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Journal of Teacher Education 2005; 56; 418
DOI: 10.1177/0022487105279569

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THE INTEGRATION OF SOCIAL JUSTICE IN TEACHER EDUCATION

DIMENSIONS OF PROSPECTIVE TEACHERS' OPPORTUNITIES TO LEARN

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This article examines the integration of social justice in teacher education and defines dimensions of teachers' opportunities to learn. Findings come from a comparative case study of two elementary teacher education programs: the Teachers for Tomorrow's Schools Program at Mills College and the Teacher Education Intern Program at San José State University. Combining concepts from sociocultural theory and a theory of justice for the conceptual framework, this study illustrates how these programs addressed social justice in university courses and how teachers' opportunities to learn varied across specific dimensions. Specifically, this article highlights teachers' opportunities to develop conceptual and practical tools related to social justice as emphasizing the needs of students identified by their membership in educational categories and the needs of students identified by their status in oppressed groups. In addition, it addresses how variation in teachers' opportunities informed their conceptions of students and their preparation.

Keywords: *teacher education; social justice; multicultural education; sociocultural theory; teacher preparation*

Vanessa, a student teacher in Oakland, California, begins a writing lesson by reading *The Owl Moon*. She instructs her first and second graders to snap when they recognize a descriptive word. Initially, the students create a cacophony, but soon, taken by the story, they forget about snapping altogether. After the lesson, Vanessa reflects that she does not feel as if she connects with her students, and she wonders if her sense of disconnection stems from racial or class differences. All of her students, except one, are African American, and although she is mixed race, Vanessa is not African American. Whereas most of her students are from low-income backgrounds, Vanessa was raised in a middle-class household. She says that she hopes to continue teaching African American students but questions whether she will ever feel prepared to work well with those students. Enrolled in a preservice teacher education program that claims a commitment to preparing teachers for racially and ethnically diverse classrooms, Vanessa recognizes that inevitably, she will face the challenge of teaching students from diverse

Author's Note: Thanks to Meredith Honig, Pam Grossman, and Robert Kunzman for reading earlier versions of this article as well as the reviewers of the *Journal of Teacher Education* for their thoughtful comments and recommendations. Also, I want to thank the faculty members at Mills College and San José State University for opening up their practices so that others can learn from their experiences and efforts.

Journal of Teacher Education, Vol. 56, No. 5, November/December 2005 418-435
DOI: 10.1177/0022487105279569
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backgrounds, and she wonders, Will I be prepared? Will I know enough to reach all the students in my class? How will I relate to students who do not share my background?

It is likely that Vanessa, and the majority of prospective teachers currently enrolled in teacher education programs nationwide, will be called on to teach students who come from a variety of communities and whose lived experiences differ from their own. Demographic trends reveal that by the middle of this century, students of color will constitute more than 50% of those enrolled in public schools and that the number of English-language learners (ELLs) and students living in poverty will also continue to rise (Ladson-Billings, 1999b; Villegas & Lucas, 2002). In California, where Vanessa plans to teach, 62% of students are students of color, 25% are ELLs, and 47% qualify for the federally supported free or reduced-price lunch program for low-income students (Education Data Partnership, 2003). However, the pool of currently practicing and prospective teachers remains primarily White, female, and middle class (Cochran-Smith, Davis, & Fries, 2003). For example, in 2002, nearly 75% of the teachers working in California's public schools were White (Education Data Partnership, 2003). These demographic trends and Vanessa's experiences raise the question, How are teacher education programs preparing teachers to teach well in increasingly diverse classrooms?

This article addresses this question by examining how two teacher education programs aim to improve how they prepare prospective teachers to teach racially diverse and low-income students well. In the first section below, I review the literature on teacher education and show that historically, teacher education programs have aimed to address diversity with add-on or piecemeal approaches, with little success. However, in recent years, new approaches to multicultural education and diversity have suggested that programs that integrate a social-justice orientation across program settings are likely to fare better. This review raises the following questions: How do social-justice teacher education programs aim to achieve these goals, and what factors help and hinder them in the process? I then discuss how I drew on sociocultural theory and a theory of social justice as the theoretical underpinnings for a comparative, mixed-methods analysis of the implementation of an integrated social-justice approach in two elementary teacher education programs. My study revealed two types of findings. First, I found that these two teacher education programs had explicit commitments to social justice and equity. However, the implementation of this commitment in practice varied within each program along specific dimensions that help reveal in specific terms the range of ways social justice might be integrated in a teacher education program. It is important that differences in the integration of social justice between the two programs affected teachers' views of teaching students from diverse backgrounds. I conclude with implications for practice and research in teacher education.

BACKGROUND

Historically, preservice teacher education programs have attempted to improve the preparation of teachers for diversity by making structural and curricular changes to their programs. For example, programs have added courses in multicultural education, required clinical experiences with students from diverse backgrounds, and otherwise created opportunities for prospective teachers—particularly White, middle-class teachers—to consider their beliefs and attitudes about students of color and low-income students (Banks, 1995; Gay, 1994; Goodwin, 1997; Grant, 1994; Ladson-Billings, 1995). Although important, these opportunities often have been mapped onto the fragmented structure of teacher education programs and have had limited success (Cochran-Smith et al., 2003; Goodlad, 1990; Grant, 1994; Grant & Secada, 1990; Howey & Zimpher, 1989). Some programs have aimed to address the shortcomings of these attempts by integrating a vision of teaching and learning focused on social-justice principles in a more so-called coherent approach.

Many argue that developing program coherence around multicultural education and social

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justice would improve the preparation of teachers to work with diverse students (e.g., Nieto, 2000; Villegas & Lucas, 2002). These claims stem in part from empirical evidence that creating greater coherence around a particular vision of teaching and learning, such as a learner-centered vision, improves teachers' opportunities to learn (e.g., Snyder, 2000; Zeichner, 2000). However, research on the integration of social justice is limited. Much of this work focuses on integration within individual courses rather than across programs.

For example, Ladson-Billings (1999a) used critical race theory to illustrate how individuals and programs more explicitly challenge prospective teachers to address issues of race and inequality. She suggested that Cochran-Smith's work at Boston College challenges teachers to more directly explore how race and racism inform their views and practices by supporting them to develop five different perspectives that are critical to addressing issues of race and language diversity: "reconsidering personal knowledge and experience, locating teaching with the culture of the school and the community, analyzing children's learning opportunities, understanding children's understanding, and constructing reconstructionist pedagogy" (p. 229). Ladson-Billings also pointed to a course taught by Joyce-King that uses a Black studies theoretical perspective to challenge teachers to reconsider their own education and their role as change agents in teaching.

The tide seems to be turning, however. A recent review of multicultural teacher education mentions two studies (Davis, 1995; Tatto, 1996) as having investigated the inclusion of such issues across entire programs (Cochran-Smith et al., 2003). Tatto (1996) found that although programs subscribed to principles of fairness and social justice, they had weak impacts on teachers' ingrained beliefs. In addition, Ladson-Billings (2001) explored the experiences of prospective teachers in a program explicitly focused on diversity and culturally relevant teaching. The overall focus of Ladson-Billings's study was on prospective teachers' experiences and practices, not on the program as a whole or on teachers' opportunities to learn about such issues across program settings. Vavrus (2002) described how Evergreen State College infuses transformative multicultural education into its program standards. From his perspective, Evergreen State College is a clear example of how teacher education programs might adapt standards set by the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education to more fully address issues of race and diversity.

These studies point to critical issues regarding the integration of social justice; they highlight the importance of teacher educators' practice, prospective teachers' experiences, and program policies. These studies provide an initial foundation but leave key implementation questions unaddressed. For example, Tatto (1996) reported weak impacts on teachers but did not illuminate how integration worked. Without this information, one has limited understanding of the root causes of these limited impacts. Accordingly, I aim to extend this emerging line of current research by examining the following questions about the implementation of social justice in teacher education:

- How do teacher education programs implement social justice in an integrated fashion across the entire program (e.g., including university courses and field placements)?
- What do prospective teachers' opportunities to learn about social justice look like in such programs?

THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

I turned to sociocultural theory (e.g., Engeström & Miettinen, 1999; Lave, 1988) and a theory of justice (Young, 1990) as the conceptual framework for this inquiry because together, they provide concepts essential for understanding the process of integrating conceptions of social justice.

Sociocultural theory starts from the premise that a complex charge such as teacher preparation for diversity is a problem of teacher learning. The challenge for teacher education is to enable teachers to use a dynamic array of knowledge and to learn in and from practice (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999; McDonald, 1992; Shulman, 1987, 1998). In this conception, who students and teachers are, where schools are

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located, and the types of resources available—along with other contextual factors—all matter to the work of teaching and learning. Sociocultural theory recognizes this complexity and views prospective teachers' opportunities to learn such an array of knowledge as embedded within the activity system of teacher education. Within such a system, teachers' learning results from the interaction between their prior experiences and their opportunities to learn in university courses and clinical placements (e.g., Engeström & Miettinen, 1999). Thus, this perspective directs attention to three interrelated units of analysis: a program as a whole, individual university courses, and clinical placements (Rogoff, 1995).

Sociocultural theory guided data collection and analysis toward several issues that theoretically would affect the implementation process and teachers' opportunities to learn:

- A program's mission and its relationship to the goals and purposes of individual participants, university courses, and clinical placements. According to theory, the mission of a group—in this case, the teacher education programs—acts to frame the goals, purposes, and practices of the system as a whole as well as the individual settings, such as courses within that system (Engeström & Miettinen, 1999; Scott, 1998). From this perspective, a program in which the mission of social justice is woven across the separate but overlapping settings of courses and clinical placements should create a greater sense of coherence for participants and enable learning (Grossman, Smagorinsky, & Valencia, 1999).
- Program activities, including course discussions, assignments, and teachers' experiences in clinical placements. Activities act to mediate implementation of social justice and teachers' opportunities to learn. In doing so, they function to shape individuals' participation in and appropriation of the concepts and practices represented in courses and clinical experiences (e.g., Engeström & Miettinen, 1999; Smagorinsky, Cook, Jackson, Moore, & Fry, 2004; Wertsch, 1995).
- Conceptual and practical tools related to teaching for social justice afforded to prospective teachers. Conceptual tools are the principles, frameworks, or guidelines that teachers use to guide their decisions about teaching and learning (Grossman et al., 1999). Conceptual tools may include general, applicable theories, such as constructivism and instructional scaffolding, or more philosophical views related to the purposes of schooling, such as social justice. Although conceptual tools facilitate teachers' framing and interpretations of practice, they do not offer specific solutions or strategies for negotiating the dilemmas that arise in classrooms (Grossman et al., 1999; Smagorinsky et al., 2004). Practical tools are "classroom practices, strategies, and resources that do not serve as broad conceptions to guide an array of decisions but instead, have more local and immediate utility" (Grossman et al., 1999, p. 14).

Sociocultural theory draws attention to teacher education programs as systems and emphasizes the above concepts, but it does not provide a theoretical basis for understanding what is being learned through programs, activities, and tools. Sociocultural theory suggests that the subject matters, and this prompted me to search for a conception of the subject, in this case, social justice.

I turned to a theory of social justice represented by Iris Marion Young (1990) in her book *Justice and the Politics of Difference* because she provided a systematic and detailed theory of justice and oppression. This conception of justice foregrounds institutionalized forms of oppression and provides concepts for understanding how programs help prospective teachers learn that the experience of oppression varies by individuals and by groups. This theory also identifies aspects of justice that support an examination of the dimensions of justice emphasized within teacher education. According to theory, justice

- involves, but is not exclusively focused on, the distribution of goods across individuals;
- comprises social relations and processes;
- recognizes individuals as members of social groups, whose opportunities and experiences are informed but not determined by their affiliations; and
- demands attending to social group differences rather than negating them.

Traditional theories of justice argue that the equal distribution of material goods to individuals is a primary avenue for achieving social justice (Anderson, 1999; Young, 1990). Distributed theories advocate divvying up goods and resources to individuals, who are conceptualized as independent of institutional context and social structures. Young (1990) complicated this view by proposing that a theory of justice should attend to the role of social relations: how people interact, who they are, and what they do.

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At the center of such a conception is a view that individuals are members of social groups and that differences between social groups structure relationships. From this perspective, "where social group differences exist and some groups are privileged while others are oppressed, social justice requires explicitly acknowledging and attending to those group differences in order to undermine oppression" (Young, 1990, p. 3). Thus, addressing injustice requires developing respect for group differences without reaffirming or reestablishing aspects of oppression. This definition suggests that social-justice teacher education provide prospective teachers with opportunities to develop respect for individuals' differences and recognize how those differences might be informed by individuals' affiliations with particular social groups, such as those based on race, ethnicity, or class. A view of justice in which individuals are members of social groups, opportunities are informed but not determined by an individual's group membership, and social groups' differences are acknowledged rather than denied directs the analysis of social-justice teacher education to consider the opportunities prospective teachers have to appropriate such ideas.

METHOD

I used this framework to guide a qualitative and survey-based comparative case study of two elementary teachers education programs—the Teachers for Tomorrow's Schools Program at Mills College and the Teacher Education Intern Program at San José State University (SJSU)—that make social justice and equity central to the preparation of prospective teachers.[1] A primary goal of this study was to develop a rich description of the implementation of social justice in practice. A primarily qualitative approach allowed me to examine deeply and over time the practices and the day-to-day challenges and successes of the teacher education faculty members and prospective teachers in each program (Merriam, 1988; Ragin, 1987). Through prolonged, intensive contact with the sites, I gained an understanding of the experiences of individuals, groups, and organizations that allowed me to examine the complexity of the relationships and interactions within and across settings (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Grounded in real-life situations and context, such case study research supported a holistic and vibrant account of the implementation of social justice in practice.

The pre- and postsurveys complemented this qualitative approach, focusing on prospective teachers' beliefs and attitudes about teaching and their preparation and probing quantifiable variables and outcomes. The survey was critical to this study for a number of reasons: First, it identified prospective teachers' beliefs and attitudes about teaching and students on entry, which research teaches affects their experiences of teacher education (e.g., Kennedy, 1999). Second, it situated the interview responses of the individual case-study teachers within the context of the larger cohort of prospective teachers. Third, it allowed for a comparison of outcomes across settings by providing standardized measures that captured changes in teachers' beliefs and attitudes over time. This mixed methodology allowed me to triangulate findings and identify complex concepts at the heart of this inquiry. As presented in this article, responses to specific survey items corroborate findings based on the qualitative analysis.

Site Selection

I used a strategy of purposive sampling for site selection. Programs were chosen not because they represented extreme or ideal instances of social-justice teacher education but because they were strategic sites that were information rich (Cresswell, 1994; Ragin, 1987). To select sites, I looked for programs that

- demonstrated a commitment to social justice and diversity that extended beyond a short-term or faddish focus on such issues;
- supported teachers to work in schools with students from diverse backgrounds;
- engaged in a process of integrating social justice across multiple courses and clinical placements; and
- were similar in terms of their structure: both programs are 5th-year elementary preservice programs, cohort based, and require a full year clinical experience.

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Sociocultural theory suggested that the integration of social justice would be informed by the broader contexts in which the programs were situated (Wenger, 1998). Accordingly and in addition to the above, I intentionally selected programs with different organizational contexts and lengths of time at implementation. Mills, a private institution, has attempted to address issues of social justice for over a decade. In contrast, San José State University (SJSU), a large public institution, was in its 1st year of implementing an integrated strategy. There are a number of institutions across the country that would have met this criterion, but I chose these two sites proximate to my home to enable the intensive time on site that the theory and my research design demanded.[2]

Case-Study Teacher Selection

Because sociocultural theory suggests that the experience of individuals is critical to the implementation of social justice in teacher education, I followed a sample of 10 prospective teachers (5 in each program). The case-study of teachers' perspectives provided a window into how the programs afforded teachers with opportunities to learn concepts and practices related to social justice. Using teachers' responses to the initial survey and early observations of course conversations, I selected this sample of case-study teachers according to the following criteria: demographic characteristics, beliefs about teaching and students, prior teaching experiences, knowledge of the programs' commitments to social justice, and clinical placement assignment.[3]

Analysis of prospective teachers' initial survey responses indicated that the average responses of the case-study teachers resembled those of their larger cohorts. In the Mills case, the average response of the cohort to survey items was 4.1 on a 5-point, Likert-type scale ranging from 1 to 5, with a standard deviation of 0.237. The Mills case-study teachers' average response to survey items was also 4.1, with a standard deviation of 0.319. In the case of SJSU, the average response of the cohort to survey items was 3.9, with a standard deviation of 0.336, and the case-study teachers' average response was 4.1, with a standard deviation of 0.198. The two cohorts ranged in age, race, and ethnicity, and I selected individuals who varied along those demographic characteristics, though they did not represent the full range of diversity in each cohort. In addition, I viewed teachers' prior teaching experiences as a possible factor that would influence their learning to teach and their recognition of social justice and equity as important issues in the practice of teaching. I included prospective teachers with little to no prior experience teaching and teachers with more than 1 year of teaching experience. I anticipated that if I used these criteria alone, my study could be critiqued on the basis of selection bias. To attend to this, I included teachers in the sample who explicitly recognized and enrolled in the program because of its social-justice mission and candidates who did not consider the program's social-justice mission as a central factor in their decisions.[4] Table 1 lists selected characteristics of the case-study teachers.

Data Sources

This study draws on data collected from August 2001 through June 2002: the entire preservice period for teachers enrolled in both programs. Per sociocultural theory, data collection methods focused on multiple levels of analysis: the program as a whole, university courses and clinical placements, and prospective teachers. I triangulated data from individual semi-structured interviews with teacher education faculty members and the 10 case-study teachers; observations of university courses and case-study teachers' clinical placements; a review of documents such as accreditation reports, course syllabi, and assignments; and pre- and postsurveys of the cohort of prospective teachers at Mills and SJSU.[5] The findings presented in this article draw on a subset of these data, primarily faculty member and prospective teacher interviews, observations of university courses and clinical experiences, and responses to specific survey items. Specifically, I conducted a total of 22 interviews with faculty members to gauge

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TABLE 1 Characteristics of the Case-Study Teachers

Teacher	*Age*	*Race/Ethnicity*	*Prior Work Experience*
Mills College			
Vanessa	26	Mixed: Puerto Rican, Hawaiian Portuguese, Caucasian	Union organizer
Melissa	22	Caucasian	Student teacher
Claudia	49	Caucasian	Nonprofit administrator
Abigail	45	Caucasian	Corporate/business
Dominique	24	Mixed: African American, Caucasian	Full-time teacher with Teach for America
San José State University			
Kate	29	Mixed: Caucasian, Latina	Full-time teacher, private school
Heather	27	Caucasian	Fitness instructor
Sandra	42	Caucasian	Full-time teacher, public school
Margaret	23	Chinese American	Undergraduate; one semester as a teacher of English as a second language in China
Biaggi	26	Mixed: Caucasian, African American	Aide on an Alzheimer's ward; volunteer for the Special Olympics

the extent to which the programs intended to integrate social justice and to gain insight into course goals and assignments. I also conducted 67 observations of university courses to examine the inclusion of social justice in the content and pedagogy of individual courses.[6] These observations facilitated an in-depth understanding of teachers' opportunities to learn about social justice through course discussions, in-class tasks, and assignments.

To better understand prospective teachers' views of their opportunities to learn about social justice, I interviewed each case-study teacher three times: at the beginning, middle, and end of their participation in the 1-year program. In these interviews, teachers reflected on individual courses and assignments; clinical placements; and their conceptions of social justice, students, and their preparation. I observed the case-study teachers approximately three times each in their clinical placements. These observations provided a glimpse into prospective teachers' experiences in their placements and how those experiences intersected with their opportunities in courses.

Data Analysis

Data analysis occurred as an iterative process. As noted above, I began coding my data using concepts from sociocultural theory, and I coded observational data of courses for opportunities to learn conceptual and practical tools (Merriam, 1988; Miles & Huberman, 1994). I also coded program missions and course syllabi to identify programs' and faculty members' intentions to include social justice across programs. During the initial analysis, I noticed patterns that were not fully captured by sociocultural theory, patterns that seemed particular to social justice. I then developed a set of codes on the basis of Young's (1990) conception of social justice, which included such concepts of justice as attending to the needs of individual learners, justice as focusing on social relationships, and a view of individuals as tied to broader social groups. I coded observations, interviews, and documents according to this coding scheme. I coded all qualitative data in NUD*IST to facilitate cross-program analysis and the analysis of the integration of social justice across program settings.

Survey analysis included separate descriptive statistical analysis of the survey responses from each cohort. As noted earlier, I analyzed the responses of the five case-study teachers in each program to determine how closely they represented the mean of the cohort on specific questions. To understand changes in teachers' conceptions over time, I conducted paired *t* tests on specific items. The survey analysis presented here draws on teachers' responses to survey

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items related to their beliefs and attitudes for teaching racially and ethnically diverse students and English-language learners (ELLs).

FINDINGS

This study revealed two broad findings: (a) These programs intended to integrate social justice, and (b) the implementation of social justice varied in practice along some specific dimensions that inform prospective teachers' opportunities to learn. I take up each of these findings in the subsections below.

Program Intentions to Integrate Social Justice

A combination of sources, including interviews with faculty members and program documents such as accreditation reports and syllabi from multiple courses, confirmed that both Mills and SJSU had the will and intent to address social justice, an essential precondition to the implementation of complex goals (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998). For example, Mills's mission reflects a commitment to justice, as stated in its *Student Handbook* for 2001 and 2002:

> Guided by an ethic of care and social justice, which includes a commitment to equity and access, we aim to create a context for teacher learning that promotes an honest exploration of questions associated with teaching in the changing and complex circumstances of urban schools.

In addition, Mills faculty members developed a set of core principles to clarify their commitment to social justice and equity. For instance, one principle acknowledges teaching as a political act and states,

> The candidate recognizes the power of education in providing access for all students to full participation in a democratic society. The candidate demonstrates teaching practices that equitably enhance the knowledge, skills, and dispositions of all students and that invite, value, and honor multiple perspectives.

Most faculty members reported in interviews that they intended this principle, along with the others, to clarify their view of social justice as helping all students from all backgrounds succeed; to articulate the standards for prospective teachers; and to guide decisions about planning, curriculum, and assessment.[7]

Second, on the basis of course observations, syllabi, and other documents, I ascertained that the majority of courses at Mills articulated goals and purposes related to social justice and to teaching students from diverse backgrounds. For example, the syllabus for General Curriculum and Instruction stated, "All discussion will focus on equity and thus, will consider the ways to meet the needs of individual learners with regard to race, ethnicity, gender, SES [socioeconomic status], language, various physical, mental, and emotional conditions etc." In an interview, the course instructor elaborated on this goal and suggested that she strove to help prospective teachers recognize that "issues of equity and social justice [are] not incidental choices, but very political choices of what to teach." Also, for example, the syllabus for Introduction to Teaching indicated that prospective teachers should learn about the purpose of schools, particularly as influenced by the changing population of students; how teachers can help students take full advantage of schooling; and how the "gifts of diversity [are] sapped by racism, sexism, homophobia, classism, and other forms of oppression."

SJSU's mission also articulated a commitment to social justice and equity, though developed more recently than that of Mills. Just prior to the year of this study, faculty members revised the program mission to more explicitly address issues of equity. The following excerpt from the College of Education's mission illustrates this emphasis:

> The College of Education faculty hold that excellence and equity matter—that each is necessary, and neither is sufficient in the absence of the other. . . . Equity speaks initially to access and ultimately to outcomes. . . . Our College works toward equity in action, i.e., equity not only by policy, but through process and practice. (San José State University, College of Education, n.d.)

There also was visible evidence in course syllabi that SJSU faculty members intended to address such issues as part of the content of their

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individual courses. For example, the syllabus of the course on psychological foundations identified specific equity objectives for prospective teachers and stated that candidates would be able to, for example, "use psychological principles to identify and examine sources of inequity in the classroom and develop lessons that see students' backgrounds and prior experiences as the foundation for learning." Syllabi of the courses on language arts methods and math methods and, not surprisingly, Multicultural Foundations explicitly stated that prospective teachers would be prepared to teach in culturally, linguistically, and academically diverse classrooms. The syllabus of Multicultural Foundations outlined specific objectives, such as "develop[ing] teachers' cultural competence and help[ing] them to critically analyze the roots of inequity and injustice."

In sum, this initial set of findings served to confirm that the programs intended to integrate social justice and equity. Sociocultural theory suggests that formal structures such as program missions and course goals and purposes may frame actual practice, but they neither guarantee nor prescribe how such goals should be realized in practice (Engeström, 1996; Grossman et al., 1999; Smagorinsky et al., 2004). In the next two sections, I take up these questions: (a) To what extent were program intentions related to social justice put into practice? and (b) How were they put into practice?

Integration of Social Justice in Practice

I found that the two programs varied in terms of how they integrated social justice. This point alone is not surprising. Variation is a routine finding in implementation studies of various stripes. However, I was able to identify two specific dimensions along which the implementation of social justice varied. I identified these dimensions in the iterative process of data analysis, in which I considered how themes and patterns emerging in the data related to concepts from sociocultural theory and a theory of social justice. These findings—the specific variations—are important because they help elaborate the strategic choices facing teacher education programs that aim to integrate social justice and what counts as the integration of social justice in a dynamic way consistent with sociocultural theory. This conceptualization of the integration of social justice reflects that there is no best way to adhere to this goal but rather multiple avenues along a set of specific continua. Figure 1 illustrates these specific dimensions.

In this section, I first describe the dimensions of this framework. Then, I show how the programs varied in terms of the opportunities they provided teachers to learn about particular aspects of teaching from a social-justice perspective.

The framework. To elaborate, I found teachers' opportunities to learn varied in terms of their emphasis on conceptual and practical tools, indicated by the horizontal continuum in Figure 1. According to sociocultural theory, conceptual tools embody particular pedagogical strategies, and likewise, practical tools are the representation of more general concepts (Wertsch, del Rio, & Alvarez, 1995). For example, prospective teachers might be introduced to the conceptual tool of scaffolding through course readings and also taught specific strategies for scaffolding instruction for ELLs.

Teachers' opportunities to learn also varied in terms of the conception of social justice on which each opportunity rested. I grouped my data into like categories and found that Young's (1990) view of justice helped distinguish among these groupings. The left side of Figure 1 illustrates these different aspects of social justice that focused on individual, organizational, and institutional levels. The individual category includes teachers' opportunities to consider social justice in the context of individual students' needs per distributive notions of justice. In accordance with Young, the opportunities within the organizational category were those that helped teachers consider the experience of individuals as informed by their membership in social groups. The first subcategory, students identified by membership in an educational category, refers to students who are identified by their specific educational needs, such as ELLs or special education students. The second subcate-

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		Conceptual Tools ←	→ Practical Tools
Individual	Students identified as independent of their affiliations with broader social groups		
Organizational	Students identified by membership in an educational category		
	Students identified by membership in an oppressed group(s)		
Institutional	Recognition that oppression is a result of institutional constraints		

FIGURE 1: Dimensions of Teachers' Opportunities to Learn About Social Justice

gory, students identified by their membership in an oppressed group, relates to opportunities in which teachers focus on the educational needs of students in the context of their affiliations with oppressed groups: their status as influenced by race, ethnicity, gender, class, and/or sexual orientation, for example.

The institutional category identifies teachers' occasions to consider social justice as connected to broader institutional arrangements such as class and classism. This category includes teachers' opportunities to learn that oppression is not solely the result of individual action but of broader constraints placed on particular people (Young, 1990). The opportunities in this category encouraged teachers to rethink the purposes of schooling writ large as well as their own backgrounds and the role of power and privilege in teaching and learning.

The programs' practice. Through multiple interviews, observations, and document reviews, a distinct pattern within this framework emerged: Teachers' opportunities to learn conceptual tools far outweighed their opportunities to learn practical tools. This is important because it indicates that these two programs were able to integrate concepts related to social justice more easily than practices that exemplified such principles. This suggests that including practices may require different types of knowledge, resources, and supports than those required to integrate conceptual tools related to social justice. A full elaboration of each of these dimensions is beyond the scope of this article and is reported elsewhere (McDonald, 2003). Here, I array my findings related to the organizational category and teachers' opportunities to learn about students identified as members of educational categories and as members of broader social groups.

Opportunities to learn about social justice as focused on students identified by their membership in educational categories. A comparison of teachers' opportunities in this dimension revealed key findings: (a) Teachers had opportunities to learn about some groups of students more than others (e.g., ELLs vs. special-needs students), (b) some opportunities favored the development of conceptual tools over that of practical tools in ways that had some effect on teachers' views of teaching, and (c) clinical placements acted as a key mediator in teachers' opportunities to learn.

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Overall, in both programs, teachers had few occasions to learn concepts and practices for working with special-needs students. Observations revealed that neither program provided prospective teachers with opportunities in courses to explore such issues in general or as they related to social justice in particular. One exception at Mills, General Curriculum and Instruction, focused prospective teachers' attention on the principle that teachers should try to adapt their instruction to meet the needs of individual special education students. This course provided teachers with the time to consider their work with special education students as attending to their individual needs, but discussions in two class meetings avoided the broader political debates in the field about mainstreaming and inclusion. For example, the coinstructor of General Curriculum and Instruction began a whole group discussion regarding inclusion by stating,

> Regardless of where you are on this issue [of full inclusion], the chances are very high that you will have a child with special needs in your class—this is not something we're going to debate about full inclusion or options. But what is really vital to think about is how are you going to meet the needs of special needs children and the other children in your classroom.

This quotation reflects the course's overall approach to meeting the needs of special education students as an individual matter, one of attending to students' individual needs within their classroom contexts. These opportunities, as observed, did not enable prospective teachers to grapple with broader political issues surrounding the teaching of special education students, the kinds of transformative or reconstructionist experiences that many have argued are foundational to learning how to teach (Banks, 2002; Liston & Zeichner, 1991).

Both Mills and SJSU provided teachers with opportunities to develop conceptual and practical tools related to teaching ELLs. Notably, however, the majority of courses emphasized the conceptual over the practical, affording prospective teachers with opportunities to develop broad principles for working with ELLs rather than practices. In particular, these opportunities emphasized the broad principle that teachers ought to adapt instruction to meet the needs of ELLs but provided few strategies for how teachers might make such adaptations. One course assignment required teachers to "be very explicit about how [they] will meet the needs of L.E.P. [limited-English-proficient] students at varying levels of English proficiency," but the course overall provided prospective teachers with few practical strategies for how they might adapt their instruction to meet such students' needs.

The one exception to this general practice was Mills's Teaching English Language Learners. This course challenged teachers to think both about the importance of adapting instruction for ELLs and how to make such adaptations in practice. For example, the instructor explored the rationale and the practices of the reciprocal teaching model. First, he introduced the model:

> They looked at the strategies expert readers use. They found expert readers tend to summarize what they read; they typically ask questions; they also make predictions; and they clarify—uh, I wonder is this how it is? All four are happening on an ongoing basis. Their approach then was to see if they could teach those strategies to students. Essentially, they grouped students and asked them to take on each of the four roles. They taught the students the approach by scaffolding in reciprocal teaching.

To supplement teachers' conceptual understanding of this model, he pointed out how that model might need to be adapted for ELLs and then gave teachers time to work with the model:

> But sometimes it's too much for ELL students. The other side of the handout is a modified version [of reciprocal teaching]—(1) sitting side by side and one student reads aloud, (2) Student B then asks Student A two questions. There are four levels of questions, and they're increasing levels of sophistication. So let's try it and see how it feels.

In this course, the instructor consistently provided prospective teachers with opportunities to link conceptual tools with practical tools that they could then enact in their work with ELLs. In interviews, Mills case-study teachers often reflected that in addition to helping them develop concepts, this course also helped them learn strategies for working with ELLs. For example, Dominique commented,

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> I felt like his class gave us a lot of different ways to present information to our kids, so he kind of gave us those concrete things. Where in our other classes—those things are minor—the bigger things are like, "What is your purpose for being here? What is your purpose as a teacher?"

This course highlights an important difference between the integration of social justice as emphasizing the needs of ELLs at Mills and SJSU. Because of this course, Mills prospective teachers had opportunities to connect concepts and practices regarding the teaching of ELLs. In comparison, SJSU prospective teachers mostly had opportunities to learn the principle that they should accommodate ELLs but had few occasions on which to think through how they might enact that principle in practice.

Case-study teachers' reflections and responses to selected survey items suggest that differences in the opportunities to learn afforded by the programs led to prospective teachers feeling differently prepared to teach ELLs. Interviews conducted with teachers over the course of their preparation indicated that in both programs, teachers increasingly felt that it was their responsibility to adapt instruction to meet the needs of ELLs. Teachers in both cohorts appropriated this conceptual tool. Survey analysis revealed that both Mills and SJSU teachers made positive but not significant gains in terms of understanding the concept that as teachers, they should adapt instruction to meet the needs of ELLs. On a 5-point, Likert-type scale ranging from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*, Mills candidates on average entered the year strongly agreeing (specifically 4.46) that teachers should adapt instruction to meet the needs of ELLs. By the end of the year, their average response had increased to 4.83, indicating a small but positive change. The SJSU candidates entered the year with an average response of 4.05 to this particular item and ended the year with an average response of 4.76, again demonstrating a positive trend. These findings suggest that teachers' opportunities in the programs to learn the concept of adapting instruction to meet the needs of ELLs had an impact, at least in the short term, on their views of teaching.[8]

Beyond this general trend, Mills prospective teachers expressed feeling more confident in their actual ability to teach ELLs—their ability to enact that concept in practice—than SJSU prospective teachers. Specifically, I asked teachers to respond to the item "I do not feel confident in my ability to address the needs of ELLs" on a 5-point, Likert-type scale ranging from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*. Mills teachers entered the year disagreeing, with an average response of 2.88, as did SJSU teachers, with an average response of 2.64. At the end of the year, the average response to this item for Mills teachers was 1.96 and for SJSU teachers was 2.05. Triangulating these findings with interviews and observations, I concluded that although both cohorts of teachers made positive gains in this area, the Mills teachers seemed to demonstrate larger gains because of their opportunities to learn about practical tools for working with ELLs. Even though these opportunities occurred almost exclusively in the context of one course, they seemed to have had an important impact on the Mills teachers' confidence to teach ELLs. In contrast, SJSU teachers had few opportunities to develop actual strategies for working with ELLs, and the limited gains illustrated here reflected the comments of the case-study teachers who expressed dissatisfaction with their opportunities to develop strategies for teaching ELLs.

Teachers' clinical experiences mediated their opportunities to learn to teach for social justice. In general, prospective teachers' experiences in their placements curbed their opportunities provided in courses to develop concepts and practices related to social justice. For example, individual case-study teachers commented that what they understood and could learn about teaching ELLs was informed by their opportunities to work with such students in real classrooms. Melissa, a Mills case-study teacher, highlighted this point when reflecting on a position paper that required her to explore issues of teaching ELLs: "I had a really hard time with it because I haven't taught any English language learners this whole year." Sandra concurred about her clinical experience at SJSU:

> I am not quite sure if I feel prepared to work in that arena. I feel prepared professionally from being in [Multicultural Foundations]. Jessica [the instructor

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> in Language Arts and Literacy] has been very good about, you know, doing the multicultural thing, and how do you fit in the second-language learner, but as far as my placement here, I haven't been able to practice it.

Melissa's and Sandra's comments suggest that teachers' opportunities to learn about social justice sometimes resulted from the interactions between individual courses and their opportunities in their clinical placements rather than the impact of any one setting in isolation.

Opportunities to learn about social justice as focused on students identified by their membership in oppressed groups. Similar to teachers' opportunities to learn about social justice as emphasizing students identified by their educational categories, in this dimension, I found that the majority of teachers' opportunities enabled them to develop conceptual tools for thinking about how students' status in oppressed groups might affect their teaching. However, prospective teachers had few opportunities to develop actual strategies or practices for working with such students, suggesting again that programs increased awareness but did not necessarily improve teachers' capacity to use such awareness in practice. Second, I found that the specific diversity of the students in prospective teachers' clinical experiences mediated their appropriation of concepts and practices related to this conception of social justice.

The majority of prospective teachers' opportunities to learn in this dimension focused their attention on broad principles. Specifically, these opportunities challenged teachers to raise questions about how students' race, ethnicity, class, or gender might influence their classroom experiences, including how they as teachers might interact with such students differently. These opportunities reflect those implemented by other teacher educators that challenge prospective teachers to consider issues of institutionalized oppression (Ladson-Billings, 1999a). As an example, SJSU's Multicultural Foundations course required teachers to complete a "community investigation" assignment. The goal of this assignment was to engage teachers in selected real-world problems experienced by people living in poverty and to encourage teachers to think about how one's economic status might influence one's in-school experiences. Overall, the assignment supported teachers to develop the concept that students' SES may inform their in-school experiences but offered them few occasions to consider how they should use that information to design instruction.

Mills also provided teachers with opportunities to develop the broad concept that students' status in oppressed groups might affect their in-school experiences. At times, these opportunities left prospective teachers wondering if they had developed actual practices for attending to such students. For instance, during the midyear retreat, teachers split into two groups to discuss a fictional student Eric. In one group, Eric was identified as African American and in the other as Caucasian. The activity did not emphasize pedagogical tools for working with Eric but explored whether, as teachers, they should consider the role that race might play in classroom interactions. Throughout the case discussion, faculty members stressed the value of reflecting on race when trying to understand and interpret events with individual students. One faculty member commented, "We need to be aware of our assumptions, and we need to think about the race question along with many, many others. If the questions don't get raised, they can't possibly be addressed." The following week, during a debriefing of the retreat, prospective teachers commented on having learned the general principle that students' race is important but feared that they lacked the practical tools required to enact that principle.

> Teacher 1: Now, we know better than to make so many assumptions.
> Teacher 2: I just thought that there was so much in the case, and so we didn't consider race.
> Teacher 3: I think we acknowledged the race factor, but now what do we do? I think we're tired of theory: Give me some things to do in my classroom that frickin' work.

These teachers grappled with how to connect the general principle that a student's race might influence his or her educational needs with practical strategies to support that student.

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In both programs, teachers reported in interviews that clinical placements had a significant impact on their opportunities to learn to teach students whose status in oppressed groups might shape their educational experiences. It is important that the specific diversity of the students in their clinical placements seemed to inform how they thought about their preparation to work with culturally diverse students.

Mills teachers were more likely than SJSU teachers to be in districts and schools with high percentages of African American students (Education Data Partnership, 2003). Working with African American students and learning on the job to understand and address their needs was an important factor in their preparation. Vanessa, for example, said,

> In my coursework at Mills, I would feel really confident about myself. Then (my first semester in my teaching placement) I didn't have a problem with that [the diversity of the students] at all, because I had Latino students, which were very much like me, communicated very much like me . . . and I didn't have discipline problems with them. It [student diversity] wasn't a challenge to me until I came here [second placement in a classroom with predominately African American students], and the African American students really challenged my authority, really had questions about where I was directing them, wanted to express their opinions, and I wasn't letting them express their opinions, and that's when it became an issue for me. . . . It would have been seriously problematic for me to go into my 1st year of teaching without having experienced a predominately African American class.

The types of students Vanessa encountered in her placements acted as one lens through which she filtered her opportunities to learn.

SJSU teachers also indicated in interviews that the diversity of the students in their placements shaped their opportunities to learn about teaching racially and ethnically diverse students. The types of students in their placements differed from those in the Mills placements. SJSU teachers were more likely to work in districts and schools with small percentages of African American students and higher percentages of Latino students and ELLs. A comment by one faculty member highlighted the importance of the diversity of students in clinical placements as shaping teachers' opportunities to learn:

> I've realized that I put too much emphasis on second-language learners when I'm thinking about diversity. But I think to a large extent [that] reflects where I'm teaching. Like if I were teaching at [a university in the East Bay, where Mills is located], I'd think I'd put more emphasis on African American students.

The SJSU teachers' frame of reference for teaching diverse students tended to emphasize their work with ELLs and focused their attention specifically on language issues, not on issues of culture or ethnicity. In sum, the specific diversity of the students in teachers' clinical placements shaped their opportunities to learn to work with students whose status in oppressed groups might inform their educational experiences.

According to responses to specific survey items, Mills and SJSU teachers felt differentially prepared to work with students from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds. SJSU teachers demonstrated strong gains in terms of feeling prepared to work with students from racial and ethnic backgrounds other than their own and to create equitable learning opportunities for students from diverse cultural backgrounds.[9] Although the Mills teachers' responses over time indicated positive changes, their views did not shift as dramatically as those of the teachers at SJSU. This difference between the Mills and SJSU teachers is surprising, given the similarities in their opportunities to learn about teaching students from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds. I would have expected the teachers in both programs to feel similarly about their preparation in this area. And, if not similarly, I expected the Mills teachers to express a much greater sense of preparedness in this area given that many of their courses addressed issues of race and ethnicity. I took these survey results as a prompt to review my data for clues regarding what might explain this differential impact. My review yielded one possible explanation that sheds light on how the integration of social justice shaped teachers overall experiences.

Differences in how the two programs integrated issues of race and ethnicity may partially

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account for prospective teachers' views of their preparation. Mills tended to integrate such issues across multiple courses, whereas SJSU tended to emphasize such issues in the context of its Multicultural Foundations course. Perhaps the fact that Mills infused concepts about teaching racially and ethnically diverse students across courses and program retreats, without providing a separate course in which to consider issues of race and ethnicity, informed teachers' sense of preparedness to teach such students. One faculty member suggested,

> With issues of language and culture . . . unless you designate a category for them they tend to disappear, they become invisible. I think a little bit of that is also what happens in our program, that since we all say that we all believe in it, it becomes a part of the subconscious of everyone in the department. It no longer becomes an explicit piece of the curriculum in some ways in the sense of this is the "diversity course." Not to say that is necessarily a problem, it is just simply the way students come to understand college. They think of it in terms of courses, books, and assignments. When it is sort of throughout, they can't put their finger quite on it.

On reflection of their opportunities to learn about race and ethnicity, conceivably, Mills teachers had a difficult time "putting their finger" on when they had occasions to learn about such issues. Also, the limited gains posted by the Mills teachers may actually indicate a positive development: Prospective teachers' appreciation of this teaching challenge increased, and their confidence inched forward even in the face of this deepening awareness.

On the flipside, as reported by the case-study teachers, SJSU teachers knew exactly where they had learned about how to teach students from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds, and they pointed directly to the Multicultural Foundations course. For example, Kate stated, "Multicultural [Foundations] has been the most powerful for me. It's really made me uncomfortable at times, but it's also been the most thought-provoking." Biaggi concurred: "The multicultural class makes me think about what it's like for different people." Perhaps having a single course that focused primarily on issues of race and ethnicity provided prospective teachers with a greater sense of preparedness to teach such students.

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to contribute to knowledge of teacher education by revealing how teacher education programs strive to integrate social justice. Drawing on concepts from sociocultural theory and a theory of social justice, I show that integration may occur along specific dimensions. The analysis of program implementation showed that some of these dimensions may be more difficult or less frequently implemented than others. Specifically, the programs in this study more fully integrated concepts related to social justice than they did practices. It is important that clinical placements were found to enable or curb teachers' opportunities to learn about social justice depending on the specific diversity of the students in their placements.

Implications for Practice

This study raises fundamental questions for teacher education programs committed to integrating social justice across their curricula, pedagogies, and structures. The framework of teachers' opportunities to learn about social justice that emerged in this study can act as a guide for both program development and teacher educators' practice. Programs interested in integrating social justice can use this framework to raise questions about how the programs as wholes address such issues. For example, programs might consider the following questions: Do teachers' opportunities in courses tend to emphasize one dimension of social justice—a focus on individual needs, for example—over others? What opportunities do teachers have to appropriate both conceptual and practical tools related to each dimension of social justice? Which courses tend to address particular aspects of social justice? In what specific ways do teachers' clinical placements mediate what they learn about social justice?

Similarly, individual teacher educators can use this framework to inquire into their own

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practice. When considering how their individual courses address social justice, faculty members might consider these questions: How do course assignments engage teachers in considering social justice from a focus on individual students to institutional arrangements? How do their assignments and discussions support teachers to develop both concepts and practices within and across those dimensions?

This recommendation comes with a caution: Implementing all aspects of this framework will take time. Your inquiry process should gauge not only what you are doing now with regard to any one aspect but why: What is the program's current capacity, and what would it take to move from where you are now to where you want to be?

Implications for Research

This study highlights sociocultural theory and a theory of social justice as a framework for understanding the integration of social justice. I combine these two theories to understand the process of integration and the conception of social justice enacted in teacher education. This framework suggests a number of implications for future research on teacher education.

First, this study highlights the importance of considering programs as systems with multiple and interacting settings. This study highlights how concepts from sociocultural theory aid an in-depth understanding of the relationship among courses and between courses and clinical experiences and how those relationships inform prospective teachers' opportunities to learn. Researchers interested in teachers' learning and the overall organization of programs may find sociocultural theory an appropriate lens for directing future inquiries into teacher education.

Second, further inquiry into social-justice programs would be enhanced by further refinement of a theory of justice as it is practiced in teacher education. In particular, this study points to the importance of having a theoretical framework for identifying and defining the content of what programs are trying to implement.

Finally, this study, through the comparison of Mills and SJSU, begins to identify dimensions of implementation. However, it was limited because of its focus on only two programs. Future research that looks broadly at the implementation of social justice across various teacher education programs would likely refine the dimensions of teachers' opportunities to learn about social justice identified here and would provide richer guides to faculty members engaged in such work.

NOTES

1. Both programs agreed to be publicly recognized as part of this research. The names of all individuals are pseudonyms.
2. I have no official affiliation with either institution.
3. For a description of the survey items, see McDonald (2003).
4. Three of the five case-study teachers at Mills explicitly selected the program because of its attention to social justice and equity. Only one of the five SJSU case-study teachers was aware of the program's focus on social justice and equity on entry. Notably, the majority of SJSU teachers were unaware of the program's social justice emphasis.
5. The survey sample size at Mills was 24, with a response rate of 77.4%. The survey sample size at SJSU was 22, with a response rated of 88%.
6. I observed the following courses at Mills: Learning and Child Development, General Curriculum and Instruction, Introduction to Teaching, Teaching English Language Learners, the Clinical Seminar, and Program Retreats. At SJSU, I observed the following courses: Classroom Management, Multicultural Foundations, Language Arts and Literacy, and the Clinical Seminar. For both programs, I collected syllabi and assignment descriptions for all courses.
7. The other core principles included views of teaching as a moral act based on an ethic of care, an act of inquiry and reflection, a collegial act, and as focused on the acquisition and construction of subject matter knowledge and a view of learning as a constructive and developmental process.
8. Given the bounding of this case at the end of the preservice period, the survey results are one available source of data of short-term program impacts. These data do not capture longer term impacts of teacher education programs that would require a more longitudinal design.
9. SJSU teachers' average response to an item about how well prepared they felt to teach students from racial and ethic backgrounds other than their own was 3.09 on entry and 4.09 on exit. Mills teachers' average response to the same question was 3.63 on entry and 3.86 on exit. SJSU teachers' average response to the item about how well prepared they felt to create equitable learning opportunities for students from diverse cultural backgrounds was 3.05 on entry and 4.27 on exit. Mills teachers' response was 3.63 on entry and 3.88 on exit.

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