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**PRESERVICE TEACHERS TO INSERVICE TEACHERS:
TEACHING FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE**

A Thesis in

Curriculum and Instruction

by

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research project was to explore how preservice teachers, who are now currently inservice teachers, who took an undergraduate secondary education course with a focus on teaching for social justice, currently, make sense of what it means to teach for social justice. The participants in this study took the same secondary education course for preservice teachers which focused on critical consciousness raising experiences in order to promote teaching for social justice in classrooms. My participants took this course when they were working on their undergraduate degrees in education. This course was the one course in the education program that brought together students in each of the content specific discipline areas of the program—mathematics, science, social studies, language and literacy, and world languages (Bullock, 2004). The course was taken the semester prior to student teaching and occurred during the first 10 weeks of the semester followed by a five-week practicum (Bullock, 2004).

In order to conduct my research project I solicited sixteen secondary education teachers, who were previously enrolled in the same undergraduate teacher education program (mentioned above) at a major university in the Mid-Atlantic region of the United States to volunteer to participate in this study. The inservice teachers all took the same secondary education course as preservice teachers which focused on teaching for social justice.

There were many factors that influenced the participant's perspectives about teaching for social justice as well as the degree to which they taught for social justice. All these factors—the undergraduate course rooted in critical consciousness raising experiences, sociocultural structures, political structures, contextual influences, hidden

curriculum, teaching stance, teaching praxis—connected to power, privilege, and oppression through issues such as race, ethnicity, class, culture, sexual preference, language, ability, etc.

Both participants self-admittedly teach for social justice, however, the degree to which this takes place varies depending on their respective perspectives on what it means to teach for social justice. Jim does not teach for social justice and is less inclined to trouble and challenge dominant perspectives because he is uncomfortable with difference. He also does not understand the sociocultural mechanisms that reproduce hegemony and is part of the complicit process rather than part of the solution. Neil teaches for social justice to a certain degree and is more inclined to trouble and challenge the status quo and hegemonic mechanisms. However, he does this by teaching for the other (Kumashiro, 2002) and teaching about the other (Kumashiro, 2002) but does not teach in a manner that is critical of privileging and Othering (Kumashiro, 2002).

This study suggests that more research is needed in order to explore and understand how teachers who have an awareness of teaching for social justice actually teach for social justice. This exploration and understanding needs to look at the broad scope of the influences on teachers and how these influences impact teaching for social justice. In addition, teacher education programs must emotionally and structurally embrace curricula rooted in social justice in order to promote teaching for social justice in a way that preservice teachers can also embrace and incorporate in to their teaching praxis. If preservice teachers are to do this they need to understand approaches like education for the Other, education about the Other, education that is critical of privileging

and Othering, and education that changes students and society (Kumashiro, 2002) in order to teach for social justice.

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Chapter One

Introduction

Justice can be thought of as the maintenance or administration of what is just, particularly by the unprejudiced adjustment of contradictory claims or the handing over of merited rewards or punishments (Tyler & Smith. 1995). “Such judgments are of special interest because justice standards are a socially-created reality. They have no external referent of the type associated with physical objects. Instead they are created and maintained by individuals, groups, organizations, and societies” (Tyler & Smith, 1995, p. 1). Because peoples’ views about the world are socially constructed society’s values often are persuasive in how people interpret anything, let alone social justice. In other words, social justice is a matter of perspective, relative to the person holding the view. Teachers are people immersed in society whose views of the world are influenced and constructed by external social forces. Teachers’ social justice views ultimately get transmitted to their students by way of teaching practices.

Teaching for social justice is defined in many ways, by many educators, even though these educators may use different terminology. In the end educators suggest the pursuit of social justice through educational means that transforms students and teachers.

Teaching for social justice can be defined as teaching for enhanced perception and imaginative explorations, for the recognition of social wrongs, of sufferings, of pestilences wherever and whenever they arise. It is to find models in literature and in history of the indignant ones, the ones forever ill at ease, and the loving ones who have taken the side of the victims of

pestilences, whatever their names or places of origin. It is to teach so that the young may be awakened to the joy of working for *transformation* [italics added] in the smallest places, so that they may become healers and *change their worlds* [italics added]. (Greene, 1998, xlv)

Another view of teaching for social justice is as follows:

Is teaching what we believe ought to be—not merely where moral frameworks are concerned, but in material arrangements for people in all spheres of society. Moreover, teaching for social justice is teaching for the sake of arousing the kinds of vivid, reflective, experiential responses that might move students to come together in serious efforts to understand what social justice actually means and what it might demand. (Greene, 1998, pp. xxix-xxx)

Another educator defines teaching for social justice as “approaches to challenging racism, classism, sexism, heterosexism, and other forms of oppression in schools” (Kumashiro, 2002, p. 4). And still more educators describe teaching for social justice as seeking “a diversity that understands the power of difference” (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1997, p. 26)

In the end, most educational advocates for education that moves people towards social justice calls for students, teachers,—all people—to become what Kincheloe and Steinberg call “initiators of social movements” (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1997, p. 26). Kumashiro alludes to people who participate in these social movements as activists, people who are “engaged in projects or efforts that worked against more than one form of oppression” (2002, p. 12). These educators objectify different means of fostering social justice; however, all would agree that social justice is working against all forms of sociocultural oppression. This oppression manifests itself in all spheres of political and

social life. Likewise, it stems from institutional operations that manifest themselves overtly and covertly to maintain, to preserve, to self-perpetuate dominant sociocultural values, privileging some and, at the same time, oppressing others.

Oppression manifests itself in many ways, shapes, and forms. It is complex and dynamic, depending on the subject as well as the context (Kumashiro, 2002). It can manifest itself in the form of racism, classism, sexism, heterosexism, and other such prejudices. (Kumashiro, 2002). Among other differences, it manifests itself because of cultural, ethnic, skin color, language, ability, religious, sexual, sexual identity differences between people. However, in order to understand this oppression and its operations, one must understand oppression in relationship to its juxtaposition with privilege (power). Kumashiro suggests that in order to understand oppression we first must understand “a focus on difference, a focus on normalcy [privilege], and a focus on intersections [of difference and normalcy]” (2002, p. 24). In so doing, the multiplicity and the complexity of the oppression-privilege (power) continuum may be revealed.

Kumashiro (2002) also suggests that “oppression is a dynamic in which certain ways of being (or, having certain identifications) are *privileged* [italics added] in society while others are marginalized” (p. 31). The privilege part of the oppression-privilege (power) continuum is explained by Kumashiro (2002) as groups that are “traditionally favored, normalized, or privileged in society” p. 32). For me, and I think many educational researcher I have referred to, understanding privilege is what gives rise to understanding sociocultural (institutional) mechanisms that privilege and conversely those that oppress. Skin color is one sociocultural mechanism. As many educational researchers suggest “white” skin color is a mechanism of privilege. It is also suggested

that a European ethnicity is a mechanism of privilege; as is sexual preference of heterosexuality. Middle-class/wealthy socio-economic status is another mechanism of privilege (Banks, 1995; Bullock, 2004; Grant, 1999; Howard & England-Kennedy, 2000; Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1997; Kumashiro, 2002; Sleeter, 1993). In addition, teachers in our schools are using curriculums that privilege, discourse that privileges, classrooms materials that privilege, while at the same time perpetuating and promoting oppression of students and people which lie at the margins of the privileged.

In order for social justice to take place, educational research suggests that teachers need to recognize what gives rise to privilege and be able to question and trouble whether this is democratic and justice. Kumashiro suggests that educators need to “teach a critical awareness of oppressive [privilege] structures and ideologies, and strategies to change them” (2002, p. 45). This suggestion by Kumashiro is where I have located my research project. I want to explore whether or not, or to what degree, teachers who took an undergraduate course, which emphasized critical consciousness raising experiences, (Bullock, 2004) teach for social justice.

Project Background Information

The purpose of this research project is to explore how preservice teachers, who are now currently inservice teachers, who took an undergraduate secondary education course with a focus on teaching for social justice, currently, make sense of what it means to teach for social justice. I was fortunate enough to locate a course, as well as a study,

for secondary undergraduate preservice teachers embedding critical consciousness raising activities in the course to promote teaching for social justice.

The preservice teachers took the undergraduate secondary teacher education course at a large Mid-Atlantic university. Throughout the teaching of this course instructors “examine[d] how preservice teachers’ teaching stances were affected by critical-consciousness raising experiences in relation to ability, class, sexual identity, gender identity, and race” (Bullock, 2004, p. iii). The researcher found that the preservice teachers’ concepts of the connections between race and teaching stance ranged from resisting new knowledges to understanding power, privilege, and oppression (Bullock, 2004).

In addition, the researcher found that preservice teachers were most challenged by incorporating teaching about sexual identity into their teaching stances (Bullock, 2004). All-in-all, the researcher suggested that “by focusing on antioppressive teaching stances, teacher education programs need to infuse issues of “*social justice*” [italics added] into the curricula” (Bullock, 2004, p. iv). The researcher also suggested that “more work is needed when preparing preservice teachers” (Bullock, 2004, iv) to teach in ways that foster teaching stances rooted in social justice.

Because of these findings, teacher education programs are potentially very influential in how teachers create their world view and how they teach for social justice based on that world view. These findings have propelled me to design this research project which explores how inservice teachers make sense of what it means to teach for social justice based on their past educational experiences and whether or not they teach for social justice.

Research Questions

The aforementioned research has helped me design questions which will explore teaching for social justice.

Primary Question:

- ❖ How do inservice teachers teach (or not teach) for social justice in their classrooms?

Secondary Questions:

- ❖ How do inservice teachers conceptualize teaching for social justice in their classroom experiences and how is this related to teaching for social justice?
- ❖ What are some of the obstacles which inhibit inservice teachers from teaching for social justice?
- ❖ What aspects of teacher education programs impact teaching for social justice?
- ❖ Do inservice teachers connect teaching for social justice to their teaching stance?

Dissertation Roadmap

In Chapter Two, “My Conceptual Framework”, I introduce myself as an educational researcher to give the reader an understanding of my background and its influences on how I have constructed my researcher voice. I also provide my interpretation of ideologies such as critical theory, constructivism, and critical multiculturalism which I utilize to provide the framework and support for my

description, analysis, and interpretation of the teacher's stories about teaching for social justice.

In addition, I provide my interpretation of Kevin Kumashiro's (2002) ideology of antioppressive education and how I utilize his ideology as a measuring stick to also analyze and interpret the teacher's stories concerning teaching for social justice. In Kumashiro's ideology he discusses four approaches to antioppressive education: *Education for the Other*, *Education about the Other*, *Education that is critical of privileging and Othering*, and *Education that changes students and society* (Kumashiro, 2002). These allow me to speak specifically about issues concerning race, culture, ethnicity, socio-economic class, sexual identity, sexual preference, religion, and ability. I connect these issues and approaches to the complexity and dynamics of power, privilege, and oppression as well as teaching for social justice.

Lastly, I discuss teaching for social justice and its overarching ideals of transformation and change of society for just and democratic means. Ultimately, as part of my framework, I need to be able to connect the teachers' stories of teaching for social justice to what educational researchers, educational experts, and educational theorists conceptualize as teaching for social justice.

In Chapter Three, "Methodology", I provide my explanation of the qualitative research methodological practices and strategies used in my research project. I include the context of the study (preservice undergraduate course to inservice teachers teaching for social justice) as well as a description of the participants (teachers). I also discuss the data collection methods I employed during this process of the research project which involved electronic dialogue exchanges (Goldstein &

Freedman, 2003). Connected to this part of the process I also explain the role of memoing (Schwandt, 2001), peer reviewing by my advisor, and triangulation as part of my qualitative research method's strategy. This chapter culminates with discussing how I describe, analyze, and interpret the data collected from the teachers.

Chapter Four is "A Teacher's Perspective on Teaching for Social Justice: Jim's Story". In this chapter, I analyze Jim's story of teaching for social justice through my interpretation of the literature surrounding teaching for social justice. I analyze the connection between teaching for social justice and teaching stance to determine relationships between the two as well as influences on one another. I further my analysis of Jim's story through looking at the contextual factors which have facilitated Jim's thinking about the world—his reality and whether or not these impact his classroom experiences. I then push my analysis of Jim's story to look at his undergraduate influences, 412W, and how this course did or did not influence Jim, in terms of teaching for social justice. The analysis then delves into how Jim went about teaching about, for, and to marginalized students and how Jim taught about issues of power, privilege, and oppression.

In Chapter Five, "A Teacher's Perspective on Teaching for Social Justice: Neil's Story", I analyze Neil's story of teaching for social justice through my interpretive lens of the literature surrounding teaching for social justice. I start by analyzing the connection between teaching for social justice and teaching stance in order to again determine relationships between the two as well as influences on one another. I also analyze how Neil interprets teaching for social justice since he claims to be not only

an advocate for social justice but also a teacher who implements strategies for teaching for social justice.

In Chapter Five I also analyze contextual influences on Neil's attempts to teach for social justice as well as the political implications of his attempts at teaching for social justice. Following this analysis, I analyze Neil's explanation to obstacles to his attempts as teaching for social justice as well as his purported outcomes to teaching for social justice. This is explored further by then analyzing Jim's view of the hidden curriculum and whether or not it impacts his teaching for social justice, perpetuating issues such as racism, hatred, bigotry, sexism, classism and other such prejudices. This is then further analyzed by exploring whether or not 412W was influential in developing Neil's approach to teaching for social justice.

In Chapter Six, "Conclusion: Understanding the Complexity of Teaching for Social Justice", I make interpretations and draw conclusions as to whether or not Jim and Neil taught for social justice as well as the dynamics and complexities associated with teaching for social justice. In addition, this chapter draws conclusions about, and connections between and to, contextual influences as well as classroom experiences which articulated conclusions about the process of teaching for social justice. I also draw conclusions about the impact of the undergraduate courses (412W) both Jim and Neil took which advocated critical consciousness raising experiences in order to promote teaching for social justice. In the end, I draw conclusions to whether or not Jim and Neil taught for social justice and if so, to what degree, and if not, why not.

Chapter Two

My Conceptual Framework

In this chapter I present my conceptual framework which fuses three theoretical perspectives in order to provide a backdrop for how I couch my analysis and interpretation: critical theory, constructivism, and critical theory. I also present my perspective of the literature surrounding issues related to Maxine Greene's (1998) ideology of teaching for social justice and Kevin Kumashiro's ideology of antioppressive education. I do this so that the reader is provided with my perspective of the literature which I use to describe, analyze, and interpret the stories (data) provided by the two teachers I interviewed.

Conceptual Framework

As an educational researcher, I have aligned myself with ways of thinking about issues of power, privilege, and oppression and how these sociocultural forces reveal themselves in the day-to-day operations of life. This alignment houses my fundamental interpretation of what I perceive has taken place in my two participant's stories and is the underpinnings of how I describe, analyze, and interpret the data. The three ideologies that are the foundation for my conceptual framework are critical theory, constructivism, and critical multiculturalism (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1997).

Critical Theory

Critical theory is one underpinning ideology that is part and parcel of my conceptual framework. Critical theory empowers me to challenge specific ways that cultural institutions are used to shape identities. These cultural institutions, from the media to religion to science and academia, dictate what is accepted as true, normal or acceptable within a culture. They offer privilege to some while marginalizing or denying others. Critical theory also looks at the mechanics of this process of privilege and marginalization, and often fosters thinking about the possibility of political action against this process (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1997; Kumashiro, 2002). Thus, critical theory is part of the foundation to ground my interpretation of the world.

Critical theory, as part of my conceptual framework, is a means to evaluate and assess the “context where learning takes place, including the larger systems of society, the culture and institutions that shape educational practice, the structural and historical conditions framing practice” (Merriam, 2002, pp. 9-10). This aspect of my conceptual framework provides me with the ability to strategize in a manner that “uncovers, examines, and critiques the social, cultural, and psychological assumptions that structure and limit our ways of thinking and being in the world” (Merriam, 2002, p. 9). By uncovering, examining, and critiquing forms of oppression, students, teachers, and society are often opened to social injustices, which may empower them to become change agents.

Critical theory as a part of my conceptual framework questions and troubles (Kumashiro, 2002) the “status quo”. This allows me to question whose interests are being

served by the way the educational system is structured, who really has entrance into particular programs, who has the power to make changes, and what are the outcomes of the way in which education is structured (Merriam, 2002). According to Burbules (2002), critical educational research “has foundered on the question of imputing motives or intentions to educators, when the very point should be to reveal activities, or the consequences of activities, that teachers emphatically do not intend (Phillips, 1981; Burbules, 1981)” (p. 332). Burbule’s suggestion offers a way of thinking about critical theory as a strategy for educational research that can be very useful with respect to analyzing deeper, often hidden issues (hidden curriculum) in the educational context.

Constructivism

Another underpinning ideology of my conceptual framework is that of constructivism. Constructivism is a way to view the world, its complexities, and its layers. Constructivism is a learning theory which holds that knowledge is not transmitted unchanged, but instead, learning is an active process of recreating knowledge. It is a view that reality, or at least our knowledge of it, is a value-laden subjective construction rather than a passive acquisition of objective features (Schwandt, 2001).

I couple constructivism with critical theory as a way of structuring my conceptual framework. This allows me to described, analyze, and interpret links between sociocultural institutions and their influences on people. These links involve the control of the knowledge construction process and the idea that because our “subject is defined by its place among various social positions...” (Nealon & Searls Giroux, 2003, p. 37)

people are influenced and create their worldview by what they perceive as being 'real'. For example, people construct their ways of thinking and viewing the world by that in which they come in contact. This is how sociocultural institutions such as schools shape students, and eventually, societies' worldviews.

According to Schwandt, "the constructionist seeks to explain how human beings interpret or construct X [(...facts, truth, reality, and knowledge...)] in specific linguistic, social, and historical contexts. In addition, many constructionists hold that X is something that should be severely criticized, changed, or overthrown" (2001, p. 32). This "criticism", to which Schwandt (2001) alludes to, is an important part of my conceptual framework as it provides another way of describing, analyzing, and interpreting how society and its institutions have been structured with regard to dominant culture and issues of power, privilege, and oppression.

Critical Multiculturalism

A third underpinning ideology of my conceptual framework is Kincheloe and Steinberg's (1997) ideology of critical multiculturalism. As an educational researcher critical multiculturalism provides me with many facets in which to think critically about what it is I am interpreting. It provides a certain landscape in which to critically examine the layers of complexity that ultimately reside within the essence of phenomena and the experiences of human beings that are not tangible or overtly obvious.

Critical multiculturalism is an ideology which allows me to think about and critically reflect on, what is taking shape, evolving, developing, within in a sociocultural context. This critical reflection explores facets of the educational setting and how these

facets intersect with hegemony and dominant culture, and their impact on politics, socio-economic class organization, religion, gender role, race, ethnicity, culture, sexual identity, sexual preference, ability, and other such mechanisms within the sociocultural process.

Kincheloe and Steinberg (1997) assert that “the critical [multiculturalist’s] articulation is concerned with the contextualization of what gives rise to race, class and gender inequalities” and “with the ways power has operated historically and contemporaneously to legitimate social categories and divisions” (p. 25). Critical multiculturalism allows me to explore the educational context (classrooms) in which my participants are immersed.

Critical multiculturalism, being part of my conceptual framework, also allows me to explore the potential complicity which takes place on behalf of the teacher(s) (and the students)—the lack of socially responsive “action”. This complicity gives rise to hidden, undetected, intangible forms of oppression and domination. Kincheloe and Steinberg make this point by stating, “it is at this unsuspected level [‘innocent’ everyday conversations between teacher-student, etc.] that the power of patriarchy, white supremacy and class elitism accomplish their hurtful work” (1997, p. 25).

Kincheloe and Steinberg go on to suggest,

Critical multiculturalism appreciates both the hidden nature of these operations and the fact that most of the time they go unnoticed even by those who participate in them. The subtlety of this process is at times disconcerting, as the cryptic nature of many forms of racism, sexism and class bias makes it difficult to

convince individuals [(white) teachers] from the dominant culture of their reality.

(p. 25)

This element of my conceptual framework will allow me to describe, analyze, and interpret these hidden operations. For example, the act of being colorblind is an example of a hidden operation. It is describe by Sleeter as when white teachers treat “children as children and do not see race (Rist, 1978)” (1993, p 161).

Critical multiculturalism is able to explore how schools and teachers influence the knowledge construction process people. Power comes in many forms and is carried out in a multitude of ways when it intersects with issues of race, class, gender, ethnicity, culture, language, sexual orientation, sexual preference, ability, and such like issues. These intersections are the connections between the events which are the meaning (Richardson, 1990). According to Richardson (1990), “[t]he meaning of each event is produced by its temporal position and role in a comprehensible whole. Narratively, to answer the question, “What does something *mean*?” requires showing how the something contributed to the conclusion of the episode” (p. 21). This ‘something’, this knowledge construction process, as well as other process, is what I will explore through the use of critical multiculturalism.

In adhering to Kincheloe and Steinberg’s notion of critical reflection on what is taking place, Kincheloe and Steinberg (1997, p. 24) assert that “critical multiculturalism, thus, is dedicated to the notion of egalitarianism and the elimination of human suffering” as the ultimate accomplishment of the critical teacher (critical member of society). As an educational researcher I want to “investigate how the social and political aspects of the

situation shape the reality; that is, how larger contextual factors affect the ways in which individuals construct reality” (Merriam, 2002, p. 4)

Critical multiculturalism also extends to social justice. Kincheloe and Steinberg point out that “critical multiculturalism refuses to position the mere establishment of diversity as its final objective; instead, it seeks a diversity that understands the power of difference when it is conceptualized within a larger concern with social justice” (1997, p. 26). As a component of my conceptual framework, critical multiculturalism will allow me to analyze and interpret whether or not teaching for social justice is taking place, or not taking place, and to what degree, based on the perception of the teachers as well as my perception.

Antioppressive Education

Kumashiro’s (2002) ideology of antioppressive education offer ideas, concepts, views, and perspectives—ways of thinking about issues of diversity and multicultural education (race, ethnicity, gender, sexual identity, sexual preference, ability/disability, etc.) related to power, privilege, and oppression as part of my conceptual framework. This piece of my conceptual framework provides me with the evidentiary educational research needed to make claims about my data vis-à-vis my interpretation of the teachers’ realities. Kumashiro describes the components of his ideology as “an attempt to address the myriad ways in which racism, classism, sexism, heterosexism, and other forms of *oppression* [italics added] play out in schools...” and how “...oppression is a dynamic in

which certain ways of being (or, having certain identifications) are privileged in society while others are marginalized” (2002, p. 31).

Kumashiro (2002) describes four approaches to antioppressive education: (1) Education for the Other, (2) Education about the Other, (3) Education that is critical of privileging and Othering, and (4) Education that changes students and society. I have used his approaches to antioppressive education as a means of analyzing and interpreting teachers’ experiences in the classroom which connect to teaching for social justice.

Education for the Other

Kumashiro’s first approach of antioppressive education focuses on “improving the experiences of students who are Othered or in some way oppressed in and by mainstream society” (2002, pp. 32-33). This approach identifies two ways oppression manifests itself in schools. The first is that schools themselves are “spaces where the Other is treated in harmful ways” (Kumashiro, 2002, p. 33). The Other, refers to students who are marginalized and not a part of what mainstream society deems ‘normal’. Often these students are students of color, students who are gay or perceived as gay, students that do not fit with the ‘in’ crowd because of something characteristic that marginalizes them (Kumashiro, 2002). This Othering seems to play out in schools by students, by teachers, by administrators, by parents, etc. both passively and actively. Passively it takes place with inaction between students and teachers who do not respond to situations that call for *education for the Other* (Kumashiro, 2002). These situations foster an environment which marginalizes students.

The second way oppression manifests itself in schools is how “assumptions about and expectations for the Other—especially those held by educators—that influence how the Other is treated” (Kumashiro, 2002, p. 33). Teachers, students, administrators, parents, and the like may hold certain expectations about what it is students should be based on mainstream, dominant perspectives. If students do not live up to these expectations they are often marginalized as Other. These expectations usually are created by the experiences that the individuals have had and are connected to expectations about what is “gay” or what is “male” or what is “white” or what is “African American” or what is “Hispanic”. These individuals, teachers and students, consciously and subconsciously reveal their prejudices and stereotypes in the operations of schools and classrooms (Kumashiro, 2002). For example, much research has indicated that teachers who are white and middle-class want students who are not white and middle-class, to act and behavior like white middle-class students unconsciously, and in some cases consciously (D’Angelo & Douglas, 2008; Grant, 1999; Jones, 1997; Kumashiro, 2002; Sleeter, 1993).

In order for teachers and students to bring about change in education for the Other, “schools need to be and provide helpful spaces for all students, especially for those students targeted by the forms of oppression” (Kumashiro, 2002, p. 34) which Other and marginalize. These spaces, schools, need to foster, embrace, and cultivate an environment that celebrates ‘diversity’ in such a way that normalcy is no longer socioculturally mainstream (dominant culture). Students also need spaces, in schools, that provide help, support, advocacy, and resources. Othered and marginalized students need to count on

people whom they can trust to support them from oppression, during oppression, and after oppression (Kumashiro, 2002).

To bring about change also involves educating educators to be culturally responsive (Gay, 2002; Phuntsog, 2001; Torrey & Ashy, 1997). According to Kumashiro this means,

That educators need to acknowledge the diversity among their students, as well as embrace these differences and treat their students as raced, gendered, sexual, and classed individuals. For example, researchers suggest that rather than assume that students of color are intellectually inferior to White American students or culturally deficient, educators could incorporate the students' home cultures into their classrooms and pedagogies, teaching in a "culturally sensitive" or "culturally relevant" way (Ladson-Billings, 1994; Philips, 1983,; Sheets, 1995; Bogt, Jordan, & Tharp, 1993), or even teaching students about the "culture of power" so that they will know what it takes to succeed in mainstream schools and society (Delpit, 1988). (2002, p. 35)

This would be opposed to teaching in a traditional manner which propagates a pedagogy of whiteness (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1997) and Others and marginalizes.

The strengths of education for the Other is that it calls on educators to recognize that there is great diversity among the student population, and, more importantly, that the majority of the students—namely, all those who are not White American, male, hegemonically masculine, heterosexual, and middle-class or wealthy—are marginalized and harmed by various forms of oppression in schools. (Kumashiro, 2002, pp. 36-37)

It calls on educators to work for social justice rather than be complicit and allow oppression to maintain its roots in education (Kumashiro, 2002). This means educators need to be willing to put themselves out there and allow students to see their support of students who are Othered and marginalized.

On the other hand, some of the weakness of education for the Other is that by itself it may promote or perpetuate the privileging of the non-Othered or non-marginalized (normal). Also, in educating for the Other, one needs to be able to define the Other which may serve to further Other and marginalize by substantiating identity boundaries. And lastly, the educator needs to be able to “accurately assess the needs of their students, especially their Othered students” (Kumashiro, 2002, pp. 38-39). Ellsworth (1997) explains this weakness by suggesting that there is potentially a breakdown between who the teacher thinks the student is and who the student actually is and a breakdown between what is being taught and what is being learned. Again, educators need to be educated on how to educate for the Other.

Education about the Other

Kumashiro’s second approach of antioppressive education focuses on, what all students—privileged and marginalized—know and should know about the Other. Given that knowledge can lead to oppressive as well as antioppressive actions, and given that a primary goal of schooling is to teach and learn more knowledge, these researchers suggest that antioppressive knowledge is central to challenging oppressions in school. (2002, p. 39)

Education for the Other needs to address knowledges that are partial and knowledges that are distorted and misleading in order to unlearn misconceptions and unlearn stereotypes about the Other and relearn new knowledges that support and provide understanding of the Other. Partial knowledges usually only address what is socioculturally normal or mainstream while distorted/misleading knowledges are based on stereotypes and myths about the Other (Kumashiro, 2002).

One of the frustrations of working against oppression and educating for the Other is the fact most partial knowledges are taught and therefore learned through the hidden curriculum, or the informal curriculum, which is often handed down from student to student as well as from teacher to student (Kumashiro, 2002). This learning process is very difficult to combat when trying to educate for the Other. In order to bring about change and work for antioppressive education Kumashiro suggests that educators need to expand the curriculum to include specific units on the Other as well as not limiting their units about the Other to once or twice a year (2002). Instead Kumashiro suggests that curricular units about the Other be integrated with the standard curricular units in order not to further marginalize the Other (2002).

The strengths of education about the Other as an approach to antioppressive education is that “it teaches all students, not just the Othered students, as it calls on educators to enrich all students’ understanding of different ways of being” (Kumashiro, 2002, pp. 41-42). Education about the Other may work against partial knowledges and perhaps make connections between groups (Othered and non-Othered) (Kumashiro, 2002). In addition, education about the Other can be implemented in such a way that

disrupts the partial knowledge and disrupts ways that students see themselves (Britzman, 1998).

However, education about the Other is not unproblematic and needs to be positioned in such a way that educators understand its limitations or possible weaknesses. Education about the Other may present dominant cultural narratives that further the division between groups (Othered and non-Othered). Telling the stories of the Other is putting the Other in a place that is already different than the norm. Education about the Other may position the Other as the expert which again may serve to increase the divisions between groups (Othered and non-Othered). Education about the Other can never tell the complete “story” of the Other because each story is unique and different which limits its power of educating about the Other (Kumashiro, 2002).

Education that is critical of privileging and Othering

Kumashiro’s (2002) third approach of antioppressive education focuses on education that is critical of privileging and Othering. Kumashiro suggests that this approach “requires examining more than one’s dispositions toward, treatment of, and knowledge about the Other” (2002, p. 44). He also asserts that,

educators and students need to examine not only how some groups and identities are Othered in society, but also how some groups are privileged, as well as how this dual process is legitimized and maintained by social structures and competing ideologies. (Kumashiro, 2002, p. 44)

The identification of how some groups are privileged serves to expose the sociocultural structures in place to perpetuate what is 'normal' and what is not. Schools are a frontline of defenses for dominant cultural values. Schools reinforce 'normalcy' and schools utilize strategies and tactics (overt and covert) to perpetuate hegemony and its cultural well-being. Since schools, as social institutions, connect to all other social institutions it should be somewhat apparent how dominant sociocultural values become transmitted (Althusser, 1971; Gramsci, 1971; Stambach, 1999).

In order to bring about change, education that is critical of privileging and Othering must educate teachers and students on sociocultural structures which promote and perpetuate oppression of the Other. In order to do this, educators must be taught to identify these structures and to be able to teach about these structures in such a way that they do not alienate students. This critical consciousness or critical awareness then needs to be taught to students (Bullock, 2005; Ayers, Hunt, & Quinn, 1998; Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1997; Kumashiro, 2002; Sleeter, 1993).

This happens when educators teach knowledge about oppression and when educators teach students how to "recognize, understand, and critique current social inequities" (Ladson-Billings, 1995, p. 476). According to Kumashiro,

Developing this critical awareness requires learning that that which society defines as "normal" is a social and contested construct (Apple, 1995) that both regulates who we are supposed to be and denigrates whoever fails to conform to "proper" or "normal" roles (Greene, 1996). Simultaneously, developing this critical consciousness requires *un*learning or critiquing what was previously learned to be "normal" and normative (Britzman, 1998), especially when what we

previously learned helps to mask the privileging and Othering of different identities. (2002, pp. 45-46)

Students, especially white students, have been taught that white is authentic in the United States and their ancestral experiences and history have made this country what it is in terms of success. This holds true for what is male, what is heterosexual, what is middle-class/wealthy. Students of all backgrounds are typically taught in schools what is to be held in high regards concerning normalcy. Students need to be able to recognize what supports the notion of normalcy in order to be able to criticize in order to unlearn (Kumashiro, 2002).

Kumashiro (2002) speaks of this recognition in terms of identity. He suggests that students need to understand how identities correspond to both being privileged and Othered. For example, how gay identities are marginalized because sociocultural structures suggest that being gay is not normal or how whites are privileged because sociocultural structures suggest that being white (skin color and ethnic background) is normal. Students also need to be taught the thinking skills to formulate plans of action which potentially lead to transformative moments in the dominant culture (Ellsworth, 1992) and potentially lead to challenging oppression (Kumashiro, 2002). Being critical of privileging and Othering potentially provides for spaces that promote a critical consciousness which may translate into challenging dominant sociocultural structures and changing dominant sociocultural structures (Freire, 1995; Kumashiro, 2002; Maher & Tetreault, 1994).

One of the strengths of education that is critical of privileging and Othering is that it puts educators in a position not only to teach about oppression and the forces that

perpetuate dominant culture but also it puts educators in positions to potentially change society. On the other hand, one of the draw backs of this approach is that because identities and experiences are diverse and dynamic and complex, so too is oppression and what oppression means to people. Oppression can manifest in many different ways. The same type of oppression may manifest itself differently under different circumstances so as to be critical of certain sociocultural structures and the way they oppress or privilege may not articulate oppressions impact across the board (Kumashiro, 2002).

Another shortcoming of this approach is that even though one may understand the sociocultural structures that produce and perpetuate oppression and privilege this understanding does not mean one will take action against such oppression and privilege. Knowing does not always lead to action. Many people remain complicit in the process of oppressing and privileging (Kumashiro, 2002).

Education that changes students and society

Kumashiro's (2002) fourth approach of antioppressive education focuses on education that changes students and society. Walkerdine (1990) and Kumashiro suggest that,

Oppression and harm are produced not merely by the actions and intentions of individuals or by the imperatives of social structures. Rather, oppression is produced by discourse, and in particular, is produced when certain discourses (especially ways of thinking that privilege certain identities and marginalize

others) are cited over and over. Such citational processes serve to reproduce these hierarchies and their harmful effects in society. (2002, p. 50).

Often discourse is used in classrooms to reinforce the ideals of normalcy and the ideals of the Other, so oppression goes far beyond the identity characteristics to thinking and creating intangible discourse to reinforce the status quo in a citational manner (Kumashiro, 2002).

According to Kumashiro (2002), in order to bring about change, education that changes students and society must address three areas of concern in schools: the problem of resistance, a curriculum of partiality, and pedagogy of crisis. A problem of resistance represents curriculums in the core disciplines such as history, sciences, mathematics, and English. This resistance often perpetuates oppressive knowledges as well as perpetuates dominant sociocultural values overtly and covertly. Teachers often privilege certain sociocultural values and oppress others in the materials they use and the lessons they teach. Most teachers (especially white teachers) unwittingly allow dominant cultural values to be perpetuated to their students via their pedagogical practices in the classroom (Kumashiro, 2002; Sleeter, 1993).

It is extremely difficult for social change to take place when schools continue to utilize curricular materials at all levels (K-12) that privilege middle-class/wealthy (class), white (race), male (gender), heterosexuals (sexuality) (Howard & EnglandKennedy, 2006; Kumashiro, 2002). When schools do provide curriculums that offer diversity, it is usually presented as “add-ons”. This process only serves to further the division between the sociocultural values that are privileged and the sociocultural values that are not

privileged (Kumashiro, 2002). Kumashiro suggests that this process plays out in the following manner:

To say *who we are* and *what we are focusing on* is simultaneously to say *who we are not* and *what we are not focusing on*. The naming of difference, then, whether in activist communities or inclusive curricula, can serve less to describe who a group is, and more to prescribe who a group ought to be. (2002, p. 57)

When researching how white teachers construct race, Sleeter (1993), also refers to this problem of resistance. She writes that “Several white teachers incorporated food, music, and holidays from different countries into their teaching, although these lessons tended to retain a Eurocentric bias” (1993, p. 165). She goes on to report that

Lessons added token representations of Americans of color (mainly by adding personal knowledge about the students in the classroom) to a curriculum that heavily favored Europe and Euro-americans, without reconstructing students’ interpretations of the histories of Americans of color, or their knowledge of Africa, contemporary Latin America, or the pre-Columbian Americas. (1993, p. 166)

Additionally, when teachers focus on difference they fail to disrupt the knowledge of normalcy and the identification of the sociocultural structures which create privilege and thus the model for the privilege-oppression binary. Kumashiro (2002) supports this notion by stating that “adding difference does not really change teaching and learning practices that affirm our sense of normalcy” (p. 57).

Since this approach continues to be a problem of resistance associated with the curriculum and teaching practices as well as a stumbling block for education that changes

students and society Kumashiro suggest that we need to change how we approach teaching the curriculum and the disciplines. He states that,

We need to acknowledge that the desire to continue teaching the disciplines as they have traditionally been taught is a desire to maintain the privilege of certain identities, worldviews, and social relations. And we need to acknowledge that trying to “solve” the problem by adding differences can comply with oppression if we define differences in problematic ways and then add them to a framework where the same identities remain privileged. (Kumashiro, 2002, p. 58).

This means educating teachers to teach in ways that serve to trouble and disrupt knowledge that has continually been allowed to maintain the status quo and the Eurocentric cannon.

A curriculum of partiality represents problems by traditionally adding on to the curriculum in order to create diversity. When educators do “add on”, the emphasis needs to be less on what the identities are teaching directly and more on what the culmination of identities teaches indirectly (Kumashiro, 2002). In so doing, there is a higher probability of fostering an environment conducive for education that changes students and society.

A curriculum of partiality may be circumvented somewhat by including differences in a manner that changes the fundamental narratives and discourse and the repercussions of these narratives and discourse for thinking, identifying, and acting in oppressive and/or antioppressive ways. Educators can further this process by providing contradictory narratives, stories, and identities to the mainstream curriculum (Kumashiro, 2002). They can also provide students with opportunities to hear voices that reflect on mainstream lessons in order to produce multiple ways or divergent ways of

meaning-making. This ultimately has the potential to produce multiple truths and multiple realities.

This process mentioned above should be coupled with a critical pedagogy in order to further disrupt the oppressive nature of partial curriculums. Kumashiro (2002) suggests this happens when critical questions are being asked about the partial curriculum and its materials and he suggests that this is a process of troubling the dominant narratives scripted by traditional texts and traditional curriculums.

Pedagogy of crisis involves a process of unlearning and relearning in order to foster an environment that is conducive for education that changes students and society. This crisis involves learning about how many privileged and unprivileged people perpetuate oppression by being complicit (Kumashiro, 2002). According to Kumashiro (2002),

Learning that *the very ways in which we think and do things is not only partial but oppressive* involves troubling or “unlearning” (Britzman, 1998a) what we have already learned, and this can be quite an emotionally discomforting process, a form of “crisis” (Felman, 1995). (p. 63)

This process of antioppressive education involves learning (unlearning) something that disrupts our commonsense view of the world and at the same time learning (relearning) other world views (Kumashiro, 2002). Two examples of this are unlearning common sense religious views of homosexuality as a sin and being white entitles white people to certain higher sociocultural status. Teachers need to foster this crisis and at the same time provide safe spaces for students to work through their crises to facilitate a change in the student and possibly society. According to Kumashiro (2002), “what results from

working through crisis is a change in the relationship students see between themselves and the binary of normalcy/Otherness” (p. 64).

The strength of education that changes students and society is that it may “suggest curricular and pedagogical reforms that help to address the complexities of antioppressive education by developing such notions as partiality, resistance, crisis, and unknowability as they apply to teaching and learning” (Kumashiro, 2002, p. 68). Reform, in and of itself has been suggested by many researchers such as Banks (1995), Ayers, Hunt, and Quinn (1998), Freire (1970), Gay (2002), Grant (1999), Kincheloe and Steinberg (1997), and Sleeter (1993) to combat the established privilege/oppression binary.

However, the weakness of this fourth approach to antioppressive education is that it, like oppressive education, is limited in its worldviews, perspectives, voices, and identities. As much as critical pedagogy and antioppressive education supports the notion of troubling and questioning the dominant narratives and what sociocultural structures have produced these dominant cultural structures need to be able to trouble and question themselves—Reflexivity (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003a; Denzin & Lincoln, 2003b; Kumashiro, 2002; Merriam, 2002; Schwandt, 2001; Sergiovanni & Starratt, 2002).

Additionally, because of this weakness Kumashiro (2002) suggests that four ethical questions arise out of education that changes students and society. These questions revolve around: whether or not it is ethical to intentionally and constantly lead a student to crisis, whether or not all experiences with crisis are antioppressive, whether or not working through crisis involves invading a student’s privacy, and whether or not all forms of repetition constitute oppression, and do all resignifications constitute antioppressive change (Kumashiro, 2002)?

These four approaches to antioppressive education are not a cure-all for combating oppression and understanding privilege. These are, however, pedagogical practices and strategies for addressing how oppression plays out in schools. In addition, these approaches help student and educators to conceptualize how sociocultural mechanisms embedded in our society create overt and covert forms of oppression and privilege. These approaches allow students and educators to examine issues of race, class, ethnicity, culture, sexual preference, sexual identity, religion, and disability and ability, in order to identify how normalcy is structured and how the Other is marginalized and is created out of this process. Thus, in identifying the process, the mechanisms and the binary, students and teachers are potentially better able to work against oppression and towards social justice.

Teaching for Social Justice

Another component of my conceptual framework is the ideology of teaching for social justice. It encompasses many parts which culminate to propagate in an equitable format, the ideals of justice and democracy for all. It is apparent through the myriad research that injustice is part of our sociocultural world and that injustice manifests itself in schools, business, political life, socio-economic class, gender, race, sexual preference, sexual identity, religion, as well as in all sociopolitical spaces people occupy.

To work towards social justice in an educational context means first understanding what justice is supposed to represent. According to Maxine Green (1998),

Justice, after all, is thought to be the primary value of political life if it is incarnated in human action in spaces where people live together. Thinking of it as a normative ideal, a notion of how persons *ought* to live together, most of us would agree that there should be an equitable, a fair distribution of goods and services. (p. xxviii)

These spaces present the context as to how justice does or does not play out in life (e.g., classrooms). They are based on power, privilege, and oppression. In addition, one of the requirements in a just society ought to be that everyone impacted by a decision ought to have a part in making the decision (Greene, 1998). In most cases involving injustice and oppression the spaces like schools and classrooms are responsible for perpetuating stereotypes and dominant sociocultural values (Sleeter, 1993). In these cases, however, people do not have a part in the decision making process, which means their identities have been created for them by the dominant narratives perpetuated by schools and American society.

Social justice ultimately is an end product of researchers such as Kumashiro (2002), Kincheloe and Steinberg (1997) and Ayers, Hunt and Quinn (1998), and Greene (1998), among many others, though they may each use a different vernacular to describe and explain social justice. This product which manifests itself out of antioppressive education and critical multiculturalism and teaching for social justice is supposed to arouse “the kinds of vivid, reflective, experiential responses that might move students to come together in serious efforts to understand what social justice actually means and what it might demand” (Greene, pp. xxix-xxx). This implies a social movement, a movement which demands action in order to facilitate social change. Greene (1998) calls

students involved in this movement “contemporary resistance fighters” and asks what teachers can do to empower students to criticize instances of injustice.

Greene (1998), as well as Kincheloe and Steinberg (1995) and Kumashiro (2002), suggest that in order for this process to play out educators need to create spaces in classrooms which safely support counter-narratives which challenge, disrupt, and question conventional, dominant sociocultural values. Conterminously, educators need to create safe spaces for students to fashion new ways of knowing and viewing the world. These spaces should allow students to,

reflect on experience in the culture and the social world, to discover how much of the stuff of actually lived experience has been shaped by an oppressor somewhere—and how much has been freely chosen by the individual empowered to create her- or himself as she or he lives a life. (Greene, 1998, p. xl)

In this process, Greene (1998) suggests, that students who identify with the same oppression and empowerment may be compelled to come together to become change agents for social justice.

Ultimately teaching for social justice “is to teach so that the young may be awakened to the joy of working for transformation in the smallest places, so that they may become healers and change their worlds” (Green, 1998, p. xlv). Thus, teaching for social justice is necessary in order to foster a more democratic, equitable, and justice society.

Researcher Voice

My voice impacts my description, analysis, and interpretation of the data. My voice, as a researcher, is a reflection of my experiences and a reflection of my subject (Nealon & Searls Giroux, 2003). According to Nealon and Giroux, “The subject is defined by its place among various social positions: suspect, cop, student, teacher, doctor, patient, electrician” (2003, p. 37). I am positioned in society in a variety of ways (depending on who is assigning positions). I see my position as a husband, as a father. I see my position as a male, heterosexual, middle-class, teacher. I see my position as privilege and power, according to certain social standards—white. I believe it is important for my readers to understand “where I am coming from” because my position, my subjectivity, impacts my interpretation of the research I as I describe, analyze, and interpret my participants’ stories.

My researcher voice has been cultivated by my connections to my experiences. As a researcher I have read and re-read much of the literature and much of the research produced by educational experts, educational researchers, and educational surrounding my area of study. In doing so, I have tried to make my own interpretations of this body of information and apply it to my own research. Connecting my experiences to the literature has created my view of issues surrounding teaching for social justice and antioppressive education.

My experiences have also helped me think about the literature in ways in which I can relate to and apply to my participants’ stories. My experiences revolve around the hateful and biased discourse of a grandfather at an early age; the nonexistent hateful or

bias discourse of that grandfather's son. These experiences also revolve around dialogue and commentary of "friends" (more like "acquaintances" now) which reflected racism, hatred towards non-whites, other bigotry, as well as the privilege and power of skin color and language. I have also experienced (white) professors at institutes of higher education using discourse and language and innuendo reflective of their hidden privilege and hidden power as well as their bias and their bigotry towards people of color. These experiences are still occurring today. As I write, two days ago I experienced a comment by a white person about an African American that was reflective of privilege, power, and oppression. I have had many more of these types of experiences that have been concentrated around these sociocultural products of power, privilege, and oppression which I am now able to make sense of because of my interpretation of the research and literature.

My subject has also become a powerful influence on my description, analysis, and interpretation of the research and literature as well as a powerful influence on the interpretation of my participants' stories. It has also become a powerful influence on the interpretation of my subject as a husband and as a father, in that I am married to a woman who is Hispanic and we have a multiracial son. Because I feel I understand the sociocultural structures imbedded in our social system which create power, privilege, and oppression (e.g., skin color and race), I am extremely concerned with the potential oppression of my family as well as others. I am concerned as to how these sociocultural structures, such as schools in rural areas, employing predominately white, female teachers, perpetuate the ideologies of "whiteness", power and privilege afforded people of a certain skin color (white) and ethnic background.

These experiences, and my subjectivity have burned in me a passion to become what James Banks calls a “White transformative scholar” (1995, p. 396) focused on creating an understanding of what fosters ideals of oppression, hatred and bigotry among people in order to foster social justice. Hopefully my experienced and subjective voice is able to tell a story from a perspective which enables readers to make connections between the events which is the meaning (Richardson, 1990, 13). The events of racism, bigotry, hatred, social justice, equality, and democracy help to facilitate an environment conducive for people to become social change agents (Banks, 1995; Gay, 2002; Giroux, 1998; Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1997; Kumashiro, 2002; Sleeter, 1993)

Chapter Three

Methodology

In this chapter, I begin with methodological structures concerning participants and participant selection. I then move to methods of data collection, which involves email dialogue exchanges. I also illustrate memoing's impact on my data analysis and interpretation. All of these methods contributed to triangulation of the data.

To explore how inservice teachers teach (or do not teach) for social justice in their classrooms, I used a basic interpretive qualitative research strategy (Merriam & Associates, 2002; Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). This research strategy helped me to discover and understand the perspectives and worldviews of my participants (inservice teachers) (Merriam & Associates, 2002, p. 6). In addition, this qualitative method allowed me to analyze the data "to identify patterns or common themes that cut across the data" (Merriam & Associates, 2002, pp. 6-7). I end the chapter with a brief description of how the data was interpreted and analyzed which transitions into the following two data analysis chapters.

Background Information

The Secondary Education Course which Focused on Teaching for Social Justice

My participants took the same secondary education course for preservice teachers which focused on critical consciousness-raising experiences in order to promote teaching

for social justice in classrooms. My participants took this course when they were working on their undergraduate degrees in education. This course was the one course in the education program that brought together students in each of the content-specific discipline areas of the program—mathematics, science, social studies, language and literacy, and world languages (Bullock, 2004). The course was taken the semester prior to student teaching and occurred during the first 10 weeks of the semester followed by a five-week practicum (Bullock, 2004).

Research Participants

In order to conduct my research project, I solicited sixteen secondary education teachers, who were previously enrolled in the same undergraduate teacher education program (mentioned above) at a major university in the Mid-Atlantic region of the United States to volunteer to participate in this study. The inservice teachers all took the same secondary education course as preservice teachers which focused on teaching for social justice.

Jim

Jim is a male between the ages of 25 and 33 who identifies himself as a Euro-American/White. Jim's sexual identity is heterosexual and he identifies his socio-economic status as poor working class. He identifies himself as able bodied rather than disabled. Jim was raised by his family in a small-town area. Jim teaches language and literacy in a public school district in a rural (non-farm) area.

I think Jim's demeanor in teaching for social justice is representative of many "white" conservatives in this country. He seems to be greatly influenced by his upbringing and family background. Jim is interesting, as well as intriguing, to me because I think he represents many "white" teachers (as well as "white" Americans) in how he approaches issues of diversity, multiculturalism, and teaching for social justice. In addition, as a "white" American he seems to feel a need to defend dominant perspectives and ideologies connected to ownership of the United States and social ideals and values. He often makes reference to "why can't they be like us" when referring to people other than "white" Americans.

Jim's exposure to the secondary education course brought a new perspective to how he sees students, people, and society. However, it is only part of the perspective of how dominant culture is organized and operates in society. The course's critical consciousness-raising experiences pushed Jim into new spaces where he looked at the world somewhat differently. This "push", however, was not enough to make him approach teaching for the Other, teaching about the Other, teaching that is critical of privileging and Othering, and teaching that changes students and society (Kumashiro, 2002).

Neil

Neil is a male between the ages of 25 and 33 who identifies himself as a Euro-American/White. Neil's sexual identity is heterosexual and he identifies his socio-economic status as middle class. He identifies himself as able-bodied as opposed to

disabled. Neil was raised by his family in a suburban area. He teaches science in a public school district in a farming area.

I think Neil's teaching for social justice demeanor is more progressive than Jim's and, in my opinion, most "white" teachers; Neil represents a "white" liberal who is not afraid to upset the status quo in his classroom with his students. He seems to be greatly influenced by his upbringing, as well his family background, mentioning his grandmother's influence on him. His worldly travels also seem to have influenced him. Jim is interesting, as well as intriguing, as I think he, once again, goes against the norm, or status quo, as a "white" teachers (as well as most "white" Americans) in how he approaches issues of diversity, multicultural education, and teaching for social justice.

As a more progressive "white" teacher, Neil seems to disregard contemporary, conventional modes of teaching issues of diversity, multicultural education and teaching for social justice. He is not part of the mainstream as far as his religious practices, holiday practices, views on sexuality, views on ethnicity or views on social justice. Neil questions and criticizes the dominant perspectives of his "white" students.

Neil's own admissions discount the value of his exposure to the secondary education course. Neil felt that taking the course opened him to how other students in the course perceived issues related to power, privilege, and oppression and teaching for social justice. Neil seems to be more cognizant of how to teach for social justice, however, his implementation of teaching strategies to teach for social justice do not address all the components of teaching for social justice in what I would call an effective manner. The secondary education course's critical-consciousness raising experiences did not seem to push Neil into new spaces that necessarily looked at the world somewhat

differently. However, Neil seems to teach for social justice effectively when teaching for the Other and teaching about the Other. On the other hand, Neil is not effective when it comes to teaching that is critical of privileging and Othering and teaching that changes students and society (Kumashiro, 2002).

Methods of Gathering Data

I sent letters and informed consents to sixteen inservice secondary education teachers who were previously enrolled in the same undergraduate teacher education program at a major university in the Mid-Atlantic region of the United States. This letter asked the inservice teachers to volunteer to participate in this study. The undergraduate teacher education program focused on critical consciousness-raising experiences to foster a commitment to teaching for social justice. Only two of the sixteen inservice teachers returned the informed consent forms with their signatures. I then made telephone calls to the remaining fourteen possible participants who did not respond to my letter but was not successful in recruiting any of those potential participants. With the approval of my advisor I proceeded with the study using the two participants who agreed to be part of my study.

The data-collection process commenced in May, 2006 and concluded in September, 2006. During this time I conducted a series of email dialogue exchanges with both participants. This dialogue allowed me to explore how inservice teachers, who took an undergraduate secondary education course with a focus on teaching for social justice, currently make sense of what teaching for social justice means. During the time period

from September, 2006 until December, 2006 I began to describe, analyze, and interpret the data.

I began the study by contacting the two inservice teachers who were willing to volunteer via email. This email correspondence asked for demographic information as well as initiating the email dialogue exchanges (McIntyre & Tlusty, 1995, Ojanen, 1993; Tella 1992) intended to explore each participant's understandings of teaching for social justice. The initial email dialogue exchange posed the following questions:

1. What does teaching stance mean to you? What is it comprised of – principles, criteria, guidelines?
2. How has it changed since you started teaching?
3. Are you familiar with teaching for social justice?
4. If so, what does teaching for social justice mean to you? Do you teach for social justice?

These questions set the framework for further questions in order to explore and/or expose issues connected to power, privilege, and oppression and teaching for social justice.

Email Dialogue Exchanges

The electronic correspondence offered my participants “a less formal, more spontaneous medium than traditional” (Goldstein & Freedman, 2003, p. 443) correspondence because of spatial constraints, they were not assessable for observations and interviews. These exchanges allowed my participants the ability to provide historical

information and to feel comfortable and not pressured by my physical presence. It also allowed me control over the line of questioning (Creswell, 2003, p. 186).

The email dialogue exchanges were semi-structured and open-ended in nature in order to provide the greatest opportunity for the participants to supply as much information about their experiences as possible without the feeling of being coerced. Since the exchanges were guided by my research questions, I had the opportunity to explore other areas of interest or other threads that came out of the participants' responses to my line of questioning. This exploration allowed me to inquire about unclear responses. Some response pointed me in new directions, furthering my understanding of how each participant taught for social justice as well as how each conceptualized teaching for social justice. It allowed me to inquire as the issues connected to teaching for social justice.

Memoing

I used memoing during the course of the research process to reflect on what was taking place. Memoing provided me with a means of examining and exploring the data which developed in describing and analyzing the data (Schwandt, 2001). These memos also helped to guide my inquiry and enable me to reflect on past thoughts and ideas related to the data collection, data analysis, and data interpretation.

Memoing provided another dimension to the data-gathering process as well as the data-interpretation process. Additionally, after returning to my memos after a day, sometimes two days, I read them differently the second time. This furthered the inquiry

and exploration of the dynamics and connections and threads involving teaching for social justice. Memoing also kept me on the proverbial track—this process was like a guide that provided insight and direction during times when I struggled to make sense of the data or make connections to the data.

Peer Reviewer

Dr. Debra Freedman, Ph.D., my advisor and co-researcher, was my sounding board for my description, analysis, and interpretations of the data. She reviewed my data-collecting strategies and provided expertise and insight on this part of the process enabling me to feel confident in my approach to my study. Dr. Freedman also examined my analysis of the data to provide guidance on what I did well and what I needed to clarify for my readers. This process helped me to see other possible connections between the events of the data (Richardson, 1990) as well as making the connections already established clearer. In addition, Dr. Freedman provided suggestions, insight, and her own interpretation of the data when reviewing my own interpretation of the data. This process also provided me an opportunity to “reinterpret some of my analysis. In total, her peer review of the entire process provided researcher expertise that enabled me to stay grounded and focused on conducting a quality research study.

Triangulation

In order to create a high degree of internal validity, I employed the procedure of triangulation. Triangulation which “is a procedure used to establish the fact that the criterion of *validity* has been met” (Schwandt, 2001, p. 257). Based on the fact that I made inferences or interpretations of the data collected from the email dialogue exchanges, I needed to utilize other methods to create different vantage points to analysis in order to make sense of the data.

The other methods which I brought to use in the quest to increase the internal validity of my study were memoing and peer review. The analytic procedure of memoing as the second component of my triangulation was used to describe specific aspects of the setting and phenomenon taking place in the study (Schwandt, 2001). In my case memoing captured my thoughts while I was engaged in the process of analysis. I then integrated the memos into my final analysis of my participants.

The third component to triangulation is peer review. Dr. Freedman has been peer reviewing my description, analysis, and interpretation of the data. This process has allowed her to scan some of the raw data (email dialogue exchanges) and assess whether or not my findings were plausible based on the data (Merriam, 2002).

Description of Qualitative Data

The process of description or describing data is one of giving an account of that which we perceive concerning what is taking place. “Descriptions in interpretive work are factual claims about what we perceive. In other words, description is not simply an

account of what I see (or hear) but also a claim *that* this is in fact the case” (Schwandt, 2001, p. 55).

What makes the process of description complex and dynamic is that perception is based on the researcher’s background knowledge of the area being researched. In addition, the complexity and dynamics of the process extend to conceptual resources and experiences related to the context being studied (Schwandt, 2001). This process constructs a research environment more in line with the generation of factual descriptions based on relative interpretation; i.e., what I see may not be what you see. In the end description should be thick, characterized by its relative interpretation of the researcher (Schwandt, 2001).

Analyzing Qualitative Data

The process of analyzing qualitative data, simply stated, involves “the activity of making sense of, interpreting, or theorizing data” (Schwandt, 2001, p. 6). I begin this process by organizing, reducing, and describing the data in multiple steps until I was able to draw conclusions or interpretations (Schwandt, 2001). This process helped me compartmentalize the data of the two participants in order to connect the themes which emerged to research involving issues of power, privilege, and oppression, as well as, and as important, if not more so, teaching for social justice.

According to Schwandt (2001), this process involves “sorting, organizing, and reducing the data to something manageable and then exploring ways to reassemble the data to interpret them (p. 7). After each email dialogue exchange I tried to break down the

data in order to label elements that appeared to be connected to my inquiry—teaching for social justice—and then establish assertions (according to the literature and research) explaining the data.

Analysis of the data indicated that issues related to power, privilege, and oppression were most poignant when connected to teaching for social justice. These issues, power, privilege, and oppression, as they connect to teaching for social justice, encompassed contextual issues, classroom experiences, connections to 412W, teaching marginalized students, social constructs, political issues, obstacles and outcomes, and the hidden curriculum.

The data analysis phase revealed that contextual issues such as family background and life experiences were very influential for both participants concerning their interpretation of teaching for social justice as well as their strategies for teaching for social justice. These contextual factors facilitated the architecture early on for how both participants viewed the world around them. There is no question that when it came to teaching for social justice and teaching stance both teachers were greatly influenced by their family upbringing.

Both teachers' classroom experiences, ranging from students drawing Nazi symbols on books and desks, to students using racist discourse towards African Americans, to students using bigoted discourse towards homosexuals, also impacted how both participants dealt with issues of power, privilege, and oppression in the classroom. These classroom experiences exposed the types of responses these participants had concerning teaching for social justice. These experiences also exposed their social

realities concerning their views about race, ethnicity, culture, religion, immigration, sexual preference, ability, and other such views.

Data analysis also exposed how both participants did or did not make connections between their undergraduate course (412W), which emphasized critical consciousness raising experiences, and the degree to which teaching for social justice took place. Both participants mentioned how they felt 412W influenced, or did not influence, their ability to teach for social justice. This analysis of the 412W course also helped me to shape my views and analysis of my recommendations for teacher education.

Also during the data analysis process the emergence of how both participants approached teaching marginalized students was exposed. Both participants took much different routes to teaching marginalized students. These routes were based on their views about marginalized and Othered students (Kumashiro, 2002) developed from the previously mentioned social structures. Again, the connections were clear between family background, family upbringing, and overall life experience as well as the teacher's approach to teaching for social justice.

During the course of my analysis of the social constructs and/or social structures both participants were exposed to, I uncovered that both participants were highly influenced by these social constructs and/or social structures such as educational systems and the media. These social constructs/social structures impacted both participants differently and the influences exerted on both participants manifested themselves in different ways as well. These manifestations prompted the development of views about how the social context operates in this country which impacts issues of power, privilege, and oppression.

Analysis of the data also revealed there were political implications and/or influences related to teaching for social justice. One teacher describes his frustration with No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and how it was inhibitive regarding educating students in environments that had low economic bases. Also, the same teacher indicated how NCLB impacted testing, promotion, certification, graduation, or denial/approval of services and opportunities and how this was often a catalyst for leaving children behind rather than leaving no child behind.

Analysis also revealed how one teacher felt obstacles such as social constructs/social structures produced outcomes such as dogmatism, racism, homophobia, and sexism among his students. Both teachers expressed how difficult it was to combat issues of power, privilege, and oppression when dealing with students who brought these obstacles and outcomes to the classroom.

Analysis also revealed that the hidden curriculum of the schools was very influential with regards to issues of power, privilege, and oppression. One teacher was able to provide voices for the Other (Kumashiro, 2002) in the overt curriculum which worked to combat the teachings of the hidden curriculum (Sleeter, 1993). However, the other teacher was unable to combat the hidden curriculum because of a lack of know how.

This analysis phase brought me to the realization that teaching for social justice in this study was influenced for both teachers by many factors connected to power, privilege, oppression—dominant cultural factors. These factors caused each teacher to teach for social justice to different degrees based on their interpretation of the world around them and their interpretation and understanding of teaching for social justice. Out

of this I developed a continuum of teaching for social justice. This continuum enabled me to locate each teacher in relation to the degree at which teaching for social justice was conducted. This continuum encompasses not teaching for social justice at the left and teaching for social justice at the right. In between the left point and the right point is the degree to which teaching for social justice is manifested by each teacher.

Interpretation of Qualitative Data

The interpretation process was my attempt at making sense of the teachers' experiences in their respective classrooms as these experiences connected to teaching for social justice. Schwandt suggests that the interpretation process "is an act of clarifying, explicating, or explaining the meaning of some phenomenon" (2001, p. 133). In the conclusions chapter, I interpret the hidden meaning behind the teacher's discourse which exposes the shortcomings of the teacher's attempts at teaching for social justice, as well as the aspects of teaching for social justice they did well. Other issues that I make an interpretation of, as they connect to teaching for social justice are issues of race, ethnicity, culture, sexual preference, sexual identity, religion, ability, and other such issues.

These interpretations of the teachers' attempts at teaching for social justice are compared to Kumashiro's (2002) ideology of antioppressive education which involves four areas: education for the Other, education about the Other, education that is critical of privileging and Othering, and education that changes students and society (Kumashiro, 2002). Each teacher is able to teach (or not teach) for social justice to different degrees

depending on the teacher, the context, the dynamics and complexity of the issues (race, ethnicity, culture, sexual preference, and other such issues) being addressed in the classroom.

Chapter Four

A Teacher's Perspective on Teaching for Social Justice:

Jim's Story

First I live in a small town in north central PA. We are surrounded by small towns. We are very blue collar as they [the] major industry here is powdered metal plants. We are predominantly white lower middleclass people .I have encountered several instances at different schools where the student draw Nazi symbols on their books and on the chalkboards. I have also encountered students who use racial slurs and stereotypes against African Americans. This occurred in the larger school where I taught to the PSSA students. The Nazi symbols were at several different schools that I substituted at. (Email Dialogue Exchange IV, Jim)

Jim's way of viewing the world has been strongly influenced by his upbringing; an upbringing of living in a small rural community. His interactions with people of color, or people who are not considered white, have been very limited not only in his upbringing but also in his educational experiences both as a student and as teacher of language and literacy. Jim seems to be content with, as well as entrenched in how he views his world concerning issues related to teaching for social justice.

Jim and I had discourse on issues connected with teaching for social justice. At times, the defense of his positions concerning people of color seemed to verge on prejudice and bigotry. He often made references to "Others" in terms that sometimes screamed "Whites have certain privileges that Others do not or should not" and at other times whispered with reservation "I want to promote social justice in my classroom but do not know how".

In a multitude of ways, in this chapter, I explore teaching for social justice through Jim. I look at teaching stance as a way of understanding Jim's foundation as to how he teaches, the beliefs and ideals he brings to the classroom, and how his family background and upbringing has influenced his teaching stance. I also provide an exploration of the contextual influences which help determine Jim's self-admitted approach to teaching for social justice and how these contextual influences control Jim's approach to teach for social justice.

This chapter also analyzes Jim's classroom experiences in order to glimpse a view of the dynamics associated with teacher and student and how the racial, sexual, and cultural backgrounds of students and teacher are integral in how issues associated with privilege and oppression unfold. These classroom encounters then give way to inquiry into how Jim's undergraduate work, specifically, a course rooted in critical-consciousness raising experiences situated to promote social justice, influenced his strategies, thinking, and conceptualization to teach for social justice.

At the end of this chapter I analyze Jim's experiences as they illustrate connections between teaching for social justice and his personal experiences in life. This analysis seems to create an understanding of why Jim approaches teaching for social justice in the manner that he does. The illustrations of Jim's life events connect, allowing an understanding of his approach and conceptualization of teaching traditionally marginalized students and what how Jim interprets "Other".

Lastly, I connect issues of power, privilege, and oppression, along with social constructs to Jim's approach to teaching for social justice. The connections and the

threads between Jim's experiences are what provides meaning allowing interpretation of Jim's teaching for social justice.

Sociocultural Issues Connected to Teaching for Social Justice

Jim identifies himself as a Euro-American/White male between the ages of 25 and 33. He is heterosexual and classifies himself socio-economically as poor-working. Jim is a language and literacy teacher in a public school district situated in a farming community where almost 100 percent of students are white. Jim's teaching stance is interesting in that it is very personalized and is guided by personal experience and yet has built-in rules and policies that are rigid. Jim describes his teaching stance in the following way:

To me a teaching stance is the position that I take regarding different issues within the classroom. It can be a general, overall stance that encompasses everything that I believe in a general classroom setting regardless of the specifics. It includes my attitudes on a variety of subjects including the best methods of teaching, how to handle classroom management, classroom rules, and any philosophies I might have. I did encounter some problems when I dealt with unmotivated students. I found that some of my stances did not work and needed to be rethought. (Email Dialogue Exchange I, Jim)

Jim and I began our journey into teaching for social justice by exploring teaching stance expecting this process would start to peel back the layering and complexity of teaching for social justice. In addition, I wanted to explore what teaching stance meant to Jim, with the hope that I would uncover the dynamics of what Jim valued in terms of his vision of teaching students.

Jim painted a portrait of a teaching stance which encompassed his classroom

behavior as it connected to everything he believes in: attitudes on a variety of subjects, best methods of teaching, classroom management, and classroom rules. Jim also identifies the many factors that he accounts for when contemplating his teaching stance, such as the position that he takes regarding different issues within the classroom, his overall stance that encompasses everything he believes in a general classroom setting and his attitudes on a variety of subjects including the best methods of teaching, how to handle classroom management, classroom rules (Email Dialogue Exchange I, Neil).

All of these factors Jim mentions regarding teaching stance potentially impact his influence on his students (Sleeter, 1993) and his teaching for social justice. If this is the case, it stands to reason that a teacher has the potential to be very influential regarding all aspects of a student's life. Jim alludes to this connection when he states, "It includes my attitudes on a variety of subjects including the best methods of teaching, how to handle classroom management, classroom rules, and any philosophies I might have" (Email Dialogue Exchange I, Neil). The significance of Jim's use of the word 'my' suggests that his perspective(s) regarding his 'philosophies' will be reflected in his teaching. Fried (1995) supports this contention by suggesting teaching stance can be thought of as "a philosophy, an attitude, a bearing, a way of encountering students based on a set of core values about kids and their learning potential" (p. 139).

These core values will be centered on Jim's view of the world; centered on his vision of how "things" are in the world. Christine Sleeter strengthens this position by suggesting, "teachers bring to the profession perspectives about what race means, which they construct mainly on the basis of their life experiences and vested interests" (p. 157). Thus, since Jim's teaching stance is a compilation of his experiences which have shaped

his vision of the world it is easy to understand how his teaching stance is connected to teaching for social justice. Therefore, if teaching stance “combines the beliefs about children that you consciously try to adhere to and the qualities of feelings you communicate through words, gestures, and actions” (p.168) there is no question that teaching stance impacts teaching for social justice.

Jim’s ideology and approach to teaching for social justice on the outside seems to be reflective of many educational researchers’ visions of teaching for social justice. He mentions qualities such as ‘equality in the classroom’ and not allowing oppression in its many ugly forms to manifest itself in his classroom. However, Jim emphasizes his difficulties with implementing his strategies to teaching for social justice in the classroom when he mentions the geographical area he teaches.

I am somewhat familiar with social justice. To me it means teaching for equality in a classroom. No beliefs or attitudes are suppressed or belittled at the expense of something else. I do try and teach for social justice, but given the area that I live and teach in, this is very difficult as there are some deep rooted prejudices here that are tough to overcome. (Email Dialogue Exchange II, Jim)

Jim’s response suggests that he has a concept of what many educational researchers, educational theorists, and educational experts describe as teaching for social justice. For example, according to Maxine Greene (1998), “Teaching for social justice, we must remember, is teaching what we believe ought to be—not merely where moral frameworks are concerned, but in material arrangements for people in all spheres of society” (p. xxix). Jim’s statement, “To me it means teaching for equality in a classroom. No beliefs or attitudes are suppressed or belittled at the expense of something else” (Email Dialogue Exchange II, Jim) reflects Greene’s (1998) idea of that teaching what we feel is the way

students ought to act and/or behave. Jim's call for 'equality' is thus reflective of his interpretation of equality.

A dynamic to keep in mind when looking at the connections between teaching for social justice and teaching stance is how Jim implements his approach to teaching for social justice. This is relative to his interpretation of concepts of equality, fair, just, democratic, and equity. In addition, these concepts need to be interpreted when they are embedded in context of family background, sociocultural conditions, current experiences, career decisions, and life planning (Jones & McEwen, 2000). Jim alludes to these when he mentions, "I do try and teach for social justice, but given the area that I live and teach in, this is very difficult as there are some deep rooted prejudices here that are tough to overcome" (Email Dialogue Exchange II, Neil).

Jim's ability to teach for social justice is impacted by a multitude of variables, his and his students, which is evidenced above. These experiences have helped script how Jim and his students envision issues of race, class, gender, sexual preference, sexual identity, and ability, which at this point would be difficult to change. According to Cole and Knowles (1993) and Kagan (1992), transformation of people's ideas and beliefs about these issues is difficult and people typically retain their prior beliefs and understandings of teaching and educational practices.

Contextual Influences

Jim is influenced by many variables that impact how he teaches, his expectations for and of students, past educational experiences as a student, students' opinions of him, student race, as well as PSSA scores, etc.

My positions have developed as I grew up and as I entered my education to become a teacher. I tried to remember back to my school days and to remember what I liked, did not like, what worked for me and what made me zone out in class. I use popular culture as a way to keep "identifiable" with the students and I tried out my ideas during student teaching. Also during my student teaching, I had the students in my classes fill out questionnaires with what they thought I was good at, bad at and what they liked and disliked. I used that info for whatever I did next. It is a constant process of trial and error with each new job I take. My experiences are somewhat broad in that I have taught in a small school and a larger school and this allowed me to try out ideas with different demographics although I have not had much experience with anyone who was not white. As for a very specific example: I taught *The Odyssey* in my student teaching and I tried a variety of activities. I found that one class needed constant supervision and monitoring to be kept on task. For a different class, they could be chatting, but they always came up with outstanding presentations. This shaped my stance on how much I need to enforce talking during group work. Some classes are disciplined enough to engage in small talk and still do their work. Some can't. This led me to my style of different rules for different classes and helped me see that what works for one class might not work for another. Another experience I had came in my first "real" job teaching English to students with low PSSA scores. I found that they did not respond to the same motivational techniques I used with honor students in student teaching. I needed to find new ways to get through to them. I needed to constantly quiz them or they would not pay attention. This was something I never had to do in student teaching and shaped my stances on assessment. Some need more to stay on task. (Email Dialogue Exchange III, Jim)

Jim's statement suggests that what has created his position on teaching for social justice was created on, as well as teaching stance is his social process of constructing knowledge. The knowledge construction process and the idea that because our "subject is defined by its place among various social positions" (Nealon & Searls Giroux, 2003, p. 37) people are influenced and create their worldview by what they perceive as being 'real'. For example, people construct their ways of thinking and viewing the world by what they come in contact with which is how cultural institutions such as schools shape students, and eventually society's worldviews.

Jim alludes to the influence of schools on his way of thinking about the world both as a student (K-12) and as a preservice teacher when he mentions "My positions

have developed as I grew up and as I entered my education to become a teacher. I tried to remember back to my school days and to remember what I liked, did not like, what worked for me and what made me zone out in class” (Email Dialogue Exchange III, Jim). His contact with these social institutions suggests that he has been influenced by his educational experiences and thus his teaching for social justice has been influenced by these social institutions as well.

Jim also states, “My experiences are somewhat broad in that I have taught in a small school and a larger school and this allowed me to try out ideas with different demographics although I have not had much experience with anyone who was not white” (Email Dialogue Exchange III, Jim). This statement is powerful and dynamic with regard to how Jim potentially views identity dimensions such as race, ethnicity, culture, sexual identity, sexual preference, religion, and socio-economic class. Christine E. Sleeter supports this contention by suggesting “that teachers bring to the profession perspectives about what race [ethnicity, culture, sexual identity, sexual preference, religion, socio-economic class, etc.], means, which they construct mainly on the basis of their life experiences and vested interests” (1993, p. 157).

In addition, Jim’s experiences, because they have been limited to classrooms and schools with predominately white students (and probably white teachers), may suggest that Jim has complicity and has tacitly generated an unconscious and unquestioned ideology of how society is structured. Sleeter suggests the aforementioned by stating that, “Spending most of their [whites] time with other white people, whites do not see much of the realities of the lives of Americans of color nor encounter their viewpoints in any

depth” (1993, 168). These experiences have possibly generated how Jim views his world regarding education and the mechanisms related to educational life.

Classroom Experiences

Since Jim mentions his lack of experience with students of color, I wanted to investigate the layering underlying Jim’s thoughts, perspectives, points-of-view and the manifestation of each in connection with teaching for social justice. Jim mentioned that teaching for social justice is difficult because of the area he lives and teaches and that there are deep-rooted prejudices in his community, educational system, and even in his classroom.

First I live in a small town in north central PA. We are surrounded by small towns. We are very blue collar as the major industry here is powdered metal plants. We are predominantly white lower middle class people. I have encountered several instances at different schools where the students draw Nazi symbols on their books and on the chalkboards. I have also encountered students who use racial slurs and stereotypes against African Americans. This occurred in the larger school where I taught to the PSSA students. The Nazi symbols were at several different schools that I substituted at. (Email Dialogue Exchange IV, Jim)

Jim’s response reveals several sociocultural dynamics that seem to connect with teaching for social justice, or a lack thereof, and what has potentially influenced Jim’s perspective on social reality.

The first dynamic is geographic location. Jim states that “I live in a small town in north central PA. We are surrounded by small towns. We are very blue collar as the major industry here is powdered metal plants” (Email Dialogue Exchange IV, Jim). It appears, from my own experiences that generally, people who live in small, rural, blue collar and predominantly white (mono-cultural) towns seem to have attitudes which are

prejudice and racist, generally speaking. Growing up in a similar geographic location as Jim, I recall Nazi symbols on the book covers of fellow students in high school. I am not sure if the students completely understood what the symbols represented but none-the-less they were present. I also heard language and dialogue that was derogatory, discriminatory, and biased towards people in my school who were not white. However, according to Julie A. Cothorn (2005), the geographic area in which people are raised has nothing to do with the degree in which people are prejudiced. Cothorn (2005) also states the, “It does not make any difference whether the person was raised in a small, mid-sized or large community, nor does it make any difference whether each [person] currently live[s] in a small, mid-sized or large community. This seems to suggest that geographic location may not be a powerful influence on how Jim has developed his world view.

Another dynamic, or lack thereof, connected to teaching for social justice and what has potentially influenced Jim’s perspective on social reality is socio-economic class. Jim states that “We are predominantly white lower middle class people” (Email Dialogue Exchange IV, Jim). In this case there is a potential connection between socio-economic class and education and teaching for social justice. According to Kincheloe and Steinberg (1997), socio-economic class, as it intersects with other axes of power such as race shapes our consciousness. In other words, because social institutions (schools) have such an enormous impact on our knowledge-construction process, young people, and in this case, young, “white lower middle class people” (Email Dialogue Exchange IV, Jim), have been influenced by hegemonic, racist institutionalized ideologies. Kincheloe and Steinberg connect to this process of socio-economic (class) control and complicit covert promotion of white prejudice and racism by suggesting,

Such a *process* [italics added] involves the *processes* [italics added] by which ideological inscriptions are imprinted on subjectivity, the ways desire is mobilized by power forces for hegemonic outcomes, the means by which discursive powers, shape thinking and behaviour through both the presences and absences of different words and concepts, and the methods by which individuals assert their agency and self-direction in relation to such power plays. (p. 25)

The second part of the socio-economic education dynamic and its connection to teaching or lack of teaching for social justice and prejudice and racism, is reflected in Cothorn's (2005) work regarding how people develop prejudice and racism. The students Jim has referred to are high school students. Being high school students obviously means they have not, yet, earned their high school degree. Cothorn (2005) links education to prejudice and racism by stating that, "the higher the education that a person has, the more knowledgeable they become of other cultures, therefore resulting in less prejudice" (2005, p. 3). A possible explanation for Jim's students' prejudiced and racist language, according to Cothorn (2005), is that Jim's students have acquired, relatively speaking, a small amount of education to that point in their lives.

Additionally, Jim may not feel it is his responsibility to trouble his students with type of oppression even though he states:

To me it [teaching for social justice] means teaching for equality in a classroom. No beliefs or attitudes are suppressed or belittled at the expense of something else. I do try and teach for social justice, but given the area that I live and teach in, this is very difficult as there are some deep rooted prejudices here that are tough to overcome. (Email Dialogue Exchange I, Jim)

Kumashiro, in interviewing preservice teachers, alludes to this when he states, “Many of my students [preservice teachers] acknowledged and condemned the ways schools perpetuate various forms of oppression, but asserted that, as teachers, their jobs will be to teach academics, not disrupt oppression” (2002, p. 2). It seems Jim, as well, is thinking along with the students Kumashiro interviewed. This obviously is not in line with what Greene (1998) calls teaching for social justice.

A Critical Consciousness-Raising Course

Jim’s feels there was value in his undergraduate teaching course that was rooted in critical consciousness-raising for the promotion of social justice. It prompted Jim to think more divergently concerning issues related to teaching for social justice. However, Jim also reveals some of his potential biases.

There is a connection in that some of the things brought up in the course I never thought of before because they just were not issues where I grew up. We never had to worry about how what we said might offend someone because either there were none to offend or we knew enough about each to know that we were just being idiots and not serious. However, now I try to watch what I say as to not exclude anyone. I try to discourage the racial remarks and other offensive acts. I try to use what I learned in the course to get students to think about life beyond the small town and how damaging the misconceptions can be. Where I once might have taught a folktale unit on the simple concepts of what goes into making one, we now talk about gender issues, issues of beauty, intelligence and equality. (Email Dialogue Exchange V, Jim)

Jim suggests that his undergraduate course which focused on critical-consciousness raising experiences assisted him in exploring ideas regarding teaching for social justice that he did not consider before taking the course. Jim’s statement, “There is a connection in that some of the things brought up in the course I never thought of before because they just were not issues where I grew up” (Email Dialogue Exchange V, Jim), suggests that

because he was raised in a predominately white, rural, small, low-middle class town he did not see his oppressive behavior as cultural. Kumashiro (2002) suggests that, it is our “identities and cultures that situate oppression” (p. 77). Also having been raised in a predominately white, rural, small, low-middle class town, I can recall countless times when oppressive, racist, prejudiced comments were made about people of color. It was common place, not out of the ordinary, and it was part of the cultural fabric that made up the community.

More importantly, Kumashiro suggests that we as researchers, teacher educators, teachers, and students examine “different ways of making sense of or “reading” the multiple oppressions that play out in everyday life” (2002, p. 77). Because this oppressive behavior seems to be cultural it appears to be imbedded in the habits, rituals, and behaviors of certain types of demographics such as mono-cultural, less educated geographic locations (Cothorn, 2005).

Jim’s comments further illustrate his cultural position: “We never had to worry about how what we said might offend someone because either there were none to offend or we knew enough about each to know that we were just being idiots and not serious” (Email Dialogue Exchange V, Jim). This represents a line discourse which is unconscious, complicit, culturally cognitive superiority, privilege, and Othering. Jim does not realize that his discourse, even within his own group, is perpetuating dominant culture’s hegemonic ways.

Kumashiro identifies this social behavior as “structural/ideological oppression: racism that privileges Whiteness and “Otherizes”” (2002, p. 81). Jim does not seem to realize that his discourse may have far-reaching implications because of his “cultural

insensitivity and individual prejudice, but also from the social structures and competing ideologies that help to define normalcy in society” (Kumashiro, 2002, p. 81). Jim’s discourse is evidence of dominant culture’s influence on how he views the world. In addition, Powell (1997) and Wade (2000) suggest that many teachers are predisposed to adhere to discourses of potential which privilege those of dominant culture and discourses of deficit that deny opportunities for Others.

Now that Jim is a teacher there is a possibility that this behavior, though ‘not serious’, but socially constructed, has far-reaching social implications. If Jim is trying to “teach for social justice, but given the area that [he] live[s] and teach[s] in, this is very difficult as there are some deep rooted prejudices here that are tough to overcome” (Email Dialogue Exchange V, Jim) this may be a concern because “teachers bring to the profession perspectives about what race means, which they construct mainly on the basis of their life experiences and vested interests” (Sleeter, (1993, p. 157). We, as people, individuals, are not that easily changed with regard to prior beliefs. This has been illustrated by a multitude of educational researchers and educational theorists (Bullock, 2004; Lawrence, 1997; Lawrence & Bunche, 1996; Lawrence & Tatum, 1997; Tatum, 1994).

Another complex dynamic for many white teachers who teach for social justice is understanding how to work against power, privilege, and oppression without reinforcing the status quo. Kumashiro discusses this contention when he states, “The norm or status quo, which manifests in the traditional operation of schools, for instance, or in traditional pedagogies, is what is oppressive. Changing oppression, then, requires constantly working against this norm” (2002, p. 11). Jim points to this dynamic when he states:

However, now I try to watch what I say as to not exclude anyone. I try to discourage the racial remarks and other offensive acts. I try to use what I learned in the course to get students to think about life beyond the small town and how damaging the misconceptions can be. Where I once might have taught a folktale unit on the simple concepts of what goes into making one, we now talk about gender issues, issues of beauty, intelligence and equality. (Email Dialogue Exchange V, Jim)

Jim is consciously attempting to teach for social justice but may not understand the inter-workings of what manifests privilege, power, and oppression. How Jim talks “about gender issues, issues of beauty, intelligence and equality” (Email Dialogue Exchange V, Jim) in his classrooms, is a step in the right direction. However, Jim needs to address these issues as well as the issues of race, class, ethnicity, sexual preference, and sexual identity in such a way that creates an environment of critical consciousness working against the status quo and towards a climate of antioppressive education and teaching for social justice. This antioppressive environment is built on understanding that “oppression is a dynamic in which certain ways of being (or, having certain identifications) are privileged in society while others are marginalized” (Kumashiro, 2002, p. 31). If Jim does not recognize or acknowledge this dynamic, he, again, may be reinforcing the status quo (privileging some while marginalizing Others) rather than teaching for social justice.

At this point I wanted to search Jim’s way of thinking about his undergraduate secondary education course, rooted in social justice. I wondered if this course helped him in preparing to teach or think about how to teach students who are different from him in terms of sexual preference, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, culture, religion, and socio-economic class?

I would not say that it taught me how to deal with problems I have personally. What it did do was make me aware of the things that I do that could be construed as racist. It made me think about the things I say and do that I never thought were

wrong before. I would have liked a little more content on how to deal with it. (Email Dialogue Exchange VIII, Jim)

Jim's explanation about the course's impact on him starts to peel back the layering of his teaching reality and the connection it has to teaching for social justice, Kumashiro's ideology of antioppressive education, as well as what Kincheloe and Steinberg call pedagogy of whiteness. Jim suggests that the course revealed new ways of thinking about the world around him in terms of power, privilege, and oppression. According to Bullock (2005) most of the students who took the course were moved to some degree to look at the issues of race, ethnicity, socio-economic class, sexual identity, and sexual preference in new ways that connected to power, privilege, and oppression.

Jim, in acknowledging his lack of awareness about his behavior and its potential manifestation of racism and prejudice, is actually acknowledging (probably unconsciously) his own power and privilege regarding his own whiteness. But more importantly, Jim needs to learn about and understand "how and why his or her political opinions, socio-economic class, role, religious beliefs, gender role and racial self-image are shaped by dominant perspectives" (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1997, p. 23). He needs to recognize what has created his world-view or perspectives about the world that has taught him to unconsciously and unknowingly to commit social injustices by way of cognition and discourse. According to Sleeter, in order for Jim to create a critical consciousness about his actions and behavior he needs to

learn about racism, as well as about the historic experiences and creative works of American minority groups and about the wide range of implications for schooling. This means beginning their reeducation by forcing them to examine white privilege and planning long-term learning experiences that anticipate the various

strategies white people use to avoid and reinterpret education about race. For example, structured immersion experiences in which a white person spends at least a month in a minority community, coupled with instruction about racism and the history and culture of that group, as well as development of some emotional bonding with members of the group, can propel serious reexamination of his or her perspective. The aim of education for white teachers would be to encourage them to work collectively with local communities of color and to construct an ongoing process of learning from and connecting with people of color. (1993, p. 169)

Obviously this is a large undertaking and as Sleeter (1993) acknowledges, her own process of transformation took several years. However, it is encouraging to see that Jim is having what could be interpreted as beginning stages of, his metamorphosis to a transformative scholar (Banks, 1995).

Life Events

Jim's approach to teaching for social justice is indicative of what Sleeter (1993) calls a 'color blind' approach. Jim advocates teaching for social justice in a way that treats students as equals. This is an approach that does not consider race, ethnicity, gender, sexual preference, sexual identity, or class. However, his reluctance to actually to teach for social justice shines through when he expresses his concern about people who want to retain their ethnic backgrounds.

I try not to take any of those things into account as they should not matter in terms of what the student can or cannot do. I guess you could say that I try and encourage the students to ignore that too although it is difficult when we are

supposed to treat everyone as an equal yet some ethnic backgrounds want to retain that identity and it is difficult to do that and treat them equal at the same time. However, as a rule, I try to leave my own personal opinions on those things at home and not in the classroom unless I see racism or bigotry going on. Email (Dialogue Exchange VI, Jim)

Jim's comment, "I try not to take any of those things [race, ethnicity, gender, etc.] into account as they should not matter in terms of what the student can or cannot do" (Email Dialogue Exchange VI) may suggest that Jim's failure to acknowledge student differences or his failure to acknowledge differences equates to "Othering" (Kumashiro, 2002). In other words, Jim's approach to teaching for social justice equates to marginalizing people who do not fit into neatly organized cultural assumptions of what is normal. Because Jim's model of 'normal' is a reflection of himself and his students, he does not understand how not recognizing student differences privileges the dominant group and ultimately oppresses the non-dominant group(s) (Kumashiro, 2002).

Most teachers like Jim do not understand how cultural institutions such as schools are structured in terms of power, privilege, and oppression and this lack of understanding does not allow teachers like Jim to analyze how these social structures work to reinforce power and privilege and oppression (Kumashiro, 2002). Jim also does not understand that even if he only teaches white students, to work against power, privilege, and oppression he needs to address the social structures that push some people up and push other people down (Banks, 1995; Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1997; Kumashiro, 2002).

Jim's statement, "I guess you could say that I try and encourage the students to ignore that too although it is difficult when we are supposed to treat everyone as an equal yet some ethnic backgrounds want to retain that identity and it is difficult to do that and

treat them equal at the same time” (Email Dialogue Exchange VI) is further evidence of his lack of understanding of the sociocultural mechanisms which privilege and oppress (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1997; Kumashiro, 2002; Sleeter, 1993). Again, according to McIntosh (1988), by ignoring the differences means to be like us (whites). Peggy McIntosh suggests this when she points out, “whites are taught to think of their lives as morally neutral, normative, and average, and also ideal, so that when we work to benefit others, this is seen as work which will allow “them” to be more like “us”” (McIntosh, 1988, p. 3). It appears that Jim suggests that retaining his identity is ok but people with “Other” identities should not be able to retain theirs in this country.

Jim’s idea of, “treat them equal” (Email Dialogue Exchange VI), means equal to what white cultural standards equate to with regard to cultural values, morals, and ethics. Jim’s statement reflects the acculturation process “in which cultural patterns of the dominant group are adopted by the new or oppressed group” (Gollnick & Chinn, 2002, p. 14). Also, Jim’s statement, which may subconsciously reflect his views concerning these issues, may mirror several of Kincheloe and Steinberg’s (1997) categories of multicultural education. The first category Kincheloe and Steinberg refer to is conservative multiculturalism/monoculturalism. This ideology represents a view

that non-whites and the poor are inferior to individuals from the white middle or upper-middle class. The expressions of this inferiority are rarely stated overtly in public, but surface in proclamations about family values and what constitutes excellence. In this context family values and excellence become racial and class codes for justifying the oppression of the marginalized: because they allegedly

don't have family values many non-whites and poor people fail to succeed; an excellent school is one that is often predominantly white and middle class. Thus, a central feature of monoculturalism or a conservative multiculturalism involves the effort to assimilate everyone who is capable of assimilation to a white, middle-class standard. (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1997, pp. 3-4)

Jims appears to be advocating a conservative multiculturalism that is reflective of his disapproval of people of color retaining their ethnic backgrounds (though it is appropriate for him to retain his own ethnic background) and his insinuation that these people should assimilated into a white culture.

The second category Kincheloe and Steinberg (1997) refer to is liberal multiculturalism. This ideology represents a view

that individuals from diverse race, class and gender groups share a natural equality and a common humanity. An intellectual sameness exists that allows different people to compete equally for resources in a capitalist economy (McLaren 1994b). Liberal multiculturalists often express this concern with sameness by way of the cliché: we are 'dedicated to working toward a world where there is only one race – the human race' (Franklin and Heath 1992: 2-3). This concern with sameness has led liberal multiculturalists to embrace the axiom of colour blindness in the pursuit of their race-related educational and socio-political goals. (p. 10)

Jim's statements also could suggest that he would be in favor of a liberal multiculturalism; a multiculturalism that works towards a natural equality. Again, when Jim refers his treatment of Others, he is possibly suggesting the idea of one race, yet in order to have one race, Others have to be like "us" – dominant culture. This does not solve the problem of privileging; certain people will still be afforded the rights and privileges because of their group affiliation (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1997).

The third category Kincheloe and Steinberg (1997) refer to is pluralist multiculturalism. This ideology represents a view that typically links race, gender, language, culture, disability and to a lesser degree sexual preference in the larger effort to celebrate human diversity and equal opportunity. In this context there is less emphasis on assimilation – although the relationship between pluralism and assimilation is ever *fuzzy* – as race and gender differences are explicitly recognized. (p. 15)

Jim makes reference to these differences when he refers to "gender issues, issues of beauty, intelligence and equality" (Email Dialogue Exchange VI), as well as, "to treat everyone as an equal yet some ethnic backgrounds want to retain that identity and it is difficult to do that and treat them equal at the same time" (Email Dialogue Exchange VI). Jim's way of thinking about teaching for social justice "consistently makes European ways of seeing for universal, neutral and objective methods of exploring reality" (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1997). Jim's reality is consistently making sense of the world through Eurocentric lenses which does not allow him to recognize his privilege.

Also, Kincheloe and Steinberg (1997), in the following statement, add to their explanation of pluralist multiculturalism which also connects to the dynamics of teaching for social justice and Jim's statements:

The curriculum emerging from this position [pluralist multiculturalism] insists that in addition to teaching students that they should not hold prejudices against others, diversity education means learning about the knowledge, values, beliefs and patterns of behaviour that demarcate various groups. In the pluralist curriculum students read literature written by women, Jews, blacks, Latinos and indigenous peoples in addition to the traditional cannon. Students also learn that social unfairness exists, as women, for example, who don't follow socially dominant sex roles are deemed to be too aggressive or man-like, or men who don't adopt macho ways of being are seen as wimps. (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1997, pp. 15-16)

Jim's account that "I guess you could say that I try and encourage the students to ignore that too [referring to differences] although it is difficult when we are supposed to treat everyone as an equal" (Email Dialogue Exchange VI). Jim appears to be "teaching [his] students that they should not hold prejudices against others" (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1997, p. 15) just because they are different, but Jim's perspective about diversity appears to come through when he states,

I guess you could say that I try and encourage the students to ignore that too although it is difficult when we are supposed to treat everyone as an equal yet

some ethnic backgrounds want to retain that identity and it is difficult to do that and treat them equal at the same time. (Email Dialogue Exchange VI)

Jim's inflection seems to imply that he does not agree with "Others" trying to retain their differences. The last part of Jim's statement is somewhat ironic because I think these issues are personal. As Sleeter suggests, "teachers bring to the profession perspectives about what race [ethnicity, culture, religion, sexual identity, sexual preference, ability/disability] means, which they construct mainly on the basis of their life experiences and vested interests" (1993, p. 157). If this is the case it appears that it might be rather difficult to create teachers who are advocates for social justice who hold typologies of multiculturalism that privilege and oppress rather than create a critical awareness of the structures that privilege and oppress.

Teaching Marginalized Students

Jim has not had much experience with teaching a diverse student population. Most of the students he has had in his classrooms are like him—white. This lack of experience has fostered some doubt about his ability to teach students of color because Jim feels that he cannot 'relate' to them and 'relate' the material to them.

Socio-economic class, religion and sexual preference do not affect me. I do tend to have a bit of a reservation about teaching students of different ethnicity. It is not that I do not like them it is that I feel that I cannot relate to them or relate the material to them. (Email Dialogue Exchange VII, Jim)

Many "White teachers commonly insist that they are "color-blind": that they see children as children and do not see race [class, religion, sexual preference, ethnicity] (Rist, 1978)" (Sleeter, 1993, p. 161). It appears Jim's statement, "Socio-economic class, religion and

sexual preference do not affect me” (Email Dialogue Exchange), is reflective of Sleeter’s suggestion. In reaction to this type of oppressive pedagogy that Jim seems to be exhibiting, Sleeter (1993) asks, “What does it mean to construct an interpretation of race [class, religion, sexual preference, ethnicity] that denies it” (p. 161)?

The denying or the silencing of difference is often as powerful as verbalizing difference. When Jim chooses to ignore cultural difference beyond his own white middle-class culture he is silencing and/or marginalizing the essence of identity. Jim does not realize that the silencing, whether teaching white students or teaching students of color, privileges and advantages the dominant group while oppressing and disadvantaging the non-dominant groups. Silence is not meaningless. It often speaks volumes about our views, opinions, and beliefs.

Kumashiro (2002) addresses this silence in exploring feminist and queer perspectives concerning power, privilege, and oppression, as well as, teaching for social justice. Jim’s actions are emblematic of what Kumashiro (2002) is discussing concerning researchers; the context is the same. Kumashiro suggests,

Just as feminists have critiqued the silences in research surrounding the researchers’ emotions and personal experiences, so too have queer theorists critiqued the silences surrounding the researchers’ bodies and sexualities in research (Honeychurch, 1998). They argue that such silences mask ways that the researches’ emotions, experiences, embodied desires, and sexualities always influence the ways they read and research, and consequently, mask ways that only some of their perspectives are privileged and considered objective. In other words, by ignoring the body [socio-economic class, religion, sexual preference,

etc.] and attempting to be objective, researchers actually maintain the privileging of only certain bodies [socio-economic class, religion, sexual preference, etc.] and only certain ways of embodying desires, knowledge, identities, and so forth. (2002, p. 107)

By ignoring “Socio-economic class, religion and sexual preference” (Email Dialogue Exchange VII), as well as other cultural characteristics, Jim is maintaining the privileging of only certain “Socio-economic class[es], religion[s] and sexual preference[s]” (Email Dialogue Exchange VII), as well as race, ethnicity, etc.—the dominant culture.

Issues of Power, Privilege, and Oppression

In order to explore the very complex metamorphosis of power, privilege, and oppression in society I looked to examples from Jim to guide me in my understanding of this process. Jim’s examples allowed me to glimpse into his views prior to the course he took which was rooted in critical consciousness raising as well as after completing the course.

The problem was that I never thought about the issues before. I never thought of myself as a racist and just assumed that no one could interpret what I say and do as racist. After the class I saw that they could and I tried to stop some of the things that I had been doing. For example, I stopped using the phrase "you guys" when referring to the whole class of males and females. (Email Dialogue Exchange XIV, Jim)

This simple example exemplifies the fact Jim is starting to think about how his discourse can be powerful and meaningful in terms of creating and maintaining the privileging of men and the oppression of women.

Jim had previously mentioned that “we are supposed to treat everyone as an equal” (Email Dialogue Exchange VIV) in the classroom (referring to students of color and ethnicity). I wanted to explore what Jim conceptualized as being equal and being equal to what? I wanted to know if Jim thought there was a standard that teachers are supposed to apply to all students in terms of treatment regardless of race, religion, sexual preference, ethnicity, socio-economic class, etc.

What I mean by that is that I was always taught that everyone should be treated the same regardless of race, religion, sexual preference. In other words a person should not be looked down upon or denied their rights simply because they are of a different religion, race or sexual orientation. In the classroom that means not assuming that a black student is poor or a criminal or that an Asian student is smart. It means that everyone should be given equal opportunity and consideration. We all should look [at] these people and see a person, not a black person, a white person, a gay person. Just a person. (Email Dialogue Exchange X, Jim)

Jim is suggesting that his treatment of students who are not part of the dominant culture should be fair and just, however, when Jim states that “We all should look [at] these people and see a person, not a black person, a white person, a gay person. Just a person” (Email Dialogue Exchange, X) he once again is advocating a pedagogy of “Whiteness” (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1997). In other words, a way of interpreting the world around ‘us’ which denies those justice because they are not part of the paradigm which privileges some while at the same time oppresses “Others”—pedagogy of whiteness. According to Kincheloe and Steinberg, “[e]ven though no one at this point really knows exactly what whiteness is, most observers agree that it is ultimately involved with issues of power and power differences between white and nonwhite people” (1997, p. 207). Jim is unwittingly holding nonwhite people up to a ‘Whiteness’ standard

by suggesting that nonwhites should be seen as “Just a person” (Email Dialogue Exchange X).

Sociocultural Structures

Jim’s discourse surrounding to these issues of power, privilege, and oppression is stronger evidence that he has constructed his view of the world from a ‘Whiteness’ perspective. Jim is not able to see how his epistemological nature is contributing to the privileging of European Americans and the oppression of non-whites. Jim’s comments regarding being American strongly reinforce the Eurocentric ideals that still invade all levels of our social structures. It appears that Jim is unaware how his views about people in the United States are oppressive. It is as if he discounts his Whiteness as anything other than normal, natural, or authentic and those of color have been granted the privilege of being American but must conform to what Jim views as “plain Americans”.

Have you ever noticed that some people of minorities in this country who are not of European ancestry insist that they are not Americans, but African Americans, Asian Americans, Latinos? Yet most "white" people do not insist that they be called English Americans or French Americans or Italian Americans or German Americans or Polish Americans? Like with all scenarios here there are no absolutes, but it does seem that this is primarily the case. These people want to live in America, want all the rights we have to offer, yet they are hesitant to let themselves be referred to as plain Americans? Why not? They do not have to lose their cultural identity by letting themselves be called Americans. (Email Dialogue Exchange XI, Jim)

Jim does not realize that the photograph of dominant culture looks like him—white. He is afforded the rights and privileges of his race, his skin color, his sexuality, his ability.

Kumashiro suggests that “mainstream U. S. society often privileges Whiteness by defining White Americans as the “real” or “authentic” Americans” (2002. p. 82). This seems to be Jim’s assertion, when he states, “These people [minorities] want to live in

America, want all the rights we have to offer, yet they are hesitant to let themselves be referred to as plain Americans” (Email Dialogue Exchange XI). According to Sleeter, “Being White becomes the invisible norm for how the dominant culture measures its own civility” (McLaren, 1991, p. 244). Whites so internalize their own power and taken-for-granted superiority that they resist self-questioning” (1993, p. 167). Jim clearly feels his rights, position, and status as an European-American are the measuring stick for how all “Others” (non-whites) should be measured in terms of identity. In addition, Jim is clearly internalizing his place in American culture. He feels no need to introspectively to question his own position or how his position has been achieved in American society; he is blinded by his own hypocrisy.

Jim also mentions that he “tend[s] to have a bit of a reservation about teaching students of different ethnicity [ethnicities]” (Email Dialogue Exchange XII). I pondered how Jim, self-admittedly an activist for social justice, supposes he would conquer his reservation about teaching students of color?

I guess the best way to get over this reservation is to actually do it – Teach different minorities and learn about them and how to deal with issues important to them. I did not really feel that the course gave me any ideas. As I said in a another answer, I feel it opened me up to where my own prejudices lie, or at least my actions that make me appear to be prejudiced. We learned how society perpetuates these prejudices, but I did not get a sense that we were supposed to get anything out of it on how to fix it. I just assumed that he [the] course aims were to make us aware and that once we were aware we would take the steps to correct it. (Email Dialogue Exchange XII, Jim)

According to Bullock (2004),

First, by focusing on antioppressive teaching stances, teacher education programs need to infuse issues of social justice into the curricula. Second, teacher educators must understand issues of social justice and develop their own beliefs and

antioppressive teaching stances. They must also be able to facilitate preservice teachers' reflections and learning towards social justice praxis. Third, we must incorporate field experiences that provide spaces for preservice teachers to think about antioppressive teaching stances in relation to classroom teaching so that they may envision antioppressive teaching stances as manifested through pedagogy rooted in social justice. Finally, we must bridge preservice teachers' experiences from teacher preparation to novice teaching in order to help support and sustain their evolving antioppressive teaching stances. (p.iv)

Bullock's (2004) suggestions, based on her research, are reflective of Jim's cognitive approach to teaching for social justice. Jim has indicated that he has developed an ability to reflect on what it means to teach for social justice. However, Jim suggests that

I did not really feel that the course gave me any ideas. As I said in a another answer, I feel it opened me up to where my own prejudices lie, or at least my actions that make me appear to be prejudiced. We learned how society perpetuates these prejudices, but I did not get a sense that we were supposed to get anything out of it on how to fix it" (Email Dialogue Exchange XII).

It appears that Jim has developed, to some degree, a critical consciousness; however, he feels he does not have the teaching tools to 'fix' issues of social injustice in his classroom.

Jim's discourse reflects his views about teaching for social justice when it comes to teaching students who are different from him. Even though Jim realizes his shortcomings regarding teaching students of color, as well as understanding his own

prejudices and how society perpetuates these prejudices, he still holds oppressive views about non-whites. Kumashiro's (2002) statements are reflective of Jim's view when he states "assumptions about and the expectations for the Other—especially those held by educators—that influence how the Other is treated" (p. 33). Jim, even though he teaches mostly white low/middleclass students, is perpetuating power, privilege, and oppression by his teaching stance and his lack of teaching for social justice.

According to Kumashiro (2002), "Sometimes these dispositions are about who the Other should be, as is the case with assimilationist beliefs that students of color should conform to the mainstream [dominant] culture and become more like middle-class White Americans (L. S. Miller, 1995) (p. 33). Kumashiro's (2002) assertion is not only Jim's perspective on teaching students of color but also how he views people of color in general. This is evidenced by Jim's statement "These [people of color] people want to live in America, want all the rights *we* [italics added—dominant group] have to offer, yet they are hesitant to let themselves be referred to as plain Americans" (Email Dialogue Exchange XI). Jim does not realize that by doing so, people of color are melted down into a culture that privileges a white America and oppress a non-white America. McIntosh (1988) also supports this notion when she points out that

It seems to me that obliviousness about white advantage, like obliviousness about male advantage, is kept strongly enculturated in the United States so as to maintain the myth of meritocracy, the myth that democratic choice is equally available to all. Keeping most people unaware that freedom of confident action is there for just a small number of people props up those in power, and serves to keep power in the hands of the same groups that have most of it already. (p.5)

Jim's teaching for social justice is emblematic of this worldview regarding issues of power, privilege, oppression, and dominant culture. Jim does not appear to be able to realize or recognize his own privileges and how these privileges contribute to pushing some people up, while at the same time pushing Others down. Jim is unaware to a degree that is necessary to see how his complicit nature is perpetuating, reinforcing, and running parallel with the hegemonic social constructs that continue to pummel our so-called democratic, equal, and justice society.

Conclusion

Jim's intentions to teach for social justice seem noble, however, Jim provides more discourse than he provides action, supporting this endeavor. Jim does not teach about the Other; he does not teach for the Other; he does not teach critically of privileging and Othering, and he does not teach to change society (Kumashiro, 2002). Jim does teach in a manner which preserves the status quo, which preserves white supremacy, which preserves the Eurocentric cannon perpetuated by our educational institutions. Jim is not willing to acknowledge the rights and privileges conferred upon him because of his race, and until he recognizes the sociocultural mechanisms which give rise to power, privilege, and oppression Jim will not be able to transform his way of thinking in order to start teaching for social justice.

Chapter Five

A Teacher's Perspective on Teaching for Social Justice:

Neil's Story

One day I realized that practically all the guys in one of my classes come from gym and are usually out of breath and sweaty. I said why aren't you guys showering before coming into my room. One kid replied, cause a fag might come up behind you and.... I cut him off right there. Now this was a ninth grader and his world at this point regarding homosexuality is just about the act of sexually assaulting other people. I asked him how many people he has ever heard of being sexually assaulted by a homosexual. While he sat there processing that I asked how many heterosexual rape cases has he heard about...So at this point in this kid's life he isn't intolerant in a dangerous way like an adult, he just doesn't know what he is even talking about. (Email Dialogue Exchanges, Neil)

Neil's view of the world has been shaped by a diverse upbringing and a diverse family background. Neil has traveled to many places and has experienced cultures other than his own. He has had experiences with Peace Corps Africa; his in-laws are teachers, summer camp counselors, and activists. He grew up in a suburban area and went to school in a 'city' where the student population was very diverse.

Neil is currently teaching science in a public school district in a farming community. The majority of the students in his classroom are white, middle to lower class. Neil recognizes that many of his students exhibit prejudiced, biased, and bigoted behavior but feels because of their age (14-16) they do not understand their own reasons for their behavior.

Neil seems to recognize oppression in its many sociocultural forms and he attempts to work against it whenever possible. He is open to difference and in his words 'tolerance'. He is not afraid to stand up for "Others" when it comes to dealing with injustice in his classroom.

In this chapter I explore teaching for social justice through Neil from his vantage point of a classroom practitioner. I look at teaching stance as a way of understanding Neil's foundation for how he teaches, the beliefs and ideals he brings to the classroom, and how his family background and upbringing has influenced his teaching stance. I also provide an exploration of how Neil interprets teaching for social justice in order to relate this view to educational expertise that articulates what it means to teach for social justice.

Additionally, I explore the contextual influences Neil has been exposed to in order to determine if these elements have impacted his view of the world, thus, impacting his teaching for social justice. Neil also reveals the politics associated with teaching and how this impacts his ability to teach for social justice. I also delve into Neil's vision of the obstacles to teaching for social justice he has to deal with in his classroom as well as the outcomes he is attempting to foster from teaching for social justice.

I conclude the chapter by exploring the hidden curriculum in Neil's classroom (and school) and its link to teaching for social justice. Neil also reveals his perspective on how the critical consciousness-raising undergraduate course he took impacted his teaching for social justice. Finally I create a portrait of how Neil teaches for social justice in his classroom as well as the sociocultural structures which influence this process.

Sociocultural Issues Connected to Teaching for Social Justice

During the first part of my interviewing process, via email dialogue exchange, I wanted to explore Neil's foundation for his teaching practice. In order to do this I

initiated a dialogue that revolved around Neil's vision of what teaching stance meant to him and how he conceptualized teaching stance. In addition to exploring Neil's vision of teaching stance I hoped to gain some insight into what he valued in terms of his vision of teaching students, especially vis-à-vis teaching for social justice. Neil paints his vision of teaching stance by explaining:

It is like a teaching style, a set of personal beliefs that you bring with you into the classroom, and a perspective about pedagogy all wrapped-up in one completely weird "buzz" word. My class rules are blah blah blah.... I put more energy into evolution because it is my favorite.... I can't believe No Child Left Behind....These kids are going to act as a mature as the hypocritical adults that teach and parent them... frustrated being a liberal in a conservative town.... How can I give this kid with an IEP an adapted exam without the whole damn class knowing about it...no safety goggles, no lab. (Email Dialogue Exchange I, Neil)

Many factors influence Neil's teaching in the classroom: 'personal beliefs', 'perspective about pedagogy', 'class rules', issues related to the curriculum such as 'evolution' and 'No Child Left Behind', adults impact on the students, along with political issues such as being a liberal versus being a conservative, etc.

All these elements potentially impact Neil's influence on his students and his teaching for social justice. This is because teachers' teaching stances are reflective of what they are covertly and overtly doing in the classroom with their students. According to Sergiovanni and Starratt (2002), "A teacher's platform [stance] is rarely explicit. Neither is it static or one-dimensional. It is derived from life experiences, from formal education, and especially from trial-and-error experience in classrooms" (p. 71).

In understanding the make-up of Neil's teaching stance, I am able further to explore issues related to teaching for social justice that are more complex and layered and are part of his past. According to Fried (1995), teaching stance is "a philosophy, an attitude, a bearing, a way of encountering students based on a set of core values about

kids and their learning potential” (p. 139). Because teaching stance is a product of a teachers’ attitudes and ways of thinking about the world it is also possible to connect teaching stance to issues related to hegemony and oppression (Powell, 1997; Wade, 2000) as well as issues connected to teaching for social justice (Greene, 1998). In using my conceptual framework to analyze Neil’s teaching stances I am able to identify how his socially constructed knowledge (Banks, 1995; Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1997) influences his view of the world—his reality. This view of the world often is connected to ways of thinking which promotes perspectives related to the perpetuation of dominant culture such as “colorblindness” (Sleeter, 1993) and other ideals that may oppress (or liberate).

In having a better understanding of Neil’s vision of his teaching stance and its unique composition I then wanted to explore Neil’s concept or vision of teaching for social justice. This dialogue was intended to start a journey into Neil’s life as a teacher and to look for threads which would help me make sense of the complex nature of teaching for social justice. Neil first stated that “I suppose. You may have to redirect me if I am off track. Some of these terms [I] recall only from being in the college of education don’t make their way into the everyday conversation in a school” (Email Dialogue Exchange I).

I thought this was an interesting response and was reflective of the possible disconnect between teacher education programs and many teachers’ realities. Often the bridge between teacher education programs and the practice of teaching in the field is nonexistent which does not foster a union that would support new teachers in their quest to infuse teaching for social justice into their curriculum (Bullock, 2004).

Interpreting Teaching for Social Justice

To further this inquiry into Neil's vision of teaching for social justice, I simply asked him what does teaching for social justice mean to him? My intent was to substantiate a context in order to make additional inquiries into classroom issues such as racism, sexism, and classism. Once I did this, I hoped that multiple threads would be exposed leading me in a multitude of directions. Neil described his vision of teaching for social justice as "not just trying to educate someone in my classroom about some biological concept but expanding it to fit the bigger picture- educating so we may all live in a society that is more fair and just" (Email Dialogue Exchange I). His response suggested that he has a concept of what many educational researchers, educational theorists, and educational experts espouse as teaching for social justice. For example, according to Maxine Greene (1998),

Teaching for social justice, we must remember, is teaching what we believe ought to be—not merely where moral frameworks are concerned, but in material arrangements for people in all spheres of society. Moreover, teaching for social justice is teaching for the sake of arousing the kinds of vivid, reflective, experiential responses that might move students to come together in serious efforts to understand what social justice actually means and what it might demand (pp. xxix-xxx).

Greene (1998) and Neil both consider teaching for social justice to consist of some degree of teaching in a manner that is 'just' and concerned with this justness as it

relates to society at large. At this point Neil's vision of teaching for social justice is a snap-shoot of the tip of the iceberg. What does Neil mean by 'just' and 'fair' and 'the bigger picture'? I wanted to explore these ideas and concepts in order gain a deeper vision of how teaching for social justice played out in Neil's classroom or what teaching for social justice for Neil was only conceptualized in theory and not in practice.

Following this inquiry Neil was able to paint me a picture of how he envisioned teaching for social justice plays out in his classroom with his students.

I believe I do. A project my kids finished while in the midst of their genetics project was a one page biography on a female or minority scientist. It is quite interesting to introduce such a project and look around the room at the puzzled looks. It is a rural, white school district that I teach in. They look at me like, where is King going with this. I feel like I won my first victory. I have tied science to something that is wrong with our society (the many contributions that women and minorities have made to science without much of our society realizing some of these great discoveries). Once the students have done some research the discussions are usually awesome. (Email Dialogue Exchange II, Neil)

It is evident that Neil is looking for a vehicle to move the students thinking toward bringing about 'change'. It seems that Neil believes that if he can bring to light or make evident to the students that "something is wrong with our society (the many contributions that women and minorities have made to science without much of our society realizing some of these great discoveries)" (Email Dialogue Exchange II) he can foster a change in them. This in some way appears to be an attempt to allow the students to understand "the dynamics of oppression" (Kumashiro, 2002. p. 31) and "work against oppression by focusing on what all students—privileged and marginalized—know and should know about the Other" (Kumashiro, 2002. p. 39). Kumashiro (2002) examines this form of education as Education about the Other.

However, this approach often leads to problems that may perpetuate or reinforce stereotypes, bigotry, hatred, oppression, and hegemony. By Neil having his students do research on women and minorities in science (based on Neil's own omission of his students being predominately white and rural) he may be increasing the Otherness which schools and teachers often complicitly infuse in the curriculum. Kumashiro (2002) points out that "teaching about the Other could present a dominant narrative of the Other's experience that might be read by students as, for instance, the women's experience, or the minorities' experience. Otherness might become essentialized and remain different from the norm" (p. 42). In this case the norm is being a white farming community.

However, this does not mean Neil's approach may not be effective in promoting spaces in his classroom for moving students closer to a social justice perspective.

Kumashiro alludes to this practice by teachers and emphasizes that

[L]earning about and hearing the Other could be undertaken not to fill a gap in knowledge (as if ignorance about the Other were the only problem), but to disrupt the knowledge that is already there (since the harmful/partial knowledges that an individual already has are what need to change) (Luhmann, 1998) (p. 42).

This means "changing oppression requires disruptive knowledge, not simply more knowledge" (Kumashiro, 2002, p. 42). In this case Neil may be able to create spaces in his classroom through his research on women and minorities in science which does not add to already oppressive and dominant cognitive narratives. However, he starts to allow students to analyze preexisting narratives regarding people from whom they are different from and that are different from them in order to disrupt and trouble what they already

think they know. This process may heighten social consciousness which may create an environment which, in turn, starts to make social injustice unendurable (Freire, 1970).

In addition to the idea of disrupting knowledge in the classroom, Neil's project, if well-guided by him, may also be able to create spaces for the students to realize and/or to learn that "[d]isruptive knowledge, in other words, is not an end in itself, but a means toward the always shifting goal of learning more" (Kumashiro, 2002, p. 43). This seems paramount when teachers are battling social injustice which is often perpetuated by schools and teachers as part of the mechanisms in a social construct which privileges normalcy and oppresses Otherness.

I think this point of disruptive knowledge regarding Neil's project can be taken a step further. In looking at the critical component related to teaching for social justice, teachers can add information to the student's spaces which may allow them to recognize what shapes dominant perspectives. Often students need a frame of reference or operational information that may allow them to further understand the depth and the complexity that a science project about women and minorities may bring about. Joe Kincheloe and Shirley Steinberg (1997) bring to light the social structures (political opinion, socio-economic class, role, religious beliefs, gender role, racial self-image, culture, etc.) that are shaped by dominant social perspectives. The project should help the students examine the mechanisms by which their viewpoints have been formed. If Neil has students (white) in his classroom that may have racist viewpoints the project alone may not disrupt their knowledge but reinforce their racist ideologies. Neil needs to be able to create spaces for those students to be self-reflective and critically view the

social structures which have shaped their viewpoints (e.g., family background—a father or grandfather that was racist).

Contextual Issues

After unpacking Neil's vision of teaching for social justice and exploring a snapshot of how he goes about teaching I wanted to explore issues such as Neil's family background, education, religion, socio-economic class, etc. I thought this inquiry would explore and uncover more of Neil's vision of teaching for social justice as well as mechanisms of the processes of teaching for social justice. Since there was an obvious connection between Neil's personality/character—who Neil is—and what takes place in his classroom, I wanted to know how Neil's personal beliefs influenced his teaching for social justice.

Well, I consider myself a liberal so this shows up in my stance in subtle ways I guess. For example, when we do debates on cloning/stem cell research the kids are always curious about my views and in the end I tell them. I try to be fair during the debates and try and play devil's advocate but I am sure an adult outsider would be able to see my bias. The kids are probably also aware of my strong views against any form of intolerance just through conversation. I guess another thing that must be weird for the kids is that they are curious what Christian denomination I am. I tell them that I am not affiliated with any Christian denomination, and that I respect all religions. They ask well do you celebrate Christmas and it snowballs from there. I think it is shocking for them to meet someone who is not the same as them. During holidays I try to throw in all of the other non-Christian holidays, as a way of talking about tolerance. But at this age the kids don't really have strong views of intolerance, racism, dogmatism (like their parents might have) I just think that they don't know all of the diversity that is out there. I think there are some personal beliefs that I may tone down but I don't think anyone can totally not bring their personal baggage with them into a classroom. I am not sure what you mean by teaching praxis? (Email Dialogue Exchange III, Neil)

One of the concerns regarding teaching stance and connecting teaching stance to teaching for social justice is the idea of personal beliefs. Regarding teaching for social

justice, how do teachers determine what should be in their teaching stance? According to Sergiovanni and Starratt (2002),

Besides the technical understandings that emerge from a blend of intuition and conceptual schemata, there is a floor of beliefs, opinions, values, and attitudes that provides a foundation for practice. These beliefs, opinions, values, and attitudes make up what has been called a “platform” [stance] (p. 70).

Relatively speaking, these beliefs, opinions, values and attitudes (“ideals”) are a product of our environment, right or wrong, relatively speaking. There is no question that teachers bring to their classrooms certain perspectives regarding their students regarding race, ethnicity, culture, language, religion, socio-economic class, sexual identity, and sexual preference. These beliefs impact students as well as how teachers treat students. For example, teachers may bring, as part of their teaching stance, an ideology about teaching for social justice that would resemble the concept of being “colorblind” (Valli, 1995). This concept, according to Sleeter (1993), is often how white teachers make reference to how they see diversity in their classrooms. That is, “they see children as children and do not see race (Rist, 1978)” (Sleeter, 1993, p. 161).

Conceptual variables such as race, class, and gender, are rarely validated within a white privileged dominant cultural teaching and learning framework. Particularly problematic is that this perception can create a racial invisibility of race or “color blindness.” A dominant culture's ideology of color blindness encourages teachers to act as though race is non-recognizable when it is nearly impossible in the U.S. to do so (Crenshaw, 1998; Kousser, 1999; McLaren & Torres, 1999; Nieto, 1995; Powell, 1996; Winant, 1998). In classrooms with students of color, teacher-educator Linda Valli (1995)

found that white teacher candidates, “had to first see the color of the child in order to design a multicultural curriculum, but then they had to move beyond color sightedness to value a multicultural curriculum for everyone” (p. 125) that can lead to an equity pedagogy for all students.

I would also contend that where students are white and living in a farming community school district, a teacher needs to recognize color in order to design and implement a curriculum rooted in social justice. Otherwise the teacher may increase the difference divide between white students and Others. This is precisely Neil’s circumstance.

I also find interesting Neil’s comments about him being different from his students based on “not [being] affiliated with any Christian denomination” (Email Dialogue Exchange III) and, I am assuming, not celebrating Christmas, interesting. It appears he is trying to show differences between himself and his students in order to foster, again, an environment of disruptive knowledge. His students learning about these differences (between a white teacher and white students) is “about disruption and opening up further learning, not closer and satisfaction” (Kumashiro, 2002, p. 43).

Kumashiro (2002) also puts it another way, which I feel represents a possible explanation for Neil’s point about being different (Other).

Lessons about the Other should not aim to tell students the “accurate” portrayal of the Other. Rather, such lessons could be treated as both catalysts and resources for students to use as they learn more. Disruptive knowledge, in other words, is not an end in itself, but a means toward the always shifting goal of learning more (p. 43).

If this is the case, Neil's extension of the students 'learning more' about him may be a way to promote a social justice curriculum linked to counter-narratives (Greene, 1998). The idea is that just because the teacher is white does not mean that she/he follows the same religious backgrounds of the students or celebrates the same religious holidays (if any). This may prompt the students to start to question and trouble their once-confirmed socially constructed standards regarding people and their backgrounds (religion, race, ethnicity, culture, socio-economic class, education, etc.)

Political Issues

Since Neil mentioned No Child Left Behind (NCLB) in his vision of teaching for social justice and his teaching stance, I decided to explore this thread and/or connection to a greater degree. My thinking was that it may lead me down a path of discovery concerning political issues often encountered as a teacher dealing with students, other teachers, administrators, parents, school districts, school boards, etc.

I guess at the grunt level NCLB makes me feel bad for poor inner city schools because I think its hurting them not helping them. The way that I see it in my building is that administrator's heads can roll for not making the scores. I don't think this is fair either because my principal has really turned my school around in terms of community pride, academics. He is fun and visible. I think the pressure will change him at some point. Related to my stance, I guess I worry about high stakes testing and it probably makes me follow state standards a little more rigorous than I other wise would. I feel like I have to keep moving instead of taking my time and making sure no child really is left behind. (Email Dialogue Exchange IV, Neil)

It appears that Neil's ability possibly to teach for social justice or follow through on characteristics related to his teaching stance may be compromised due to components of No-Child-Left-Behind like high-stakes testing. Because high-stakes testing is often tied to items such as promotion, certification, graduation, or denial/approval of services

and opportunity, high stakes testing can corrupt the evaluation process when pressure to produce rising test scores results in “teaching to the test” or making tests less complex. So Neil’s political obligations to the school district, the community, the school, parents, students, and possibly himself may push him to give up some of his teaching for social justice/teaching stance integrity in order to meet his political obligations.

I would speculate that many teachers are tied to their political obligations concerning No Child Left Behind as well as other political and bureaucratic policies and notions set forth by federal, state, and local entities. I think the connection between No Child Left Behind, politics, and teaching for social justice/teachings stance is what Maxine Greene refers to as:

Justice, after all, is thought to be the primary value of political life if it is incarnated in human actions in spaces where people live together. Thinking of it as a normative ideal, a notion of how persons *ought* to live together, most of us would agree that there should be an equitable, a fair distribution of goods and services (p. xxviii).

The irony is that is that No Child Left Behind does not seem to be just, even though Maxine Greene states that justice should be a primary value of political life. Neil seems to allude to this injustice in the political realm of No Child Left Behind when he notes “I guess at the grunt level NCLB makes me feel bad for poor inner city schools because I think it [is] hurting them not helping them” (Email Dialogue Exchange IV). That is, poor inner city schools may not have the viable resources to support high-stakes testing which consequently hinders the inner city schools ability to move forward with

regards to promotion, certification, graduation, or denial/approval of services and opportunities (funding).

Since the political realm of education seems to wield a mighty hammer with respect to how educational life plays out for school districts, communities, schools, teachers, administrators, parents, and students. I decided to explore this element of Neil's teaching reality even further. This exploration also was intended to expose the degree to which Neil's teaching stance and its evolution from his first day of teaching until now was impacted by political issues.

I have to tone down what I talk about with colleagues in terms of politics. My stance has evolved from day one, I think, because I first had the notion that I would walk in the classroom and show these kids: look you can't hate Muslims because... or you don't know anything about homosexuality so why are you....if abortion wasn't legal then...evolution is completely accepted by the scientific community.... So I realized from day one that I want these issues to come up in my classroom, but I have to be professional about how to handle them without causing an earthquake. I have to be less biased and try and give them the bigger picture, and be careful how I explain my personal views. (Email Dialogue Exchange V, Neil)

Neil makes an interesting statement regarding his teaching reality at the beginning of his teaching tenure that seems to connect to his undergraduate experience and teaching for social justice. He states:

My stance has evolved from day one, I think, because I first had the notion that I would walk in the classroom and show these kids: look you can't hate muslims because... or you don't know anything about homosexuality so why are you....if abortion wasn't legal then...evolution is completely accepted by the scientific community. (Email Dialogue Exchange VI, Neil)

According to Maxine Greene, "Teaching for social justice ought to support the emergence of counter-narratives" (p. xxxi). It appears Neil, by providing counter-narratives regarding issues such as a pedagogy of whiteness or other hegemonic social

constructs that often present themselves in classrooms, had the perception before his in-service teaching tenure that he was going to be able to be a change agent (Kumashiro, 2002) and/or politically transformative (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1997). I would hypothesize that many pre-service teachers crossing the threshold to in-service teachers have a lot of energy and a lot of drive to be change agents and activists (Kumashiro, 2002); however, once they are immersed in teaching realities they realize they have to make changes to their high-energy approaches to teaching for social justice.

Going back to the ideas of being a change agent and/or activist (which is what Neil seems to be professing in his statements) suggests that Neil has some preconceived notions concerning the status quo in schools regarding dominant culture and is prepared to disrupt the status quo through his antioppressive teaching stance (Bullock, 2004; Kumashiro, 2002). Kumashiro (2002) argues that

multiple forms of oppression are constantly played out in schools and the norm or status quo, which manifests in the traditional operation of schools, for instance, or in traditional pedagogies, is what is oppressive. Changing oppression, then, requires constantly working against this norm. (p. 24)

Neil seems to be anticipating this oppression stemming from traditional pedagogies and the status quo which often propagates power, privilege, and oppression vis-à-vis our educational system (Banks, 1995; Brady, 1995; Ayers, Hunt, & Quinn, 1998; Fried, 1995; hooks, 1994; Johnson, 2001, Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1997; Kumashiro, 2002; Ore, 2003). James A. Banks also makes mention of this status quo in the educational system and what teachers need to do to work against this ingrained social amalgam. Banks states,

institutionalized knowledge within our society still supports inequality, dominant group hegemony, and the disempowerment of marginalized groups. [The status quo] underscore[s] the need to educate students to become critical consumers of knowledge, to become knowledge producers themselves, and to be able to take thoughtful and decisive action that will help to create and maintain a democratic and just society. (pp. 397-398)

It seems Neil wants to pursue this social justice path in order to foster and manifest a democratic and just society that educational researchers like Banks (1995), Kincheloe and Steinberg (1997), Kumashiro (2002) and others, advocate.

Obstacles and Outcomes

Neil's story of the political climate which impacts his teaching for social justice exemplifies the layering and complexity associated with teaching for social justice. In order to explore this layering more deeply I wanted to switch gears somewhat and discuss issues related to teaching for social justice that revolve around a statement made by an educational researcher concerning teaching for social justice. To paraphrase, teaching for social justice is teaching that arouses students, engages them in an expedition to identify obstacles to their full humanity, to their freedom, and then to drive, to move against these obstacles. I wanted to see how Neil interpreted this and potentially what were some of the obstacles his students faced? I related the obstacles to Neil's project so that he had some perspective on how to dialogue about these issues.

I guess the first problem is that these kids don't see many of these issues as obstacles. I figure if all I do is make these things appear as obstacles at their age it is a good start. I try to do more but sometimes it is frustrating if I forget the age of the audience, 14-16. You can't go past step one if the obstacles aren't

acknowledged. My kids face all of the obstacles in a typical small town: dogmatism, racism, homophobia, sexism, but again most of them don't recognize this as an "obstacle to move against". (Email Dialogue Exchange VII, Neil)

Neil is able to identify the outcomes due to 'obstacles' such as 'dogmatism, racism, homophobia, sexism', but I am not sure at this point if Neil is able to identify social constructs that lead to students' knowledge-construction process which develops these outcomes.

Students and teachers are often oblivious to the critical factors that create and/or manifest their ways of thinking in the world regarding social issues (Banks, 1995; Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1997). Neil realizes that teaching a curriculum rooted in social justice needs to address these issues in the classroom as a means of helping students rationalize why they think the way that they do about the outcomes. I believe Neil sees this opportunity with his students as a way to change students and society regarding oppressed and marginalized groups. Kumashiro addresses these outcomes, which Neil mentions, by creating an understanding of oppression: "oppression itself can be seen as the repetition, throughout many levels of society, of harmful citational practices" (2002, p. 51).

Kumashiro is referring to how levels of society, in this case, schools, perpetuate oppression by being an environment that does not examine the obstacles (knowledge construction) and allows "associations that characterize oppression: Whiteness and authenticity, femaleness and weakness, heterosexuality and normalcy, queer sexualities and sinfulness, limited English-language proficiency and lack of intelligence, to name just a few" (2002, p. 51).

Referring back to Neil's dialogue (Email Dialogue Exchange II) concerning his student's project on genetics, Neil also reveals other issues connected to obstacles and outcomes as well. Neil's reflection on issues stemming from women and minorities in science seems to connect to how Neil teaches for social justice. In order for Neil to bring about change, which he seemingly he embraces as a teacher for social justice, he needs to address the three themes Kumashiro addresses: a problem of resistance, a curriculum of partiality, and a pedagogy of crisis (2002).

Kumashiro (2002) defines a problem of resistance as core curriculums (science, history, math, English) which perpetuate oppressive knowledges. He mentions that science classrooms espouse teaching a neutral curriculum: however, science has an oppressive history.

Neil has tried to address obstacles and outcomes, I think, by having his students complete a "one page biography on a female or minority scientist" (Email Dialogue Exchange II) as a means of creating a social justice environment in his classroom. "Unfortunately, educators often stop after "adding on" differences as if adding, say, *women* here and *Jews* there solves the problem" (Kumashiro, 2002, p. 55). Kumashiro states that "there are a number of problems with adding differences to the curriculum, not the least of which is the recognition that the very act of naming and including differences could operate in contradictory ways" (2002, pp. 55-56).

The second theme Kumashiro mentions is a curriculum of partiality. This type of curriculum is unable fully include all differences and voices in a curriculum. For this reason many partial curriculums promote and perpetuate oppressive education. Kumashiro suggests students (and teachers) can learn to read materials related to the

curriculum in ways that are divergent and antioppressive (2002). According to Kumashiro “students can learn to read for silences and the effects of those silences on the “meaning” of the text” (2002, p. 62). In having his students complete the one page biography on a female or minority in science, is trying to create an environment in which his students start to explore and/or examine the silences or voices that are not present in the traditional text/curriculum that may perpetuate the Western scientific cannon.

Additionally, Neil mentions that, “Once the students have done some research [one-page biographies on women and minorities in science] the discussions are usually awesome” (Email Dialogue Exchange II). Kumashiro mentions that

Antioppressive education [teaching for social justice] is not something that happens when the curriculum is no longer partial. Rather, it happens when critical questions are being asked about the partial curriculum. It is not a curriculum that is fully inclusive or that centers on critical texts. Rather, it is a process of looking beyond the curriculum. It is a process of troubling the official knowledge in the disciplines (Apple, 1993). (2002, p. 62)

Neil’s discussion with his students should focus on critically examining what is often unquestioned about the status quo, about what is left out and about what is silenced by dominant perspectives. The example he supplies (Roselyn Franklin was never given due credit for her work that led to the discovery of DNA structure – Watson and Crick, two men, received a Nobel prize for their work) would be a perfect opportunity critically analyze and trouble the social constructs (male privilege, Whiteness) that give power and privilege and that also oppresses.

The third theme Kumashiro discusses is pedagogy of crisis. As a student (and a teacher) learns

that the very ways in which we think and do things is not only partial but oppressive involves troubling or “unlearning” (Britzman, 1998a) what we have already learned, and this can be quite an emotionally discomforting process, a form of “crisis” (Felman, 1995). (Kumashiro, 2002, p. 63)

The student’s biography assignments, along with the discussions, may lead to this pedagogy of crisis. It may facilitate what Kumashiro calls bringing about change for students and society. I think Neil’s intent with the assignment, as well as his stance regarding teaching for social justice, is to bring about change, to address the issues related to what he sees as social injustices—how his students view Muslims, homosexuality, abortion, evolution, etc. However, according to Kumashiro (2002), working through this crisis is much more complicated than this brief explanation.

The point of the three-themed process for Neil would be to move the students through spaces which would allow them to be cognizant of the powers that influence their knowledge construction and perpetuate power, privilege, and oppression in order to serve as change agents and activists. Kumashiro suggests that

Lessons that critique, for example, the harmfulness of stereotypes and the invisible histories of institutionalized oppression [often found in schools] can involve revealing our own privileges, confronting our own prejudices, and acknowledging the harmfulness of practices that unintentionally perpetuate stereotypes or are complicit with institutionalized oppression (2002, p. 64).

Once students and teachers recognize the social mechanisms which privilege certain people while oppressing others, they are better situated to work against these social constructs for social justice.

Troubling the Hidden Curriculum

In an attempt to further my understanding of Neil's vision of teaching for social justice I wanted to explore if he suspected that bringing about issues related to women and minorities in science, and their lack of recognition may have some impact on his students thinking about the bigger picture – society (social justice). Neil's story regarding this matter revealed an example of one of Kumashiro's ways of working against oppression and towards social justice. Neil's depiction was as follows:

That is my hope. Many of the kids after the biographies can't believe some of the things they find. I didn't know this but one of my students found a "rumor" about his subject for which I couldn't answer. He wanted to know if this could possibly be true and I said that I don't know. I am referring to Charles Richard Drew, an African-American surgeon who did much to set up blood banks around the U.S. and England during WWII. He also figured out that plasma could be transfused without typing. My student found a story that Drew was in a car accident in the south and bled to death because the hospital didn't want to put white blood in him. I could never dispute this but the bottom line is a kid who wasn't very likely to be open-minded was appalled at this story and its irony. Someone who saved so many lives doesn't get to benefit from something he discovered. (Email Dialogue Exchange VIII, Neil)

One way to interpret the objective of Neil's assignment (whether he is doing this intentionally or unintentionally does not matter) is to realize that students are often taught through an informal or 'hidden curriculum' "which means that, because they are taught indirectly, pervasively, and often unintentionally, they can carry more educational significance than the official curriculum (Jackson, Boostrom, & Hanson, 1993) (Kumashiro, 2002, p. 40).

Neil's example of his assignment in this case is to work against and/or trouble the hidden curriculum and work towards bringing about change—teaching for social justice. Thus, the objective of Neil's project is to create outcomes that provide voices for the Other and critically analyze social constructs which marginalize and create stereotypes about Others. Researchers suggest that curriculums be expanded to include specific units on the Other throughout the academic year and are not add-ons which seem out of place (Apple, 1995; S. Chan, 1995; Kumashiro, 2002; Hune, 1995; Russo, 1989; Schmitz, Rosenfelt, Butler, & Guy-Sheftall, 1995; Sumara, 1993).

“The strength of this approach [Education about the Other] is that it teaches all students, not just the Othered students, as it calls on educators to enrich all students' understanding of different ways of being” (Kumashiro, 2002, pp. 41-42). Considering that Neil's classroom is White and situated in a farming community, Education for the Other may allow students to make discoveries about the way the world operates with regard to power, privilege, and oppression. This seems to be embodied and evidenced when Neil claims, “the bottom line is a kid who wasn't very likely to be open-minded was appalled at this story and its irony” (Email Dialogue Exchange VIII). In this case Education about the Other was a mechanism to trouble the way society works and why it works the way it does.

In Neil's project, his students discovered mistreatment of an African-American physician who worked so hard to save the lives of so many, irrespective of race. In learning about the Other through this project the student is starting to “disrupt the knowledge that is already there. (since the harmful/partial knowledges that an individual already has are what need to change) (Luhmann, 1998)” (Kumashiro, 2002, p. 42). This

is the start of the process for creating an environment of change; an environment which starts to trouble the status quo; and environment in which students (and teachers) can become “initiators of social movements” (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1997, p. 26).

A Critical Consciousness-Raising Course

Neil’s dialogue to this point directed me to explore another layer of complexity related to teaching for social justice. This layer encompassed a connection to and/or between his teaching stance and teaching practices and his undergraduate program. Specifically, I wanted to explore whether or not his secondary education course, 412W, helped him construct either or both his teaching stance and teaching practices as they relate to teaching for social justice.

I don’t think my stance was really altered by any of my certification classes. I think you have to remember that I was thirty years old at the time, worked and studied abroad, and was changing careers. I do think it was interesting to see the views of the other students in those courses. It was more beneficial to see the stances of the people I would be teaching with. (Email Dialogue Exchange VIV, Neil)

Neil’s comments speak to issues of identity and character and how they connect to teaching stance. Individuals are not that easily changed with regard to prior beliefs. This has been illustrated by a multitude of educational researchers and theorists (Bullock, 2004; Lawrence, 1997; Lawrence & Bunche, 1996; Lawrence & Tatum, 1997; Tatum, 1994). Neil makes reference to his age by stating, “I don’t think my stance was really altered by any of my certification classes. I think you have to remember that I was thirty years old at the time, worked and studied abroad, and was changing careers” (Email Dialogue Exchange, VIV). In making this reference he is supporting the assertion that

individuals are not that easily changed with regard to prior beliefs. (Bullock, 2004; Lawrence, 1997; Lawrence & Bunche, 1996; Lawrence & Tatum, 1997; Tatum, 1994).

I think this creates a very challenging situation with regards to fostering an environment that promotes teaching for social justice. Even as young adults (late teens and early twenties) we are very resistant to change. This premise, I think, speaks to Neil's statement. According to Jones and McEwen (2000), in order for people to better understand themselves and to represent themselves in the world, people identify themselves according to identity dimensions and contextual influences. Identity dimensions are dimensions such as race, sexual orientation, and religion, whereas contextual influences are family background and life experiences.

Mentioning both identify dimensions and contextual influences makes it apparent that our identities are socially constructed. Students and young people often identify themselves according to the dominant perspectives, ideologies, and influences of schools. I think Neil's statement expresses these points of view related to teaching stance, identity, and their connection to teaching for social justice as a student in an undergraduate setting.

To further my inquiry regarding teaching for social justice and its connection with identity and the critical consciousness course I started to explore other dimensions I felt would reveal other phenomena; dimensions such as Neil's mention of tolerance regarding racism, dogmatism, etc. I wanted to explore how Neil's experiences helped shape his views and his perspectives regarding the issues of race, ethnicity, culture, sexual identity, religion, and class. To provide some context for Neil to tell his story, I explained to him that I grew up with a very racist grandfather who was prejudiced towards anyone he considered a non-white, yet I never heard my father make any racist or prejudice

comments. Despite having been raised around my grandfather, I consider myself very conscious of social justice and I support the promotion of social justice. Neil responded:

I also grew up with some family members that were quite intolerant. But I also had some family members that helped shape my views. My grandmother is the best example. When I was quite young she would show me films like “Gandhi” and a movie about the Zulus fighting the British in South Africa. These are quite powerful for a youngster. She would read National Geographic magazines to me. Most of them were articles about poor people in Africa. She would lecture me about not wasting food. Maybe she was the inspiration for me to do Peace Corps Africa. I guess the irony was that this grandmother was not educated, and the grandfather that would be telling the racist or ethnic jokes at family dinners was quite educated. Some other sources of my education or the formation of views are related to my school (school in the city with a diverse student body), traveling a lot, my in-laws (they were teachers, summer camp counselors, activists). I guess the question is why I latched onto the “good” instead of the “bad” family members at such a young age. (Email Dialogue Exchange X, Neil)

Because life experiences are so powerful in shaping our views of the world around us, it is not difficult to connect these experiences to our views related to issues of social justice. Neil mentions that “I also grew up with some family members that were quite intolerant. But I also had some family members that helped shape my views. My grandmother is the best example” (Email Dialogue Exchange X). According to Cothorn (2005) “As a person ages, they become more knowledgeable about other cultures [races, ethnicities, religions, sexual identities, sexual preferences, socio-economic classes, etc.], therefore they become more open. Whereas the younger generations are found to be more judgmental” (p. 7). This exposure to his grandmother seems to be a rational explanation why Neil may be more open to teaching for social justice.

Additionally, going back to my exploration of whether or not the critical consciousness raising course had any influence on Neil’s teaching for social justice he states that, “I don’t think my stance was really altered by any of my certification classes.

I think you have to remember that I was thirty years old at the time, worked and studied abroad, and was changing careers” (Email Dialogue Exchange X). I think this also is evidence that Neil’s life experiences and his relationship with his grandmother at a young age have made his world views related to social justice more open and liberal. (As an aside, I point out that, in his first dialogue of the inquiry, he mention he is a liberal.)

Putting It into Practice

Eventually our dialogue transitioned, prompted an exploration into how and to what degree Neil put his teaching for social justice into practice. Neil’s story about how his 14-16 year old students did not have strong views of intolerance, racism, and dogmatism, persuaded me to inquire about his classroom experiences.

Yeah, there have been some instances. One that came up was one day I realized that practically all the guys in one of my classes come from gym and are usually out of breath and sweaty. I said why aren’t you guys showering before coming into my room. One kid replied, cause a fag might come up behind you and.... I cut him off right there. Now this was a ninth grader and his world at this point regarding homosexuality is just about the act of sexually assaulting other people. I asked him how many people he has ever heard of being sexually assaulted by a homosexual. While he sat there processing that I asked how many heterosexual rape cases has he heard about...So at this point in this kid’s life he isn’t intolerant in a dangerous way like an adult, he just doesn’t know what he is even talking about. (Email Dialogue Exchanges XI, Neil)

Neil’s description of this experience provides a snapshot of a ‘teaching moment’ which he used to teach for social justice and educate about the Other (Kumashiro, 2002). In this instance Neil tried to create an environment in the moment to provide antioppressive knowledge (Kumashiro, 2002) in order to challenge the student’s claim that “cause a fag might come up behind you and...” (Email Dialogue Exchange XI). The student’s comment about a person who was homosexual was in the context of what society defines

as 'normal' behavior with regard to sexuality. Neil, in identifying this reference to deviant sexual acts, confronts that student in a manner which allows the student to try and provide answers to questions that may provide "spaces for critical-consciousness raising" (Bullock, 2004, p. 10).

Neil asked the student, "how many people he has ever heard of being sexually assaulted by a homosexual. While he sat there processing that I asked how many heterosexual rape cases has he heard about" (Email Dialogue Exchange XI). By asking this, Neil is trying to get the student to examine critically what he is saying in order to make sense of what the student has learned from society about normal and heterosexual and homosexual behavior. According to Green, "teaching for social justice [this process] is teaching for the sake of arousing the kinds of vivid, reflective, experiential responses that might move students to come together in serious efforts to understand what social justice actually means and what it might demand" (1998, pp. xxix-xxx). It seems Neil's questions are geared towards this end product; allowing the student to recognize the social injustice mechanisms that create dominant cultural perspectives on the social issues of sexual preference and sexual acts.

This seems to be the first instance in which Neil approaches teaching for social justice from a critical and antioppressive perspective or approach. In order to promote this process, Kincheloe and Steinberg (1997) suggest that teachers of social justice need to recognize how power, privilege, and oppression are institutionally produced. Once they are aware of these schools-manifested dynamics, teachers "are able to help students to overcome these social barriers by engaging them in the exploration of different ways of reading the world, methods of resisting oppression and visions of progressive

democratic communities” (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1997, p. 29). I think Neil’s questions to the student regarding homosexuality and heterosexuality were a means for the student to think about reading the world differently; in thinking about the essence of sexuality and possibly why he (the student) thought homosexuality was about the act of sexually assaulting other people.

I think Kumashiro (2002) suggests a similar approach for teachers teaching for social justice. He states that

Many researchers have argued that understanding oppression requires examining more than one’s disposition toward, treatment of, and knowledge about the Other. They assert that educators and students need to examine not only how some groups and identities are Othered in society, but also how some groups are privileged, as well as how this dual process is legitimized and maintained by social structures [schools] and competing ideologies. (Kumashiro, 2002, 44)

Neil’s questioning of the student’s supposition is an attempt to push the student to trouble or critically question how and why people who are homosexuals are marginalized as well as how people who are heterosexuals are privileged. Researchers suggest that this process should bring about a critical consciousness (Bullock, 2004; Kumashiro, 2002, Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1997) which “requires unlearning or critiquing what was previously learned to be “normal” and normative (Britzman, 1998a), especially when what we previously learned helps to mask the privileging and Othering of different identities” (Kumashiro, 2002, p. 46).

Sociocultural Structures

Sociocultural structures seem to be influential when connected to teaching for social justice. This would appear to be an important layer to explore not only related to Neil's teaching for social justice but teachers in general (pre-service/in-service). Because Neil mentions his family members who that were quite intolerant, I decided to explore his ideas about what social structures create intolerance towards "Others" and towards people who do not fit the stereotypical norm.

I think in my family economics may have played some part. In Pittsburgh when the steel industry collapsed there was a scramble of white middle class people who all of the sudden wouldn't be guaranteed a well paying steel mill job. No job security and the rest is history. People who are insecure always look for a scapegoat to blame their problems on. The media in Pittsburgh feeds my family doses of black crime reports without ever trying to figure out why that might be. A steady dose of black thugs on your news at night for decades in an economically depressed town is not healthy for a community. (Email Dialogue Exchange XII, Neil)

Neil's dialogue concerning economics, race, class, and the media seems to evidence his awareness as a teacher of social justice by identifying factors that influence people's views of the world. He points to how "The media in Pittsburgh feeds my family doses of black crime reports without ever trying to figure out why that might be" (Email Dialogue Exchange XII, Neil). This expresses his understanding that the media, at times, fuels this attack by targeting African-Americans as criminals while convincing working-class white Americans that African-Americans and immigrants "are responsible for the poverty, despair, and violence that have become a growing part of everyday life in American society" (Giroux, 1998, p. 3). Kincheloe and Steinberg (1997) also refer to this relationship regarding social constructs which help to promote dominant cultural views in society.

When Neil alludes to how his family views the media's portrayal of the Pittsburgh steel mill's economic impact on the racial relationships in the area, he acknowledges the social constructs which often promote racial tensions in economically depressed areas. "The media in Pittsburgh feeds my family doses of black crime reports without ever trying to figure out why that might be" (Email Dialogue Exchange XII). He is pointing to most people's inability to analyze what causes this social dynamic—people blaming each other for their socio-economic discontent and strife. Kincheloe and Steinberg argue that this socio-economic discontent and strife is caused by "the way power shapes consciousness" (1997, p 25). In this case, the media is helping to shape the consciousness or views of the white middle class workers who that lost their jobs because of African-Americans in Pittsburgh. He realizes,

such a process involves the processes by which ideological inspirations are imprinted on subjectivity, the ways desire is mobilized by power forces [the media] for hegemonic outcomes [racism, bigotry, hatred], the means by which discursive powers shape thinking and behaviour through both the presences and absences of different words and concepts. (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1997, p. 25)

This further indicates that Neil has a grasp of what social constructs foster social injustice and how these social constructs are manifested in everyday social life for the perpetuation of dominant culture, overtly or covertly.

These complex social dynamics associated with hegemony and the educational system seems to be connected to teachers, the curriculum, the administration, the district, the entire educational system. At the same time it seems they contribute to privileging

and advantaging some (students as far as skin color, race, religion, social economic class, etc.) while oppressing others.

Of course. The disparities in school district spending? Jonathan Kozol didn't just make all that stuff up. Case in point the few African-American students in my building are in special Ed, and considered behavioral problems. The evil cycle is probably worse for low SES in my district. The teacher's loath dealing with these kids, and their welfare dependent parents. I don't have an answer here but these kids have a sixth sense and must accept their lot at some point maybe middle school? (Email Dialogue Exchange XIII, Neil)

It appears Neil recognizes the socio-economic status inequalities produced and reproduced by schools. Again, Neil is referring to "subtle and often hidden educational processes that privilege the already affluent and undermine the efforts of the poor" (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1997, p. 24) when he mentions, "Case in point the few African-American students in my building are in special Ed, and considered behavioral problems. The evil cycle is probably worse for low SES in my district. The teachers loath dealing with these kids, and their welfare dependent parents" (Email Dialogue Exchange XIII, Neil).

Researcher's Howard and EnglandKennedy (2006) concur with Kincheloe and Steinberg's assertions regarding the correlations between student class status and school achievement and attainment. Howard and EnglandKennedy state,

As many researchers have documented, there are disparities in school circumstances and outcomes between poor and affluent students. In spite of our nation's ideology of equality, this body of research has documented the various ways that schools have reflected societal inequalities fairly consistently through their structures, practices, and policies. (2006, p. 1)

Also, Neil's mention of "The disparities in school district spending? Jonathan Kozol didn't just make all that stuff up" (Email Dialogue Exchange XIII) acknowledges how funding, or lack there of, greatly impacts student outcomes and their potential for success in schools and society (Kozol, 1991). I think socio-economic status greatly influences the advantages and privileges afforded people in society. This is emblematic in of Neil's examples of how African-American students are treated in a predominately white rural school district.

Conclusion

Neil is dedicated to pushing his teaching practices towards a pedagogy rooted in social justice. He understands the sociocultural structures which provide the mechanisms for oppression to play out in his classroom. Neil is able to disrupt some of his student's ways of thinking about normalcy and the status quo with his projects.

However, Neil does not provide spaces and a context for his students to examine the sociocultural structures which provide power and privilege to some people based on race, ethnicity, sexual preference, sexual identity, class, and gender. He is unable to enact a pedagogy that is critical of privileging and Othering as well as a pedagogy that changes students and society. He is, however, dedicated to promoting a pedagogy rooted in social justice.

Chapter Six

Reflections on Analysis and Interpretation

In this chapter I reflect on different aspects of my research. I step a way from the data for a time and then come back to it in order to reflect on it as well as other research elements and explore other ways of thinking through the data. According to Amulya (2007) “Reflection is an active process of witnessing one’s own experience in order to take a closer look at it, sometimes to direct attention to it briefly, but often to explore it in greater depth” (p. 1). In addition, Raelin (2002) suggests that reflective practice illuminates what the self and others have experienced. This is my intention in this chapter, to reexamine and to rethink and to provide further insights into my research.

First, I reflect on teaching for social justice and what it means now that I have blanketed my participants’ teaching stories with a critical eye. I reflect on other ways of describing teaching for social justice and other ways of thinking about teaching for social justice. In this process I also explore the importance of teaching for social justice in the teaching process as well as the complexity of teaching for social justice in the data.

Secondly, I discuss 412W, the secondary education course which both participants took as undergraduates. This course was imbedded with critical consciousness raising experiences which provided a venue for students to critically examine hegemonic practices in social settings such as schools (Bullock, 2004). This process, in my interpretation, was to promote social justice. In this process, I discuss, to a greater degree (reflectively), connections between 412W and the participants and connections between 412W and teaching for social justice.

Lastly, I reflect on my role as a researcher, as a story teller with a specific perspective. This reflection explores potential limitations in my description, analysis, and interpretation because of my educational background. This reflection also examines other readers' possible interpretations of my participant's stories as well as my intentions of the teacher's stories. I also reflect on my relationship and/or engagement with the teachers and how this process presented itself and what this process means to me in my research.

A Reflection on Teaching for Social Justice

To me social justice is an idea or a way of thinking about society. This way of thinking about a society promotes the fair treatment of individuals and provides the benefits of society to individuals in an equitable manner. In this case fair and equitable refers to the distribution of societal opportunities based on one's merits. For example, the idea that hard work will benefit a person in their quest for a particular job, education, income, home, spirituality and the like. Conversely, one would not be limited in this quest because of their race, skin color, culture, ethnicity, sexual preference, sexual identity, religion, ability, and other such characteristics. In other words, people in a just society would not receive privileges and advantages based on sociocultural characteristics.

I realize that social justice is a relative, dynamic, complex, and elusive ideology and is based on one's interpretation of what is 'just'. With that being said, it is understandable that there are numerous ways of thinking about, describing, explaining, and translating the meaning of social justice. In the following sections I explore different

ways of translating social justice and how it connects to teaching to manufacture the main idea of teaching for social justice.

Theories to Promote Social Justice

When exploring how educational theorists suggest making society more just, fair, equitable, equal, fair, and the like, they usually use a variety of ways to describe this process. Often these theories are labeled teaching for social justice, antioppressive education, critical multiculturalism, multicultural education, culturally responsive teaching, and other such theories. These proponents of a society that is just, because of their relative perspectives, have different ways of describing the process to promote social justice. Additionally, proponents of society that is just all have different, yet similar, theories about what social justice connects to and embraces. In the following, in no particular order, I explore several proponents of a society that is just and how they theorize about what fosters a just society. Also, I connect my ideas of a just society to these theories.

I start with Maxine Greene who theorizes about social justice in the following way:

To teach for social justice is to teach for enhanced perception and imaginative explorations, for the recognition of social wrongs, of sufferings, of pestilences wherever and whenever they arise. It is to find models in literature and in history of the indignant ones who have taken the side of the victims of pestilences, whatever their names or places of origin. It is to teach so that the young may be

awakened to the joy of working for transformation in the smallest places, so that they may become healers and change their worlds. (1998, p. xlv)

It appears to me that Greene is advocating a theory in which teachers decidedly work towards revealing social injustices. Additionally, she suggests that teachers should foster an environment where students are changed towards a more just outlook and thus become agents of social justice change. In order for this process to take place schools and teachers must incorporate teaching strategies and practices that encompass ideas relative to social change which inspires students to look injustice in the face and confront it and take action.

Kevin Kumashiro (2002) is another educational theorist who has developed an approach to work against power, privilege, and oppression and how these play out in society. He suggests that

In an attempt to address the myriad ways in which racism, classism, sexism, heterosexism, and other forms of oppression [social injustice] play out in schools, educators and educational researchers have engaged in two types of projects: understanding the dynamics of oppression and suggesting ways to work against it. (2002, p. 31)

First of all, in order for teachers to work against oppression they need to be able to recognize what oppression is and how it manifests itself in school culture. Second of all, once this has been accomplished then teachers can develop teaching strategies to work against oppression.

Teachers need to recognize that oppression can manifest itself in many forms like physical and verbal. For example, male students who exhibit feminine characteristics

are often verbally abused and referred to as queer or gay. This social stigma characterizes a normal male as stereotypically masculine and an abnormal male as more feminine in nature. This discourse substantiates what society typically values and privileges in terms of male characteristics. Once teachers are able to recognize how this process promotes oppression, as well as other forms of oppression, they are able to work against it by incorporating teaching strategies into the classroom which work against oppression.

Kumashiro (2002) suggests working against oppression in four ways: education for the Other, education about the Other, Education that is critical of privileging and Othering, and education that changes students and society. Education for the Other focuses on “improving the experiences of students who are Othered or in some way oppressed in and by mainstream society” (Kumashiro, 2002, pp. 32-33). This approach suggests that schools need to be supporting spaces for the Other in terms of education and needs. Additionally, schools need to be spaces that provide resources, advocacy, and help (Kumashiro, 2002). For example, safe zones (GLBT communities). I view this approach as providing Othered students with a safe place to go both physically and emotionally, which can only be provided by teachers and other students.

Kumashiro’s (2002) second approach of antioppressive education is education about the Other. Education about the Other is “what all students—privileged and marginalized—know and should know about the Other” (Kumashiro, 2002, p. 39). This approach, for example, suggests that teachers need to include in their curricula lessons on the Other (women in science) and that the lessons are throughout the curriculum. In doing so, Kumashiro suggests that this practice teaches all students, not just marginalized students, about different ways of being (2002).

Kumashiro's third approach of antioppressive education is education that is critical of privileging and Othering (2002). According to Kumashiro, "educators and students need to examine not only how some groups and identities are Othered in society, but also how some groups are privileged, as well as how this dual process is legitimized and maintained by social structures" (2002, p. 44). For example, students of privilege often do not recognize the rights and privileges conferred to them upon birth because of their class, race, and gender, as well as other identities. Teachers need to be able to teach a critical awareness of oppressive structures in society and ways to change them (Kumashiro, 2002). This critical awareness by students often leads to the next approach to antioppressive education.

Education that changes students and society is Kumashiro's (2002) fourth approach to antioppressive education. This approach suggests "curricular and pedagogical reforms that help to address the complexities of antioppressive education by developing such notions as partiality, resistance, crisis, and unknowability as they apply to teaching and learning" (Kumashiro, 2002, p. 68). For example, teachers could introduce learning materials into classrooms for students which provide alternative perspectives from traditionally marginalized groups rather than only from groups who have been traditionally advantaged. Groups such as immigrants to the United States in the early 1800s and their role in the development of this country would be an example of a traditionally marginalized group. This approach would help to reform and circumvent a curriculum of partiality.

Joe Kincheloe and Shirley Steinberg are educational researchers and theorists who suggest critical multiculturalism as a means of promoting social justice. According to

Kincheloe & Steinberg, “critical multiculturalism refuses to position the mere establishment of diversity as its final objective; instead, it seeks a diversity that understands the power of difference when it is conceptualized within a larger concern with social justice” (1997, p. 26). Kincheloe and Steinberg suggest that critical multiculturalism is a merging of multicultural education and critical theory and from this emerges a critical pedagogy (1996). This critical nature of education is intended to expose processes such as sorting systems (special education), curriculums, and teaching practices which produce and reproduce power, privilege, and oppression.

Additionally, Kincheloe and Steinberg (1996) make the point that “Class is a central concern of a critical multiculturalism as it intersects with race, gender and other axes of power” (p. 25). Because ‘power’ is produced in the form of socio-economic status, race, gender, ethnicity, language, religion, and other such forms, these intersections which take place throughout society produce inequities and equalities among people which leads to social injustice. These intersections have produced power and privilege as well in the form of race, gender, class, and the like.

When these issues of power collide with education, education becomes ground for perpetuating how society thinks about race, gender, class, and the like. This is why critical multiculturalists within education must help students to realize how power (in its many forms) shapes subjectivity and thinking. In this process teachers need to reveal the ways in which privilege and dominant forces are produced which creates a binary of privilege and oppression. Student’s awareness of this binary will hopefully promote an environment in which social justice is a reality.

James A. Banks' (1996) describes his theory of multicultural education as a process to promote "values such as justice, equality, and freedom" (p. 391). In my estimation, these social 'values' are some of what gives rise to a society rooted in social justice. Banks (1996) describes his theory as a process consisting of five dimensions. These five dimensions constitute content integration, the knowledge construction process, prejudice reduction, an equity pedagogy, and an empowering school culture and social structure.

Banks (1996) describes content integration as "the ways in which teachers use examples and content from a variety of cultures and groups to illustrate key concepts, principles, generalizations, and theories in their subject area or discipline" (p. 392). This 'dimension' suggests that teachers need to incorporate culturally diverse means of teaching for students with the idea of promoting social 'values'. For example, teachers who incorporate American history readings from the perspectives of Native-Americans, African-Americans, European-Americans, as well as others, may promote values such as justice, equality, and freedom.

Banks' (1996) second dimension of his theory of multicultural education is what he calls the knowledge construction process. Banks (1996) describes this dimension as, "the methods, activities, and questions used by teachers to help students understand, investigate, and determine how implicit cultural assumptions, frames of reference, perspectives, and biases within a discipline influence the ways in which knowledge is constructed" (p. 392). This dimension is closely connected with Banks' first dimension in that it has the potential to be a conduit to allowing students to recognize how society is framed regarding power, privilege, and advantages. When students are introduced to the

ways in which stereotypes are manufactured and maintained by people and institutions they often become cognizant of how society privileges some and oppresses others. Thus, the student's awareness may promote recognition of justice, equality, and freedom.

Banks (1996) explains this further by stating, "when the knowledge construction process is implemented, teachers help students to understand how knowledge is created and how it is influenced by the racial, ethnic, and social-class positions of individuals and groups (Code, 1991, Collins, 1990)" (p. 392). For example, a student may recognize how teachers, and ultimately schools, perpetuate white superiority by recognizing how teachers and schools deny race (Sleeter, 1993). Students, and teachers, may recognize that this denial (silence) is actually an expression of racial, ethnic, and social-class position where whiteness is privileged.

Banks' (1996) third dimension of his theory of multicultural education is prejudice reduction. Banks (1996) describes prejudice reduction as "the characteristics of students' racial attitudes and strategies that teachers can use to help them develop more democratic values and attitudes" (p. 392). Once again, Banks (1996) is advocating a process teachers can use to promote a more just and equitable society. This process might, for example, consist of teachers developing projects for students that allow students to recognize the 'good' in people. This, once again, may allow the student to recognize the similarities between herself/himself and someone she/he is different from. In turn, this may help to tear down walls between people and disprove stereotypes as well as bring light to what sociocultural characteristics privilege and oppress.

Banks' (1996) fourth dimension of his theory of multicultural education is labeled an equity pedagogy. Banks (1996) suggests "An equity pedagogy exists when teachers

modify their teaching in ways that will facilitate the academic achievement of students from diverse racial, ethnic, cultural, and gender groups (Banks & Banks, 1995b)” (p. 392). Banks goes on to suggest that a number of other researchers such as Au (1980), Boykin (1982), Delpit (1995), Kleinfeld (1975), Ladson-Billings (1995), and Shade and New (1993) have discussed this dimension in terms of culturally sensitive or culturally congruent. I believe this dimension, as part of the process, is a means of promoting social justice in that it provides for differences in learning styles. By teaching in a culturally responsive manner teachers are providing students with a learning environment that is productive for all students and not just some students. For example, teachers, regardless of race, need to be able to teach students, regardless of race (though keeping race in mind), based on their learning styles. This approach by the teacher is fostered an educational environment that is equitable for the students.

Banks’ (1996) last dimension of his theory of multicultural education is what he calls an empowering school culture and social structure. He suggests that

This dimension conceptualizes the school as a system that is larger than any of its constituent parts such as the curriculum, teaching materials, and teacher attitudes and perceptions. The systemic view of schools requires that in order to effectively reform schools, the entire system must be restructured, not just some of its parts.
(p. 393)

I think this part of the process of social justice is a reflection on society. For example, teachers and students become agents for change. Students and teachers who become aware of the injustices propagated by schools and people by privileging some because of sociocultural characteristics may tend to advocate ‘just’ change. This dimension

potentially helps to reshape schools into vehicles for social and cultural progress, as well as change, towards a society structured to be more just, equitable, and free. I believe Banks (1996) suggests this restructuring because of the hegemonic nature of schools as social entities.

Another aspect of Banks' (1996) theory of multicultural educations is the idea of 'transformation'. He suggests that teachers are an integral part of the push towards social justice and that teachers can use what he calls transformative academic knowledge to help students develop alternative (divergent) ways of thinking about preexisting knowledge. For example, Banks (1996) suggests that teachers can develop different concepts, models, themes, and explanations that run counter to traditional, mainstream ways of thinking about disciplines such as math, history, science, etc. Additionally, Banks (1996) also indicates that teachers need to become what he calls 'transformative scholars', teachers who understand knowledge as it relates to the cultural experiences of students.

Geneva Gay (2000) is another educational theorist who suggests culturally response teaching as a means for promoting social change. She points out that teachers need to use the cultural information, past experiences, and performance styles of diverse students to make learning more suitable and valuable for them. Additionally, according to Gay (2000), this process involves understanding and respecting the cultures and the experiences of all groups. Once this is accomplished by the teacher, then the teacher can use this understanding as a resource for teaching and learning. Also, this process appreciates the existing strengths and accomplishments of all students (groups) and develops them further.

Shor (1992) supports Gay's (2000) contention concerning culturally responsive teaching and suggests that this type of pedagogy is educational empowerment. She points out that this pedagogy is a student-centered program for multicultural democracy in schools and in society. She also mentions that the goals of this pedagogy are to relate personal growth to public life, to develop strong skills, academic knowledge, habits of inquiry, and critical curiosity about society, power, inequality, and change.

I realize that I have only scraped the surface of describing the theories and practices that connect to promoting social justice as well as the multitude of educational theorists and researchers who advocate theories and practices to promote social justice. Collectively, the educational theorists I have mentioned, all suggest fostering, to some degree, spaces for and by teachers and students to re-think issues of power, privilege, and oppression and how they play out to create a society reflects a binary of privilege and oppression. Teaching for social justice, antioppressive education, critical multiculturalism, multicultural education, culturally responsive teaching, and other such theories should be emancipatory. However, social justice cannot be accomplished without action which works towards a greater equity between dominant and oppressed groups (Tisdell, 2002). Educators like Maxine Greene, Kevin Kumashiro, Joe Kincheloe, Shirley Steinberg, James Banks, Geneva Gay, Paulo Freire, Michael Apple, Henry Giroux, Peter McLaren, as well as many others, advocate education as the practice of freedom (Freire, 1970). Teachers who implement these theories into their day-to-day teaching practices should strive for moving people to take social and political action for social justice.

Reflections on My Understanding of Teaching for Social Justice

Obviously, teaching for social justice is a complex and dynamic process. This process can be convoluted by many uncontrollable variables that teachers encounter in the classroom on a day-to-day. In this section I review the data reflectively and provide a retrospective interpretation of Jim and Neil's examples and comments about their respective positions on teaching for social justice.

Reflecting on some of Jim's Responses

During the first conversation I had with Jim we discussed his perspectives on teaching for social justice.

Brian: Are you familiar with teaching for social justice? If so, what does teaching for social justice mean to you? Do you teach for social justice?

Jim: I am somewhat familiar with social justice. To me it means teaching for equality in a classroom. No beliefs or attitudes are suppressed or belittled at the expense of something else. I do try and teach for social justice, but given the area that I live and teach in, this is very difficult as there are some deep rooted prejudices here that are tough to overcome.

Brian: You mention that teaching for social justice is difficult because of the area you live and teach and because of deep rooted prejudices. Could you expound on this and give some examples you have encountered in the classroom? Could you describe the area in which you live?

Jim: First I live in a small town in north central PA. We are surrounded by small towns. We are very blue collar as the major industry here is powdered metal plants. We are predominantly white lower middle class people. I have encountered several

instances at different schools where the students draw Nazi symbols on their books and on the chalkboards. I have also encountered students who use racial slurs and stereotypes against African Americans. This occurred in the larger school where I taught to the PSSA students. The Nazi symbols were at several different schools that I substituted at.

Jim's responses to my questions concerning teaching for social justice did not surprise me. I expected him to be somewhat familiar with the concept since he took an undergraduate course which focused on critical-consciousness raising activities meant to promote social justice. However, as I reflect my initial interpretation of Jim's response as to why it was difficult for him to teach for social justice I am surprised by my quick dismissal and lack exploration of Jim's concern about the difficulty of teaching for social justice. Initially, I suggested Jim's response concerning living in a small town meant geographic location did not impact his degree of prejudice and view of social justice. In other words, his response seems to suggest that geographic location may not be a powerful influence on his degree of prejudice.

However, Jim's response may also be interpreted in a completely different manner. For example, Jim's concern that teaching for social justice is difficult in his area because of his students deep-rooted prejudices may reflect more issues about implementing a social justice strategy rather than issues with his prejudices. Jim's struggle with teaching for social justice may be impacted greatly by not only the small town community he and his students are immersed in, but other factors as well. Factors such as their families low to middle class socio-economic status, having less than a high

school degree, and being relative young in age. The combination of these factors may be difficult to overcome as a teacher trying to implement a curriculum embedded with social justice practices.

Even though Cothorn (2005) suggests the size of the community in which students are raised and currently living has nothing to do with how prejudiced one is she also suggests that people tend to be more prejudice if they are younger and have lower levels of education. In this case, Jim's students live in a small community, are young, and have a low level of education. This may mean that Jim's concerns about his students' prejudices are viable concerning the difficulty of teaching for social justice.

In addition, my analysis and interpretation did not take into account other aspects of Jim's day-to-day experiences in his classroom. These aspects might include the fact that Jim has only been teaching for few years which means he may be entrenched with other responsibilities that take precedent over the complexity of teaching for social justice. For example, according to Wey (1951), beginning teachers typically have difficulties with student discipline, poor environmental condition of the classroom, adjusting to a new teaching assignment, adapting to the needs and abilities of the students, motivating student interest and response, keeping records and making reports, handling broader aspects of teaching techniques, and being able to establish and maintain proper relationships with supervisors and administrators. All of these factors may be contributable to Jim's difficulty teaching for social justice.

Another conversation Jim and I had began with a discussion about teaching practices and social justice.

- Brian: Going back to teaching stance and teaching practice or we can also say worldview or perspective, what life events have helped how you view issues related to teaching for social justice. For example your worldview/perspective on sexual preference, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, culture, religion, socioeconomic class, etc., issues that make us different from one another? How do you take your perspectives concerning these issues into the classroom?
- Jim: I try not to take any of those things into account as they should not matter in terms of what the student can or cannot do. I guess you could say that I try and encourage the students to ignore that too although it is difficult when we are supposed to treat everyone as an equal yet some ethnic backgrounds want to retain that identity and it is difficult to do that and treat them equal at the same time. However, as a rule, I try to leave my own personal opinions on those things at home and not in the classroom unless I see racism or bigotry going on.
- Brian: You mention that you have not taught a diverse student population (mostly white students). So how has your perspective/worldview been shaped regarding teaching students who are not white or have a different sexual preference than you or a different religion, or a different socioeconomic class?
- Jim: Socioeconomic class, religion and sexual preference do not affect me. I do tend to have a bit of a reservation about teaching students of different ethnicity. It is not that I do not like them it is that I feel that I cannot relate to them or relate the material to them.

Reflecting on my original interpretation of Jim's responses I criticize Jim for his lack of acknowledging student differences or his lack of acknowledging people's differences and suggest that this is a marginalizing mechanism. In retrospective I could have furthered our conversation about student differences by exploring Jim's ideas on culturally responsive teaching. Maybe by allowing Jim to read some literature on culturally responsive teaching and putting my question about student differences into another context Jim may have injected some dialogue that would be more reflective of my perspective on teaching students based on differences.

I also make reference to Jim not understanding how cultural institutions such as schools are structured in terms of power, privilege, and oppression and this lack of understanding does not allow teachers, like Jim, to analyze how these social structures work to reinforce power and privilege and oppression. However, in re-examining Jim's comments I am able to suggest that if I discussed those structures in schools that create power, privilege, and oppression Jim may have been able to address these issues.

During the course of another conversation I brought up issues related to Jim's comments about not teaching many students that were different than himself (white, male, middle-class, and heterosexual). I interpreted Jim's comments to mean that he was exhibiting an oppressive pedagogy in his classroom. This interpretation in retrospect may have been somewhat harsh. In re-reading Jim's comments, "Socioeconomic class, religion and sexual preference do not affect me", I am able to suggest that Jim's meaning of 'affect' may be different than my meaning of 'affect'. For example, maybe Jim is not suggesting that he is 'color-blind' (Sleeter, 1993) or does not pay attention to the socio-economic class or sexual preference of students. But on the contrary, he tries to teach in a way that he does not let his own prejudices or biases about the student's socio-economic class or sexual preference influence him.

Further inquiry may have led to different interpretations of Jim's comments. In addition, Jim's comments about not being able to relate to them does not necessarily mean he does not want to relate to those students. He may not feel that he has enough teaching methodologies, strategies, and practices to teach in a culturally responsive way (Gay, 2000; Shor, 1992). In other words, Jim may not feel he has the wherewithal to use

cultural knowledge, prior experiences, and performance styles of diverse students to make learning more appropriate and effective for them (Gay, 2000).

During the course of another conversation between Jim and me, we discussed issues related to mechanisms that potentially work against teaching for social justice.

Brian: You mention TV/films/music contributing to people's ways of thinking in a racist and/or prejudice manner...is there any way to combat this as a teacher teaching for social justice?

Jim: I think that a teacher can combat it when teaching; especially history and English teachers. A history teacher can teach about it historically while an English teacher can teach it as part of any lessons on literature. I also think it might be a good idea to have a special class on it. Maybe a half-year class that rotates with life skills classes and the like.

My initial interpretation did not include this part of our conversation. Jim suggested using history and English disciplines as a means of combating racist and prejudiced behaviors. Jim also goes as far as to suggest that a course should be designed to address issues of racism and prejudice in schools. Once again, Jim's response could be interpreted as falling inline with ideas such as culturally responsive teaching (Gay, 2000).

According to Gay (2000) culturally responsive teaching involves many aspects which include, but are not limited to, instructional techniques curriculum content, student-teacher relationships, classroom climate, and learning context. In addition, Gay (2000) suggests that teachers from various backgrounds and disciplines, for example, language arts, science, social studies, and music, may collaborate in teaching a single cultural concept. Gay's (2000) ideas regarding culturally responsive teaching seem to be reflected in Jim's comments concerning fighting racist and prejudiced behavior promoted on TV, in films, and by the media.

As part of another conversation, which was not included in the data analysis and interpretation, Jim and I also discussed racist and prejudiced language in classrooms.

Brian: You mention if you see or hear any racist/prejudice comments in the classroom you do not want to hear them or see them... where do you think a teachers responsible lies in terms of dealing with these kinds of issues? Should teachers stop the behavior while it is occurring or should they do more?

Jim: That is not an easy answer. Is it the responsibility of the teacher to teach their subject and morals? I think that is a fine line to walk. Teachers are not parents so I am not sure it is in their authority to tell a student how they should think. However, you set the rules for your classroom and while they are in there the student must follow those rules. I try to create an air of tolerance and equality in all my classes. What the students do when they leave is another matter. Sure I would love for the students to take the behavior I ask of them in the class and apply it to everything they do. I would even encourage it. Bottom line: in the school the teachers should enforce the rules and that includes no racist talk, art or deeds.

Jim does a very good job in answering my question regarding this issue. Jim could be interpreted as advocating the fact that “Teaching for social justice, we must remember, is teaching what we believe ought to be—not merely where moral frameworks area concerned, but in material arrangements in all spheres of society” (Greene, 1998, p. xxix). In addition, Jim is advocating a classroom environment which will not tolerate racist and prejudiced behavior. Jim’s behavior could be considered a social action, the taking of a stand against racist and prejudiced behavior. Banks suggests teachers need to take social action concerning racist issues (1999).

These reflections suggest that my interpretations of Jim’s responses may have been somewhat skewed by our initial conversation. Because Jim’s answers to my initial questions did not meet my expectations of what it means to teach for social justice I may have pigeonholed Jim from the onset of the study.

Reflecting on some of Neil's Responses

During the first conversation I had with Neil we discussed his perspectives on teaching for social justice.

Brian: Are you familiar with teaching for social justice?

Neil: I suppose. You may have to redirect me if I am off track. Some of these terms that I recall only from being in the college of education don't make their way into the everyday conversation in a school.

Brian: What does teaching for social justice mean to you?

Neil: It means not just trying to educate someone in my classroom about some biological concept but expanding it to fit the bigger picture-educating so we may all live in a society that is more fair and just?

Reflecting on Neil's response and example of how he teaches for social justice I am inclined to think that because his response was inline with my perspective on teaching for social justice the tone was set for how I would analyze and interpret Neil's future responses. Additionally, I may have shed a more favorable glow over Neil's responses because we seemed to connect when looking at perspectives on teaching for social justice. I would also add that reflecting on my analysis and interpretation of Neil's responses I would suggest that Neil may not be as effective in implementing his teaching for social justice pedagogy as I originally thought. Neil's students may have provided a completely different view of the genetics project and one page biography on women and minorities in science than Neil's responses indicated.

Furthermore, I may have been able to be more critical of Neil if his answers to my questions were less in line with my way of thinking regarding teaching for social justice.

Brain: Do you teach for social justice?

Neil: I believe I do. A project my kids finished while in the midst of their genetics project was a one page biography on a female or minority scientist. It is quite interesting to introduce such a project and look around the room at the puzzled looks. It is a rural, white school district that I teach in. They look at me like, where is King going with this. I feel like I won my first victory. I have tied science to something that is wrong with our society (the many contributions that women and minorities have made to science without much of our society realizing some of these great discoveries). Once the students have done some research the discussions are usually awesome.

Initially I interpreted Neil's response in the following manner. It is evident that Neil is looking for a vehicle to move the students thinking toward bringing about 'change'. It seems that Neil believes that if he can bring to light or make evident to the students that "something is wrong with our society (the many contributions that women and minorities have made to science without much of our society realizing some of these great discoveries)" (Email Dialogue Exchange II) he can foster a change in them. This in some way appears to be an attempt to allow the students to understand "the dynamics of oppression" (Kumashiro, 2002. p. 31) and "work against oppression by focusing on what all students—privileged and marginalized—know and should know about the Other" (Kumashiro, 2002. p. 39). Kumashiro (2002) examines this form of education as Education about the Other. Because I have the same teaching strategies with my students, getting them to recognize a flaw in our social system which promotes dominant cultural values, I was more inclined to analyze and interpret Neil's responses favorable.

Reflections about 412W

Jim and I also had conversations which revolved around 412W, the undergraduate course which was imbedded with critical-consciousness raising activities. These activities, in my interpretation, were to promote teaching for social justice.

Brian: Is there a connection to/between your teaching stance/teaching practices and your undergraduate program...specifically the 412W secondary education course? Did this course help you in constructing your teaching stance/teaching practices related to teaching for social justice?

Jim: There is a connection in that some of the things brought up in CI 412 I never thought of before because they just were not issues where I grew up. We never had to worry about how what we said might offend someone because either there were none to offend or we knew enough about each to know that we were just being idiots and not serious. However, now I try to watch what I say as to not exclude anyone. I try to discourage the racial remarks and other offensive acts. I try to use what I learned in CI 412 to get students to think about life beyond the small town and how damaging the misconceptions can be. Where I once might have taught a folktale unit on the simple concepts of what goes into making one, we now talk about gender issues, issues of beauty, intelligence and equality.

Jim consciously makes reference to the fact that 412W revealed that his discourse was offensive outside his group and that he was conscious of his language and how his language could be construed as oppressive and/or offensive, though he may not intend it to be oppressive and/or offensive. Jim also calls for action again when he comments about discouraging racial remarks which takes courage.

Jim seems to connect 412W with his teaching practices and his own students by suggesting that he wants his students to think (maybe this is critically) about life beyond their small town. This may point to Jim's desire for his students to trouble and question

the way things are in their small town. Kumashiro (2002) supports this notion of troubling and questioning by suggesting “disruptive knowledge, in other words, is not an end in itself, but a means toward the always shifting goal of learning more” (p. 43). If Cothorn’s (2005) contention is accurate, people are less racist and prejudice with more education, then Jim’s approach may be more reflective of teaching for social justice.

During the course of another conversation I asked Jim about teaching diverse student populations.

Brian: Thinking back to your undergraduate secondary education course 412W...did this course help you in preparing to teach or think about how to teach students that are different than you and that you are different from in terms of sexual preference, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, culture, religion, socioeconomic class, etc.?

Jim: I would not say that it taught me how to deal with problems I have personally. What it did do was make me aware of the things that I do that could be construed as racist. It made me think about the things I say and do that I never thought were wrong before. I would have liked a little more content on how to deal with it.

Jim’s comments about becoming more aware of his own actions that could be construed as racist suggests that 412W may have provided a mechanism for prejudice reduction (Banks, 1995). Banks suggests that prejudice reduction “relates to the characteristics of students’ [in this case a preservice teacher] racial attitudes and strategies that teachers can use to help them develop more democratic values and attitudes” (1995, p. 392). Possibly the teacher(s) in 412W were able to persuade Jim to think about his actions and language in such a way that he was able to realize how his actions and language were oppressive.

It is difficult to determine if Jim’s comments about the lack of content in the course to deal with these issues of racist behavior and language is indicative of the

amount of content actually in the course. I would have to solicit responses from the teachers to determine the amount of content in the course. Also, it is unclear what Jim means by content.

Also during the course of our conversation Jim and I discussed how 412W moved him and created spaces for Jim to rethink racist behavior.

Brian: You mention the 412W class helped you think about issues you never thought about before because growing up they were not issues...can you give an example(s) of these issues and how you thought about them before and after the taking the course?

Jim: The problem was that I never thought about the issues before. I never thought of myself as a racist and just assumed that no one could interpret what I say and do as racist. After the class I saw they could and I tried to stop some of the things that I had been doing. For example, I stopped using the phrase "you guys" when referring to the whole class of males and females.

Once again Jim suggests that 412W created a space for Jim to rethink how he thought about the language and discourse he had used in the past that may be construed as oppressive. This space created by 412W, and its teachers, enabled him, as a preservice teacher, to rethink his prejudice and to embrace the idea of prejudice reduction (Banks, 1995). According to Banks (1995), "the prejudice reduction dimension of multicultural education relates to the characteristics of students' racial attitudes and strategies that teachers can use to help them develop more democratic values and attitudes" (p. 392). In this case it appears that Jim may have developed more democratic values and attitudes once his own prejudices and biases were exposed with help from 412W.

Another conversation began with a discussion about 412W's impact on Jim's ability to teach a diverse student population.

Brian: You mention that you “do tend to have a bit of a reservation about teaching students of different ethnicities.” How do you suppose you will get over this reservation? Did 412W provide you with any ideas on how to do this? Is it imperative to get over this reservation in order to develop into a “great” teacher (if there is such a thing)?

Jim: I guess the best way to get over this reservation is to actually do it – Teach different minorities and learn about them and how to deal with issues important to them. I did not really feel that 412W gave me any ideas. As I said in a another answer, I feel it opened me up to where my own prejudices lie, or at least my actions that make me appear to be prejudiced. We learned how society perpetuates these prejudices, but I did not get a sense that we were supposed to get anything out of it on how to fix it. I just assumed that he course aims were to make us aware and that once we were aware we would take the steps to correct it.

Jim’s comments potentially suggest that 412W provided him with the context to realize that in order to be an effective teacher for social justice he needs to teach students in a culturally response (Gay, 2000) manner. For example, he should teach students in a manner reflective of using cultural information, past experiences, and performance styles of diverse students to make learning more suitable and valuable for them n(Gay, 2000). In addition, Jim suggests that 412W provided him with the realization that he needs to learn about people (in his words, minorities), people who have different education requirements than himself. Once again, this is indicative of his realization that in order to be an effective teacher he needs to teach in a culturally responsive (Gay, 2000) manner.

Jim also makes reference to how 412W provided a framework for recognizing how society (and I would imagine its institutions) perpetuate these prejudices. Even though Jim goes on to comment that 412W did not provide a means for how to fix ‘it’, I would suggest that 412W did provide potential ways of addressing issues of prejudice which Jim has already mentioned. Means such as recognizing his own biases and prejudices and recognizing how his language and discourse may be interpreted as racist.

Neil and I also discussed 412W and its impact on his teaching and his teaching for social justice.

Brian: Is there a connection to/between your teaching stance/teaching practices and your undergraduate program...specifically the 412W secondary education course? Did this course help you in constructing your teaching stance/teaching practices related to teaching for social justice?

Neil: I don't think my stance was really altered by any of my certification classes. I think you have to remember that I was thirty years old at the time, worked and studied abroad, and was changing careers. I do think it was interesting to see the views of the other students in those courses. It was more beneficial to see the stances of the people I would be teaching with.

Even though Neil suggests that 412W did not really alter his teaching stance and thus teaching for social justice, I would suggest that it had a larger impact on his teaching for social justice than he realized. When Neil comments about how it was interesting to see the views of other students in 412W I think he is making a connection to people's attitudes and behaviors related to issues surrounding power, privilege, and oppression such as race, sexual preference, ethnicity, and the like.

Indirectly Neil has made connections about how people think about the world, how people's prejudices are manifested in their thinking and how teachers (in this case preservice teachers) are not exempt from being influenced by social structures which create standards for normalcy (Kumashiro, 2002) such as white, male, heterosexual, middleclass. Neil is juxtaposing his views on power, privilege, and oppression with those of the other students in the course. In doing so, Neil has to have a frame of reference which is the 412W course and its critical-consciousness raising experiences. I am obviously suggesting that 412W had more of an impact on Neil than he realized. Additionally, I am not so obviously suggesting that my question(s) may have been vague

and not specific enough for Neil to identify aspects of the course which were obviously relevant to him teaching for social justice. Clearly 412W was influential in a positive manner concerning the fostering of teaching for social justice.

Reflections of a Researcher's Role

In reflecting on my role during the inquiry process with my participants, as well as, my analysis and interpretation of their stories, I realized that there may be several aspects of this process that I did not completely consider. One of these aspects is the idea of reflexivity. According to Schwandt (2001) reflexivity is a “process of critical self-reflection on one’s bias, theoretical predispositions, preferences, and so forth. This kind of self-inspection can be salutary for any kind of inquiry, and fieldworkers are often encouraged to record and explore these evolving dispositions” (p. 224).

During the course of my research I was so preoccupied with making connections between the teacher’s stories and a critical analysis of how they taught for social justice that I did not stop to reflect on how my biases, theoretical predispositions, preferences, and mindset at the time which may have influenced how I made sense of their responses. Reflecting now, it is apparent that I may have created a lens of bias to view Jim’s responses because of my perception that Jim was not wholeheartedly teaching for social justice according to my expectations. In addition, during my inquiry, when I asked Jim for examples of how he teaches for social justice he only gave me experiences that demonstrated he was not teaching for social justice.

Brian: You mention that you try to discourage racial remarks and other offensive acts...I assume this is related to your

students/teaching...how do you do this? Could you give an example regarding issues such as sexual preference, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, culture, religion, socioeconomic class, etc.? Why do you think people (in your area/schools) think the way they do about African Americans? What causes some in your area/schools to be a racist or make racist comments?

Jim: I think my answer to the previous question also applies to this one. If I see any of the comments or drawings I tell them that I do not want to hear it and to erase the drawings. It has never gone beyond that because I only substituted and never have them long-term. The kids usually do as I ask and there is no trouble.

This may have reinforced my bias and made it easier for me to deem Jim an unconscious target to criticize and make an example.

Also, my theoretical dispositions of critical structuralist multiculturalism may have provided a backdrop that made it easy to target Jim because his efforts to teach for social justice seemed to warrant a complicit hegemony. I think the nature of critical multiculturalism prompted me to want to be critical in order to create an environment where criticism was paramount to the conceptual understanding of the structures of the larger system of culture. Because I did not interpret Jim's teaching for social justice as anything more than lip-service my theoretical predisposition may have allowed me to target Jim's whiteness, his maleness, his heterosexuality, his middleclassness as unwarranted privileges and thus criticize him.

Additional structures which may have prompted me to be over critical of Jim's responses was my interpretation of Jim's bias because of my bias.

Brian: Going back to teaching stance and teaching practice or we can also say worldview or perspective what life events have helped how you view issues related to teaching for social justice...for example your worldview/perspective on sexual preference, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, culture, religion, socioeconomic class, etc., issues that make us different from one another? How do you take your perspectives concerning these issues into the classroom?

Jim: I try not to take any of those things into account as they should not matter in terms of what the student can or cannot do. I guess you could say that I try and encourage the students to ignore that too although it is difficult when we are supposed to treat everyone as an equal yet some ethnic backgrounds want to retain that identity and it is difficult to do that and treat them equal at the same time. However, as a rule, I try to leave my own personal opinions on those things at home and not in the classroom unless I see racism or bigotry going on.

My bias, theoretical dispositions, and preferences towards making connections to my theoretical framework and the educational work of Kumashiro, Kincheloe and Steinberg, Sleeter, and Others cast blinders over my eyes. Jim's comments persuaded me to think he was prejudiced and biased and his comments about teaching for social justice were more lip-service rather than genuine and authentic. In other words, he may have been making responses that were more politically correct than honest because he was unsure of my race, sexuality, and socio-economic status. Because of this perspective I took, again, I may have been over critical in my analysis and interpretation rather than digging deeper to find a connection between Jim's responses and 412W.

Another aspect I may not have considered during the research process is that of the setting and context. That is, the idea that even though the teachers and I were not working together physical (being in the teacher's classrooms and face-to-face interviews) I was still part of the setting and context which may have influenced how I developed particular interpretations of their responses. Schwandt describes this part of the research process in the following way:

Reflexivity in a methodological sense can also signal more than inspection of potential sources of bias and their control. It can point to the fact the inquirer is part of the setting, context, and social phenomenon he or she seeks to understand.

Hence, reflexivity can be a means for crucially inspecting the entire research process, including reflecting on ways in which a field-worker establishes a social network of informants and participants in a study and examining one's personal and theoretical commitments to determine how they serve as resources for generating particular data, for behaving in particular ways vis-à-vis respondents and participants, and for developing particular interpretations. (p. 224)

I think in this case, at times, my personal and theoretical commitments pushed me see more of the negative nature of the data rather than the positive nature of the data.

For example, based the following response I criticized Jim about advocating pedagogy of Whiteness, as well as, his denying students of color because they are not white which is Othering (Kumashiro, 2002).

Brian: You mention that "we are supposed to treat everyone as an equal" in the classroom (referring to students of color/ethnicity)...equal to what? Is there a standard that teachers are supposed to apply to all students in terms of treatment regardless of race, religion, sexual preference, ethnicity, socioeconomic class, etc.? When you mention "we are supposed to treat everyone as an equal" can you substitute other responsible parties besides teachers for "we"?

Jim: What I mean by that is that I was always taught that everyone should be treated the same regardless of race, religion, sexual preference. In other words a person should not be looked down upon or denied their rights simply because they are of a different religion, race or sexual orientation. In the classroom that means not assuming that a black student is poor or a criminal or that an Asian student is smart. It means that everyone should be given equal opportunity and consideration. We all should look these people and see a person, not a black person, a white person, a gay person. Just a person.

In my hast to be critical of Jim's bias and lack of understanding of the issues surrounding teaching for social justice I may have disregard the deeper meaning behind Jim's

dialogue. I think it was easy to criticize Jim on the surface for his views of treating all people, regardless of religion, race, or sexual orientation as just people because it holds all people up to a paradigm of whiteness. However, I should have furthered my inquiry into his meaning of concepts such as ‘treated the same’, ‘because they are of a different religion, race, or sexual orientation’, ‘equal opportunity’, and ‘Just a person’. This may have revealed deeper and more complex meaning about Jim’s way of thinking and the sociocultural structures that may have played a role in sculpting Jim’s way of making meaning about religion, race, sexual orientation, etc.

Another aspect I have reflected on is the relationship between my own educational background and my analysis and interpretation of the data. Not having graduated from a teacher education program, not having been a preservice teacher, and not having taught in a k- 12 setting I may have limited some of my understanding of the phenomenon taking place in the teacher’s stories. These limitations may not have allowed me to see aspects of their stories which may have altered the scope of my description, analysis and interpretation.

I have also reflected on other reader’s impressions of my analysis and interpretations as another aspect of this process. Even though this has taken place after my description, analysis, and interpretation, reflecting on how other readers have interpreted my stories has provided me with some insight into my writing and its meaning. From this part of the process I have been able to reflect and learn something about myself in this experience. According to Amulya (2007), “Certain kinds of experiences create particularly powerful opportunities for learning through reflection” (p. 1). In this case, having other reads provide feedback about their impressions of my

description, analysis, and interpretation provided other lenses to view my research. These lenses enabled me to reflect on how I analyzed and interpreted the responses as well as insight into my own biases, theoretical dispositions, and preferences in relationship to my research.

Additionally, the insight I gained into my research through the eyes of other readers has prompted me to specify my intentions of telling the teacher's stories. I want readers of this research to realize the complexity of teaching for social justice. To realize all of the extraneous variables that come into play which are out of one's control. These variables impact the context in which teaching for social justice takes place. I want readers to understand that my intention was not to criticize any of the participants in order to evidence their shortcomings, their lack of knowledge of teaching for social justice, or their biases, prejudices, or hegemonic tendencies. Instead, I wanted to highlight their respectable attempts at teaching for social justice through their stories. I intended their stories to be emblematic of the extremely complex and dynamic nature of teaching for social justice.

Conclusion

In retrospect, writing this chapter provided the opportunity to reflect on how my own subjectivity and my own agency impacted this research. In reading the teachers' texts (stories) I was in a process of open-ended interpretation, a process of negotiation (Nealon & Searls Giroux, 2003). In other words, my interpretation of the teacher's stories is based on my subjectivity and agency; my subjectivity being its place among social

positions and my agency being the power to do something (Nealon & Searls Giroux, 2003). My position as a researcher helped to shape how I have made interpretations of the teacher's stories, as well as, provided me with the power to make connections between the teacher's stories and issues of power, privilege, and oppression.

According to Creswell, "The qualitative researcher systematically reflects on who he or she is in the inquiry and is sensitive to his or her personal biography and how it shapes the study" (2003, p. 182). This process of systematically reflecting on who I am and how I influenced the outcome of the study did not take place during the course of the study which could have been injected into to the description, analysis, and interpretation.

Additionally, Creswell suggests that "This introspection and acknowledgement of biases, values, and interests (or *reflexivity*) typifies qualitative research today. The personal-self becomes inseparable from the researcher-self" (2003, p. 182). During the course of my research I did not acknowledge this aspect of the research process; I did not inform the reader or myself for that matter, of my position surrounding the issues emerging in the gathering, analysis, and interpretation process. In retrospect, future research needs to procedurally encompass statements of personal reflection which emerge in the 'role of the researcher' section or an epilogue, or are embedded throughout the study (Creswell, 2003, p. 182). This will promote the reflexivity which is paramount to qualitative inquiry and research.

Chapter Seven

Conclusion

Understanding the Complexity of Teaching for Social Justice

The purpose of this research project was to explore what it means for in-service teachers to teach for social justice. My attention was on teachers who took an undergraduate secondary education course that focused on critical consciousness-raising experiences promoting the teaching for social justice and how those teachers currently describe, interpret, contemplate, think about and implement these experiences.

Other questions I considered along the way were: How do teachers conceptualize teaching for social justice in classroom experiences and how is this related to teaching for social justice? What are some of the obstacles which inhibit teachers from teaching for social justice? What teacher education programs aspects impact teaching for social justice? Do teachers connect teaching for social justice to their teaching stance?

In this chapter I will review sociocultural structures which impacted the participants' interpretations of teaching for social justice. Along with this review, I will discuss the degree to which the participants go, in order to implement their respective teaching strategies to teach for social justice. From my research questions and participants' stories, I will then conclude with the implications of each on teacher education.

Teaching for Social Justice in Practice

Considering the many dynamic and complex factors involved with teaching for social justice, as well as the many dynamic and complex researchers who advocate “their” form of teaching for social justice, I have concluded that there is a continuum to which teaching for social justice manifests itself in the classroom. This continuum is a range going from not teaching for social justice at one end of the continuum (left) to teaching for social justice to the degree that encompasses all of the dynamics involved with teaching for social justice (right). This continuum is very subjective based on how one interprets what teaching for social justice encompasses.

My analysis and interpretation of Jim’s teaching for social justice is that he would be positioned at the left, indicating he did not teach for social justice very effectively. Jim’s self-admitted attempts at teaching for social justice fell short when assessing his attempts at education for the Other, education about the Other, education that is critical of privileging and Othering, as well as education that changes students and society (Kumashiro, 2002).

Jim’s attempt (discouragement) at education for the Other (Kumashiro, 2002) does not address the social mechanisms in his classroom which counters power, privilege, and oppression. Jim’s focus “on individual prejudice, cultural differences, and the interpersonal discriminatory treatment of the Other,” (Kumashiro, 2002, p. 37) fails to attend to other causes as well as other signs of oppression (McCarthy, 1993). Jim’s ‘silence’ is discouraging because not addressing racial remarks does not address the ‘privileging’ of the ‘normal’ (Kumashiro, 2002). Thus, by only focusing on discouraging racial remarks Jim is implying that the Other is the problem (Kumashiro, 2002).

Additionally, Jim's attempt (teaching about gender issues, issues of beauty, intelligence and equality) at education about the Other (Kumashiro, 2002) does not address the social mechanisms in his classroom which counter power, privilege, and oppression. Jim's focus on gender issues, issues of beauty, intelligence, and equality are once again pointing out difference rather than privilege. As Britzman (1998) points out this "might simply reinforce the binary of "us" and "them"" and "that learning about "them" helps students see that "they" are like "us", and therefore does not disrupt ways that students see themselves" (Kumashiro, p. 43).

Jim, in fact, does not in fact apply any of Kumashiro's strategies or pedagogical practices in education that are critical of privileging and Othering (2002). Jim mentions that the undergraduate course he took provided a context for developing a critical consciousness; however, not to the degree of acknowledging privileging and Othering in his own classroom.

Since Jim does not implement a classroom strategy addressing education that is critical of privileging and Othering, he obviously is unable to promote education that changes students and society (Kumashiro, 2002). Ultimately, teaching for social justice embodies "teaching for the sake of arousing the kinds of vivid, reflective, experiential responses that might move students to come together in serious efforts to understand what social justice actually means and what it might demand" (Greene, 1998, pp. xxix-xxx). Without question, Jim is without question not accomplishing this dynamic as it relates to teaching for social justice. Overall, he does not effectively teach for social justice.

My analysis and interpretation of Neil's teaching for social justice concludes he is positioned at the right of the continuum which would indicate that he did teach for social justice effectively in some cases and in comparison to Jim was much more effective. Neil's self-admitted attempts at teaching for social justice were somewhat effective in assessing his attempts at education for the Other, education about the Other, education that is critical of privileging and Othering, and education that changes students and society (Kumashiro, 2002).

Neil's attempt (project—biography of a female or minority scientist) at education for the Other (Kumashiro, 2002) does address some of the social mechanisms in his classroom which identifies issues of power, privilege, and oppression in society. His project focused on diversity outside the classroom and in society; on difference and people that may be defined by their difference to “normalcy” and what is considered socially “normal” (Kumashiro, 2002). Even though Neil is effective in his implementation of this pedagogical practice, Kumashiro suggests this “approach is necessary to work against the harmful effects of oppression, but in helping only the Other (and presuming to know the Other) it alone is not enough” (2002, p. 39).

Neil's attempt (comments about Muslims, homosexuality, abortion, evolution) at education about the Other (Kumashiro, 2002) also addresses the social mechanisms in his classroom, and society, which identify issues of power, privilege, and oppression. His focus on issues of religion, sexuality, and child birth is his attempt “to work against oppression by focusing on what all students—privileged and marginalized—know and should know about the Other” (Kumashiro, 2002, p. 39).

Neil's (conscious or unconscious) attempt to educate about the Other provides the impetus for challenging oppression. According to Kumashiro (2002, p. 39), "Given that knowledge can lead to oppressive as well as antioppressive actions, and given that a primary goal of schooling is to teach and learn more knowledge, these researchers suggest that antioppressive knowledge is central to challenging oppressions in schools".

Neil's attempt (student who found a story that an African-American was in a car accident in the south and bled to death because the hospital didn't want to put white blood in him) at education that is critical of privileging and Othering falls somewhat short of its mark. However, Neil still attempts to identify social structures that power, privilege, and oppress in his classroom. His project for his students, though effective in some ways, does not establish a knowledge base for the students which would allow them to be critical of the privileging that occurs in society. Kumashiro suggests,

Many researchers have argued that understanding oppression requires more than one's dispositions toward, treatment of, and knowledge about the Other. They assert that educator's and students need to examine not only how some groups and identities are Other in society, but also how some groups are privileged, as well as how this dual process is legitimized and maintained by social structures and competing ideologies. (2002, p. 44)

Even though Neil's project allows a student to realize the injustices committed against a non-dominant group member in this country, it still does not provide an opportunity for the student to recognize what social structures contribute to the privileging of the dominant group. Trying to develop this "critical consciousness requires *unlearning* or

critiquing what was previously learned to be “normal” and normative (Britzman, 1998), especially when what we previously learned helps to mask the privileging and Othering of different identities” (Kumashiro, 2002, pp. 45-46).

Neil’s classroom environment is unable to foster such critical thinking in his student which “involves making visible the privilege of certain identities [Euro-Americans] over others [African-Americans]” (Kumashiro, 2002, p. 46). The discovery of a horrible atrocity committed against an African-American does not allow the student to see the connection between privilege and oppression because Neil does not uncover “the process by which this privilege is masked” as well as “the process of learning about the dynamics of oppression [that] involve learning about oneself” (Kumashiro, 2002, p. 46). According to Kumashiro (2002),

Developing this critical perspective can happen when teachers practice what Maher and Tetreault (1994) call a “pedagogy of positionality” that engages both students and teacher in recognizing and critiquing how we are positioned and how we position others in social structures. (p. 46)

I believe that both teachers were genuinely interested in teaching for social justice. The degree to which teaching for social justice manifested itself in their classrooms was relative to their perspective on what it means to teach for social justice. Based on this perspective, they implemented this pedagogical practice in their own way. The complexity lies with individual teachers and how they connect teaching for social justice to social structures/issues such as power, privilege, and oppression.

Implications for Teacher Education

The undergraduate secondary education course, which focused on critical consciousness-raising experiences, was a conduit between the preservice teacher's perspectives, reality, worldviews, and interpretations of what it means to teach for social justice. Because each preservice teacher brought with him, to the classroom, a different set of perspectives, realities, worldviews, each had his own personality, character, and lenses by and through which to interpret the world around them. This means it is impossible to determine how inservice teachers, who took a course in developing pedagogical practices to teach for social justice, will implement teaching for social justice into their curriculum. These inservice teachers may have the best intentions but are unable to follow through with teaching for social justice because they interpret teaching for social justice incorrectly, they are only able to implement elements of teaching for social justice, or they may be limited by time, politics, NCLB, resources, high-stakes testing, close-minded students, parents, administrators, other teachers, school boards, and community.

In order for teachers to implement teaching strategies conducive to producing teaching for social justice to the degree advocated by educational experts such as Banks (1995), Bullock (2004), Ayers, Hunt, and Quinn (1998), Freire, (1970), Gay (2002), hooks (1994), Kincheloe and Steinberg (1997) and Kumashiro (2002), as well as others, teacher education programs need to incorporate teaching for social justice throughout the curriculum, not just in one course. According to Bullock (2004),

This means we need to incorporate structured and guided experiences for preservice teachers to have classroom experiences while considering critical diversity issues. This also means providing professional development opportunities, such as courses or workshops, for inservice teachers to explore these issues. (p 154)

I would add that these structured and guided experiences need to be conducted by teacher-educators who are able to create spaces for inservice teachers to develop a critical awareness of the social structures that produce power, privilege, and oppression. Otherwise, we will continue to reinforce the status quo and the Eurocentric canon.

One of the difficulties that teacher education programs face when trying to develop pedagogical, teaching for social justice practices, is that these programs are trying to educate a majority of white students/teachers. Sleeter suggests (1993), “the teaching population in the U.S. is becoming increasingly white while the student population becomes increasingly racially diverse” (p. 157). According to Sleeter, This may pose a problem if “Whites so internalize their own power and taken-for-granted superiority that they resist self-questioning” (1993, p. 167). I think many white students/teachers are unable to recognize and acknowledge their own power and privilege (like Jim, for instance) and if these privileges are pointed out to them in teacher education programs, they may be less likely and less willing to teach for social justice as because they may feel they are being attacked. Sleeter supports this contention by stating that “educators who try to teach white people about racism often experience tenacious resistance” (1993, p. 158).

Sleeter also argues “that it is terribly inadequate to address racism in education primarily by trying to educate white teachers” (1993, p. 157). Both Jim and Neil (white teachers) were well-intended; however, they were not able to teach for social justice to the degree that would or could changed students (and ultimately society) to fight against, for example, injustices in our society such as racism and hatred. I would suggest (as does Sleeter (1993)), that teacher-education programs need to recruit more students of color, thus producing more diverse teaching population to implement culturally responsive pedagogical practices. This is not to say, however, that white teachers cannot do the same or that they will not be as effective.

I would also advocate that teacher-education programs need to reform its curricula in such ways that do not reinforce pedagogy of whiteness but rather allows all students to recognize social structures which provide power and privilege as well as social structures which oppress. This needs to be in conjunction with teaching teachers pedagogical strategies for creating the same environment for student in the classroom. I know this is a difficult proposition but I believe I am a testament for the possibility of this process working effectively.

Teacher-education programs need to be dynamic and adaptable. They need to be implemented by people who are diverse in their thinking and in their perspectives on the world. Considering that people are dynamic and not static, teacher-education programs need to be able to create dynamic spaces that are safe for students, allowing them to explore new knowledges, or disrupt old knowledges. Teacher-education programs also need to maintain these spaces so that when preservice teachers become inservice

teachers, they still are able to explore, challenge, disrupt, and construct in order to continually to teach for social justice.

Other implications for teacher-education programs may include providing multiple courses, workshops, inservice not only as preservice teachers but also as inservice teachers. We need to do this to further teacher's understanding of sociocultural mechanisms which create inequality, inequity, and unjust environments (like schools). Ways of thinking and meaning-making, of adults, are not easily changed. One course in a teacher-education program cannot be expected to change students and society in 15 weeks.

Another implication for teacher-education is that teachers who are afforded the rights and privileges of the dominant group are less likely to take up arms against injustice to and try and challenge and change society either in a secondary education course or in their own classroom. In order to make my point I quote Sleeter (1993) at length:

White people are aware of the efforts they and their families and friends have made to better themselves, and they are aware of the problems they encounter in everyday life. It is in their interest to assume that the problems they face are not unique and that the efforts all people make pay off according to the same rules. "Given the racial and class organization of American society, there is only so much people can 'see'. Positions they occupy in these structures limit the range of their thinking. The situation places barriers on their imagination and restricts the possibilities of their vision" (Wellman, 1977, p. 235). Spending most of their time

with other white people, whites do not see much of the realities of the lives of Americans of color nor encounter their viewpoints in any depth. Nor do they really want to, since those viewpoints would challenge practices and beliefs that benefit white people. (p. 168)

Sleeter (1993) suggests in order to change this perspective, people privileged by the dominant group, and (in this case white teachers) need to reconstruct their basic interpretation of race to better understand the sociocultural mechanisms that produce power and privilege, based on the sociocultural concept of race. This is a huge undertaking which would require large investments in time and effort on the part of education programs as well as educational systems. More importantly, people have to be willing to change.

Teacher-education programs need collectively to develop a vision of teaching for social justice through practices such as antioppressive pedagogy and critical consciousness-raising experiences which are emblematic of a critical multiculturalism (pedagogy) which embraces, advocates, designs, implements, and evaluates teaching for social justice. This process needs to be infused by teacher educators who are invested in teaching for social justice both emotionally and structurally which according to Bullock (2004), many teacher-educators feel this type of course is generic and unnecessary.

Teacher education programs also need to recruit students who harbor “diverse worldviews and discursive fields of reference, including those that expose, challenge, and deconstruct racism [power and privilege] rather than tacitly accepting this” (Sleeter, 1993, p. 168). Obviously this is easier said than done. Sleeter suggests that

Educators of color are much more likely to bring life experiences and viewpoints that critique white supremacy than are white teachers and to engage in activities that challenge various forms of racism (Foster, 1990; Ladson-Billings and Henry, 1990). They are also less likely to “marginalize minority intellectual discourse” (Gordon, 1990, p. 103). (1993, p. 169)

In other words, teacher-education programs need to be diverse regarding its teacher-educators as well as students.

However, simply implementing these ideas for teacher-education programs is only part of the solution the promoting of social justice. Research continually needs to be designed and conducted to assess and evaluate the efficacy of teacher-education programs’ attempts to promote teaching for social justice. Specifically, more inservice teachers who have been exposed to teacher-education programs espousing and utilizing teaching practices rooted in social justice need to have their stories told to make sense of what is taking place between teacher-education programs and actually teaching for social justice. This translates into further research connected to the dynamics and complexity of teaching for social justice.

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Appendix A

Jim's Demographic Information

Demographic Information (Responding is optional).

1. What is your gender?
 - a. Female
 - b. Male**
 - c. Transgender

2. What is your age?
 - a. 22 or under
 - b. 23-25
 - c. 25-33**
 - d. 33-42
 - e. 42 and over

3. With what racial/ethnic group do you identify? (if you are of a multi-racial/multi-ethnic background, circle all that apply).
 - a. African American/Black
 - b. Asian/Pacific Islander
 - c. Middle Eastern
 - d. Native American/Alaskan Native
 - e. Chicano/Latina/Hispanic
 - f. Euro-American/White**

4. What is your sexual identity?
 - a. Bisexual
 - b. Lesbian
 - c. Gay
 - d. Heterosexual**
 - e. Uncertain

5. With what socio-economic status do you identify?
 - a. Poor Working**
 - b. Middle
 - c. Affluent

6. Do you have a disability that substantially limits a major life activity (such as seeing, hearing, learning, walking)?
- a. Yes
 - b. No**
7. In what type of area did your family predominantly live while you were growing up?
- a. Farm
 - b. Rural (non-farm)
 - c. Urban
 - d. International
 - e. Suburban
 - f. Small-town**
8. What area are you teaching?
- a. Language and Literacy**
 - b. World Languages
 - c. Science
 - d. Mathematics
 - e. Citizenship
 - f. Other: _____
9. In what type of area are you teaching?
- a. _____ Farm
 - b. _____ Rural (non-farm)**
 - c. _____ Urban
 - d. _____ International
10. In what type of school are you teaching?
- a. _____ Private (non-parochial)
 - b. _____ Parochial
 - c. _____ Public**
 - d. _____ Charter

Appendix B

Neil's Demographic Information

Demographic Information (Responding is optional).

3. What is your gender?

- a. Female
- b. Male**
- c. Transgender

4. What is your age?

- a. 22 or under
- b. 23-25
- c. 25-33**
- d. 33-42
- e. 42 and over

11. With what racial/ethnic group do you identify? (if you are of a multi-racial/multi-ethnic background, circle all that apply.)

- a. African American/Black
- b. Asian/Pacific Islander
- c. Middle Eastern
- d. Native American/Alaskan Native
- e. Chicano/Latina/Hispanic
- f. Euro-American/White**

12. What is your sexual identity?

- a. Bisexual
- b. Lesbian
- c. Gay
- d. Heterosexual**
- e. Uncertain

13. With what socio-economic status do you identify?

- a. Poor Working
- b. Middle**
- c. Affluent

14. Do you have a disability that substantially limits a major life activity (such as seeing, hearing, learning, walking)?
- a. Yes
 - b. No**
15. In what type of area did your family predominantly live while you were growing up?
- a. Farm
 - b. Rural (non-farm)
 - c. Urban
 - d. International
 - e. Suburban**
 - f. Small-town
16. What area are you teaching?
- a. Language and Literacy
 - b. World Languages
 - c. Science**
 - d. Mathematics
 - e. Citizenship
 - f. Other: _____
17. In what type of area are you teaching?
- a. _____ Farm**
 - b. _____ Rural (non-farm)
 - c. _____ Urban
 - d. _____ International
18. In what type of school are you teaching?
- a. _____ Private (non-parochial)
 - b. _____ Parochial
 - c. _____ Public**
 - d. _____ Charter

VITA

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FORMAL EDUCATION

Recreation Management, B. S., area of concentration, Fitness Management, Lock Haven University of Pennsylvania, 1995.

Physical Education and Exercise Science, M. S., area of concentration, Athletic Administration, Michigan State University, 1997.

Curriculum and Instruction, Ph. D., area of concentration, Curriculum and Supervision, The Pennsylvania State University, ABD.

Dissertation title: Preservice Teachers to Inservice Teachers: Teaching for Social Justice

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Instructor in Fitness Management/Recreation Management, August 1999 to present, Lock Haven University of Pennsylvania, Lock Haven, PA 17745.

Strength and Conditioning Coordinator, January 1999 to May 1999, Lock Haven University of Pennsylvania, Lock Haven, PA 17745.

Assistant Strength and Conditioning Coach, May 1997 – August 1998, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI

Teaching Assistant, August 1995 – May 1998, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI.
Taught physical education and exercise science courses, proctored exams.

Student Assistant Strength and Conditioning Coach, May 1995 – August 1995, The Pennsylvania State University, State College, PA