11-1-2013

Developing Socially Just Teachers: The Interaction of Experiences Before, During, and After Teacher Preparation in Beginning Urban Teachers

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Many teacher education programs, particularly those focused on preparing teachers for urban schools, use "social justice" as a conceptual framework for their work (Kapustka, Howell, Clayton & Thomas, 2009; Kaur, 2012; Zeichner & Flessner, 2009). However, there remains a lack of clarity and consistency across these programs on what "teaching for social justice" means and what experiences support its development (Castro, 2010). Furthermore, few studies have looked at the development of socially just teachers over time or attempted to link particular elements of a teacher education program to the enactment of socially just teaching practices. In one longitudinal study, Cochran-Smith and her colleagues (2009) found that most graduates of their program organized around a social justice theme were holding students to high expectations and connecting curriculum

to their students' cultural backgrounds and experiences; but few were engaged in any "structural critique" (p. 373) or activism around unfair school practices. Differences across their cases were not linked to any specific features in their preparation program or differences in their background experiences. In another study, Agarwal, Epstein, Oppenheim, Oyler & Sonu (2010) studied the teaching practices of twelve graduates of their "social reconstructionist" (p. 238) preparation program. However, their study focused more on obstacles these teachers faced rather than how their practices linked to prior experiences.

In contrast, this article reports on an exploratory study that investigated how twelve graduates from one justice-oriented preparation program were conceptualizing socially just teaching after a year of teaching in an urban school and how they perceived that various experiences before, during, and after their program were influencing their socially just teaching practices.

Theoretical and Research Frameworks

Justice-oriented Teacher Education and Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT)

Within the context of inequitable educational opportunities, particularly along lines of race, ethnicity, language, gender, and socioeconomic class, socially just teacher education aims to prepare teachers to teach in culturally responsive ways and also act as critical change agents in schools and society. Literature on justice-oriented teacher education and CRT (Gay, 2000; Irvine, 2003; Ladson-Billings, 2001, 2009; Morrison, Robbins & Rose, 2008; Villegas & Lucas, 2002) suggests that socially just teachers:

- hold high academic and behavioral expectations for all in a rigorous curriculum;
- create classroom climates that are both warm and demanding
- affirm and sustain their students' cultural backgrounds by drawing from their "funds of knowledge" (languages, histories, cultural practices);

- connect with their students' families and communities
- advocate for curricular and policy changes that promote more equitable educational opportunities;
- help students identify and critique historical and contemporary examples of injustice; and
- empower students to actively work toward social change.

With varied levels of emphasis, justice-oriented teacher educators (Cochran-Smith, et al., 2009; Picower, 2011; Zeichner & Flessner, 2009) stress the importance of the social and political activism embodied in those final three practices. Teachers must be prepared not only to work with individual students in their classrooms but also step out of their classrooms and actively seek change in school and societal policies and practices that unfairly marginalize some students by social class, race, language, and other markers of difference. Less clear in the literature, however, is how such activism can be enacted in the early years of teaching and what experiences in and out of teacher education programs promote its development.

Authentic vs. Critical Caring

Related to this work on socially just teaching and CRT is literature on critical caring (Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 2005; Roberts, 2010; Rolon-Dow, 2005; Valenzuela, 1999). These critical care theorists acknowledge Noddings (2005) who challenged teachers to practice "authentic care" which focuses on teachers' relationships with students rather than "aesthetic care" which focuses on objects and ideas of schooling, such as behavioral objectives, grades, and tests. These scholars, however, are critical of Noddings who, they say, offers a "color-blind" view of caring that does not consider perspectives on caring in marginalized groups or the context of caring relationships. As an alternative, Rolon-Dow (2005) calls for "color(full) critical caring" (p.103) that includes a complete and accurate appraisal of the context of the caring relationship and an acknowledgement and address of the racialized contexts in which students live and go to school.

Experiences that Promote Culturally Responsive, Socially Just Teaching

Studies of teacher candidates (Garmon, 2004) and experienced teachers (Irvine, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 2009; Rolon-Dow, 2005; Valenzuela, 1999) suggest that certain types of experiences in and out of pre-service teacher education can be important influences on culturally responsive, justice-oriented teachers: cross-cultural background experiences; preparation program coherence around CRT and social justice (across courses, field experiences, and supervision); and strong supports during the early years of teaching.

Cross-cultural background experiences. Garmon (2004) defines cross-cultural experiences as those "in which there [is] opportunity for direct interaction with one or more individuals from a cultural group different than one's own" (p. 207). Candidates' cross-cultural experiences before entering and adjacent to their teacher preparation programs have been linked to greater openness to diversity (Adams, Bondy, & Kuhel, 2005; Garmon 2004) and commitment to teaching in urban and/or high needs schools. Taylor and Frankenberg (2009) found that teacher candidates without prior urban experiences became less committed to urban teaching over the course of their year-long urban teacher preparation program than candidates with some prior urban experience.

Teacher preparation experiences. A number of studies (Athanases & Oliveira, 2008; Ladson-Billings, 2001; McDonald, 2007) have indicated that programs whose course work, field experiences, and supervision cohere around a common vision of CRT and socially just teaching are more effective than more fragmented programs. Athanases and Olveira (2008) studied graduates of such a program and found that most were acting as advocates both in and out of their classrooms (e.g. setting up extra tutorials outside of class to meet diverse learning needs, speaking out to obtain needed resources for special needs students, starting a bilingual parent group). These teachers reported that they felt inclined to do so because their preparation program courses had emphasized the importance of advocacy and provided opportunities in their fieldwork to practice interceding on behalf of students and their families**.**

In addition, a small group of longitudinal studies have demonstrated a link between teacher preparation program coherence around an equity-oriented mission and urban teacher retention (Freedman & Appleman, 2009; Quartz & TEP Research Group, 2003). For example, Freedman and Appleman's (2009) study of graduates of the University of California at Berkeley's Multicultural Urban Secondary English Credential over a five year period found that the program's graduates who remained teaching in high-poverty urban schools said they had intentionally entered an urban teacher preparation program with "a sense of mission, which was reinforced and developed by [their] teacher education program" (p.329).

Support for equity teaching during the early years of teaching. Recent studies (Picower, 2011; Puig & Recchia,2012; Ritchie, 2012) have demonstrated the power of support networks for sustaining socially just teaching in the early years of teaching. Picower (2011) studied six graduates of a justice-oriented preparation program who met as a critical inquiry study group biweekly the year after graduation. She found that the group supported these teachers' efforts to integrate critical pedagogy into a mandated curriculum and speak against policies that they felt were not in the best interests of their students. Ritchie (2012) found that justice-oriented teacher networks played an important role in sustaining eight practicing teachers whose work in critical pedagogy or teaching for social justice has been described in book(s) or journal article(s) during the past ten years.

A Framework for Developing Justice-oriented Decision-making in Teachers

Chubbuck (2010) offers a framework for thinking how teachers can make pedagogical decisions that aim at social justice. She argues that socially just teachers need to use both an individual and structural orientation in their deliberations. An individual orientation to a student who is struggling to read, for example, leads the teacher to analyze the student's problem only in terms of that individual's experiences. Such analysis might lead the teacher to provide extra support in decoding skill development or seek assistance from the school's special education specialist, but it can also lead to blaming the student or the

student's parents for the reading problem. Adding a structural orientation toward professional reflection and teaching expands a teacher's ability to make pedagogical decisions. The teacher will see the struggling reader not only with unique experiences but also "as a member of a larger sociocultural group that may have experienced structural, institutional barriers to learning" (Chubbuck, p. 201). So in addition to extra teaching or seeking support services, the teacher might promote more use of students' "funds of knowledge" (Rodriguez, 2012) among fellow teachers, work for change in a "drill and practice" reading curriculum in the school or advocate to the school board for lower class sizes.

Methodology

Because this study was exploratory and aimed partially at generating factors that contribute to a teacher's definition and enactment of socially just teaching and because I wanted to highlight the voices and experiences of our program graduates, I chose an interpretive method of inquiry (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), using a small group of teachers as case studies (Stake, 1995) to address these questions:

1. How do recent graduates from a justice-oriented urban teacher education program who are now teaching in urban schools describe their orientation toward socially just teaching?
2. How do these teachers describe their practices as socially just teachers?
3. What pre-program, program, and post-program factors do these teachers describe as influences on their socially just teaching practices?
4. What relationships can be seen among these teachers' orientations toward socially just teaching, self-described teaching practices, and self-reported pre-program, program, and post-program influences?

Context and Data Sources

Located in a mid-sized Catholic university in the Midwestern United States, the undergraduate and post baccalaureate teacher preparation program in this study foregrounds knowledge,

dispositions, and practices needed to teach in racially and culturally diverse schools across coursework and field experiences. In early foundational courses such as Teaching in a Diverse Society, Child and Adolescent Development in a Diverse Society, and Introduction to Learning and Assessment, students read from a variety of sources that challenge them to interrogate their entering beliefs and knowledge about racially, linguistically, ethnically and socioeconomically diverse students and classrooms. They actively participate in after school tutoring programs and early field experiences in urban churches and schools and are asked continually to write about and discuss their experiences in light of their readings. They then take a variety of methods courses that are coupled with four additional guided field experiences in urban schools where they have multiple opportunities to practice culturally responsive and critical pedagogies with racially, linguistically, and economically diverse students. Across the curriculum, they discuss and debate educational policy issues relating to social justice and structural inequities, drawing connections to their urban field experiences. In addition to these required field experiences during their program, many candidates volunteer as tutors, teachers, recreational directions, and/or child care workers for a variety of organizations serving children and youth living in poverty in local, national, and international settings. During their final semester they complete a full semester of student teaching in an urban classroom.

This study was part of a larger investigation of teaching disposition development that I began with one of my colleagues. We conducted preliminary data collection and analysis together; however, I completed final data collection and analysis with various graduate research assistants over a two year period. For the larger study, we invited all 96 students completing student teaching during January and June of 2008 to participate. 37 students volunteered and participated in the first phase of data collection. This low level of participation was probably due to the timing of our request at the end of the semester when candidates were completing student teaching, preparing for graduation and participating in job searches. In addition, for economic reasons, many graduates were moving out of state and closer to their families. A year after the first interview, 31 of the original 37 teachers were teaching and available for a second interview. Because of our program's focus on urban teacher preparation, from these 31 teachers,

I selected for closer examination only those 12 teachers who in June of 2009 had completed at least one year of teaching in an urban school with at least 50% of the students eligible for free or reduced lunch (See Table 1). These teachers were similar to our typical graduates in average age (23), gender (70% female), race (92% White), and background (67% grew up in suburbs or small towns; 50% attended parochial schools). They differed somewhat in area of certification (60% elementary; 40% secondary); our program is evenly split between the two areas.

Primary data sources included: 1) two 60 minute semi-structured interviews (face-to-face or by phone, taped and transcribed), one completed at the end of student teaching and the other at the end of the first year of teaching (Appendix A); 2) a demographic survey (Appendix B) and 3) student teaching narrative evaluations by two supervisors.

Data Analysis

I used both inductive and deductive methods to conduct individual and cross-case analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2003), beginning after each of these teachers completed student teaching. First, using the research questions as a framework and considering my literature review on socially just teaching and CRT, a research assistant and I completed several separate readings of the interviews and supervisor narratives and then used open coding and analytic memos to separately identify preliminary emic codes (Corbin & Strauss, 1998). For example, in descriptions of socially just teaching practices, these teachers frequently mentioned "high expectations" and "connecting with parents." After our separate reading and analysis, we jointly agreed upon a preliminary coding list and used the research questions to organize these codes around three large categories: social justice definitions, teaching practices, and influences. Then, using NVivo 9.0 (QSR International, Melbourne, Australia), we separately tried out the coding on two sets of interviews and supervisor narratives. Again, we met to negotiate coding on these two cases to agreement and further refine coding categories. We continued this separate and joint coding and refinement of codes for the rest of the interviews and narratives. Once all were coded, we

used NVivo to create data displays and search for patterns within and across the cases. In this stage of axial coding, we added some etic codes (Corbin & Strauss, 1998) which we drew from the literature. Then, in light of these etic codes, we separately reread and re-coded the data and once again negotiated our coding to agreement. To illustrate, under the broad category of "teaching practices" we added "warm demanding" (Bondy, Ross, Hambacher & Acosta, 2012; Irvine, 2003) and "funds of knowledge pedagogies" (Gonzalez, Moll & Amanti, 2005; Rodriguez, 2012) because of their significance in the CRT literature, ability to bring together some of our preliminary codes, and strength in helping us make distinctions across the cases. For example, many teachers discussed "high behavioral expectations. " However, some were using the more asset-oriented perspective of "warm demanders," while others held more deficit views of behavior management and control. Final coding categories are outlined in Table 2.

After the second interview transcript for each teacher was available, another research assistant and I used the same coding framework to code these interviews. Then, drawing from all of the data collected on each case, I wrote detailed case reports for each teacher that summarized definitions of socially just teaching, self-reported teaching practices, pre-program cross-cultural experiences, program influences, adjacent influences, and on-the-job influences. To search for patterns and make comparisons, I used the case reports to create charts that summarized results on each of these factors across the cases (Table 3 is an example).

At this point, we also used Chubbuck's (2010) framework on orientations toward socially just professional reflection and pedagogical decision-making in an effort to classify the teachers as individually- or structurally- oriented. However, the data suggested that while helpful, the "individual" and "structural" binary did not capture the various combinations of socially just teaching definitions and practices that these teachers were describing. Therefore, we found it necessary to expand on Chubbuck's framework to include three categories of orientation toward socially just teaching that highlighted different emphases in these teachers' thinking and teaching practices: Structural/Individual (S/I), Individual/Structural (I/S), and Individual

(I). Those with either an S/I or an I/S orientation exhibited some level of "sociocultural consciousness" (Ladson-Billings, 2001, p. 120) when thinking about their students and how to teach them; they offered evidence that they saw their students not simply as individuals but as members of larger racial, cultural and/or socioeconomic groups often marginalized in traditional schools.

In addition to caring for their students, all of the S/I and I/S teachers offered evidence that they were drawing from their students' "funds of knowledge" (Gonzalez, Moll & Amanti, 2005; Rodriguez, 2012) to teach content; they regularly made use of their students' cultural assets - languages, home/family communication practices, literature, popular culture, and histories. What distinguished the S/I teachers from the I/S teachers, however, was that the S/I teachers were also engaged in activism (consciousness-raising and advocacy) both within and outside of their classrooms.

In contrast, the teachers that we classified as individually-oriented (I) did not exhibit any sociocultural consciousness in their descriptions of socially just teaching nor did they describe any CRT practices. They described their practice of socially just teaching primarily as caring relationships with individual students.

Results

In this section I summarize 1) how these 12 teachers were oriented toward socially just teaching; 2) what they viewed as practices of socially just teaching; and 3) what experiences before, during and after their teacher preparation they saw as influences on those practices. In addition, I discuss relationships among orientation, practices and influences across these teachers that are displayed in Table 3.

Socially Just Teaching Orientations

Eight teachers were both individually- and structurally-oriented toward socially just teaching. Five were more structurally-oriented (S/I), while three were more individually-oriented (I/S). The other four teachers were only individually-oriented (I).

S/I Orientation: Consciousness-raising and Advocacy.
Interviews indicated that Cassie, Michael, Francine, Rosina, and Anna had both a structurally and individually-oriented conception of socially just teaching with *emphasis on the structural*. These teachers used sociocultural and equity frameworks to define socially just teaching. For example, Rosina said it was "teaching students who have been left behind in the social network [because of] socioeconomic status." Both Cassie and Anna said it was "being an advocate for change" in what Cassie called "systems that blame the victim."

These teachers described a range of teaching practices that included consciousness-raising, advocacy, CRT, and caring relationships. Because their consciousness-raising and advocacy activities set these teachers apart, I highlight how these teachers described those particular practices in their teaching.

All five teachers described efforts within their classrooms to make students more aware of societal injustice, take positions on controversial topics, and see themselves as capable of making a difference in their communities. Michael said that he wanted to make his predominantly African American history students "question every fact that their textbooks . . . may force-feed them" and see "that . . . the United States is not . . . the bastion of freedom and democracy that a lot of textbooks paint it as." Cassie shared with her students her perception of the school's unfair curricular practices for special education students and how they [her students] "had a right to" and are "fully capable of doing . . . what other classrooms are doing." Anna described a curriculum where she was trying "to expose students to . . . injustices in the world" and get them to "want to do something about [them]." Rosina described curricular topics that included historical examples of oppression (African Americans in the Jim Crow South, Chicano farm laborers) and injustices taking place in their "own neighborhoods," such as disparities in food prices and access to healthy foods across areas of the city.

In addition, Francine and Michael explained how they were helping their students think of themselves as change agents in their communities. Francine organized her first grade students, many from

immigrant families, into a team that she called the "Peacemakers." She wanted them to see themselves not only as "good friends" but "young authors" who "can grow up to make a difference." Because Michael wanted his high school students to "know that they don't live in a vacuum and that… every day they can do something to help someone else," he raised funds to take a group of his students on a Habitat for Humanity trip to a rural area in another state to help people who were losing their farms. His rationale was: "I think they grew up in a system that made them think of themselves as these underprivileged kids [who] can't help other people."

In addition to these consciousness-raising activities in their curricula, Francine, Michael, and Cassie also described ways they were engaged in advocacy designed to change unfair structures or curricular policies that limit opportunities for students For example, in her first year of teaching first grade, Francine was trying to "help the whole school . . . give every kid a chance to learn" by changing what she called the school's "traditional and conservative" reading curriculum which had all students reading the same stories and taking the same spelling test every week. She noted that in a school where over 90% of the students were students of color and second language learners, "A lot of the things we're doing aren't really beneficial to a lot of the kids." So she convinced the principal to find funds for a new reading curriculum that was designed to individually assess all of the students and then provide multicultural reading materials and assignments that would address various student needs.

In her school where all of the students were eligible for subsidized lunch and most were second language learners, Cassie expressed dismay over the lack of educational opportunities available to her students who were classified by the school as special education students: "My students were held to incredibly low expectations. In previous years, they ate breakfast and lunch in the classroom and were not exposed to any classes or . . . academic content with general education peers." By the end of her first year of teaching, she had convinced the school administration to change their mainstreaming policies so that her students were not isolated during recess. She also contacted the school district's superintendent to argue for her students' need for standard math and literacy curricula. She borrowed

curricular materials from her colleagues and from the district's curricular warehouse, explaining, "I will do what it takes in order to provide [my] students with access to those materials."

I/S Orientation: Culturally responsive teaching (CRT) and caring. Three of these teachers (Don, Katelyn, and Angela) were both individually- and structurally-oriented toward socially just teaching but with *emphasis on the individual*. These teachers used a combination of sociocultural and individualistic frameworks to define socially just teaching and describe their teaching practices. Katelyn and Don spoke about providing "equal opportunities" for students who don't always have them, such as "giving kids the opportunity to go to college." Angela said that socially just teaching involves "knowing that [all students have] the right to learn no matter what their background is" and "teaching every student the way [s/he] can learn." In particular, they described their teaching practices primarily as a combination of various CRT strategies described earlier and caring relationships with individual students.

As seen in Table 3, there was evidence of CRT methods ("funds of knowledge" pedagogies, high expectations, warm demanding, connection to parents) in all eight of the S-I and I-S-oriented teachers. However, here we focus on how Don and Angela with their I-S orientation focused on a combination of CRT with caring relationships. In both interviews, Don, a White English teacher in a predominantly African American public high school, talked about the importance of "rapport" and personal involvement with his students: "I want to talk to them every day…. I want to be a person that they can rely on." In both interviews he described his success in helping students navigate college and job applications and also getting financial aid for further education.

Both of Don's interviews also indicated that an important way that he established this rapport and also taught English was by tapping into his students' cultural resources. In his second interview, he explained, "I think knowledge of the culture of the people you're teaching is incredibly important. You have to know where they're coming from…. We have to [always] be learning from our kids…. To more fully understand his students' language, ways of expression, and

humor, he consulted with African American colleagues about "slang words" that his students used. He also said that he had spent "a ton of time" listening to their music, going to their movies, and "watching…all these old Black sitcoms that they talk about." In both interviews he offered examples of how he has used African American popular culture and language as bridges to understanding literature and developing writing skills. He used the music of Tupac Shaqur and Famed Rapper to teach poetry and novels. He taught paraphrasing by asking students to translate rap songs "so that a White person can understand."

Angela, an African American English teacher in a predominantly African American high school, conceptualized her socially just teaching as a combination of CRT and caring. She explained how she drew largely from her own experience: "I am African American and I teach African American children, so I feel like I'm in tune to what's 'culturally relevant.'" She is direct with her students about why they need to learn Standard English: "My students… speak African American Vernacular English. I tell them that's not wrong; it's a part of our culture…. But you have to be able to speak Standard English…. [because]… people judge you based on how you look and how you speak." On the other hand, she indicated that she was interested in developing her students' bilingualism. To teach Standard English, she had her students translate Standard English texts into African American Vernacular English (AAVE) and also write paragraphs in AAVE and then translate them into Standard English.

In her second interview, Angela reported her success in combining high expectations with emotional warmth. She recalled that when she first came into her school, students "pretty much did whatever they wanted" but now with her " structure and high standards" her students recognize that "you don't play" in her classroom. On the other hand, she mentioned numerous ways that she had personally connected with her students. She started a peer mentoring program for her school's first year students to make them feel "more welcome," solicited money from local merchants for students who could not afford prom clothing, and shared her personal e-mail and phone number with students and parents "in case they "have a problem they want to talk about." As a result, she said that "a lot of my students… call me 'Mama.'" Even after they leave her class,

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"they stop by during passing period [to] still get that little personal moment."

Individual Orientation (I): "Color blind" Caring. Four teachers (Megan, Kelly, Adriana, and Jeremy) were only individually-oriented in their reflection and pedagogical decision-making. They did not use sociocultural frameworks to define socially just teaching. In fact, two of these teachers said that "socially just teaching" was "hard to define." When pressed, all of these teachers used frameworks that focused on students as individuals. Both Megan and Adriana said socially just teaching was "being open to differences." Kelly said it is "trying to understand where each student is coming from." Jeremy said it is "getting involved in the lives of your students."

Adriana stressed that teaching for social justice and being "a good teacher" were one and the same, that a "good teacher" is "caring," and "positive" with students. She offered an example of how she reached out to one of her third graders whose mother had died: "She needs someone to talk to, to cry, and to hang out with." When asked directly about his use of culturally responsive teaching practices with students, Jeremy replied that he didn't have much of an opportunity to do so because he teaches math. When pressed for an example of how her socially just teaching practices look in the classroom, Adriana could only think of a holiday program that they had in her school where they "sang a song in a different language."

Although all of these teachers, when asked about their socially just teaching practices gave examples of caring for individual students, they did so without mention of their non-White students' race or cultural backgrounds, nor did they give any indication that they had thought about the structural inequities that might be impacting their students' school experiences. There was indication, however, of deficit thinking in both of the interviews of these four teachers. When speaking about her students "different backgrounds," Kelly spoke about her need to be "patient" with "students [whose] home lives aren't as desirable as they may wish." She also said that her first year of teaching had been "stressful" because of "where the kids come from" which was "so urban." She gave examples of students who "haven't had breakfast in the morning" or who were "moving all the

time." In speaking about her socially just teaching practices, she described students "who come to school unclean and with dirty clothes and with not very much sleep and not very much food" and how she tried to "help them get over whatever's going on at home."

Unlike the other eight teachers in this study, Adriana, Megan, Kelly, and Jeremy did not offer any examples in their second interviews of how they were using their students' cultural "funds of knowledge" (Gonzalez, Moll & Amanti, 2005) in teaching. Megan acknowledged the need to "change and modify [lessons] . . . because of how differently children learn" but admitted that "I have a lot to learn" about their "cultures [and] backgrounds."

Experiences: Pre-program, Program, Adjacent, and On-the-job

Table 3 shows relationships among these teachers' general orientations toward socially just teaching, prior cross-cultural experiences, teacher education program experiences, other experiences while in college, and on-the job supports.

All eight of the teachers who said that they enacted socially just teaching through advocacy, consciousness-raising and culturally responsive teaching, came into their preparation program with significant prior cross-cultural experiences. In addition, they cited several features of the program and various supports during their first year of teaching as important influences on their teaching practices. In contrast, the four teachers who described their socially just teaching only as "caring" cited only the program's field experiences as important influences on their practice.

Prior cross-cultural experiences. Nine of these teachers came into their preparation with significant prior cross-cultural experiences. Angela, Don, Katelyn, and Jeremy grew up in racially diverse neighborhoods and attended urban public schools. Don was active throughout his youth on racially diverse athletic teams and for six years coached predominantly African American and Latino boys on a local high school football team. Katelyn volunteered at urban soup

kitchens and a preschool for children of young mothers in her urban high school.

Even though they grew up in predominantly White, suburban or small town neighborhoods, Cassie, Michael, Francine, Anna and Rosina also entered their teacher preparation program with prior cross-cultural experiences, primarily through employment and/or community service. Every summer during high school, Cassie volunteered at a summer camp where she developed close friendships with three African American women who became her college roommates. Michael, Francine, and Rosina tutored at urban schools serving predominantly African American and Spanish-speaking students. Anna participated in service projects sponsored by her church that included work with children from low-income families in Appalachia and Washington, D.C., experiences which, she said, made her aware that she "had a really standard, White, middle class upbringing." In contrast, Megan, Kelly and Adriana grew up in small towns and attended parochial schools where they had little or no exposure to people of diverse races, ethnicities, languages, or socioeconomic classes. Their first interactions with people of color were during college.

Additional cultural immersion experiences during college. All nine of the teachers who came into the program with prior experiences working in high-poverty settings expanded on these experiences during college. Francine volunteered in a local homeless shelter; Michael served as a mentor in a local Big Brother/Big Sister Program. Anna worked with children diagnosed with autism in their inner city homes. Angela and Rosina worked as tutors in local African American and Latino schools. Cassie taught in a high-poverty Chicago public summer school program. Both Katelyn and Rosina studied and worked in Mexico which, Katelyn said, gave her the first-hand experience of "being a second language learner." In contrast, Megan, Kelly and Adriana reported no interactions with racial, ethnic or socioeconomic populations different from their own except during their program field experiences in urban schools.

Program conceptual framework, fieldwork, courses, and mentors. A year after completing their preparation program, while all twelve students spoke about their diverse field experiences as major

influences on their socially just teaching, only the eight teachers whose teaching included culturally responsive, consciousness raising and/or advocacy practices, also cited the program's social justice theme and specific course content and instructors that challenged their thinking about students and schools. Michael mentioned readings by Gloria Ladson-Billings and Paulo Freire that pulled him out of his "comfort zone." Anna said that her educational policy course work and readings "really opened my eyes to the inequalities in education." She explained that this view was reinforced by her field experiences in various schools serving different socioeconomic classes where she saw disparities in resources, teaching methods, and what students were able to do. Francine recalled writings by Jonathan Kozol that inspired her to want to work with students "in difficult situations and difficult schools" and not go there to be a "superhero" but to simply work with kids to "bring the best out in them."

Cassie remembered how her cooperating teacher in student teaching "creatively met the needs of English language learners" and students with diagnosed learning disabilities and said that she was using many of those methods in her first year of teaching special education in a school serving a large number of English language learners. Michael spoke about being placed in student teaching with "two phenomenal history teachers" from whom he learned "so much about the reality of day to day urban education," including "how to deal with bureaucracy and the importance of collaboration and flexibility." Francine mentioned two course instructors and two supervising teachers who "were such wonderful role models" for urban teaching: "I learned from them that if we're not optimistic, if we don't set up a positive classroom, a hopeful classroom, and a safe classroom, very little learning will happen."

In contrast, when asked about important teacher education program influences on their teaching, Megan, Adriana, Kelly made no mention of course content, readings, instructors, or mentors. In fact, two of them said that they found the courses somewhat repetitive. Adriana explained that the program "really drills into you the idea of multicultural education, being open and accepting to all different backgrounds of students, but I think that I heard the same text, the same stories, the same lecture [and] I had the same discussion in

classes probably ten times." While Jeremy remembered a diversity class that he took with its interesting discussions on controversial topics, he recalled that the course didn't change his thinking but reinforced his belief that "our society blows differences out of proportion and really, we're all basically the same."

In contrast to the other eight teachers, Megan, Adriana, Kelly, and Jeremy spoke primarily about the field experiences that had made a lasting impression. Megan, Adriana, and Kelly valued the experiences because, in Megan's words, they put them with "populations that I wasn't familiar with." When pressed further, however, on how her field experiences had changed her, Megan expressed a disturbingly deficit view of clients at a shelter for women and children, suggesting that her previous impressions of diverse populations were only reinforced rather than changed by this experience:

> Just seeing how those people had to live and then seeing these kids . . . changed my whole outlook. . . . These moms who were pregnant and who had an infant and a toddler and . . . two other kids in school . . . somewhere made these choices. . . . Did her family fail her? Did the community fail her? Not to say that her life is gone, but I don't think her life is as good as it could be and I think that's sad. . . . I saw these kids who were four and couldn't speak yet. . . . Maybe their Mom doesn't know that you're supposed to read to your kids. I thought everybody knew that.

Support during the first year of teaching. As seen in Table 3, in contrast to the four individually-oriented teachers, who saw socially just teaching only as caring, all eight of the other teachers reported various sources of support in their first year of teaching. Both Cassie and Francine were part of urban teacher corps program cohorts (in different cities) that met frequently and had mentors available for support. They also felt strengthened in their socially just teaching as they worked on advanced degrees in special education (Cassie) and English Language Learning (Francine). Francine noted: "I am able to reflect with other teachers who have the same passion and the same drive and the same willingness to put [themselves] out there to teach in more challenging situations." Angela was excited that her co-workers "are so involved in the students' lives" and that they often collaborate with each other on lesson planning and team teaching.

Michael described how he was inspired by being "surrounded by people who are really good at what they do." Don credited his "phenomenal" administrators and colleagues for supporting him at times when he felt "clueless." Anna, Rosina, and Katelyn discussed the comforts of working in small urban charter schools where faculty and administrators share a common vision.

Limitations

This study's limitations must be acknowledged. Because it focused only on 12 teachers from one teacher preparation program, generalizations to larger populations cannot be made. In addition, although the reports of supervisors and cooperating teachers were used as supporting evidence, primary data sources were self-reports. Also, the important question of how these 12 teachers were impacting their students' learning still remains. Nevertheless, these first-hand accounts about socially just teaching practices from urban teachers who came from the same justice-oriented teacher preparation program suggest several implications for practice and future research in justice-oriented teacher education.

Discussion and Implications

In a discussion of why teachers often find it difficult to enact critically relevant pedagogy, Ladson-Billings (2006) wrote, "The first problem teachers confront is believing that successful teaching for poor students of color is primarily about 'what to do'" (p.34). Instead, she suggests, "the problem is rooted in how we think" (p. 34). This study strongly supports the importance that Ladson-Billings and others (Chubbuck, 2010; Valenzuela, 1999) put on the analytical frameworks that teachers use to inform their practice. As shown in Figure 1, an individual orientation (I) toward professional reflection and judgment limits possible choices of teaching practices in a given situation and may lead to deficit thinking about individual students. Use of both an individual and structural orientation (I/S) *with emphasis on the individual* will lead the teacher to recognize students as members of particular racial, ethnic, linguistic, and socioeconomic groups and widen the repertoire of potential teaching practices, including many of the CRT practices discussed earlier (Gay, 2000; Irvine, 2003; Ladson-

Billings, 2001; Morrison, Robbins & Rose, 2008; Villegas & Lucas, 2002). However, as seen in Figure 1, the I/S teachers were not choosing the social and political activism advocated by many justice-oriented teacher educators (Cochran-Smith, et al., 2009; Picower, 2011; Zeichner & Flessner, 2009) and critical care theorists (Roberts, 2010; Rolon-Dow, 2005).

In addition to calling attention to the importance of conceptual frameworks for socially just teaching and how they relate to choice of teaching practices, this study supports others that have highlighted what types of experiences work together to shape and sustain socially just teachers: 1) significant cross-cultural experiences before and during teacher preparation, 2) program course work and field experiences grounded in a clear vision of justice-oriented teaching; and 3) on-the-job supports. These experiences suggest several ways that teacher educators might foster the development of more structurally-oriented socially just teachers.

Expand Opportunities for Cross-cultural Experiences

All of the teachers in this study who exhibited at least some structural orientation toward socially just teaching came into their preparation program with significant cross-cultural experiences, a finding which lends support to other studies that have linked strong prior cross-cultural experiences to growth in commitment to social justice and urban teaching (Adams, Bondy, & Kuhel, 2005; Garmon 2004; Taylor & Frankenberg, 2009). In light of this finding, justice-oriented programs should consider making prior cross-cultural experiences a consideration for program admission. This does not mean that only those incoming students with prior cross-cultural experiences should be admitted. Rather, *more* students with significant cross-cultural background experiences and more students of color should be recruited in order to create a critical mass of candidates who could support each other's development of a more structural orientation to socially just teaching.

In addition to prior cross-cultural experiences, all of the teachers who had at least some structural orientation toward socially just teaching by the end of their first year of teaching had served in

high-poverty communities through community service or employment during their preparation program that went above and beyond what was required; on the other hand, three of the four teachers with only an individual orientation toward socially just teaching did not report such experiences. This interesting finding substantiates the urgings by many teacher educators that students, particularly those who enter their program with little or no cross-cultural experiences, be offered opportunities for significant community immersion experiences adjacent to their formal teacher education program (Ladson-Billings, 2001; Zeichner, 2010). While such experiences in themselves might not produce the structural level of understanding that is an important part of socially just teaching (as in the case of Jeremy), and (as in the case of Megan) while such experiences could actually reinforce stereotypes about "other" cultures (Hollins & Torres Guzman, 2005), such experiences, with appropriate guidance from teacher educators, could be explicitly linked to culturally responsive teaching, justice-oriented curriculum design, and advocacy. While it is hard to predict whether more guided immersion experiences would have been transformative for Megan, Adriana and Kelly, a number of studies on community-based immersion and service learning experiences (Adams, Bondy & Kuhel, 2005; Coffey, 2010; Conner, 2010) suggest that they can be, as long as they are combined with carefully designed activities.

Include All Teacher Educators in a Common Program Vision around Social Justice

This study suggested that some candidates came in with more receptiveness and readiness than others to develop a more structural orientation toward socially just teaching. On the other hand, the significant variation in the ways that these teachers were conceptualizing social justice may also be saying something about our program's coherence and ability to scaffold all candidates at various levels of development toward a more structurally-oriented view of socially just teaching practice. The full-time faculty, adjunct faculty, school-based mentor teachers, and university supervisors who work in our program may not share the same vision for socially just teaching and the orientations and practices that support it. Justice-oriented teacher education programs need to provide frequent opportunities for

these various educators in the program to collaborate on a vision for socially-just teaching through common readings and discussions and also agree on signature justice-oriented teaching practices that they want to see and assess in their exiting graduates – e.g., drawing from students' cultural "funds of knowledge" (Rodriguez, 2012) to teach traditional school subjects (as Angela and Don did); involving students in consciousness-raising discussions and debates on justice-related topics (as Rosina and Anna did); or engaging in equity-oriented advocacy (Athanases & Oliveira, 2008) (as seen in Cassie and Francine). Programs then need to provide students with ample opportunities to try out these teaching practices, get explicit feedback, and self-assess their own use of them within the broader, structural goals of socially just teaching.

Provide Ongoing Support for Graduates

As seen in Table 3, it was notable that all eight of the teachers who used both individual and structural frameworks to think about socially just teaching reported significant access to and help from colleagues (Angie, Michael, Don), administrators (Anna, Rosina, Katelyn), and/or support groups (Cassie, Francine) during their first year of teaching, while those teachers who were using only an individually-oriented framework to think about their teaching practices teaching did not. This strong finding lends support to other recent studies that have indicated that a variety of supports for new teachers are necessary to sustain the development of structurally-oriented socially just teachers (Agarwal, etal, 2010; Picower, 2011; Puig & Recchia, 2012; Ritchie, 2012).

Given that need for strong support in the early years of teaching, justice-oriented teacher educators need to think about how they can help sustain a more structural orientation toward socially just teaching in their graduates even if they are isolated in schools where low expectations, deficit perspectives and emphasis on management and control are the norm (Flores, 2007). They could create online resources that include chat rooms, curriculum materials and video examples of novice and veteran teachers who effectively combine CRT, consciousness-raising, and advocacy on behalf of their students. They could sponsor book clubs, critical inquiry, and/or action research

groups that challenge teachers to continue their development as socially just teachers after graduation. Several studies attest to the power of such projects (Flores, 2007; Quartz & TEP Group, 2003; Picower, 2011). Finally, they could collaborate with schools and school districts on targeted professional development and coaching aimed at strengthening teachers' sociocultural consciousness and socially just teaching practices (Philipott & Dagenais, 2012).

Future Study

This study raises many possibilities for future research. Since this was an exploratory self-study that relied largely on self-report, the next step in research needs to be larger-scale, longitudinal studies that follow more structurally-oriented graduates of justice-oriented teacher education programs into their classrooms and which draw from multiple sources of data to see how they are impacting their students' learning (classroom observations, curriculum materials, lesson plans, student work samples, assessment data). Also, given the low retention rates of urban teachers (Ingersoll, 2003), future studies need to look at how more structurally-oriented socially just teachers can be supported and sustained over time. In addition to more study on the influence of the various experiences outlined in this article, **s**tudy of other factors which most likely play a role in the development of more structurally-oriented socially just teachers is needed. For example, what dispositions, beliefs (religious, political), and/or values promote the development of a more structural orientation to socially just teaching? How do various dispositions, beliefs, and values interact with the experiences explored in this study? What disciplinary knowledge and understandings in the social sciences are needed to develop the necessary interpretive frameworks needed for a more structural orientation to socially just teaching?

Conclusion

Given the usual challenges in one's first year of teaching, the structurally-oriented advocacy found in Cassie, Francine, and Michael was remarkable. It appears that their rich cross-cultural experiences before and during the program, their program experiences, and on-the-job supports coalesced in ways that led to and encouraged their

early embrace of both individually- and structurally-oriented reflection and teaching practices. Knowing that these multiple factors need to come together for socially just teaching, teacher educators across many justice-oriented programs need to discuss and study how they can be more deliberate in their efforts to tap into the prior experiences of all of their candidates. They also need to explore how they can more strategically tailor course work, field work, and mentoring in ways that address the various needs and readiness of candidates to develop as socially just teachers across the continuum of pre-service and in-service teacher education.

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Appendix A

Interview Protocol after Student Teaching/First Year of Teaching

1. Where do you intend to teach/Where are you currently employed?
2. Why are you choosing to teach in this school or community?
3. As you think back to your teacher education program, what resonates the most for you?
4. Describe how your knowledge/beliefs about teaching diverse students in urban schools has changed during your teacher education program/during your first year of teaching.
5. Describe how your knowledge/ beliefs about the role of teachers has changed during your teacher education program/during your first year of teaching.
6. How do you define teaching for social justice?
7. Describe some specific examples of your socially just teaching practices.
8. What specific courses, readings, instructors, field experiences, or other experiences in or out of your teacher preparation program have had the greatest impact on your teaching for social justice?
9. *lst interview only*: What experiences BEFORE coming to college have had the greatest impact on your knowledge, attitudes, and skills related to teaching for social justice? *2nd interview only*: What experiences AFTER your teacher education program have had the greatest impact on your knowledge, attitudes, and skills related to teaching for social justice?
10. What suggestions do you have for making our program stronger in its efforts to develop socially just teachers?

Appendix B

Demographic Information Sheet

1. Gender (circle one): Female Male
2. Age: _____ years
3. To which Racial Group(s) do you belong: (Check One):

    ____Black or African American
    ____Hispanic American/Latino
    ____Native American, American Indian, Alaska Native, First Nation
    ____Asian
    ____Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
    ____White/European-American
    ____Bi-racial/multi-racial

4. Ethnic Association:_____
5. What city(s), state(s) did you grow up in?
6. Name and location of all schools attended from kindergarten through 12th grade and indicate whether the school was public, private/non-parochial or parochial.
7. Name and location of all schools attended after high school graduation:
8. Cross-cultural Experiences Inventory. Rate the frequency of your cross-cultural experiences and give examples in each of the following categories:
    a. Family _____none ___very little ____some _____ frequent _____extensive
    b. Friendships _____none ___very little ____some _____ frequent _____extensive
    c. K-12 schools _____none ___very little ____some _____ frequent _____extensive
    d. Neighborhood/community _____none ___very little ___some_____frequent ___extensive
    e. Volunteer work/service _____none ___very little ___some _____ frequent ___extensive
    f. Employment _____none ___very little ___some _____ frequent _____extensive

g. Travel (domestic or international) ____none ____very little
   ____some ____frequent__extensive

Table 1
Profile of Teachers

Name	Age	Race/ Gender	Home/School Background	1st Teach Position
Michael	23	WM	Suburban Parochial	Public HS History
Cassie	22	WF	Suburban Parochial	Public K-2 Ex Ed
Francine	22	WF	Suburban Parochial	Parochial 1st Grade
Anna	22	WF	Suburban Parochial	Charter 1st Grade
Rosina	24	WF	Suburban Parochial	Charter 6th Grade
Katelyn	22	WF	Urban Public	Charter 5th Grade
Don	28	WM	Urban Public	Public HS English
Angela	24	AA-F	Urban Public	Public HS English
Jeremy	25	WM	Urban Public	Public HS Math
Megan	22	WF	Town Parochial	Public 4th Grade
Adriana	22	WF	Town Public	Public 3rd Grade
Kelly	23	WF	Town Public	Parochial 1st Grade

Note: Age denotes age at graduation

Table 2

Final Coding Categories

Definitions of Teaching for Social Justice	Teaching Practices	Influences
"Unsure"	Caring relationships	Culturally diverse K-12 school
"See differences"	High Academic Expectations	Culturally diverse family
"All children can learn"	Skill/Content Instruction	Religious values
"All kids deserve good teachers"	"Funds of Knowledge" Pedagogies	Cross-cultural friendships
Fairness	Use Student Interests	Cross-cultural employment
Diverse Perspectives	Cultural heroes, holidays	Cross-cultural volunteer/service
Student-centered	Build background knowledge	Diverse field experiences
Student empowerment	Differentiation	Program courses/instructors
Build racial pride	High Behavioral Expectations	College courses/instructors
Teach survival in unjust world	Consistent Structure/Routines	Program supervisors
Prejudice reduction	"Warm Demanding"	Program theme of social justice
Inspire social mobility	Student Empowerment	Colleagues
Raise awareness re: injustice	Connect with parents	Administrators
Challenge status quo	Use community resources	Support groups
Consciousness-raising	Mentors	
Promote student activism	School mission	
Advocacy for change in school policies/practices		

Table 3

Orientation to Socially Just Teaching, Self-Described Teaching Practices & Influences

Name	SJ Orient	Care	Culturally Responsive Teaching Practices						Program & Non-program Influences				
			Warm Demand	High Academ	FoK	Parent Connect	Consciousness Raising	Advocacy	Pre-prog Cross-cultural	Prog Theme/ Courses	Field work	Non-prog Experience	Post-prog Supports
Michael	S-I	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Cassie	S-I	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Francine	S-I	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Anna	S-I	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X
Rosina	S-I	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X
Katelyn	I-S	X	X	X	X	X			X	X	X	X	X
Angela	I-S	X	X	X	X	X			X		X	X	X
Don	I-S	X			X				X		X	X	X
Jeremy	I	X	X						X		X	X	
Megan	I	X									X		
Adriana	I	X									X		
Kelly	I	X									X		

S-I = Structural/Individual, I-S = Individual/Structural, I = Individual
FoK = Funds of Knowledge Pedagogies

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