

2013

# Mission Possible: Teachers Serving as Agents of Social Change

Holly E. Kunkel-Pottebaum  
*University of St. Thomas, Minnesota*

Follow this and additional works at: [https://ir.stthomas.edu/caps\\_ed\\_lead\\_docdiss](https://ir.stthomas.edu/caps_ed_lead_docdiss)



Part of the [Education Commons](#)

---

## Recommended Citation

Kunkel-Pottebaum, Holly E., "Mission Possible: Teachers Serving as Agents of Social Change" (2013). *Education Doctoral Dissertations in Leadership*. 38.  
[https://ir.stthomas.edu/caps\\_ed\\_lead\\_docdiss/38](https://ir.stthomas.edu/caps_ed_lead_docdiss/38)

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the School of Education at UST Research Online. It has been accepted for inclusion in Education Doctoral Dissertations in Leadership by an authorized administrator of UST Research Online. For more information, please contact [libroadmin@stthomas.edu](mailto:libroadmin@stthomas.edu).

Mission Possible: Teachers Serving as Agents of Social Change

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE  
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF ST. THOMAS  
ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA

By

Holly E. Kunkel-Pottebaum

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS  
FOR THE DEGREE OF  
DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

2013

UNIVERSITY OF ST. THOMAS, MINNESOTA

Copyright © Holly Kunkel-Pottebaum. All rights reserved.

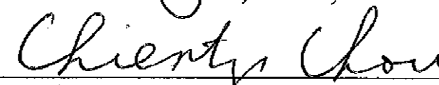
## Mission Possible: Teachers Serving as Agents of Social Change

We certify that we have read this dissertation and approved it as adequate in scope and quality. We have found that it is complete and satisfactory in all respects, and that any and all revisions required by the final examining committee have been made.

Dissertation Committee



Dr. Sarah J. Noonan, Ed.D., Committee Chair



Dr. Chien-Tzu C. Chou Ph.D., Committee Member



Dr. Karen L. Westberg Ph. D., Committee Member

April 3, 2013

Final Approval Date

### **Abstract**

A case study was conducted to learn about the formation of social justice teachers, and the methods used by radical educators to engage students in social change. Interviews conducted with eight junior and senior high school social studies teachers identified several types of formative experiences inspiring teachers to become radical educators. Personal and family experiences of oppression during their youth and early adult years, childhood multicultural experiences, social activism, volunteerism, and contact with adult mentors influenced teachers to become social justice educators.

Adopting critical thinking as the cornerstone of their social justice practice, social justice teachers employed strategies to foster critical thinking and moral action as a central feature of social justice pedagogy. These included (1) adopting alternative texts and supplemental resources to focus on social justice issues, (2) emphasizing active learning and 21<sup>st</sup> century learning skills (Rosefsky, Saavedra, & Opfer, 2012), (3) engaging students in service learning and civic action projects, and (4) integrating the arts within the social studies curriculum to raise cultural awareness and appreciation.

Data gathered from interviews, observations, and documents were analyzed using a transformational learning (Mezirow, 2000) and critical thinking theory (Brookfield, 2012). Findings reveal the importance of contact with diverse others and the important role that critical thinking and awareness play in raising social consciousness leading to moral action.

Key words: *social justice, pedagogy, radical teachers, critical thinking, Social Studies, social change*

## Acknowledgements

I began this journey six years ago. Seven years ago my father lay on his deathbed, reliving and reflecting on his short 54 years of life. As he lay in his bed, cancer eating at his insides, I sat by his side listening to his regrets. He regretted not taking risks in his life; he was too scared and thought he would live to be an old grandpa. He planned to retire, travel, and watch his grandchildren grow up. He regretted sweating the small stuff, even his mistakes as a parent. He regretted working 60 hours a week, missing family events, and my undergraduate college graduation.

Before he died, I told him it was okay, offered him forgiveness, and told him if he had known better, he would have done better. During those difficult three months, as I watched him waste away, I went through a paradigm shift: I realized I did not want to regret my life like my dad. So I promised him, I would take risks, despite my fears. This promise led me here to this moment, to the completion of my doctoral work. The person interviewed six years ago at the University of St. Thomas for admission to the doctoral program leaves the program a different person, mentally, cognitively, professionally, socially, and spiritually.

I would not be at this point without the support the compassionate, intelligent, and articulate professor Dr. Sarah Noonan, someone I hope to emulate some day. Six years ago she convinced me I could do this challenging work, when I did not believe it myself. And six years later, she has continued to be a mentor, ardent supporter, and inspiration to me. I could not, would not, be here without her consistent encouragement and support. I feel eternally grateful to her.

To my dissertation committee members, Dr. Chien-Tzu C. Chou and Dr. Karen L. Westberg, I offer my sincere thanks for your time and expertise. I appreciate the attention to detail and demand for scholarly work.

Finally I would like to thank those in my family who made the biggest sacrifices because of my desire to further my education. I want to thank my husband Jon who watched our children, took them outside to play, to trips to the store, or to practice, so I could have quiet time to research and write. I could not have completed this degree without his help.

Lastly, I want to thank my children Breanna, Caden, and Brycen, who were children six years ago. Now Breanna attends high school and the boys are in elementary school. I want to thank them for letting me use the computer for six years, and more importantly, I want to thank them for understanding when I couldn't always be at their games or school programs because I was in class or working on my degree.

Because of my father, I have no regrets; I don't sweat the small things; and I savor every moment of life!

## Table of Contents

Chapter One: Introduction.....	1
Statement of the Problem.....	3
Research Questions.....	4
Significance.....	4
Overview of Chapters.....	6
Definition of Terms.....	7
Chapter Two: Review of Literature.....	9
Social Studies and Roots of Social Justice Education.....	10
History of Social Justice Education.....	13
How Teachers Serve as Agents of Change.....	16
Teaching and Learning Pedagogy.....	20
Theoretical Framework.....	26
Critical Pedagogy.....	26
Transformational Learning Theory.....	30
Constructive Learning Theory.....	32
Summary.....	36
Chapter Three: Methodology.....	37
Case Study.....	39
Sample Procedure.....	41
Social Justice Educators.....	43
Data Collection Procedure.....	44
Phase One: Interviews.....	46
Phase Two: Classroom Observations.....	48
Phase Three: Document Review.....	49
Modes of Data Analysis.....	50
Validity and Generalibility.....	53
Ethics and Confidentiality.....	54
Summary.....	54
Chapter Four: Becoming a Radical Educator.....	56
Personal & Family Experiences of Oppression.....	57
Childhood Experiences, Activism and Mentors.....	64
Service Learning, Study Abroad and Personal Travel.....	71
Transformational Theory Creates Educators.....	78
Summary.....	81
Chapter Five: Social Justice Pedagogy and Curriculum.....	82
Strategy One.....	83
Biographies.....	84
Primary Resources.....	90
Alternative and Oppositional Text.....	98
Strategy Two.....	109
Strategy Three.....	120
Strategy Four.....	129
Use of Constructive Learning Theory.....	133
Summary.....	136

Chapter Six: Summary, Implementations, and Recommendations.....	138
Summary of Findings.....	138
Recommendation of Future Research.....	145
The Need for Radical Educators.....	147
References.....	149
Appendices.....	163
Appendix A.....	163
Appendix B.....	165
Appendix C.....	167
Appendix D.....	168
Appendix E.....	169
Appendix F.....	170
Appendix G.....	171
Appendix H.....	173
Appendix I.....	174
Appendix J.....	175
Appendix K.....	176
Appendix M.....	177
Appendix N.....	178



### **List of Tables**

Table 1: Participants demographics.....	43
Table 2: Participant teaching and education.....	44
Table 3: Brookfield’s Model of Critical Thinking to Social Justice Pedagogy.....	133

### **List of Figures**

Figure 1: Dewey’s Model of Reflective Thought and Action.....	35
Figure 2: Pottebaum’s Social Justice Curriculum Design and Pedagogy.....	145

## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

My education began 33 years ago in a small farming town in Northwest Iowa. I knew I wanted to be a teacher by the time I turned five years old. During my high school years, I realized I wanted to be social studies teacher because I loved studying history, analyzing current events, and applying psychology concepts to my life. After four years at the University of Northern Iowa, I received a degree to teach social studies in grades seven through twelve. I accepted my first history teaching position in 1996 at a public high school. I taught the information presented in the book similar to the way I learned history as a student.

As a young teacher, I taught my students the events and stories found in traditional history books because I was ignorant: I never realized education preserved the status quo. As I returned to college to earn a master's degree, I soon realized the history I taught did not include the history or stories of others who contributed to American history. As I moved from a public school teaching position to a Catholic high school position, I realized I only taught my students a small part of the constructed history and changed my pedagogy to include the voices of all people who helped shape American history.

I also recognized the need to teach my students how to think critically and evaluate the textbooks teachers used, the information presented, and the media sources used in the classroom and society. My goal as an educator evolved as I included feminist, racist, economic, cultural, religious, and gay, bisexual, lesbian, transgender (GBLT) voices and perspectives. I hoped my students would actively fight for the rights of the oppressed by opening their minds to alternative views and activities.

Learning other people's stories and thinking critically plays an important role in my student's education; however, teaching my students to be social activists outside of the classroom

plays an equally important role. I now teach social studies using many different teaching methodologies. I expose my students to alternative authors, views, and philosophies, avoiding indoctrination. I have changed the posters and pictures of traditional American history “players” and the language used in my classroom. I include reading assignments, projects, books, and activities requiring critical analysis of the information presented. Most importantly, however, I have taught my students to question everything, to search for subjugated knowledge, and to fight actively injustice in their home, community, and world.

Sixteen years ago I graduated from college with a degree in social studies education. As I progressed through my education classes and reflected on my education philosophy, I knew I would not be a typical teacher. I wanted to be different than the social studies teachers I experienced in school. They lectured every day, filled us with “hegemonic knowledge”, gave objective tests, and taught directly from the book. Hegemony or hegemonic knowledge may be defined as the

Maintenance of domination not by the sheer exercise of force but primarily through consensual social practices, social forms, and social structures produced in specific sites such as the church, the state, the school, the mass media, the political system, and the family (McLaren, 2006, pg. 173).

I resisted the idea of dominance and embraced the values of a radical educator.

During my transition to becoming a social justice educator, I lacked colleague and administrative support. I needed theory, curriculum models, stronger feelings of self-efficacy, greater knowledge of critical reflection, and support to help my students become socially active young adults. I returned to graduate school to learn. I focused my research on social justice and decided to study what motivates teachers to radicalize their teaching methodology instead of sticking to the prescribed curriculum and methods. I also wondered how social justice teachers transform lives by providing alternative, non-banking perspectives and activities to enhance

students' understanding of social injustices and promote social action. I used these questions to design my study.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Since the beginning of the common school movement, the educational system preserved the status quo and perpetuated American ideals and patriotism (Spring, 2007). A major objective in social studies education involves indoctrinating students into accepting hegemonic ideologies, institutions, and practices (Banks, 2006). The goal of teaching is to reproduce students who will become American workers and patriotic citizens (Spring, 2007). While the system "reproduces" itself through education, some teachers resist this view of education and instead advocate for change.

Social justice teachers or radical educators resist the idea of one dominant view and experience, and instead, advocate for the full inclusion of people in society. Moses identified educators as champions for social justice; "Educators today are actually the frontline civil rights workers in a long-term struggle to increase equity" (as cited in Brown, 2006, p. 701).

Paulo Freire (2000) believed in the importance of seeking alternative pedagogies to accomplish social change.

For apart from inquiry, apart from the praxis, individuals cannot be truly human. Knowledge emerges only through invention and re-invention, through the restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiry human beings pursue in the world, with the world, and with each other. (p. 72)

Social studies educators who teach for social justice may be different than other teachers. A central question in this study concerned the motivation of teachers to use this anti-oppressive, democratic approach and how their methods help them to accomplish social change. In my study, I decided to learn why and how some people became radical teachers who go against

traditional or dominant views. To address how social studies teachers serve as agents of social change in their classrooms, I set out to learn how radical teachers describe social justice curriculum and pedagogy, including the methods adopted and their struggle to become “expert” radical teachers.

### **Research Question**

I adopted the following questions to form my study: How do social studies teachers serve as agents of change? I used the following sub-questions to design my study.

1. What formative experiences influenced the professional practice of educators in social justice?
2. What do radical teachers do to create anti-classist, sexist, and racist classrooms? What pedagogical approaches and strategies inform their teaching? How do they assess their success with regard to student learning and their work as activists?
3. How do social justice teachers sustain their efforts and grow as activists engaged in social change within their classrooms?

### **Significance of the Problem**

“As the teaching profession becomes increasingly white and as white educators become increasingly involved in multicultural education, it is likely that what teachers do with multicultural education increasingly will reflect a white worldview” (Sleeter, 1996, p. 151). When students occupy social positions of power and privilege and are taught in schools and classrooms to perpetuate hegemonic knowledge, society runs the risk of creating children who will not challenge social inequities. Education must be a collaborative process that involves crossing ethnic, religious, racial, and socioeconomic boundaries for the purpose of advancing equity and social justice issues (Sleeter, 1996). According to Banks (2006), individual teachers

and not schools have the real power to help students develop knowledge, skills, and ideals needed to promote human dignity, justice, and equality.

Historically, European and Euro-Americans consider Western literature, science, religion and historical knowledge superior to those of other cultures (Sleeter, 1996). American children grow up internalizing the dominant culture's traits, beliefs, language, and habits (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990). When teachers construct their discipline content as culturally superior and more advanced than peoples of color, educators teach children to regard other cultures and their knowledge as inferior (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990).

While some teachers feel powerless in their school to evoke change, other teachers feel supported and empowered to confront issues of inequity and social injustices. Teachers have to be empowered in their classroom to create social movements by challenging their students to actively confront power relations of the dominant culture and ideology through curriculum, activities, the media, content, and ideology (Bell, 2007). However, teachers cannot fight social injustice by their passion and will alone. "Huge shifts in cultural understandings and societal and school expectations will happen only with the shared values, coalitions, networking and mutual support that comes with the power of enlarging groups of people in social movies, which results in building of social capital and political power" (Marshall & Oliva, 2006, p.11).

I examined the important role of social justice educators in advocating for change with their students. They share a common goal: to change the world. I investigated the characteristics of social studies teachers as agents of social change, including their personal and professional beliefs and actions with regard to social justice as well as the instructional methods and pedagogy promoting social activism in and outside the classroom. This included the transformative learning experiences of teachers using social justice pedagogy.

My goal in conducting this study involved gaining knowledge of social justice teachers and their practice. I hoped the knowledge would provide encouragement, support, and knowledge of advanced social justice pedagogies to secondary social studies teachers. I hope the results help teachers meet the needs of their diverse students, and also call them to action, engaging their students and colleagues in social activism for social justice. I next describe the content found within the six chapters and then offer a definition of terms used in this study.

### **Overview of Chapters**

Chapter one includes sections that provide my background in social justice education and discuss the study's problem statements, research questions, significance of the problem, and definitions of terms.

In chapter two I provide a review of the literature that looks at the history of social studies and social justice education. I also review literature on social justice educators who use their classrooms to foster social change. I also provide a discussion on teaching and learning pedagogies that promote social activism. It also provides a theoretical outline used in the analysis of the study.

Chapter three reviews the study's methodology: case study. I also discussed the method of data collection as well as the methods used in the analysis.

In chapter four, I discuss what transformational events impacted the participants' decisions to become social justice educators. Chapter five examines the pedagogical methods used by social justice educators in classrooms to elicit student activism.

I provide in chapter six a summary of results, implications and recommendations. Lastly I discussed the study's limitations and made a personal statement about social justice education.

The purpose of this study was to discover transformational experiences that motivate people to become social justice educators. Understanding the pedagogical methods and theories social justice educators use with students is instrumental in order to create social change.

### **Definition of Terms**

I adopted the following terms and definitions for use in this study.

**Critical pedagogy:** a set of practices that uncovers the ways in which the process of schooling represses the contingency of its own selection of values and the mean through which educational goals are subtended by macrostructures of power and privilege (McLaren, 1999, p. 50)

**Critical thinking:** an attitude of being disposed to consider in a thoughtful way the problems and subjects that come within the range of one's experience, knowledge of the methods of logical enquiry and reasoning, and some skill in applying those methods. Critical thinking calls for persistent effort to examine any belief or supposed form of knowledge in light of the evidence that supports it and the conclusions in which it tends (Glaser, 1941, p. 5)

**Critical thinking abilities/skills:** to recognize problems, to find workable means for meeting those problems, to gather and marshal pertinent information, to recognize unstated assumptions and values, to comprehend and use language with accuracy, clarity, and evaluate statements, to recognize the existence of logical relationships between propositions, to draw warranted conclusions and generalizations, to put to test the generalizations and conclusions at which one arrives, to reconstruct one's patterns of beliefs on the basis of wider experiences, and to render accurate judgments about specific things and qualities in everyday life (Glaser, 1941, p.6)

**Hegemony:** method in which power is maintained not only through force but through consensual agreements of subjugated members of a society (Bell, 2007)



**Radical educator:** someone who recognizes and helps students recognize and name injustice, who empowers students to act against their own and others' oppression (including oppressive school structures), who criticizes and transforms his or her own understanding in response to their students (Ellsworth, 1994; Giroux & McLaren, 1986; Shor & Freire, 1987)

**Social justice education:** a focus on understanding the *social power* dynamics and social inequality that result in some social groups having privilege, status, and access, whereas other groups are disadvantaged, oppressed, and denied access (Hardiman & Jackson, 2007)

**Transformative learning theory:** a proposition that explains how adult learners make sense or meaning of their experiences, the nature of the structures that influence the way they construe experience, the dynamics involved in modifying meaning, and the way the structures of meanings themselves undergo changes when learners find them to be dysfunctional (Mezirow, 1991, p. xii).

**Transformative pedagogy:** education that instead of transmitting and embracing the dominant instructional methods, relentlessly questions the kinds of labor practices, and forms of production that are enacted in all education levels by instituting methods of critical thinking and self-reflexivity (Giroux, 2001)

## **CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE**

### **Introduction to the Literature**

Increasingly more diverse American schools experience difficulty adjusting to the financial, mental, cultural, and language needs of diverse students (Duany & Pittman, 1991; Kao & Thompson 2003; Parra-Cardona 2006; Perreira et al. 2006; and Pong & Hao 2007). Forty percent of school children in 2010 were students of Color, while 85% of their teachers were White and female (Trent, Kea, & Oh, 2008). Critics charge college teacher programs fail to recruit a large number of diverse teacher candidates and fail to prepare adequately pre-service teachers in social justice pedagogies and theories (Trent, Kea, & Oh, 2008). A small number of teachers use their classrooms as an impetus to social change. These teachers motivate their students to create social change due to their own unique experiences and implementation of social justice lessons and activities.

I conducted a review of literature to locate scholarly literature regarding how social studies teachers serve as agents of change for social justice. The purpose of this review was to locate and summarize findings from scholarly studies of social studies teachers who have transformed their traditional curriculum into an activist classroom environment. This also included a review of social justice pedagogical methods used to promote social justice with students.

I used the following questions to guide my review of the literature: What does it mean or look like to be a social justice educator? What social justice teaching methods foster student awareness of social justice issues and teach them to be socially active? Why do some teachers choose to teach from a traditional educational perspective while some teachers seemed to be

transformed early in their lives or careers and teach in a radical manner? Lastly, how successful are social justice teaching methods in transforming students into critically reflective activist?

This literature review begins with a description of the history of social studies and social justice education as a background for this study, beginning with the history of public high schools.

### **Social Studies in High School and the Roots of Social Justice Education**

Public high schools for the first time in the 1880s began to take over private academies as the dominant educational arena (Thornton, 2005). In 1893, the National Education Association (NEA) convened and developed core academic subjects for American schools. The 1890s gave birth to the modern American curriculum; it was a period in history when educational reformers endorsed a social science perspective (Thornton, 2005). Educational reformers, during the later part of the nineteenth century, viewed the education of children differently. Instead of educating students to be passive containers of information, reformers sought to change students into active participants in their education (Thornton, 2005). Because some teachers taught in a “drillmaster style” and students acted as the obedient receptacles, groups such as the NEA and the Committee of Ten (the social-subjects component of the NEA), suggested curriculum and teaching methods needed redesigning (Thornton, 2005).

During the 1890s, the Committee of Ten met and recommended a social science component be added to the academic curriculum (Thornton, 2005). The Committee of Ten’s final report recommended all students on their way to college and the non-college bound student should receive adequate history and related social studies instruction. The final component of their report included a concern over a social studies course of study and teaching methods. The Committee of Ten recommended that social studies courses and effective teaching methods be

added to school curriculums to assimilate it into the standard curriculum. The later part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century also saw the emergence of United States (US) History as the most important class taught in the social studies field (Thornton, 2005). By the early 1900s, social studies/history classes became a core component of the K-12 core curriculum (Garcia, 2008).

During the early decades of its existence, social science terminology, curriculum, teaching methods, and fundamental content changed mostly because of the social, economic, and political debates of the times (Thornton, 2005). The 1910s, marked by a Progressive Movement, brought political, social, and educational changes. The Committee of Ten became the NEA's Committee on Social Studies by 1916. The Committee on Social Studies recommended the "new" history should focus on the origin of social problems.

The NEA in 1916 advanced the discipline of history, arguing it should play a dominant role in the social studies curriculum (Garcia, 2008). Between the 1910s and 1920s, however, the term *history and allied subjects* was replaced with the term *social studies*. The change of terms, meant to clarify *history and allied subjects* education, actually continued the varying interpretations of social science education. The Great Depression of the 1930s and World War II contributed to the desire of having social studies classes promote a free market economy and democratic ideals as a way to strengthen capitalistic and nationalist ideals in the face of communist and fascist threats (Danker, 2005). The basic form of social studies curriculum emerged by the 1940s (Thornton, 2005).

In the 1950s and early 1960s social studies became synonymous with two courses: history and geography (Danker, 2005). During this time, most high school and college social science courses consisted of European or American history. When educators taught social studies courses involving theory or policy, the content consisted of government or economic

topics (Zevin, 2007). America during the 1960s and 1970s experienced tremendous education, political, and social reform (Zevin, 2007). Habermas used the words space and time consciousness, claiming that since the 1960s, the world's space and time consciousness was shrinking (as cited in Zevin, 2007). The 1960s saw advancements in technology, resulting in a shrinking and interdependent world experiencing social, political, and economic chaos. As the world changed, a *new social studies* emerged (Zevin, 2007). Reformers addressed this new world order by making "social studies more activist and innovative" (Zevin, 2007, p. 21). The reforms in social studies during this time took three forms (Zevin, 2007). First, reformers paid attention to historical questions and issues as they applied to everyday life. Second, other social science fields such as psychology, sociology, and economics were included in the social studies curriculum. Lastly, an increase in modular, current, and thematic courses included current social, feminine, racial, legal and cultural concerns (Zevin, 2007). The tradition of social studies classes no longer only involved history and geography.

"The social studies curriculum has long served as an ideological and moral battleground in the culture wars" (Hursh & Ross, 2000, p. 211). The 1980s and 1990s saw a reversal of social studies courses focusing on women, minorities, and cultures beyond North America and Europe. These decades, perhaps because of a more conservative political landscape, saw a renewed emphasis on history, "particularly as a vehicle for understanding the past rather than simply accepting it as a part of our patriotic heritage" (Zevin, 2007, p. 21).

During the 1980s, social studies witnessed a replacement of interdisciplinary, citizenship-oriented courses with the study of history and geography (Hursh & Ross, 2000). "Since the 1980s, advocates of an almost exclusive social science approach to the social studies curriculum have been unrelentingly critical of social education" (Thornton, 2005, p. 12). National trends in

twenty-first century social studies curriculum divided social studies into four core areas: U.S. History, Global/World History, Government, and Economics (Zevin, 2007). Focused, thematic courses of the 1960s and 70s disappeared in practice due to demands by federal and state governments for a common national curriculum; this included the adoption of standardized tests (Zevin, 2007).

The National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS), founded in 1921, served as an advocate and leader in national social studies standards (Zevin, 2007). According to Zevin (2007), making standardized tests proved easier when there were fewer social studies courses. The social studies field in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is stuck between two dichotomies. On one hand, federal, state, and local education leaders advocate an easily testable standardized curriculum, and on the other hand, “there is an increased interest in higher order thinking and having students complete ““authentic”” tasks that in some way mirror demands outside the world of school” (Zevin, 2007, p. 394). Textbooks and social studies classrooms of the 1980s and 1990s saw content and teaching method improvement, but over-all, the social studies classrooms of the twenty-first century still tend to avoid a deep, critical, and well-rounded investigation of cultural, ethnic, and gender concerns and perspectives (Zevin, 2007).

The social studies field endured a long path of change, reformation, and regression in part because of the changes occurring in society at the time. The history of social justice education is much shorter and still evolving.

### **History of Social Justice Education**

Social justice education (SJE) comes from a variety of viewpoints, including Marxist, feminist, postmodernist, humanist, critical, and ecological perspectives (Wade, 2007). “Social justice is both personal *and* planetary, both practical *and* visionary, and both process *and* goal.

Social justice is concerned with equitable distribution of resources as well as relating to each other with respect and care” (Wade, 2007, p. 5). Chubbuck (2010) defined social justice education using three parts. Part one included curricula, pedagogies, and teacher expectations and interpersonal methods to improve the learning environment of all students, including children from subjugated groups. Second, social justice education breaks down educational, social, and economic barriers preventing oppressed children from an equal education. This requires teachers to transform educational structures and policies and also challenge structural inequities in schools. Finally, socially just teachers work to transform injustice perceptions and structures at the society level.

Social justice teachers offer transformative curriculum and instruction, challenging students to become active citizens who transform oppressive structures, policies, and perspectives (Chubbuck, 2010). Social justice education “enable[s] people to develop the critical analytical tools necessary to understand oppression and their own socialization with oppressive systems, and develop a sense of agency and capacity to interrupt and change oppressive patterns and behaviors in themselves and their community” (Bell, 2007, p. 2).

For decades, social justice educators investigated the “affective, personal, social, and experimental dimensions of teacher and learning” (Adams, 2007, p. 15). SJE developed from many pedagogical frameworks, such as “adult literacy education, Black Studies/ethnic studies, community organizing, conflict resolution, counseling, critical pedagogy, critical race theory, developmental education, educational administration, experiential education, higher education, intergroup dialogue, international education, laboratory and T(raining)-group education, multicultural education, teacher preparations and women’s studies” (Adams, 2007 p. 16).

Previously viewed as “touchy feely”, educators now accept social justice education that includes social justice pedagogy, curriculum, and teaching strategies (Adams, 2007).

In the 1940s, community leaders and social psychologists studied group and organizational dynamics and training. Researchers and practitioners, concerned with issues of social diversity and social justice, studied organizations and educational institutions (Adams, 2007). As awareness of racism increased in the United States during the 1940s and 50s, scholars and organizational developers advocated for more awareness and knowledge of other cultures and races to reduce prejudice in businesses, schools, and communities. During the 1960s, sociological analysts reported a picture of race relations, including systemic social, educational, and economic power discrepancies among different races (Adams, 2007).

Due to the societal problems of racial inequality and injustice during the Civil Rights and Black awareness movements of the 1960s and 70s; an emphasis on social action and single group studies emerged (Adams, 2007). Community and educational organizations began in-depth courses in Black, ethnic, and multicultural studies. Social activist and educators, such as Horton, Clark, and Freire, developed a social justice curriculum using experiential, culturally relevant, and critically reflective teaching methods (Adams, 2007). During this same time, feminist pedagogy emerged and incorporated gender consciousness and the value of real experience into legitimate sites of knowledge (Adams, 2007).

The 1980s saw an emergence of multicultural educators and practitioners, such as Suzuki, Banks, Nieto, and Sleeter and Grant (Adams, 2007). These educational scholars provided culturally-relevant and multicultural practices and literature to teacher education programs and schools. The changes provided a multicultural and social reconstructionist perspective, motivating and giving students the tools needed to make social changes (Adams, 2007).



Multicultural educators proposed pedagogical methods such as collaboration, democratic decision-making, social action skills, and democratic classroom activities to foster change.

Multicultural theories during the 1980s also focused on teaching pedagogies, invoking Freire's ideas on critical pedagogy involving student experiences and viewpoints, and focused on social identity, and sociocultural and historical content (Adams, 2007).

During the rise of social justice teacher education, there became an "explicit, intentional emphases on social justice and on social justice education" (Adams, 2007 p. 24). Using personal narratives and emphasizing concepts regarding advantage, privilege, power, and racism, social justice practitioners and educators empower students and communities to transform society (Adams, 2007).

### **How Teachers Serve as Agents of Social Change in Social Studies Classrooms**

Teacher education programs attempted to provide multicultural and human relations classes to their pre-service teachers. These courses attempted to teach educators using a pluralistic manner and a closer examination of the real causes, facts, or realities of oppression (Gonzalez & Ayala-Alcantar, 2008). Often pre-service teacher education programs and educational leaders emphasized maintaining the status quo or existing education arrangements (Brown, 2005). As social studies educators, these history, government, psychology, sociology, economic, anthropology, and geography teachers "can either be gatekeepers and maintain the status quo, or become social change agents" (Gonzalez & Ayala-Alcantar, 2008, p. 130). White (1999) argued that social studies as taught in the 1990s threatened hegemony. Technological advances such as the introduction of the World Wide Web, threatened to educate students in a different way. "Technological tools can foster students' abilities, revolutionize the way they work and think, and give them access to the world." (White, 1999, p. 81).

White (1999) posited that some social studies teachers in the 1990s rejected the standard curriculum in exchange for a more radical, socially just, and critical pedagogy. Teachers opened their minds and acknowledged “they are systemically embedded in mindsets, worldviews and values and experiences” (Brown, 2005, p. 155). Radical teachers filled their classrooms with alternative theory, activities, language, and books, challenging what Freire (2000) called the “banking system of education” (p. 72).

Teaching students to be socially active in social studies classrooms allows students to actively fight oppression and injustice so that subjugated and excluded ethnic, religious, economic, and racial groups might become full participants in American society (Banks, 2006). Social studies classrooms foster open and safe discussions, insuring students hear and analyze diverse voices and perspectives (Banks, 2006). Educational researchers focused on this transformative pedagogy of social activism in the last 20 years. While developing civic competence, respect for all cultures, and a passion to fight injustice, these social studies educators advocate listening to students’ stories, making them think critically and engaging in problem solving rather than just transferring knowledge (White, 1999).

Lucas (2010) conducted a qualitative study examining a group of social studies teachers’ views on multicultural and global education. Lucas recognized teachers’ conceptualizations affected their classroom instruction. She considered the similarities and differences between multicultural and global education, and she examined the views of four social studies teachers and analyzed their perceptions of multicultural and global education. Finally, the study described one teacher’s global education classroom, activities, and classroom methods (Lucas, 2010).

Lucas (2010) asked the teachers a variety of questions surrounding multicultural, global, and civic pedagogies in relation to their classrooms. After the completion of the interviews, four major themes surfaced. First, the teachers experienced difficulty defining multicultural education and the importance of this type of education. Next, teachers expressed a level of discomfort with multicultural education, and finally, they appeared unable to identify the difference between multicultural education and global education (Lucas, 2010).

Lucas (2010) concluded global education was and should be a fundamental component of the social studies curriculum. *However, global education should not replace multicultural education.* Lucas (2010) feared that if teachers used global and multicultural education interchangeably, educators ran the risk of minimizing the importance of both in the social studies curriculum.

Wade (2007) conducted a study on social justice education. Wade recruited 40 teachers, requiring them to be either involved with social justice organizations or published writers on social justice education. Wade gathered information regarding elementary social studies teachers who taught a social justice curriculum. She found teachers created a socially just classroom community by embracing each student. Teachers encouraged students in the social justice classrooms to speak up and contribute to the classroom community. Teachers described how they set up their classroom to foster social justice activities and themes. This included a sharing of classroom materials, changing in seating positions, and creating circle meetings (Wade, 2007).

“Teaching for social justice is much more than topics or lessons in the social studies curriculum” (Wade, 2007, p. 29). Participants offered insight regarding how they adapted the social studies standardized curriculum and dealt with standardized tests. Many teachers used supplemental readings or textbooks to bring out social justice themes. These teachers also

sought out community activists, parents, staff, and radical organizations, such as Rethinking Schools, Teaching for Change, Educators for Social Responsibility, Radical Teacher, and the Teaching for Tolerance program, to provide support, lesson plans, and guest speakers (Wade, 2007).

Overall, many of these elementary social studies teachers found that teaching for social justice was a relatively easy transition, since so much of the elementary curriculum is already focused on different people, culture, and history (Wade, 2007). Social justice elementary teachers used conflict resolution techniques, field trips, and community service activities as teaching methods (Wade, 2007). *However the secondary social studies teacher has a much more difficult time transitioning to a radical social justice educator.*

DiCamillo and Pace (2010) published their case study results from research they conducted on U.S. History teachers preparing their students to participate in a multicultural democracy. Traditionally history teachers have relied on textbooks, lectures, rote memorization, low levels of critical thinking, worksheets, and quizzes (DiCamillo & Pace, 2010). Since the 1980s, DiCamillo and Pace found social studies teachers who rejected traditional social studies methodology. Combining multicultural, democratic, and social justice pedagogy appears rare in social studies education. They found social studies teachers who “developed classroom community, taught both mainstream and transformative historical content and employed “deliberative pedagogies” that featured culminating projects and scaffolded examination of alternative history text” (p. 70).

DiCamillo and Pace (2010) conducted a case study of three U.S. History classrooms. One teacher stood out as an example of a social justice teacher, encouraging students to think critically and providing opportunities for students to reflect on historical figures, controversies,

and policies. What made this teacher different from the others in the study was his rigorous, engaging focus on critical, multicultural historical perspectives (DiCamillo & Pace, 2010).

DiCamillo and Pace (2010) concluded their case study, recognizing the lack of research on social studies teachers who teach from a democratic, multicultural, and socially just perspective. They called for more research to investigate how a democratic, multicultural, social justice curriculum addresses students' needs in a racially, socioeconomic, and academically diverse-setting.

North (2009) studied social justice teachers, and identified five “literacy’s” for social justice, including functional, critical, relational, democratic, and visionary. North found teachers purposively promoted social change by using different approaches in the curriculum, teaching methodology, and educational philosophy. “The physical layout of their classrooms, socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds of the students, school mission and histories, curricula, and teacher-student interactions differ dramatically” (North, 2009, p. 162). By the end of the study, the participants felt the group provided the support needed to continue a social justice curriculum (North, 2009). While some teachers promote Marxist, feminist, postmodernist, humanist, critical, or ecological theories and authors, others use class, culture, and religious ideas to promote social change (Wade, 2007).

“Teachers who support human freedom, justice, and equality can motivate students to engage in social action to improve the human condition (Banks, 2006, p. 103). Teachers committed to becoming agents of change need to focus on the following qualities: democratic values, multicultural content, cultural heritage and beliefs, affirmative attitudes towards diverse groups of people, and critical pedagogical skills that reduce prejudice and increase student achievement (Banks, 2006). It is the teacher and not the school who has the power to “develop

the ideals, knowledge, and skills needed to reform society (Banks, 2006, p. 103). In the next section, I describe various pedagogies used to promote activism in the classroom.

### **Teaching and Learning Pedagogies Promoting Activism in the Classroom**

Social justice educators seek to transform society, not just the individual: “Social reconstructionist educators not only endorse the multicultural education emphasis on changing the educational structure of American education but also seek to teach students about social justice and empower them as agents of change in society” (Ali & Ancis, 2005, p. 74). Teaching social studies while implementing a social justice curriculum requires educators to look at the traditional social studies curriculum critically (Wade, 2007). Methods for a social justice curriculum teach students about justice and power, while focusing on racism, sexism, power structures, privilege, classism, ableism, ageism, and heterosexuality (Adams, 2007; Grant & Sleeter, 2009).

A teacher’s eagerness and promotion of a social justice education can open possibilities of intellectual, social, and emotional growth. “Studying injustice can increase students’ awareness, empathy, and even moral outrage, hopefully motivating students to care about others and to work for social justice” (Wade, 2007 p. 38). Coupling social justice education with social studies provides an opportunity of providing multiple perspectives to students (Wade, 2007). Social studies educators can use certain pedagogical methods to promote social justice activism, subjugated knowledge, skills, and ideals (Wade, 2007). Banks (2006) suggested that teachers must first teach social criticism and help students understand how they can influence and change social inequalities, stereotypes, prejudice, and oppressive policies.

Banks (2007) postulates teachers must implement a multicultural education that offers a variety of cultural and ethnic concepts, principles, and theories. Next, teachers must understand

and help “students understand investigate and determine how the implicit cultural assumption, frames of reference, perspectives and biases within a discipline influence the ways in which knowledge is constructed within it” (Banks, 2007, p. 20). A classroom must reduce prejudice.

Teachers can use a variety of activities to help students develop positive attitudes towards different races, religions, sexualities, and ethnic groups. Social justice educators will also provide an equitable pedagogy, a modification of their teaching style that will benefit different learning and cultural styles. Finally, Banks (2007) states that teachers must provide an empowering school culture. This means that grouping and labeling of academic and athletic abilities as well as interactions between teachers, students, parents, and administration must be examined to ensure that all students are empowered. Through critical experiences, activities, and perspectives, social reform education encourages students to take a critical stance in society and gives students the confidence, tools and power necessary to take social action to improve their own lives and community (Pratt, 2002).

“Multicultural social justice education deals more...with oppression and social structural inequality based on race, social class, gender and disability” (Grant & Sleeter, 2007, p. 71). In the last twenty years, many books, journals, and articles discussed which pedagogical approaches should be used in a multicultural social justice curriculum (Grant & Sleeter, 2009). Social justice education is student-centered, collaborative, experiential, intellectual, critical, multicultural, and activist (Wade, 2007).

Grant and Sleeter (2009) recommended multicultural social justice education included goals of critical questioning, practicing democracy, analyzing systems of oppression, and encouraging social action. Boutte (2008) suggested that the framework of a social justice education consists of teaching methods rooted in the needs of students and their experiences; the

framework also provides to the students critical information, literature, and media. Curriculum and teaching methods should be multicultural, antiracist, and pro-justice while being participatory and experiential, all the while invoking a hopeful, kind, and joyful vision (Boutte, 2008). Social justice pedagogy must include academic rigor, cultural sensitivity, and critical thinking activities that invoke reflective action (Boutte, 2008). The practice of engaging students in civic debate can be a useful tool as well (Marshall & Klein, 2009). Civic debates elicit critical thinking skills, allow students to develop their own opinion/voice, recognize fact from opinion, identify bias, and encourage persuasive speaking skills.

Grauerholz (2007) suggested teaching strategies for combating classroom and student ideology in hopes of promoting social justice and activism. “Students come to our classrooms with a wide range of opinions, values, experiences and backgrounds concerning race, ethnicity, social class, gender and sexuality” (p. 16). Grauerholz (2007) recommended a variety of strategies to engage a diverse group of students. The first strategy to challenge students’ ideologies was to conduct simulations in which students are engaged in games and research activities that put students in the mindset of alternative perspectives. Role playing exercises can also be an excellent experiential learning tool. Role playing allows students to understand the values, experiences, behaviors, and attitudes of others.

Grauerholz (2007) also suggested students become active in community-based and service learning opportunities. Community and service learning activities can put students into direct contact with diverse and oppressed individuals. Finally, social justice teachers should provide opportunities for students to critically access textbooks and readings, social problems, and alternative perspectives (Grauerholz, 2007).



Wade (2007) outlined essential teaching strategies that support a social justice curriculum in a social studies classroom. Specific strategies adopted by a good teacher allowed them to advance into educators who place an emphasis on empathy, critical thinking, multiple perspectives, and activism (Wade, 2007). Wade (2007) produced a set of teaching pedagogies including organizing units thematically using children's literature, constructing good questions, using role-play and simulations, using primary sources, incorporating visual and performing arts, and participating in community activism.

A thematic approach to social studies can induce social activism by maximizing exposure to social justice curriculum and skills (Wade, 2007). Borrowing from Dewey (1911), Grant and Sleeter (2009) suggested that teachers form history around themes such as racism, labor and human rights, public policy, imperialism, and so on instead of a chronological manner. Jewett (2007) also proposed a pedagogical framework for a thematic investigation of social studies topics. Jewett believed that thematic investigations allowed students to analyze historical events, form critical questions, analyze primary readings including media and artifacts, and synthesize their "findings", thus allowing students to process relationships between power, social issues, and alternative perspectives (2007).

Wade (2007) stressed the importance of including a critical assessment of literature and media. Using literature in correspondence with critical discussion and reflection was an important component of this social justice pedagogy. The purpose of critical literacy is "to empower students with multiple perspectives and questioning habits of mind and encourage them to think and take action on their decisions through inquiry, dialogue, activism, and their daily decisions about how to live so that they help make a better world" (Wok, 2003, p. 102). Implementing a critical literacy methodology in the classroom can be a useful tool in addressing

a social justice curriculum (Banks, 2007; Freire, 2000, Marshall and Klein, 2009; Soares and Wood, 2010). Social justice teachers foster social change through teaching strategies and alternative perspectives (Marshall & Klein, 2009). Social justice educators implement the following techniques in the classroom: “a critical literacy curriculum that explores current global context, use of primary sources, role playing and civic debate” (Marshall & Klein, 2009, p. 218). Soares and Wood (2010) alleged that critical literacy perspective can be an effective tool in social studies classrooms claiming that social studies classrooms serve as the best place to teach students to be critical citizens. Through critical literary analysis of current and historical social justice issues, students create an awareness of past, present, and future social issues.

Social studies teachers for social justice implement active pedagogies, including role-playing and simulations. Role-playing and simulation allowed students to relate to others and imagine another person’s life (Grauerholz 2007; Marshall & Klein 2009, Wade 2007). Using primary resources in a social justice curriculum can also enhance students’ understanding of social issues (Marshall & Klein, 2009; Wade, 2007). Primary sources such as journals, diaries, newspaper articles, songs, documents, letters, speeches, and photos “allow students to analyze and interpret historical evidence and to construct their own understandings of historical events” (Wade, 2007, p. 71).

Another teaching strategy in a social justice curriculum included providing opportunities for students to experience social studies through the visual and performing arts (Wade, 2007). Dance, singing, drawing, painting, and acting all offered occasions for students to learn about social studies from a social justice perspective. Wade offered an of example listening to music developed during the Civil Rights Movement as a method of deepening an understanding of social movements (Wade, 2007).

Finally, teachers act as agents of change by teaching their students social activist skills that allowed them to understand and work with community organizations to foster social change. Wade (2007) suggested that teachers encourage activism and foster community connections by bringing in guest speakers, providing field trips and community service activities, writing letters to politicians and community organizations, and fostering involvement in school-based activism and community rallies and marches. Grant and Sleeter (2009) posited that social justice pedagogies should illicit an appreciation and acceptance of diverse cultures, as well as teach social and political action skills that foster an understanding and consciousness of others. Two educational theorists, Freire and Dewey, contributed to the discussion of education theory, methods, and purpose regarding the using education to accomplish social justice. In the next section, I describe Freire and Dewey who provide an important background for analyzing social justice education and teaching methods.

### **Theoretical Framework**

I adopted a variety of theories to form a conceptual structure for the conduct of my study as well as a framework to use in the analysis of the study's data. These theories are useful for analyzing and evaluating the most successful methodologies for transforming students into social activist. These theories helped me conceptualize and explain how people, through transformational experiences, became radical educators who use their classrooms as venues for social change. The theories of critical pedagogy, transformational learning, and learning theory informed my study on teachers who serve as agents of social change and their teaching methodology.

### **Critical Pedagogy**

I adopted critical pedagogy theory to explain how critical pedagogy aims to create a more socially just world (Kincheloe, 2004). While critical pedagogy encompasses education, it also acknowledges how one teaches, what one teaches, and how students learn (Giroux, 1997). Paulo Freire served as the impetus for using critical pedagogy as a method of freeing the oppressed and the oppressor from injustice and persecution (Freire, 2000). Freire's role in adult education was to provide a critical perception of reality, to debunk a person's system of beliefs or false consciousness (Allman, 2009). According to Freire, the purpose of adult education was developing a critical consciousness and a critical praxis. Education should be liberating, not constricting (Freire, 2000). Adults and educators need to decide which side they are on; are they interested in maintaining the status quo or liberalizing oppressed groups (Allman, 2009)?

Born in 1921 in Recife, Brazil, Paulo Freire learned about poverty and oppression while working and living with impoverished peasants (Kincheloe, 2004). Such experiences allowed Freire to spend his life fighting for the rights of marginalized populations (Kincheloe, 2004). Freire became a well-known educator due to his work with the poor, his jailing for insurgent teaching in 1964, and his exile in Chile by 1970 (Kincheloe, 2004). As a progressive educator, Freire affected many areas in education, including: literary theory, cultural studies, composition, philosophy, research method, political science, theology, and sociology (Kincheloe, 2004). Freire reconstructed what is meant to be an educator. "Educators in the Freirean sense are learned scholars, community researchers, moral agents, philosophers, cultural workers, and political insurgents" (Kincheloe, 2004, p. 70).

Freirean's pedagogy developed a variety of frameworks for educators to implement to maximize empowerment and social change and to reduce oppression (Kincheloe, 2004). Kincheloe thought one of the most important dimensions of Freire's pedagogy involved the

development of critical consciousness in students. Critical consciousness demands that teachers and students tackle unchecked consciousness and behaviors (Kincheloe, 2004). Freire's role in education was to provide a critical perception of reality, to debunk a person's system of beliefs or false consciousness (Allman, 2009). According to Freire, the purpose of education was developing a critical consciousness and a critical praxis. Education should be liberating not constricting (Freire, 2000).

Teachers and students alike learn through critical consciousness that their history, consciousness, and reality have been constructed by a dominant ideology (Kincheloe, 2004). "For the critically conscious thinker, education involves engaging in continuous improvement and transformation of self and reality (Kincheloe, 2004, p. 72). Freire claimed critical consciousness challenges teachers and students to step back from their reality and view the world from a new vantage point. Freire believed that a teacher was not the gatekeeper of knowledge for students. His perspective held that teachers and students were partners in education who listened to each other's stories, interacted with the community and problems, and shared a vision for eradicating oppression (in Kincheloe, 2004).

According to Freirean pedagogy, teachers and students who become agents of change in their classroom criticize their and other's perspectives, pose problems about societal norms/hegemony, and create dialogues with others (Leonardo, 2004). When people think critically, they become motivated to question dominant beliefs, traditions, and policies. Critical social theories expect students and teachers to not only have critical dialogue but also act socially (Brown, 2005). Freire demanded that a social justice educator think, speak, and act critically and consciously, which in turn will motivate them to demand critical consciousness, reflection and action in their classrooms (Kincheloe, 2004).

Another pedagogical framework promoted by Freire included the concept of critical literacy (Kincheloe, 2004). Freire taught his students the importance of literacy. He believed students could change the world by knowing how to read, write, and critically question and reflect on literature. “As students become literate they are empowered to change themselves and to take action in the world” (Kincheloe, 2004, p. 74). Critical reading allows students to read their reality and transform their lives; however, literacy must be coupled with social action and equality (Kincheloe, 2004). According to Freire (2000), critical literacy and reflection served as a critical component of transformation in that it creates situations where learners become exposed to a problem-probing and dialogic methodology. Educators teach others to analyze situations and fight oppression and injustice through literacy programs, analysis of power systems, and critical dialogue (Freire, 2000).

Freire (2000) thought reading literature critically encourages students to challenge passive acceptance of theories or ideas, and critical reading allows students to problem solve and ask questions. “It encourages learners to examine or dispute the power relations that currently exist (Marshall & Klein, 2009, p. 219). Banks (2001) said that multicultural curriculum and critical literacy forces students to uncover issues of oppression and power while allowing the learner to be reflective, transformational, and action-oriented. Radical educators use learning activities to promote social activism: reading text or concepts that come from radical or critical literary works, participating in conversations that are dialogic and purposively constructed, and providing opportunities for students to see and hear multiple perspectives all serve to fulfill these purposes (Banks, 2007).

“Freire’s understanding of the critical functions of literacy was developed as part of both a historical argument about the argument about the development of critical consciousness and

an educational proposition about the relationships of “reading the work” and “reading the world”” (Morrow & Torres, 2002, p. 117). Paulo Freire started using John Dewey’s book *Democracy and Education* after 1936. Freire used Dewey’s pedagogical ideas such as learning by doing, cooperative work, relationship between theory and practice, and the talking method between the teacher and student (Gadotti, 1994).

### **Transformational Learning Theory**

Transformational learning theory explains the method and processes resulting in significant changes in knowledge, identity and goals (Mezirow, 1997). Gaining a better understanding of the world through a critical analysis of global issues serves as the main goal of human development (Taylor, 2008). Transformative learning involves the process of changing one’s values, concepts, expectations, understanding, feelings, and automatic responses, our “frames of reference” (Mezirow, 1997, p. 7). A person’s frame of reference develops and changes through events experienced in a person’s life (Mezirow, 1997). “Transformative learning is about emancipating ourselves from these taken-for-granted assumptions about social being. It involves bringing the sources, nature, and consequences of this received wisdom into critical awareness so that appropriate actions—including social action can be taken” (Mezirow, 1998).

Exposure to radical and alternative perspectives as well as opportunities to critically reflect results in significant cognitive, affective, and behavioral changes. Mezirow developed three themes within transformative theory: centrality of experience, critical reflection and rational discourse (Cranton, 2006). Mezirow (in Brown 2005) claimed transformational learning occurs when meaning structures and perspectives based on individuals’ cultural and contextual experiences over their lifetime transform. According to Mezirow, people must engage in a

critical reflection in their experiences in order for their meaning schemes to become transformed (in Brown, 2005). Using the adult learning theory, an adult becomes a social justice educator through a developmental intercepting of the mind, body, spirit, emotions, and society (Merriam, 2008).

People mediate and make sense of their experiences by viewing their experiences through the lens of values, beliefs, and assumptions (Merriam, 2004). Experiences replace old perspectives and form new ones that are “more inclusive, discriminating, open, emotionally capable of change, and reflective” (Mezirow, 2000, p. 7). “We transform our frames of reference through critical reflection on the assumptions upon which our interpretations, beliefs, and habits of mind or points of view are based” (Mezirow, 1997, p. 7). Two components prove integral to Mezirow’s transformation learning: critical reflection and reflective discourse (Merriam, 2004). Merriam (2004) described true transformational learning as advanced cognitive development. Furthermore, Merriam believes reflective discourse allowed people to “examine alternative perspectives, withhold premature judgment, and basically to think dialectically” (Merriam, 2004, p. 61).

According to Mezirow in Brown (2005), people must engage in a critical reflection in their experiences in order for their meaning schemes to become transformed. “The purposes of critical reflection are to externalize and investigate power relationships and to uncover hegemonic assumptions” (Brown, 2005, p. 157). Critical reflection plays an important role because it helps people take informed actions, develop a rationale for practice, avoid self-laceration, ground us emotionally, enliven our spaces, and increase democratic trust (Brookfield, 1995). Brookfield (1995) affirmed the importance of critical reflection, describing three interrelated concepts related to critical self reflection. First, adults question and then replace an



assumption, which up to that point had not been challenged or critiqued. Second, adult educators go through a process where they will take on alternative perspectives, ideas, theories, or actions previously taken for granted. Finally, adults realize that previous ideas, theories, history, and traditions are hegemonic aspects of the dominant power structure, which can lead to transformation teaching in the classroom (Brookfield, 1995).

Rational discourse, the final stage of transformative learning theory occurs when an individual tests the validity of one's constructed meaning (Cranton, 2006). Rational discourse, "is the essential medium through which transformation is promoted and developed" (Brown, 2005, p. 157). According to Mezirow's theory, over time an adult will listen intently and be open to alternative perspective (in Cranton, 2006). The adult will not come to a consensus but rather reach a deeper understanding of his/her biases, as well the construction of colleague biases (Brown, 2006). Participation in—and extended exposure to—justice and equity issues provides opportunities for personal and professional growth (Brown, 2006). "The critical reflective journey invariably produces a deepening appreciation of how all teaching is ideological" (Brookfield, 1995, p. 40). Recognizing this allowed both teachers to educate students critically with a goal of dismantling and reframing constructed curriculum.

### **Constructive Learning Theory**

Constructive learning theory posits that "learners construct their own reality or at least interpret it based upon their perceptions of experiences, so an individual's knowledge is a function of one's prior experiences, mental structures, and beliefs that are used to interpret objects and events." (Jonassen, 1991, p. 8). Teachers employ a variety of teaching methods to elicit learning. Social justice educators employ strategies such as active learning and critical thinking activities, exposing students to alternative perspectives and experiences to raise

awareness about social justice issues. Moore (1998) said, “Dewey values learning as a participatory and sustaining function within the society, while recognizing the individual essence and vitality of a learner's cognition” (p. 161). Dewey said, “If knowledge involves doing, then genuine learning can only be achieved by doing” (Hook, 2008, p.8). Dewey’s philosophy revolutionized American education in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Every since social studies started emerging as a valid core subject, social educators, sociologists, and education reformers construed the objectives of social studies another way. Sociologists, such as David Snedden posited that social education’s purpose was to help students adapt to social conditions (Thornton, 2005). John Dewey saw the role of social studies courses in education differently. Dewey argued that social studies had no valid place in the curriculum unless it showed students current social issues and problems (Thornton, 2005).

John Dewey encouraged fundamental changes in teaching methods since the 1890s (Thornton, 2005). To Dewey, it didn’t matter if the social studies class was a geography or history course, the appropriate teaching methods were necessary. In Dewey’s 1916 book, *Democracy and Education*, he described significance of good teaching methods. Dewey warned that if methods did not “penetrate” information, then social studies subjects, such as geography and history will fail to contribute to a “socialized intelligence” that must inform political and social leaders (Thornton, 2008, p. 23).

Pragmatism is the term given to John Dewey’s education philosophy (Gribov, 2001). Dewey emphasized the importance of developing students’ critical thinking and reasoning skills (Zevin, 2007). Other words have been added to Dewey’s philosophy, such as problem solving, problem finding, reasoning, reflective thinking, inquiry, and creative thinking (Zevin, 2007). One important component of Dewey’s philosophy included listening and building community to

enhance school and student experiences in the education experience. Critical thinking, open and experiential curriculum, and creativity were essential in a social studies classroom according to Dewey (Zevin, 2007).

It was through the concept of valuing process that Dewey emphasized the need to ask questions in the classroom that raise problematic and controversial social issues (Zevin, 2007). Dewey maintained that a social education should not be taught with a curriculum based on unquestionable truth, facts, and values; instead, a classroom should be a reflective environment where students and teachers play an active role in the social process (Zevin, 2007). The classroom according to Dewey is an “arena in which the social and political process takes place in microcosm” (Zevin, 2007, p. 25). Like Dewey, Freire believed an education should combine social action and critical reflection, where the role of the teacher is to collaborate with students (Breunig, 2005).

Dewey contended that experiential learning occurred when a person developed ideas, reflected on experiences, and took action (Miettinen, 2000). Dewey believed that “Experimental and theoretical thought liberates us from intellectual laziness and from the tyranny of tradition” (Miettinen, 2000, p. 67)). Intellectualization is essential in learning as it provides a lens to evaluate experiences (Miettinen, 2000). Dewey believed that reflective thought and learning could not happen without a disturbance in ideas or an exposure to a variety of learning opportunities (Miettinen, 2000).

Dewey believed constructive learning occurred in five phases (Miettinen, 2000). In phase one, people form habits or ideas; however, if the habits or ideas don’t work or there is a crisis in thinking or the idea is challenged, then the person is forced to think reflectively about the ideas or assumptions and investigate alternative habits (Miettinen, 2000). The second phase

involves intellectualization; where the person defines the problem in his/her thinking or experience (Miettinen, 2000). Dewey believed that defining the problem was central in the transformation of the problem itself (Miettinen, 2000). The third phase involves analysis and development of a working hypothesis. “The presupposition of the possible solution is called a working hypothesis. A working hypothesis also can be characterized as a guiding idea or a plan” (Miettinen, 2000, p. 66). In the fourth phase, learners test their working hypothesis using additional experiences, knowledge gained, and resources (Miettinen, 2000). In the final phase, learners test their new habits, ideas, or assumptions by taking action. Dewey believed that in this final stage, learners either resolved the problematic habits or ideas, or people will use what they have reflectively learned from the experiences as a resource in future experiences and situations (Miettinen, 2000).

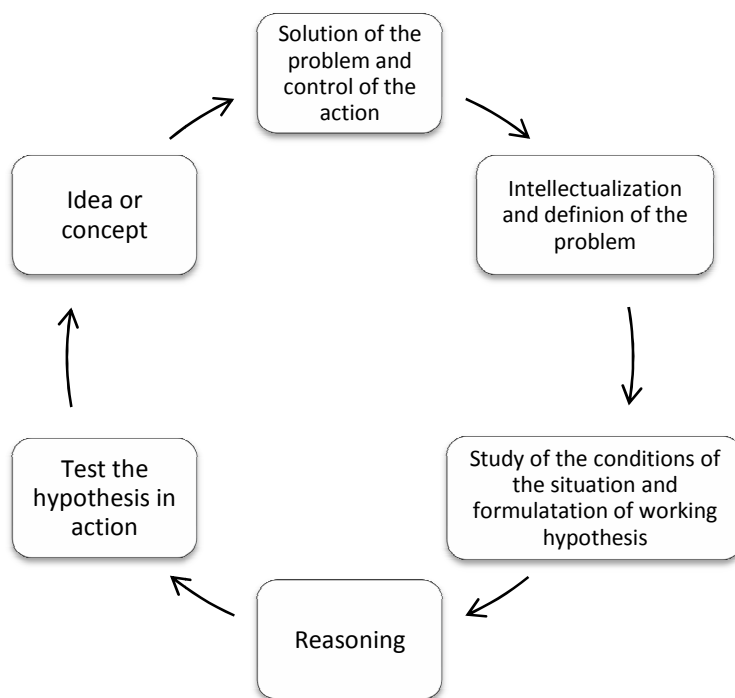


Figure 1. Dewey Model of Reflective Thought and Action

The literature on teachers acting as agents of change for social justice has typically focused on preservice teachers (Brown, 2005; Gonzalez & Ayala-Alcantar, 2008; Jenks, Lee, &

Kanpol, 2001; McNeal, 2005; Wright & Grenier, 2009) or leaders of the school (Cambron-McCabe & McCarthy, 2005; Kose, 2009; McKenzie, Christman, Hernandez, Fierro, Capper, Dantley, Gonzalez, Cambron-McCabe, & Scheurich, 2008; Theoharis, 2007), such as the principal or schools that have demonstrated tremendous success, but little has been written about individual social studies teachers who have turned their students into activist (Wade, 2007). For years, socially aware language arts, religion, mathematics, science, social studies, and art teachers have fought social injustices in the classroom by applying teaching methods that engage students from a critical pedagogical perspective. According to McLaren and Hammer (1989), teachers need to “affirm the voices of marginalized students, engage them critically, and while at the same time assist them in transforming their communities into sites of struggle and resistance” (pg. 41).

### Summary

Social studies and social justice education only possess a short curriculum history in the American school system. In the last thirty years, social studies teachers have radicalized their curriculum and classroom to promote social justice issues. I reviewed adult learning, transformation learning, and social critical theory, finding all three theories contributed to an understanding regarding how an adult becomes, evolves, or chooses to become a social activist in the classroom. Most literature related to social justice activism largely concerned elementary educators, and a gap in the literature may be claimed with regard to social studies educators, particularly at the high school level. Additionally, research largely described social justice education for preservice teachers and leaders, *but little is written about classroom teachers.*

While literature related to social justice pedagogy appears significant, the evolving pedagogy used by radicalized social studies teachers in the twenty-first century will likely show

changes in practice. This might include new methods and resources, engaging teachers and students in the exploration of global issues for local change.

In the next section, I describe the research and data collection methods used in this study. I offer a detailed description of my research methodology; case study. I used the case study methodology to study social justice educators, who based on their personal experiences, implemented pedagogical and theoretical methods to elicit change in their classrooms.

### CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

I adopted a qualitative approach to learn more about how social studies teachers serve as agents of social change in their classrooms. My qualitative study focused on the formative experiences of professional educators and their social justice practice. I adopted qualitative research methods because the features of this approach and method support the areas of inquiry involved in this study. Qualitative research “values and seeks to discover participants’ perspectives on their worlds, views inquiry as an interactive process between the researcher and the participants, is both descriptive and analytic, and relies on people’s worlds and observable behavior as the primary data” (Marshall & Rosmann, 1999, pp. 7-8).

Qualitative methods allow researchers to observe in actual settings, providing them access to direct sources of data to gather information (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). Qualitative research produces descriptive data collected in the form of words, pictures, formal documents, memos, field notes, videotape, or personal documents (Bogdan, & Biklen, 2003). Qualitative researchers are more aware of the research process instead of adopting a prescribed theory or proposed outcomes because it takes place in the natural world, uses multiple, interactive, and humanistic methods, and focuses on emergent context using an interpretive process (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). Viewing social phenomena holistically and also systematically, qualitative researchers reflect on their role and position in the inquiry, including how their personal biographies may shape the study (Marshall & Rossman, 2011).

Qualitative research “is pragmatic, interpretive, and grounded in the lived experiences of people” (Marshall & Rossman, 2011, p. 2). The strengths of qualitative research design develop from its inductive approach, its focus on individual narratives, and its emphasis on words and not just quantifiable numbers (Maxwell, 2005). Maxwell (2005) described five intellectual goals and

three practical goals of qualitative research. Maxwell's (2005) first intellectual goal requires the researchers to understand the meaning for participants in the study, of the events, situations, experiences, and actions they are involved with or experiencing. The second goal of qualitative research requires an understanding of the context within which the participants act and the influence this context has on their behavior. The third goal allows for unanticipated phenomena and influences to generate new "grounded" theories. The fourth goal puts emphasis on the fact that a major strength of qualitative research is in getting at the processes that led to research outcomes, the process by which events and actions occur (Maxwell, 2005). The fifth and final intellectual goal of qualitative research allows researchers to develop causal explanations; they "tend to ask *how*  $x$  plays a roles in causing  $y$ , what the *process* is that connects  $x$  and  $y$ " (Maxwell, 2005, p. 23).

Whereas the intellectual goals require induction and an open-ended strategy, Maxwell's (2005) practical goals give qualitative research an advantage. The first practical goal of qualitative research generates results and theories that are understandable and experientially credible. Next the qualitative method allows the researcher to conduct formative evaluations that allow for improvements in existing practice. The final practical goal of qualitative research allows researchers and participants to engage in collaborative or action research situations (Maxwell, 2005). I adopted case study research within the qualitative tradition (Creswell, 2007).

### **Case Study Research**

Within the qualitative tradition, I selected case study research because the aim of my research is to provide a "precise description or reconstruction of a case" (Flick, 2009). The advantage of using this research method allowed for the process of unearthing a complex and detailed phenomenon (Flick, 2009). "Case study research is a qualitative approach in which the



investigator explores a bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information, and reports a case description and case-based themes” (Creswell, 2007 p. 73). Yin (2009) defines a case study as an “empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real life context” (p. 18).

I used several procedures for conducting a case study. First, I identified a research problem within a setting and context and provided an in depth understanding and analysis of a case (Creswell, 2007). Second, I recognized the setting and context as well as the possibilities for purposeful sampling. Next, multiple sources of data collection were employed such as interviews, observations, and document assessments. In this case study, I completed an embedded analysis of the data. I collected and coded the data, made a detailed description, and then analyzed the emerging themes from specific aspects of the data (Creswell, 2007). The final analysis determined “whether that meaning comes from learning about the issue of the case or learning about an unusual situation” (Creswell, 2007, p. 75).

The second methodological form that framed the research questions was symbolic interactionism. “Symbolic interactionism is a sociological and social-psychological perspective grounded in the study of the meanings that people learn and assign to the objects and actions that surround their everyday experiences” (Given, 2008, p. 848). This theoretical perspective was originally conceptualized by George Herbert Mead. In 1937, Herbert Blumer coined the term symbolic interactionism and consolidated Mead’s work into a distinct research methodology (Given, 2008).

“Through symbolic interaction, human beings construct, share, resist, modify or reject various aspects of the social world” (Given, 2008, p. 848). Instead of relying on quantitative

data, I have taken a symbolic interactionist stance using qualitative research methods. Symbolic interactionism encouraged participants to act authentically in natural settings and supported a style of research allowing me to study social behavior without limiting or fully explaining it (Given, 2008). I collected and analyzed data primarily gathered from subjects in their natural settings, such as schools and classrooms (Given, 2008).

Using case study research and adopting symbolic interactionism as a stance within this research methodology, I observed teachers in their natural setting, in this case their classrooms, to identify teaching methods, classroom arrangements, curriculum, and use of resources. I examined how social justice educators use critical pedagogy and non-traditional teaching strategies and curriculum in their lessons. I also conducted interviews with professional educators regarding their practices, learning how the process of personal and professional transformation occurred, including the changes experienced throughout their careers. This case study of social justice teachers combined data from interviews, field observations of practice, and document reviews. In the next section, I describe the selection of participants and methods of data collection and analysis.

### **Sampling Procedure**

After applying and gaining permission to conduct my study from the University of St. Thomas Institutional Review Board (IRB; see Application for Approval to Conduct Research), I set out to identify participants and secured their voluntary participation in my study. I set out to find eight to ten teachers who fit into a couple of requirements. First, I required that participants possess at least three years of teaching experience. I made this a requirement because I needed participants to exhibit some mastery of teaching fundamentals and sufficient experience to reflect on their practice (Hobson, Ashby, Malderez, & Tomlinson, 2009). Second, I required potential

participants to use social justice terminology and methodology in their classrooms. Initial emails stated the requirements desired in potential participants.

I formed an initial pool of potential participants, such as former colleagues, principals, and social studies organizations. In an email, I asked former colleagues, principals, and organizations if they knew any social studies educators who use radical teaching methodologies and social justice curriculum. In the initial email I provided a definition of a social justice educator and qualities of a teacher using his/her classroom to promote social change. I received responses back from former colleagues and principals but did not receive a response from any of the social studies organizations. If a social studies teacher fit the definition and qualities presented in my email, then former colleagues and principals forwarded my contact information to potential study participants.

Eight potential participants emailed me and indicated their willingness to participate in my study. I did not know any of the study participants personally. After my interviews with the social studies participants, I asked these teachers to recommend other social justice educators who by my set social justice definitions taught in a similar manner. I recruited three teachers using snowball sampling (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). I gathered five additional teachers through purposive and acquaintance sampling (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). Using snowball, purposive, and acquaintance sampling method for my data collection (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003), I identified eight teachers willing to participate and continued adding participants until I had achieved data saturation (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). When my participants agreed, I provided a consent form (see Appendix A) and later asked them to sign it after I informed them about the process and answered their questions. I also collected demographic data about their experience before conducting interviews.

## Social Justice Educators

I secured eight radical social studies teachers who taught using social justice curriculum and radical methodologies. The study included four male and four female teachers whose ages ranged from 24-44 years. Teachers represented a variety of ethnicities and membership in oppressed groups. Table 1 shows how participants defined their own ethnicity and indicates if they were members of an oppressed group; therefore the table states what the participants had written on their demographic questionnaire (see Appendix C).

Table 1

### *Teacher Demographics*

Name	Age & Gender	Ethnicity	Member of oppressed group
Andres	34 & Male	Irish American	No
Ryan	24 & Male	¼ Japanese, ¼ Chinese, ½ northern European	Yes- Person of color & young
Lola	32 & Female	Sicilian	Yes- GBLT, single mother
Trisha	32 & Female	Anglo Saxon	Yes, gender
James	44 & Male	White	No
Emma	39 & Female	White	Yes, gender
Tim	42 & Male	Anglo Saxon	No
Margi	28 & Female	European-American	Yes, gender

My study included one teacher who taught in a public alternative high school, one in a public charter high school, one in a Catholic junior high, one in a Catholic high school, one in a private parochial school, one in a public junior high, and two who taught in a public high school. Types of school communities varied from affluent suburban to inner city, and number of years in education varied from 5 to 18 years respectively. Finally years of formal education varied from 4 to 11 years and highest degrees earned ranged from BA to an Ed. D in progress. Table 2

provides information regarding participants years of teaching at their current school, the type of school (public, charter, private, parochial), the school's socioeconomic status, the number of years spent in the teaching profession, the length of formal education, and the degrees earned.

Table 2

*Participant Teaching & Education*

Name	Length at current school & Type of school	Type of school community	Total number of years in education	Years of formal education & Highest degree earned
Andres	10 & Private Catholic college prep high school	Mixed to upper middle class	13	9 & MA-Administrative license
Ryan	3 & Public high school	Affluent, blue collar, mixed income, inner city, rural	5	4 & BA
Lola	6 & Public-alternative high school	Inner city	8	10 & M.Ed. (Ph.D. in progress)
Trisha	11 & Public junior high	Middle/upper class	11	11 & M.Ed. (PhD in progress)
James	18 & Catholic college prep high school	Inner city & mixed-upper middle class	18	4 & BA+45
Emma	3 & Public high school	Affluent	14	7.5 & M.Ed. (Ed. D. in progress)
Tim	2 & Private- parochial high school	Mixed income	5	8 & BA
Margi	5 & Public charter school	Urban 90% FRL	6	4 & BA (Masters in progress)

**Data Collection Procedure**

I interviewed teachers, observed classrooms, and collected documents from eight teachers who described their teaching methodology and curriculum using social justice terminology. I interviewed and collected documents from all eight teachers. To conduct my study, I first interviewed eight social justice teachers. One week before our first meeting, I provided

participants with examples of sample interviews questions (see Appendix B) and also requested they complete the demographic survey (see Appendix C). Prior to the interview, I asked teachers to bring artifacts illustrative of their social justice curriculum or methodology. I asked research participants to reserve two hours; this allowed time for me to conduct an interview and review their social justice lesson plans. The entire interview and review of documents were tape recorded and transcribed verbatim. Once the transcription occurred, I returned the interview transcript and asked the participants to check for accuracy, ask questions, or make additional comments.

After the interview, I asked permission to conduct a formal observation of teaching in their classroom. I observed two hours in seven of the eight teachers' classrooms. I was unable to observe one teacher since she was currently not employed as a classroom teacher. Prior to my observation, I asked teachers to provide some preliminary information regarding their proposed social justice lesson plan. In this pre-observation conference, I asked teachers to provide the following information: (a) a description of lesson objectives, (b) the lesson objective selection criteria, (c) adoption of teaching methods models and activities, (d) use of instructional materials, (e) methods of assessing student understanding and mastery of the lesson objectives, and (f) a description of any special circumstances the observer should be aware of before the observation (see Appendix D). During the observation, I used the observation form; it allowed me to record and make comments about student and teacher actions during lesson presentations, transitions, activities, and assessments. The data were used to identify emerging themes, patterns, and connections between data, pedagogical procedures and strategies, ethical dilemmas and conflicts, my own thoughts, and points that needed additional clarification (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003; see Appendix E). Following the observation, I conducted a brief post-observation conference with

the participant teacher. In the post-observation conference, I used a planning guide sheet to focus my observation thoughts and questions (see Appendix F).

### **Phase One: Interviews**

For this case study I interviewed eight social studies teachers using a social justice methodology. Interviews gave me the opportunity to ask questions about their educational philosophy, clarify statements or observations made during the interview, and probe for additional information needed to answer my research questions (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008). According to Yin (2009), interviews serve as a good source of evidence because they focus directly on the participants, offering many opportunities to share insights, inferences, and explanations regarding the study questions. Interviews allowed me to discover participant views regarding social justice and educational philosophy as well as his or her adult learning experience and “transformation story” in becoming a radical educator. “The interview is used to gather descriptive data in the subjects’ own words so that the research can develop insights on how subjects interpret some piece of the world” (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003, p. 95).

Conducting a semi-structured interview provided comparable data from my interviewees (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). McCracken’s (1998) “long interview” allows qualitative researchers to collect data (p. 31). The model provided an opportunity to assess data and allowed me to form interview questions. First, the long interview model encouraged the conduction of an extensive literature review to define the research questions. The next step required me to review cultural categories and interview design. This step allowed for a cultural review to identify cultural characteristics and associations aiding in question formation. “Only by knowing the cultural categories and configurations that the investigator uses to understand the world is he or she in a position to root these out of the terra firma of familiar expectation” (McCracken, 1988, p. 32).

McCracken's long interview model allowed me to investigate beliefs, biases, associations, and assumptions potentially affecting my research questions.

In step three, I developed the interview (McCracken, 1988). This stage of the long interview allowed for developing preliminary interview procedures, followed by "floating prompts" such as contrast, category, special incident, and auto-driving (McCracken, 1988). While in this stage, I analyzed the interview questions for impression management, topic avoidance, deliberate distortion, misunderstandings, and outright incomprehension. The final step allowed me to discover analytical categories and analyze the data found in the literature review and interview (McCracken, 1988). According to McCracken's (1988) model, the interview questions and information collected should reflect the information presented in the literature review. "The object of analysis is to determine the categories, relationships, and assumption that informs the respondent's view of the world in general and the topic in particular" (McCracken, 1988, p. 42).

I used my research question and sub-questions to prepare my interview questions, adopting McCracken's methods to prepare for conducting "long interviews" (McCracken, 1988, p.31). I began with my research and sub-questions and then used additional questions as needed to keep the conversational flow and interview focus going until it appeared the participants had fully shared their teaching philosophy and approaches. I adopted several areas of inquiry to understand their formative experiences in becoming agents of change and their current practices. For example, I studied how radical teachers create anti-classist, anti-sexist, and anti-racist classrooms. I asked participants to identify pedagogical approaches and strategies informing their teaching. As pioneers and agents of social change, I investigated how they assessed their success with regard to student learning and their work as activists. I learned how



social justice teachers sustain their efforts and continue to grow as activists engaged in social change within their classrooms.

The teacher participants were asked to review and sign a University of St. Thomas consent and confidentiality form. All interviews were tape recorded and transcribed verbatim. I then presented a copy of the transcribed interview to the interviewee to review. I used a technique called “member check” to check for accuracy, enhance validity, and seek additional clarification or comments as needed (Marshall & Rossman, 2011, p. 221).

### **Phase Two: Classroom Observation**

The second data collection method I employed was classroom observations. Observations are valuable because they cover what is really happening and provide context about the ‘case’ (Yin, 2009). Since I observed teachers in their classrooms and schools, I had direct access to data through using a staged process; a classroom observation, post-observation conference, and semi-structured interview of each participant’s “teaching career”. I conducted the observation using established protocol for a clinical observation of teaching; this included a pre-observation conference, observation of a teaching episode, and post-observation conference (Glickman, 2008).

When I performed classroom observations, I took copious notes. One important component of my observation notes became the observer comments and writing of notes to self about the experience and the environment. These observer comments and self reflections allowed me to remember important pieces of information when I used the observations for coding and theme development. My goal through my data analysis was to organize and evaluate the data so that it “break[s] through the ordinariness of routine events” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 53).

The notes and tentative analysis of these observations during the post-observation conference were used to identify, discuss, and analyze the practice of teachers employing critical pedagogy.

In addition to the post-observation conference, I also conducted an in-depth, semi-structured interview with each participant aimed at learning about how participants became social justice teachers and viewed their work as agents of social change (see Appendix F).

### **Phase Three: Document Review**

The third data collection method came from teachers' collections of social justice lesson plans, student work, supplemental readings, or worksheets. The document review contributed to the validity of my cases study results. First, I analyzed the documents many times. I appreciated that the documents came from the social studies teachers themselves; they were not created as a result of the study (Yin, 2009). Finally, documents allowed the researcher to make inferences; I developed new questions and found new social justice teaching methods. When selecting documents, I assessed the quality of the documents. I validated their authenticity, accuracy, and reliability, representativeness, and meaning. I ensured the documents were genuine, free from error or distortion, typical of its kind, clear, and comprehensible (Flick, 2009).

I collected the teachers' "Hall of Fame" document portfolio (Noonan, 2011) at the interview and asked teachers to discuss how they are used in their social justice class. "Hall of Fame" documents were lesson plans, projects, assessments, simulations, journal prompts, debates, worksheets, and activities that exemplified the very best social justice lessons participants used to foster social justice education in their classrooms. I looked for document examples that showed evidence of active social justice teaching strategies, such as use of thematic teaching units, supplemental literature, role playing, social activism activities, critical thinking questions, simulations, primary documents, community field experiences, cooperative

learning activities, videos, and debates. I analyzed these documents by looking for learning objectives of the document, the social justice theme discussed, the contextual information provided, the teaching methodologies used to implement curriculum, and the methods of assessing the engagement of students.

### **Modes of Data Analysis**

My modes of data collections included interviews, document review, and classroom observations. All of my results came from the implementation of interviews, document analysis, and observations. I used a digital recorder in the interview and a preset number of semi-structured interview questions. After the interview, a transcriber transcribed the interview verbatim. The data collected were checked for accuracy and coded using Hyper RESEARCH, a coding software. As I coded the data, I identified themes surfacing from the information. Charmaz (2006) said, “Focused codes requires decisions about which initial codes make the most analytic sense to categorize your data incisively and completely” (p. 57). I kept the codes active and close to the data using action verbs (Charmaz, 2006). I paid close attention to observed and implied actions. Finally, I looked for assumptions and gaps in the research.

I analyzed my findings through the lens of critical pedagogy theories (Freire, 2000). Freire was more concerned with social transformation, demythologizing of reality, and critical consciousness (Brown, 2005). Critical pedagogy exposes oppression and goals of social justice. Critical pedagogy encourages teachers to challenge assumption and raise consciousness in the classroom. The theory uses critical reflection to examine assumptions and experiences, and raises consciousness about social justice issues including racism, classism, and sexism. According to Freire (2000), critical reflection is a critical component of transformation in that it creates situations where learners are exposed to a problem-probing and dialogic methodology. It

is through criticism and dialogue that educators can teach others to analyze situations, oppression, and injustice. The goal of critical pedagogy is to teach students how to resist oppression and advocate for social change.

To examine experiences leading to a career in social justice education, I used transformational learning theory (Mezirow, 1991). Mezirow in 1991 proposed a theory of transformative learning which relied heavily on adult learning theory and Habermas' 1984 communicative theory (Brown, 2005). "Transformative learning is a process of experiential learning, critical self-reflection and rationale discourse that can be stimulated by people, events or changes in context that challenge the learner's basic assumptions of the world" (Brown, 2006, p. 706). This new way of thinking turns into action in the classroom according to Mezirow's transformational learning theory (Merriam, 2008). "It attempts to explain how their (teachers') expectations, framed within cultural assumptions and presuppositions, directly influence the meaning they derive from their experiences" (Brown, 2005, p.157).

Teachers used a variety of teaching strategies in order to encourage cultural awareness, critical reflection, and social action. I used Dewey's learning theory to explain their methodology. Learning theory discusses how experiential strategies and exposure to diverse perspectives and experiences promotes student engagement in learning and raises awareness of social justice issues.

In Dewey's 1916 book, *Democracy and Education*, he emphasized the highly important role of education in a democratic society. For Dewey, education and learning is emotional, dramatic, and cognitive (Fishman & McCarthy, 1998). *Democracy and Education* emphasizes the power of education to implement the power of abstract, symbolic knowledge while shrinking the limitation of its "decontextualized and emotion-evacuated forms" (Fishman & McCarthy,

1998, p. 22). Dewey stresses that education must emphasize the connections between what is being taught in school and what is going on in the student's life. This connection has a way of "adding emotional intensity and relevance to formal instruction, promoting methods of discovery opposed to mere training, use of knowledge as opposed to mere acquisition of it" (Fishman & McCarthy, 1998, p. 22). When these continuities are exposed between the school curriculum and the students' personal lives, students are able to master the curriculum because they have formed an emotional bond; they make use of and care about it (Fishman & McCarthy, 1998).

Dewey believed that education had "both a reforming and a conserving function, a responsibility to develop each student's individual potential while "transmitting" the best thinking, doing, and feeling" (Fishman & McCarthy, 1998, p. 24). Dewey felt that education should employ student centered learning as well as mastery of the curriculum. He suggests teachers focus on the learning process, create situations where students need the curriculum, and have the desire to explore, use, and remember it intellectually (Fishman & McCarthy, 1998). According to Dewey, knowledge is a process where individuals shape new perspectives and become interactive in their learning environment. Dewey's education philosophy emphasizes student's developing reflective habits or intelligence (Fishman & McCarthy, 1998). The role of the teacher is "helping students develop the ability to examine their beliefs, to understand and test their grounds and consequences, their reliability" (Fishman & McCarthy, 1998, p. 25). The curriculum goal for teachers is to not simply dump information into the student's brains, but to teach students to intellectually access, evaluate, and internalize it as their own (Fishman & McCarthy, 1998). "And if we really care about students, we need to study curriculum to understand how it can best promote the methods and traits of character students require for informed, fulfilling lives" (Fishman & McCarthy, 1998, p. 27).

## **Validity and Generalibility**

Maxwell (2005) felt that there were many ways of understanding data conclusions, such as describing exactly what is happening, interpreting what is meant for people to be involved, theorizing concepts and their relationships, and judging the worth or value of actions and meaning. Validity is a straightforward way to ensure credibility of a description, conclusion, explanation, or interpretation (Maxwell, 2005). “Valid interpretations and conclusions function as surrogates through which readers of research reports can know a situation they have not experienced directly” (Eisner & Peshkin, 1990, p. 97).

I ruled out “specific plausible alternatives and threats” in my research by including a number of validity tests (Maxwell, 2005, p. 107). Maxwell states that a key concept is to recognize the validity threat, recognizing the ways a researcher might be wrong. To ensure the validity of my research, strategies were used to identify and rule out threats to validity. Two validity threats I was aware of is researcher bias and reactivity. The biggest threat to my research was that as a social justice educator interviewing and observing radical educators I have bias. I have my own educational journey and philosophy and surely this could impact my analysis. While I recognized the need to minimize this bias, I overcame this bias by being aware of the ways I interpret things and viewing the data with a cautious eye.

A researcher must also be aware of his or her influence on the setting or the presence while conducting an observation. I established a relationship with the participant prior to my interview to reduce a potentially threatening situation and maintain distance to reduce distractions from the teacher’s lesson. I did this by sitting on the edges of the classroom and not involving myself in teacher or student group activities. Lastly, I reviewed documents, gaining insights about teaching plans and student work through my analysis of the artifacts associated

with teaching. I increased the validity of my study by triangulating sources of data: interviews, observations, and document review.

### **Ethics and Confidentiality**

“The appearance of incompatible factors engages us emotionally and stimulates a readjustment from old habits into new ones” (Fesmire, 2003, p. 35). Ethics allows people to resolve moral and ethical dilemmas. As a pragmatist, Dewey believed ethics should avoid rigid abstractions and focus on “ordinary life-experiences of inherently social, embodied, and historically situated beings (Fesmire, 2003, p. 58). Central to Dewey’s ethical approach is people need to help others live enriched, improved, and poignant lives (Fesmire, 2003). With regards to ethics, this was the goal in my research.

Through ethical and respectful protocol, I conducted my research using the highest ethical standards. I documented and refrained from judging the participants’ philosophy or teaching pedagogy. I also held the participants’ confidentiality in the highest regard; I changed participant and school names, and I eliminated any identifying qualities or locations. I also adopted a transparent process by sharing transcriptions and reflections on teaching throughout the process and after my study ended. I protected the participant privacy by securing observation notes, digital recordings, and transcripts in a locked file. I safely eliminated these files within two years of the IRB approval date.

### **Summary**

In this chapter, I discussed my research methodology; case study. I stated the advantages of using case studies in qualitative research. I provided an outline of my sample recruitment as well as a table laying out my participants demographic data. I then discussed the three data collection methods used in this study; interviews, observations, and document review. Finally, I

discussed the method used in data analysis, modes of analysis, validity, and ethical considerations.



## CHAPTER FOUR: BECOMING A RADICAL EDUCATOR

“Education is for improving the lives of others and for leaving your community and world better than you found it” (Edelman, 1992, p. 9). My first research question asked what formative experiences influenced the professional practice of educators in social justice. Chapter four examines the participants’ experiences that transformed their personal and professional lives. The eight educators in my case study chose to teach in a nonconventional and radical manner to advance the common good and social justice. These radical educators encouraged their students to engage in social reforms, travel around the world helping others, and instill a different perspective of history and the social sciences, beyond learning the content of their discipline.

The purpose of my case study of radical educators and social justice pedagogy was to (1) identify the formative experiences causing teachers to become radical educators, (2) explore the evolution and progression or stages of their careers as radical teachers, (3) identify and describe the central features of social justice pedagogy, and (4) describe the challenges and rewards associated with becoming and being a radical educator. I describe the formative experiences shaping their commitment to social justice in this chapter and then follow with a description of social justice pedagogy and the evolution of their careers in chapter five.

Three types of formative experiences served as central sources of motivation in social justice work, playing a significant role in inspiring a commitment to social justice, including (1) personal or family experiences, (2) involvement in cultural experiences and activism, and (3) participation in college-sponsored organizations and study abroad programs during college (involved living abroad and family and personal travel). I first describe how personal and family

experiences caused teachers to resist their circumstances by becoming and being radical educators.

### **Personal and Family Experiences of Oppression**

A personal or family experience fueled a passion for social justice. Two participants, Emma and Lola, described how their commitment to social justice work started with their resistance to oppression experienced during their youth and early adult years. Their personal experiences motivated them to teach in a non-traditional manner to expose and resist oppression, whether experienced personally or witnessed as a member of society. They taught their students about social justice with the hope their students would critically and actively question the status quo and challenge it. Several themes with regard to the influence of personal experience emerged, including (1) experiencing oppression and feeling like an outcast and (2) naming and resisting oppression through education.

I first describe Emma's experience, influenced primarily by difficult family circumstances, and later show how Lola's membership in two groups contributed to her experience of oppression. Different experiences adversely affected Emma and Lola; however, both felt like outcasts and used education to name and resist their oppression.

#### **Experiencing Oppression and Feeling Like An Outcast**

Emma traced her interest in social justice to her experience with poverty, describing hunger as a significant concern and distraction from meeting other needs in her life. Using Maslow's Hierarchy (Pyramid) of Needs (see for example, Lester, Hveyda, Sullivan & Plourde, 1983) to explain her plight, Emma described how biological needs, such as food, shelter, warmth, and rest, dominated her thoughts. Because hunger must be satisfied first, Emma explained how hunger prevented her from meeting other needs, such as the need for safety,

belonging, self-esteem, and finally self-actualization. “I was really at the bottom and I had not even enough food let alone time to think about how I could make the world better,” Emma said. Growing up in poverty caused her to adopt a non-traditional teaching style, incorporating social justice themes to level the playing field.

During Emma’s youth, she encountered other challenges beyond poverty, such as dealing with a parent with a severe mental illness and experiencing discrimination due to reduced expectations for her development and success as a result of discrimination. Emma’s childhood and adolescent experiences with a parent with a severe mental illness led her into the educational field:

When I reflect back I really have to say that it’s my father’s mental illness [motivated her to become a teacher]. When I was 17 he was diagnosed with bipolar schizoid effective disorder. I think of experiences with my dad and having people laugh at him, it just makes me sick. So I’m intolerant. I’m an intolerant, discriminatory person because I can’t stand it when people . . . [discriminate].

She believed the community and her teachers judged her because of her father’s severe mental illness. Emma recalled her personal experience of not being offered Advanced Placement (AP) classes because her counselors thought she had no chance of success:

I was never seen – my counselor never even talked to me about AP classes in high school. Why? Was it because I was a female? Was it because I was poor? I don’t know. Maybe it was none of those things – I don’t know. I just think that there’s those subtle, and then not so subtle ways that justice is not carried out, and it’s important for the students to understand that. I think I only had a few teachers in high school that I feel really made connections with and as a teenager struggling with a very hard home life, I could have used more. So I’ve kind of taken on that role as a teacher myself.

She felt teachers judged her as not fit to take advanced classes or go to college. During her school years, Emma operated more on survival mode, managing difficult family circumstances instead of worrying about “typical” problems such as school or socializing with friends. Emma felt subjugated all of her childhood because of her father’s severe mental illness

and poverty. Discrimination towards her mentally ill father left her with a paralyzingly low self-esteem. As a child and teenager Emma lacked support and resources to help deal with a parent with a severe mental illness.

A second participant, Lola, also experienced oppression and felt like an outcast due to her membership in three unique groups. As a Sicilian American, a member of the gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender community (GLBT) and a single parent, Lola experienced acts and feelings of oppression as a result of her social identities and marginalized status. The acts of oppression occurred through direct personal encounters or her perceptions of bias and discrimination as a result of her group membership:

In all honesty I understand that I am part of a marginalized population because of my sexuality but I don't think that alone has much influence on my teaching in a radical manner. Becoming a lesbian-mother however has a different type of influence. Not because of the membership in a minority group, but as a new role as an authentic leader. It strengthened my calling as an advocate for kids, obviously my own, and particularly my high school students. Becoming a mother offered new meaning to the truth I needed to speak to the next generation.

Lola identified her Sicilian ethnicity, including her physical characteristics, as similar to the African America experience where distinctions of skin color and hair affect African American experiences with discrimination:

It's kind of like a north and south with the Black people because northern Italians have much lighter skin than the southern Italians and the Sicilians are darker skin, they have curly hair because of all the conquests that happened with Africa. I have this book – it's actually really interesting, it's called, "Are Italians white?" And it's like when they first came here, they were called White Niggers.

Lola's appearance and experience with feeling marginalized caused her to feel isolated during her school years. Emma and Lola's experiences reveal how early experiences with oppression

led them to educate others as a resistance strategy. Education helped them see and resist oppression.

### **Education as a Source of Seeing and Resisting Oppression**

Education served as a way to help Emma and Lola understand their oppression and resist it by becoming radical educators. Emma found a voice for her oppression after first becoming involved in community activism and later engaging her students in the struggle for human rights, while Lola used her experience to make connections with students and promote a radical agenda.

Even though Emma lacked academic and emotional support in high school, she eventually applied and enrolled in college due to her mother's influence. "My mother wouldn't talk to me unless I went and she was so supportive the entire time I was in school. She didn't have a lot of money, but what she did have she gave to me." Emma's experience in college and teaching career helped her escape her poverty and low self-esteem.

As a young teacher out of college Emma moved from Washington State to a Midwestern city to begin teaching at Excellence High School. She noticed quickly that this small Midwestern city lacked diversity with regard to social class, income, race, or ethnicity. Emma described her community as a "kind of a bastion for the -isms, both in the school – a lot of sexism. I mean I've never taught at such a good ol' boys club, it just made me sick." When she began to teach, she yearned to do something memorable and profound.

Growing up with a mentally ill father and in abject poverty left her with no self-esteem and little confidence regarding her teaching abilities. It was not until the age of 25 that she gained courage through the help of her husband and her interaction with marginalized groups in the Midwest area. Emma recalled consciously recognizing discrimination at around age 25, remembering how her dad was treated. She recalled her shift in thinking, "Well how can I stop

that from happening to other people? It naturally propelled me into teaching - like education is a way to stop that.” These personal experiences served as seeds for social justice work. Emma gained confidence as she matured to stand up to the system, people, and society regarding issues of mental illness, poverty, and general oppression.

After her third year teaching, Emma attended Amnesty International meetings and soon started an Amnesty International student group at her high school. She joined the local and school groups together. Increasing her social activism, Emma served as co-chair for the Stop Violence Against Women campaign and brought speakers to the community, such as a Rwandan genocide survivor. These experiences helped her gain confidence and resolve to take risks as a teacher. Emma’s desire to be a social justice teacher comes from her desire to support students with similar experiences.

Emma’s childhood and early adulthood contained oppressive and painful experiences, causing her to gain courage to teach radically. Her college experiences and interactions with supportive people, experience teaching in a homogenous community in the Midwest, and related activism helped Emma gain the courage to teach radically. Emma believed the death of her father when she was 26 years old and the beginning of her teaching career made the “perfect storm of radicalization”. At the age of 26, she finally realized her strength and resolve in the area of social justice education.

Lola’s personal experiences raised her consciousness about oppression, and college helped her find a voice for this experience. Lola lacked academic success in high school, feeling oppressed by judgmental students, teachers, and the educational system. She did not do well socially or academically in high school or at her first college and considered dropping out of school and college because she felt so oppressed by judgmental students, teachers, and the

educational system. These occurrences motivated Lola to seek colleges, social groups, and teaching institutions allowing her to express her anger and interact with members of diverse groups. Several courses awakened her consciousness.

Lola enrolled in a history course on United States history past 1945. “It was a history class and it was all about the 1960s and I was really excited about it. I was like, Ah, ‘60s, it’s going to be so cool.’” In that class she learned Helen Keller was a socialist. Lola shared her shock, saying “I was like, ‘wait a minute?!’ And then as the semester went on, I got really mad because I felt lied to and I still feel lied to and I have moments where I get really upset about it because what a waste of my time,” Lola said. Keller’s radicalism was never mentioned in Lola’s K-12 education. The history course motivated Lola to teach history differently, feeling her primary and high school education was a waste of her time since teachers taught it from a White, capitalist, and hegemonic perspective.

Lola changed colleges and established more diverse friendship groups and relationships because White people make her uncomfortable:

Once I moved to another state, I started submerging myself within groups of non-White people. I don’t trust groups of White people; I don’t trust them. I believe that they don’t know the truth about history so it’s hard to have a conversation with somebody if they don’t really know what they’re talking about.

Experiences of feeling marginalized and deceived via the education system provoked Lola to boldly defy the gatekeepers of societal power. “I definitely see myself as a radical. I have a lot of radical thoughts. I used to have to choose who to share them with and who not to, and that’s why I have enemies.” Challenging authority, hegemonic society, or status quo with her students drives her to teach social studies for social justice. “I’m still kind of angry about a lot of stuff – especially my education.”

When Lola speaks to White people, she gets angry because they symbolize the group responsible for her oppression. Presenting workshops on White privilege allows her to dispel misconceptions people have about oppression. “It’s good therapy for me because it helps me talk through some of the things,” Lola stated.

Lola’s identification with three marginalized groups, including her ethnicity, sexual preference, and status as a single parent, exposed her to oppression in society. Lola believed the educational system promoted her oppression by teaching the facts of history from a biased viewpoint. After learning alternative perspectives from college classes and resources, she resented her previous schooling and instructors and felt determined to change the world by educating others. While Lola’s story and reaction to oppression differed from Emma’s experience, they both responded to their oppression by advocating for social change.

Personal and family experiences of oppression fueled Emma and Lola’s desire to teach for social justice. Their desire to “make things right” in response to the “wrongs” experienced encountered in youth led them to become radical educators. Only two participants identified this route to becoming a radical educator. Another pathway to social justice teaching involved direct contact with other cultures, involvement in social activism and volunteerism, and exposure to adult mentors. Instead of a direct personal experience with oppression, participants saw oppression on the sidelines as witnesses of cultural difference and activists in social justice.

### **Childhood Multicultural Experiences, Activism, and Adult Mentors**

A second type of experience influencing the formation of social justice teachers includes the effects of childhood multicultural experiences, activism and volunteerism, and adult mentors in creating greater consciousness about injustice. Participant experiences ranged from brief exchanges with members of other communities through events and volunteerism to full cultural



immersions as a result of an international experience. Parents, family members, and adults in their life facilitated their involvement, encouraging their encounters with other cultures. This early awareness regarding the needs of others set the stage for their work in social justice.

### **Childhood Multicultural Experiences**

Several different types of childhood multicultural experiences affected teachers to engage in social justice pedagogy. These experiences varied from living and interacting with others in their community, departing on brief family vacations, and living fully immersed for extended periods in a foreign country. Teachers' childhood multicultural experiences played a profound role in their career choice and teaching methodology. Two participants traced their passion to social justice through cultural contact close to home or in the United States, while three teachers described international travel as a significant factor in their formation as social justice educators.

For Andres, the neighborhood he grew up in became his cultural experience. By traveling a few blocks from his home, he felt like he was in another country because of the community's ethnicities, religions, food, language, and traditions. Andreas grew up in an affluent area, living comfortably in an economically stable household with access to resources for college. He grew up understanding the privileges and opportunities available to him. Andres only had to travel a few blocks from his home, however, to see changes in socioeconomic status, ethnicity, religion, and language. His experiences in and around his inner city neighborhood attracted him to learning about the cultural experiences of ethnically, religiously, and culturally diverse persons living close to home.

Andres's desire to learn about others led him to friendships with a diverse group of friends. He played with his friends in their homes and attended church with them. Reflecting on

this experience, Andreas traced some of his interest to his father's experience with diversity in Chicago:

I was a kid that just sought out really different places from where I grew up. My dad always talks about, he's from Chicago, and the first time I went there I was making observations and comments about the racial make-up and that we were the only White folks around here and such. Some of my very closest friends growing up were students of color that had gone to my school district and that I just really enjoyed different cultural opportunities. I had to leave maybe that cultural bubble there and to go spend time at their churches and communities within the city.

Andreas's cultural experience led him to seek out opportunities to expand his knowledge of diversity and value it. Other participants left the neighborhood to travel or live abroad.

James' brief family vacations exposed him to new environments away from home. During childhood, James remembered family trips throughout the United States. James saw, experienced, and understood history as a result of the family tours of historic places. The family visited historical slave plantations, battlefields, museums, and the hotel where Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated. He even worked a cotton gin in the South to experience the labor of enslaved people. James found his love of history and social justice in his travels around the country.

James discovered the American experience through direct contact and learned history was not about memorizing facts, but seeing how religion, culture, and wars affected people. "It was that trip that kind of started to frame things, that history wasn't just random dates to memorize and that it was just kind of a living thing that applies to me today and that I can understand, that it's more about people than it is about the date."

Two teachers, Trisha and Tim, experienced a full immersion into culture as a result of their experience living in a different country for extended periods. Trisha's parents made a life-changing decision before her ninth grade year of high school: they moved the entire family to

England for a year. This experience put stress on Trisha, causing her to learn about what it felt like to be culturally different. “I went to a British school – completely different culture and that was in 9th grade so I was a hormonal mess”. While in England, she was judged as an American, dressed differently, spoke with an accent, and enjoyed different customs. Trisha described how the experience changed her. “It shifted my perspective because it was a completely different culture even though they spoke English and they were mostly White – it was still a very, very different place.”

Trisha traveled throughout her childhood, but the family move to England allowed her to appreciate and value other cultures, infusing a sense of wonder and appreciation for other cultures and traditions. Significant contact with different cultures and the experience of feeling like an outsider influenced Trisha’s sensitivity to social justice.

Another social justice teacher, Tim, gained international citizenship and cultural experience because his parents were missionaries.

I actually was born in Indonesia. My parents were missionaries so I grew up in Indonesia and then I went to high school in Malaysia. I went to some fantastic schools with some amazing teachers and really got to see how teachers can change lives and that’s what eventually draws me in [to education].

Tim chooses to teach using a social justice methodology because of his own personal experience with religious intolerance and because of an internal drive to encourage students to go outside their own community physically, mentally, and socially. Tim traces his experience living abroad to his formation as a social justice educator.

I teach for it [social justice] because having grown up overseas I think you have to know this stuff, both to act in the world but also to appreciate the richness of the world and the different cultures that we come in contact with. So it’s part of having an honest look at the world.

The “honest look at the world”, described by Tim, summarizes the experiences of participants influenced by cultural experiences. Contact with diverse people and cultures profoundly changed their ideas about the world, raising their conscious regarding the value of diverse people and cultures and social justice. Another type of “immersion” experience promoted by mentoring adults engaged participants in becoming allies and activists for social justice.

Parents’ decisions to move the entire family overseas and immerse their children in a different culture created teachers who teach in a non-traditional manner. These fully immersed cultural experiences opened the world to these teachers, instilled a desire to rebel vocally against the dominate hegemony, interact globally with different cultures, and teach others about different cultures and social injustices they had seen or experienced firsthand.

### **Activism and Volunteerism**

The social justice educators participated in a number of ways to combat social injustices. Some teachers participated in a limited fashion, serving as volunteers within their community, while others vocally and actively fought injustice through writing letters and participating in protest campaigns. Involvement in fighting oppression increased their moral consciousness and desire to do more. This social injustice consciousness led teachers to actively use their curriculum and methods to promote social activism as a venue to fight oppression.

Margi and Ryan were encouraged by their parents to volunteer and interact with members of disadvantaged population within their communities, increasing their knowledge of people and culture. Both teachers interacted in a limited way with members of disadvantaged populations; however, as their interactions grew in number and depth, the experience instilled a long lasting desire to fight injustice.

Margi's childhood and early adulthood cultural experiences and volunteerism affected her desire to teach her students about social justice themes. During high school and college, Margi's volunteerism and coaching with youth programs encouraged her to become a teacher.

I found out working in high school and working in college, that many different youth programs and teen programs and coaching positions that I connected with hard to reach youth and I thought that was a gift I could use and take with me into teaching. But I think I went into teaching because I really knew that I loved to learn and I love to figure out new ways of serving up material to kids who didn't usually connect with it.

Working with youth at a young age, Margi developed her social consciousness and strengthened her desire to become even more involved in fighting oppression outside of her local community.

Margi's involvement in her church caused her to become involved in Habitat for Humanity, a volunteer organization involved in building homes for people in poverty. These experiences affected her passion for social justice. "I did a lot of stuff with my parents around Habitat and we hosted a family. I went to Kentucky and then Nicaragua with the church, looking at organizations in Nicaragua that were working to help the poor and poor mothers and work on environmental issues." Margi's experiences in her church and travel to Kentucky broadened her interest in volunteering and learning about social justice outside of the United States.

As an adolescent, Margi traveled to Nicaragua and lived for two weeks in the poorest neighborhood, a slum called Leon. While there, she acquainted herself with families and traveled the country learning about social justice issues faced by the poor. The international experience inspired her to return to Nicaragua, this time leading a trip with her father. They worked in an orphanage for some time.

I think those experiences in such a different country with such visible poverty really changed me and sort of opened my eyes to the fact that so many of us in this country aren't aware at all. So I think that impacted my love of kids too. I was working with kids and working on those issues.

Margi's active role of volunteering in her church community created a desire to expand her experiences inside and outside of the United States. These volunteer opportunities caused her to think more about the need for global change. Her volunteer and travel experiences allowed Margi to deepen her knowledge and resolve to fight subjugation, later using her classroom as a spring board for social change.

Sometimes discussions around the family dinner table inspire change. While growing up, Ryan heard and participated in many discussions about equity, inequality, and economics around his dining room table with his mom and dad. He remembers discussions with his father, a college financial administrator, in which he told Ryan about difficult situations dealing with the allocation of financial aid to deserving students. His mother, a community volunteer, helped at-risk students in Ryan's home town learn how to read. His mother showed Ryan how actively volunteering in a community can change lives.

Ryan grew up knowing he must go to college. His family instilled this desire and insisted he attend college. Ryan's family background and experience affected him, and later, he volunteered to help at-risk students to achieve academic success while a student in high school, passing on this value to his peers. Reflecting on his academic history, Ryan recognized his volunteerism in high school made a big impression on him. These volunteer opportunities also motivated Ryan to major in teaching and economics in college, allowing Ryan to become a social justice educator who now teaches at-risk high school students.

Ryan infuses social justice issues within his economic courses and encourages students to attend college through his participation in a program called AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination; Watt, Johnston, Huerta, Mendiola, & Alkan, 2008). The AVID program works

with first generation, at-risk students to raise their aspirations and gain acceptance into college. Childhood experiences with peers also promoted the formation of social justice teachers.

### **Children For Social Justice**

Two teachers, Andres and Tim, actively fought social injustice as children and adolescents. These social and political activities as children motivated them as teachers to become radical educators. Andreas fought against unfairness and oppression while growing up in a second tier suburb of a Midwestern city. He lived and went to an ethnically and socioeconomically diverse school. Andreas described the diversity of his community; “On one end you had a neighborhood that had 87% of its residents living below poverty level and just a few blocks over, my neighborhood had middle to very high affluence. While growing up, I was interested in finding out the socioeconomic theories on why my neighborhood and the world had such large income disparities.” As a sixth grader, Andres marched with high school seniors to the state capital to encourage state legislators to pass Martin Luther King Jr. (MLK) Day under debate at the legislature.

Tim grew passionate about religious intolerance in high school. As an adolescent, Tim became involved with social justice issues by writing letters to express his views. Tim’s teachers encouraged him to write letters to politicians. He wrote letters to protest against religious persecution and environmental issues. Reflecting on this form of protest, Tim said “I was a fairly radical environmentalist in college so environmental issues were very dear to my heart, and then working on campaigns as well in college.” Tim continues this form of activism, letter writing, as an adult. He now uses this form of social activism with his own students.

Margi, Ryan, Andres, and Tim’s volunteer experiences and social activism changed their lives, inspiring them to adopt social justice themes in their curriculum. Teachers played a

limited role in their early social justice experiences; however, increased social consciousness caused them to seek more active and enriching experiences. For other teachers, adults acted as facilitators in the formation of social justice educators.

The second route in creating social justice teachers included many childhood multicultural experiences. These cultural experiences ranged from living in a culturally diverse neighborhood, family travels to historical sites and foreign countries, volunteerism, and political activism. The experiences exposed teachers to alternative perspectives and activities, radically changing their philosophy about the goal and methodology of social studies teaching. The final component motivating social studies teachers to teach in a non-traditional and radical manner involved opportunities in college-sponsored service learning, study abroad programs, and personal travel.

### **Service Learning, Study Abroad Programs and Personal Travel Experiences**

As previously described, personal and family experiences of oppression, educational and cultural experiences, volunteerism, and activism contributed to the formation of social justice educators. In this final section, teachers traveled literally and metaphorically to many different places on their way to personal transformation. The transformational experiences in this section provided by college and early adult experiences included service learning opportunities, study abroad programs, and personal travel.

#### **Service Learning**

Becoming involved in college-sponsored service learning programs affected two teachers, Margi and Ryan, inspiring them to become social justice teachers. During their childhood and formative years, they immersed themselves in cultural experiences and volunteer



opportunities. As they progressed into college, Margi and Ryan continued their social justice opportunities by getting involved in campus organizations and specialized training.

Margi learned social justice content and experienced many service learning aspects in her college classes. She worked in the Civic Engagement Office (CEC) at her Midwestern college. She served on the service learning committee, working with professors to show them how to infuse service learning into their courses. Also while working at the CEC during college, Margi worked on social justice oriented campaigns; writing lawmakers about social justice issues. She later used her service learning experience to teach her fourth grade students about service learning.

While enrolled in a Midwestern college, Ryan participated in a program called SIT, the School of International Training. This experiential learning model allows college students to stay with a Nicaraguan family. College students in the SIT program live with middle to low-middle income Nicaraguan families; a group of college students live in the same neighborhood for an extended amount of time. Ryan described the value of living and learning from these families as recent survivors of a Nicaraguan revolution. This experience allowed Ryan to understand social and economic transformation firsthand.

While in Nicaragua, Ryan spent every day trying to figure out what Nicaraguan society needed, including (a) how to bring about social change through economic change, (b) how to create positive social change with political change, and (c) how to implement positive social change through a better understanding of history. Ryan's service learning opportunity to Nicaragua led him to question his personal experiences and understanding of United States history, politics, and the economic system. These experiences caused him to question the status quo: "Are we really a socially conscientious country? Are we really here for what we claim to

be here for? And those questions were so interesting.” These questions and inquiries required Ryan to reflect on his own beliefs and teaching pedagogy. The historical and socioeconomic knowledge he gained allowed him to connect his service learning experience to current classroom topics involving economic, historical, and political concepts and social justice activities.

### **Study Abroad Programs**

College study abroad programs allow students to experience a foreign country’s language, religion, culture, traditions, and politics first hand, and study abroad programs provide pre-service teachers with experiences of social justice learning in countries around the world. These experiential opportunities transformed the lives of five teachers. Participants described how study abroad experiences helped them develop a deeper understanding of social justice issues and motivated them to change their teaching methods.

Trisha initially traveled around the United States due to her experiences as a competitive jump roper and the ability of her affluent parents to take the family on many trips. Later, she participated in a college study abroad program. These experiences made her fearless. Her travels infused a sense of wonder and appreciation for other cultures and traditions.

Global travel and college work in a diversity program called Mosaic made the biggest impact on her future teaching pedagogy and methodology. Trisha developed a deep desire to educate people, especially subjugated members of society. Trisha said, “We can not necessarily be treated equally, we should all be treated fairly.” Trisha sought courses and travel opportunities throughout her college experience to broaden her global perspective. For example, she traveled to Australia and studied the Aborigines. During her senior years, Trisha studied in Germany as part of global studies course, allowing her to travel *all around the world*. Her world

trip introduced her to many third world countries. Global travel helped her find her future calling: teaching students about children in third world countries.

During Andres's second year of college, he traveled to Argentina, spending a year abroad. He spent his time teaching, helping the village, and learning about Latin America. This experience affected his desire to become a social studies teacher and teach for social justice. Andreas saw poverty on another level. Speaking, living with, and learning from impoverished women and children changed his life. His experiences in a study abroad program helped him see social studies and history as complex, vibrant, and interesting subjects. He wanted to share his awareness and experience with others.

Andres has a dream: someday he hopes to open a school with a focus on elementary, middle, and high school service leaning opportunities to benefit marginalized members of society. At the Catholic high school where he teaches, he uses a teaching methodology and philosophy emphasizing local and global citizenship, and shows his students the power of becoming socially active through community engagement. Andreas also uses his experience of religious diversity to engage students. A former practicing Muslim, he now attends a traditional African American Catholic Church with his family. He also takes his students to Kenya to strengthen his social justice content and activities.

Ryan's college study abroad experience also transformed his teaching career. A student from a traditional public high school, Ryan described a traditional education, where students sit in a classroom, listen to a lecture, and watch a PowerPoint presentation. Fortunately for Ryan, he absorbed information really well that way. "What I found was that it wasn't my high school or elementary or middle school experience that led me into social justice as much as my college experiences."

While in college, Ryan met many people from diverse backgrounds. He met people in his dorm floor from different worlds. He was fascinated by the fact that on one side of him was this very affluent east coast student and on the other side a very poor person from the south side of Chicago. The income disparity and inequality interested him, and so he wanted to study economics and social justice more. He ended up going abroad with a social justice program to Latin America. His study focused on a central question: “What does it mean for the international community when we talk about social justice?” During Ryan’s study abroad program, he found it fascinating to meet other college students passionate about social justice issues. He admitted at first he was unfamiliar with what he was getting involved in; however, his college study abroad experience helped him develop an understanding of social justice learning.

Emma traveled to Communist Russia, Estonia, and the Ukraine as a college student. Emma’s study abroad experience taught her to question the content professors and historians taught her, challenging traditional views and presentations of American history. Her global experience left her wondering about the left out voices and contributions of minorities in history. “No issue about the voices that are left out, which is how I teach history,” Emma said. “I went to Russia and had awesome history professors, which radicalized me and opened up the world of social injustice...the study of history will do that”. Emma knew she wanted to give a voice to the subjugated members of society, not just White men and leaders, when she earned her social studies degree/license.

Margi traveled to Denmark and studied different ways European countries handle diversity in education and special needs. Her travel abroad opportunity motivated Margi to teach social studies for social justice. Margi believed her study abroad experiences and involvement in

different professional organizations made the most impact on her social justice teaching pedagogy.

Trisha, Andres, Ryan, Emma, and Margi's college study abroad programs profoundly impacted them. These teachers traveled and lived in different countries. Their experiences exposed them to alternative experiences, perspectives, and challenges, affecting their curriculum and methodology. Motivated by their college study abroad experiences, two teachers traveled after college to expand their knowledge of social justice.

### **Personal Travel Experiences**

Trisha and James made trips abroad after college. The purpose of their personal trips was to gain a deeper appreciation and connection to people in third world countries. One teacher traveled for personal growth and curiosity while the other teacher traveled to gain contextual knowledge to build his social justice curriculum.

After college graduation, Trisha taught in a remote hill village in Thailand. Ideally she would like to go back to India and Thailand in the future with her family to teach. Trisha feels like, "I gain so much more by going to places that make me uncomfortable." She saw firsthand how education can give power to the weak, oppressed, and impoverished. Trisha's enjoyment of telling stories of people, traditions, and cultures, as well as her travels, affected her desire to teach social studies for social justice.

When Trisha taught seventh grade, she told stories to students about her personal travels, including her experience in India while she was serving in Mother Teresa's orphanage. From this story, she recalled a seventh grade student raising her hand and asking, "Ms. Trisha, what can I do to help people like that in other parts of the world?" Every year Trisha strives to get students to think globally and realize how they share the earth with others. She infuses her

lessons with a focus on the critical evaluation of issues of globalization, trade, immigration, outsourcing, HIV/AIDS, genocide, and child slave labor, to inspire her students to go out into the world and make a difference. Another member of a teacher's family helped him prepare for a future course.

James' wife influenced his desire to teach using social justice themes. She spent most of her childhood in Columbia, and Central and South America. James went to Mexico to visit her while she worked there during college. He then traveled to Thailand, Rwanda, the Congo, and Ghana. James' travels deepened his knowledge and curriculum development ability:

I went to Thailand and that was more of a like a school trip that I ended up chaperoning but then I went to Rwanda to develop the genocide course. A buddy and I just went, we didn't have a tour company, we just showed up for three weeks and kind of navigated ourselves around Rwanda, which I kind of feel was a little late in my life – it was better late than never, but it was just an experience that I think I was really good at, I traveled really easily – not just the travel piece but being in Rwanda was really easy for me.

Traveling to Thailand and Rwanda opened his eyes and increased his dedication to social justice education. James and a friend next took a challenging trip to the Congo. He reflected on the experience of travel, feeling a peace he had not felt before and a yearning to learn more. He traveled to the Congo after teaching social justice courses for a while. The trip helped him gain a more complete understanding of social justice. Following his trip to Congo, James traveled to Rwanda and Ghana. These trips only reinforced his understanding of how he needed to construct and teach his students about social justice issues around the world.

The trip to Rwanda allowed him and a colleague to form a course on genocide for students attending a Catholic junior and senior high school. When James traveled to Rwanda, he made close connections with a particular family. James said, "My family has six kids now. Because of going to Rwanda, I have a very good friend there now and his son lives with us. So

he was here last year as an eighth grader and the plan is that he'll graduate. So we have six kids and he's not an exchange student. We're his guardians and he lives with us now." James's personal travels allowed him to develop his social justice philosophy and social justice curriculum and to define his role as a social justice educator.

Teachers experienced some kind of transformation for social justice from a variety of experiences. Some took place during and after their college experience; some teachers became active in college-sponsored service learning programs; others participated in study abroad programs. Finally, personal travel also contributed to transforming educators into social justice educators. College and travel opportunities allow participants to use personal stories and knowledge in their social studies classroom. These experiences changed the lives of these teachers, and the stories and knowledge they brought back now transform their students. In the next section, I explain this "transformation" using transformational learning theory.

### **Transformational Experiences Create Radical Educators**

Mezirow developed three themes within transformative theory: centrality of experience, critical reflection, and rational discourse (Cranton, 2006). Mezirow (1997) believed transformational learning led to the process of changing a person's "frame of reference" (p. 5). "A frame of reference encompasses cognitive, conative, and emotional components" (Mezirow, 1997, p. 5). A frame of reference is composed of two components: *habits of mind* and *a point of view*. (Mezirow, 1997). According to Mezirow, experiences, critical reflection, and discourse all contribute to changes in the habits of the mind and points of view. Experiences expose people to alternative perspectives that promote reflection. Experiences cause people to reflect on "content or process by which we solve problems and identify the need to modify assumptions" (Mezirow, 1997, p. 6). Finally critical reflection causes discourse. Discourse is a "dialogue

devoted to assessing reason presented in support of competing interpretations, by critically examining evidence, arguments, and alternative points of view (Mezirow, 1997, p. 6).

The participants gained a better understanding of the world around them because of their transformative experiences as children and young adults. Their experiences during childhood, adolescence, and young adulthood enhance their social awareness and desire for social change. Participants witnessed poverty, alienation, religious intolerance, and oppression, sometimes as a direct experience and other times through texts, cultural immersion, family moves to foreign country, service learning, volunteerism, family travel, and study abroad travel.

Mentors played a pivotal role, encouraging their participation in multicultural activism and volunteerism. These experiences altered their frame of reference. Mezirow (1997) described a frame of reference as something that gets developed and changed as a result of events experienced in our lives. These experiences not only brought about a critical awareness of social issues but also helped participants form new perspectives with more inclusive, compassionate, and reflective leadership.

Critical reflection caused participants to modify their fixed assumptions and expectations, changing their “frames of reference” (Mezirow, 1997, p. 7) and gradually, shifting their view away from traditional teaching to the goals of radical education. Participants’ young adult and collegiate experiences made them “more inclusive, discriminating, open, reflective, and emotionally able to change” (Mezirow, 2003, p. 59).

As their frame of references developed and changed, participants gained knowledge and wisdom; increased critical awareness inspired social action. Critical reflection allowed participants to step back and investigate and evaluate the power structures in society that not only perpetuate oppression but also keep an oppressive system in place (Brown, 2005). Critical



reflection serves an important role because it helps people take informed actions, develops a rationale for practice, helps people avoid self-laceration, grounds us emotionally, enlivens our spaces, and increases democratic trust (Brookfield, 1995). Critical reflection enables people to become critically aware of their own assumptions as well as the assumptions made by others, therefore encouraging discourse (Mezirow, 1997).

Individuals witnessed or personally experienced oppression and felt a strong desire to “right the wrongs” in society. Their transformation motivated them to become radical educators and use teaching as a catalyst for social change. Participants used their personal, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual experiences and resources to transform the lives of children, teaching others how to resist oppression. Participants sought out schools and students where they could teach about political and economic power systems that perpetuate oppression in society. Using their own personal experiences, radical teachers showed at-risk populations oppression resisting methods, in hopes of stopping the cycle of oppression.

According to Mezirow (1997), transformational learning occurs when people change their assumptions, perceptions, feelings, and habits because of experiences. Transformational learning occurs through critical reflection on those experiences. The final step in transformational learning occurs with rational discourse. Discourse allows participants to critically examine evidence, arguments, and alternative points of view (Mezirow, 1997). Rational discourse serves as an essential element for the promotion and development of transformational learning (Brown, 2005).

According to Mezirow’s theory, over time an adult will listen intently and be open to alternative perspectives (as cited in Cranton, 2006). The adult will not come to a consensus, but rather reach a deeper understanding of his or her biases as well as the construction of colleague

biases (Brown, 2006). Participants in this study engaged in critical reflection and discourse to experience transformational learning. All eight participants engaged in critical reflection, describing the impact of their experiences. They established a direct link between experience, transformational learning, and social change. Using the adult learning theory, participants became social justice educators through a developmental intercepting of the mind, body, spirit, emotions, and society (Merriam, 2008).

### **Summary**

People enter teaching professions for many reasons, but why do some teachers feel motivated to go beyond the standard curriculum and teach their curriculum with social justice themes? As shown in formative experiences, radical teachers experienced overt or systemic oppression, life changing education, cultural experiences, community activism, volunteerism, and college service learning programs, and travel to foreign countries. Life and professional transformations occurred because of their experiences. Their experiences influenced their teaching philosophy, methodology, knowledge, and social justice understanding and consciousness that allow them to teach social justice education. Their first-hand opportunities to interact with mentally, religiously, socially, educationally, and economically marginalized members of the global family played a role in their professional choice to be a social justice educator. Participants used their experiences to become radical educators. In the next chapter, I describe how their transformation helped radical teachers develop social justice curriculum and pedagogy to inspire their students and actively change the world.

## CHAPTER FIVE: SOCIAL JUSTICE CURRICULUM AND PEDAGOGY

Social justice teachers designed curriculum to engage students in critical thinking with the goal of raising awareness of social justice issues and inspiring moral action. My second research question questioned how radical teachers created anti-classist, anti-sexist, and anti-racist classrooms. Question two also asked radical educators to discuss pedagogical approaches and reflect on his/her successes as change agents. Radical teachers viewed the study of *social justice issues as a central element of their practice and created a social justice curriculum within their assigned courses to achieve this goal*. The curriculum emphasized critical thinking to raise student awareness of social justice issues, increase empathy for others, and encourage students to engage social change.

According to Brookfield (2012), critical thinking occurs when people investigate and become aware of assumptions that influence their ideas and behaviors, recognize different viewpoints or perceptions, and take active roles in society. Taking an informed active role in society involves analysis. “We critically think not just to survive, but also to live and love well” (p. 12). Social justice teachers taught their students to use critical thinking, reflect on how critical thinking changes ideas and actions, and motivate students to take action regarding their beliefs. Brookfield (2012) called the last step “taking informed action” and explained people take action based on evidence they find convincing (p. 12).

Critical thinking happens when people discover assumptions affecting the way they act or think:

This entails (1) identifying the assumptions that frame our thinking and determine our actions, (2) checking out the degree to which these assumptions are accurate and valid, (3) looking at our ideas and decisions (intellectual, organizational, and personal) from several different perspectives, and (4) on the basis of all this, taking informed actions. (Brookfield, 2012, p. 12)

Adopting critical thinking as the cornerstone of their social justice practice; social justice teachers employed one or more of *four supporting strategies to foster critical thinking and moral action* as central features of social justice pedagogy. I created a social justice teaching model by conducting interviews and observations and analyzing teaching document data. The analysis showed four main strategies utilized by social justice educators. Social justice teachers (1) adopted alternative texts and supplemental resources to focus on social justice issues, (2) emphasized active learning and 21<sup>st</sup> century learning skills (Rosefsky, Saavedra, & Opfer, 2012), (3) engaged students in service learning and civic action projects, and (4) integrated the arts within the social studies curriculum to raise cultural awareness and appreciation. Social justice teachers designed, modified, or enriched new curriculum to raise awareness of social justice; by emphasizing critical thinking and taking informed action.

I next describe the four core strategies used to design social justice curriculum, applying Brookfield's (2012) model of critical thinking, including taking informed action, to illustrate how the adopted strategies fostered critical thinking about social justice.

### **Strategy One: Adopted Alternative Texts and Supplemental Resources**

All eight participants developed curriculum and adopted alternative resources to focus on issues rather than facts and events, present alternative viewpoints of history and current social conditions, and raise awareness regarding social justice issues and social action. Participants either modified existing curriculum and adopted an "issues" orientation within their courses, or ignored the "written" curriculum and devised a new course of study. Alternative texts allowed teachers to focus on specific social justice issues, offer alternative views to challenge dominant narratives, foster empathy and social activism, challenge students with more academically

rigorous and in-depth content and resources, and promote “professional” or scholarly thinking typically used by historians and social critics.

Teacher-selected alternative resources served as a substitute or enhancement to the “adopted” textbook in their social justice classrooms. The resources included works of biography, primary source documents, and alternative and oppositional texts used to challenge the “standard” social studies curriculum. Teachers selected resources to (1) focus on issues rather than historical facts and events, (2) offer alternative views to challenge dominant narratives, (3) foster empathy and social activism, (4) provide more engaging and academically rigorous material, and (5) make use of primary sources to foster professional thinking as historians and social critics. By presenting biographies, primary sources, and alternative and oppositional books; teachers provided students the motivation and content needed to become social activists.

I next describe the types of resources adopted, provide examples of alternative texts, and illustrate how teachers connected the use of alternative resources to social justice pedagogy.

### **Biographies.**

Six teachers used biographies to foster social change. Biographies illustrate how life experiences affected individuals and influenced their goals and values. When students read biographies, they learned how personal experience affects views of history and events. Biographies promote critical thinking by allowing students to interpret someone’s experience and draw conclusions about how experience fosters social change. Biographies encouraged students to critical think by developing skills such creating critical questions, working collaboratively, and formulating conclusions.

Out of the six teachers who used biographies, two teachers utilized the biography of *Malcolm X* (1964) to introduce students to racist social systems and the oppression of people of color. *Malcolm X*, a story about a young boy who sees his father killed by a White supremacist, describes how a young boy becomes a violent, drug hustling man swallowed by inner city ghettos. While serving time in jail, Malcolm X made a dramatic conversion to the Nation of Islam (Haley & X, 1964).

The Nation of Islam contained a small sect of Black Muslims who promoted the ideology of black pride and nationalism. Black Nationalism promoted the idea of black separatism. Black Nationalism promoted their ideology in which Blacks should seek equality through political and economic separation from White society. Within the Nation of Islam, Malcolm X raised money, gave fervent speeches, and promoted Black radicalism. The story provides hope, pride, and feelings of Black Nationalism to African Americans. In 1965, Malcolm X died by the hands of jealous colleagues in Harlem, New York. *Malcolm X* helps students learn about the oppression many Black people experienced in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

*Malcolm X* helped students achieve goals related to critical thinking by exposing them to multiple perspectives. *Malcolm X* offers a more radical perspective on the Civil Rights Movement and oppression, challenging more “traditional” descriptions of the movement and social change. Andres adopted *Malcolm X* to challenge his students dominant narratives about race and oppression, introducing radical perspectives to his senior level (grade 12) social justice course:

That’s not easy to read and it’s hard for some of these kids to read and be called White devils, but are you going to shut down right there or are you going to actually . . . can you stay curious to see well what would have created this within Malcolm that he would start to identify White folks. I mean, can you stick with him long enough to not just dismiss him and to see actually this whole transformational change that he has.

Andres drew on *Malcolm X's* biography to foster empathy and social activism. Besides race, he used the book to explore issues of class and gender (paternalism). Andres believed he could not teach about the Civil Rights Movement without incorporating all three (race, class, and gender) concepts. "I think all three were actually pretty instrumental and MLK [Martin Luther King] was just . . . he was easy enough for a White population to take in." Andres admits the class encompasses a lot of time and work. He really encourages students to read the book because *Malcolm X* provides valuable insights on social justice issues and alternative perspectives. Another participant, Lola, also used *Malcolm X* to introduce radical ideas.

Lola made a calculated effort to introduce students to radical literature and authors in her history classes. "The more radical, the better." Like Andres, Lola used *Malcolm X's* autobiography in her unit about racism and the Civil Rights Movement. She also used this book to provide an alternative perspective to the events occurring during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Lola fosters critical thinking by asking her students to be "critical" by questioning society, and recognizing how individuals may experience life circumstances and encounter oppression. She teaches her students the importance of questioning society and authority; as *Malcolm X* described in his autobiography. She wants her students to recognize how bias works:

I tell them all the time that if I walk down the street in Edina no one is going to lock their doors, but if you [persons of color] walk down the street in Edina people are going to lock their doors and that's a very racist act and you need to know those kind of things.

Lola uses examples like this and the book to help students understand how to think critically and raise awareness of racism in society.

Another teacher, Emma, used an autobiography, *The Long Walk to Freedom* by Nelson Mandela (1994), in her social studies classes to raise awareness of racism and oppression. The autobiography describes Mandela's dedication, struggle, and fight with racial oppression in

South Africa (Mandela, 1994). Mandela tells the story about the formation of his political ideals and the creation of the African National Congress Youth League. He discusses his years of hiding from the White apartheid South African government, his imprisonment of 27 years, and his momentous achievement of becoming the South Africa's first Black president in 1994 (Mandela, 1994). *The Long Walk to Freedom* acquaints readers with one of the world's most inspirational social justice activists.

Emma used biographies to reinforce the social justice concepts of racism, colonialism, and economic inequality. Mandela's biography allows students to practice their critical thinking skills by examining how Mandela challenged dominant views in society. She wants students to use this book to learn about alternative experiences and people who have shaped the world; viewing different experiences and perspectives with an open mind.

Like Andres, Lola, and Emma; Tim also used biographies in his social studies classes. "I like to go to books by people who have been there, done it." When he taught about the exploitation of resources, and genocide in Rwanda; he used *Shake Hands with the Devil: The Failure of Humanity in Rwanda* by Romeo Dallaire (2003). Dallaire, a Canadian general, personally partook in the colonization and exploitation of assets. He served as a commander of the United Nations (UN) Assistance Mission for Rwanda. Dallaire initially thought he went to Rwanda to alleviate fighting between two warring factions; however, he soon lived a much darker experience when exposed to the chaotic savagery of civil war. In the few months he worked there, he witnessed the genocide of thousands of Rwandans.

Dalliere (2003) saved many lives with the help of his troops and the use of strategic methods. Even though Dallaire sought help from the world community, no help arrived. He ended the



book by describing his retirement and struggle with posttraumatic stress disorder (Dallaire, 2003). “So books by people who are at these different places, I love these,” Tim said.

Tim used this book to teach critical thinking skills, including two steps of Brookfield’s (2012) model: challenging assumptions and checking out the validity and accuracy of assumptions.

I think if I teach them to critically think and I open their eyes to the issues, to the assumptions they’re making-isn’t it beautiful? If I can open their eyes to it, they’ll get to the action piece and then they’ll be some more effective than if I stamp them out.

Tim used biographies to elicit critical discussions about social justice topics. He hopes students will open their minds to alternative perspectives by reading stories of people who experienced or saw oppression. Trisha used biographies in her eighth grade social studies class to teach social justice concepts instead of the class “assigned” textbook.

Trisha described the books found on her classroom bookshelf about social justice, including social justice icons, such as the Dalai Lama. Specifically in her Africa unit, Trisha used a biography by Lekuton and Viola called *Facing the Lion: Growing Up Maasai on the African Savanna* (2003). She used the book to discuss poverty, African culture, and race.

*Facing the Lion*, a coming of age story about a boy who grows up as a member of a Kenyan nomadic tribe, describes typical challenges faced by adolescents (Lekuton & Viola, 2003). The story describes experiences of tribal initiation, attending boarding school, playing soccer, and making a journey to America for college (Lekuton & Viola, 2003). Trisha selected the biography to provide multiple perspectives on social justice issues and engage students in stories with more depth than an “assigned” textbook. Using Lekuton and Viola’s book allowed Trisha to foster critical thinking skills. Specifically, she planned assignments with “critical

questions” to engage students in debates and help students understand problems related to race and poverty.

In James’s eighth grade social studies class, he used *Left to Tell: Discovering God Amidst the Rwandan Holocaust*, a book by Immaculee Ilibagiza, a Rwandan Holocaust survivor. The book provides a personal narrative of the Rwandan Genocide in 1994. In 1994, a civil war between two competing groups engulfed Rwanda. The civil war turned into genocide when Hutu extremists began to brutally murder a rival ethnic group, the Tutsis.

Immaculee’s family belonged to the Tutsi tribe (Ilibagiza, 2007). The Tutsis’ brutally murdered her family and over a million people over the 100 day massacre. Immaculee survived by hiding in a bathroom with seven other women and a pastor for 91 days. In her biography, Immaculee described the terror she experienced, the importance of prayer, coming to terms with her own mortality, and finding salvation in God. During her fight for survival, Immaculee found the meaning of unconditional love; which allowed her to seek out and forgive those who killed her family (Ilibagiza, 2007).

James used this biography to focus on the issue of genocide, and to foster empathy and social activism. He wanted students to see the resiliency people develop in times of great pain and suffering. James likes to provide facts and present stories of people who have experienced social injustices. He then uses the person’s story to motivate students to take action. He encourages students to take a stand against any type of injustice and hopes his students will eventually become social activists and prevent injustice.

Using biography allowed James to achieve goals related to critical thinking. He encourages students to go from being concrete to abstract thinkers through discussions and cooperative activities. He accomplishes this by giving students a platform to develop their own

ideas. He encourages students to form their own opinions and decide their course of social change and action by identifying seven stages of genocide (see Appendix G for an illustration of biography-related assignments).

Out of eight teachers, six teachers (Andres, Lola, Emma, Tim, Trisha, and James) used biographies to focus on social justice issues such as poverty, race, genocide, and gender issues. Andres, Lola, Emma, Tim, Trisha, and James incorporate biographies all throughout the course. Teachers use biographies to present alternative views and provide engaging in-depth context on social justice issues. Biographies help teachers achieve goals related to critical thinking and also become useful resources for designing engaging discussions and activities. Teachers also adopted primary sources in their social justice curriculum to help students challenge dominant assumptions about people and society.

### **Primary Sources**

All eight teachers used primary sources, documents, and quotes in their social studies classroom. Teachers drew upon these sources to get students to read a perspective from someone who directly experienced a social justice event. Primary sources included letters, diaries, summaries of research, newspapers, photographs, quotations, or audio and video recordings to give the author's argument more validity in the eyes of students learning about social justice topics. These sources, without a historian's interpretation, allowed students to analyze content without the constructed interpretation of historians. Primary sources fostered critical thinking by allowing students to interpret the original work and draw conclusions for themselves, much like professional historians or social critics of society.

When Lola taught about revolutions or economic systems like socialism; she drew upon original writings, speeches, and books by Fidel Castro and Che Guevara. For example, Lola

used writings, speeches, and quotes by Che Guevara to raise awareness of issues. Che, an Argentine, Marxist revolutionary, and guerilla leader; advocated the Cuban Revolution with Fidel Castro in the 1950s (Casey, 2009). During his world travels as a medical student, Che developed sympathy and solidarity for the poor and the hungry, as well as those without adequate medical care. He believed capitalist exploitation, United States imperialism, and greed caused economic, political, and social inequality. In turn he fought the rest of his life to reverse these disparities (Casey, 2009).

Lola used Che Guevara's speeches to the United Nations (UN), letters to Fidel Castro, and quotations to offer alternative views to the hegemonic views of the social, economic, and political elite. The primary sources engaged students in rigorous course work, something they would not find in a typical history book. Students found this type of literature challenging to read and understand, so to help with comprehension and discussion, Lola put students in cooperative groups and used the "jigsaw method" (Aronson, 2000, p. 18):

You take a text and you break it up into pieces and each little group has their little part and then we come back together and talk about . . . because they don't all have it [the speech], they don't have the whole thing. And that works for that particular student population.

While difficult at times; Lola works hard to incorporate many primary sources in her class:

I think finding resources is probably the hardest. The resources that I have, it took me many years to get those – even before I started teaching. You know, I was looking for journal articles or books; you can't just go to Barnes and Noble and find some certain things. Or some of them aren't published anymore. I use a lot of primary documents and some of that stuff is hard to find too.

Lola incorporated primary sources to advance students' ability to use critical thinking. She wanted to provide examples such as Castro and Guevara to entice students to stand up against an ethnocentric culture and become social activists. She challenged students to ask

critical questions about the constructed systems of power in White America. Students engaged in critical thinking by gathering information, working collaboratively to understand and interpret different perspectives, and develop their own conclusions on the causes of social inequity.

Emma also used primary sources to teach about social justice issues. “We don’t use the “assigned” district textbooks.” Emma used primary resources such as supplemental readings, documents, and speeches. “An example from U.S. History is when we study the Civil War. I’ve got a packet of speeches from Lincoln and we trace his thoughts, his view of the divine as well as his view of slavery and how it changes in those documents.” Emma incorporated these documents to encourage higher level thinking skills such as interpretation, assessing facts and opinions, and drawing conclusions.

Besides historical primary resources, Emma also incorporated curriculum resources from global institutions and non-governmental organizations (NGO) such as the United Nations (UN):

When I was in Geneva, Switzerland, we got a lot of the books including the UN’s Declaration of Human Rights pamphlet. I’ve got a human rights curriculum – so a lot of this comes out of organizations, even like UNICEF or some NGOs have stuff that you can use within your classroom.

Emma used historical and human rights documents as primary sources to promote critical thinking skills. She encouraged students to gather and interpret information presented in speeches and primary readings. She asked students to become open-minded to alternative perspectives, form their own opinions, and think like professionals.

Trisha included some primary sources in her 8<sup>th</sup> grade social studies class. She primarily used visual documents and artifacts when teaching about globalization. As a requirement of the school district and state standards; social studies teachers must include economic concepts in all their units. Eighth graders can find the topic of economics difficult to understand and apply to

their lives. Trisha found students tend to understand economic concepts when she incorporates primary sources instead of textbooks that can contain technical, hard to understand vocabulary.

Trisha teaches students the basics of economics by using primary sources and once students gain confidence, she can move onto concepts that are more complex. “We will focus on questions like ‘What is economics? What is GDP? Or globalization?’” She used posters to help students understand and think critically about globalization. The book and poster set called “Material World: A Global Family Portrait” (Menzel, 2005) features families from all over the world. Photographs of families show them as they take all their belongings from inside their home and put it outside. Students find it amazing to see the large amount of possessions, or lack of “stuff” families accumulate around the world.

Seeing how other people live exposes students to different perspective on wealth and consumerism. This visual source allowed students to understand economic concepts and then develop a cost and benefit analysis of globalization as a class. Developing a cost and benefit analysis helped students to classify and analyze information; critical thinking skills. Primary sources helped students see social justice issues in a simplified manner, allowing them to see and understand economic disparity.

Like Lola, Emma, and Trisha; Tim used primary resources to educate his students on social justice concepts. Tim used the “required” textbook, but admitted he hoped to eliminate it eventually from his courses. Tim’s favorite teaching tool, primary resources, allowed him to slowly approach difficult subjects like religious intolerance, poverty, and racism. He likes using government data to present the latest statistics on poverty and other issues. He helps students use statistics about poverty to show differences in reporting about poverty, using “facts” to analyze how newspaper articles might describe poverty levels. Using these resources, Tim can introduce

the concept of poverty, share data about the issue, discuss potential causes of poverty, and eventually break down the students' prejudicial views.

Tim used supplemental books and primary sources to overcome his biggest challenge; getting his students to acknowledge social inequalities actually exists. Tim often encounters rejection of these views from students, so he steps back, provides an alternative perspective, and encourages students to analyze the data and make conclusions. Development of critical thinking skills occurs as he presents an alternative view to challenge the dominant views found in the assigned textbook. He hopes his students develop a critical awareness and the motivation needed to fight injustice.

Ryan used primary sources in his economics course; drawing primarily on personal stories, government records, and statistics. These sources allow Ryan to present engaging and academically challenging materials. Due to the attention to detail and analysis needed to read and interpret primary sources, he uses them often to practice critical thinking skills. Ryan believes primary sources provide an unbiased set of facts; allowing students to interpret data and draw conclusions based on the "facts":

I don't use a textbook primarily because I think it's so easy to paint economics down in a text fashion and say, 'This is economics.' And what I want them to get out of this class is that there is no easy answer for these issues and that I like giving them a series of readings where we'll talk.

By having students analyze economic primary sources instead of information presented in a textbook; Ryan believes students can build better and more valid arguments in class discussions.

For example, Ryan used a primary resource about Wal-Mart's global labor record to present students with information about how "big box" stores affect communities and the price of cheap goods. The source included testimonies from Chinese workers who describe their life in

factories, and their compensation for producing cheap goods. The testimonial also described people living in a town where Wal-Mart built a store and put mom and pop stores out of business. Using these two sources, students compare and contrast the theory of globalization, a theory they learn about from their Advanced Placement (AP) economics textbook and apply this theory to Wal-Mart. By providing an engaging classroom environment with alternative teaching methods and reading material; Ryan encourages students to engage in critical thinking by investigating primary sources and interpreting data.

James teaches an eighth grade class called “Genocide and Social Justice”. “It focuses on principles of Catholic social teaching – human rights, it’s a social justice class but we use genocide to illustrate social justice and the principles of Catholic social teaching and human rights points.” To move students from “concrete to abstract” thinking skills; James utilized a variety of primary resources. He incorporated government records, global organization materials, interviews, and quotations. Like Emma, James also draws upon material from international human rights groups, such as the United Nation’s (UN) Universal Declaration of Human Rights:

We use different documents to decide or discuss which rights those would be – but we look at the UN primarily and you’re born, you get health care, you need a place to stay, those are the rights that we focus on. So we have to go out and do something and the analogy that we often give in class is that there is a burning building over there and we’re not going to tell you what to do but you have to do something.

Like Lola, Emma, Trisha, Tim, and Ryan, James too draws upon primary source material to make students critically think about social justice issues and their role in changing the world.

James does not use a textbook for two classes titled “Genocide and Social Justice” and “American Experience”. Ten years ago, James and a colleague decided to stop using a textbook; becoming the first in their social studies department to eliminate the standard textbook. To



provide a rich, first-hand narrative about genocide in their classes, they traveled to Africa to learn about genocide. “We interviewed genocide survivors and perpetrators and documented genocide memorials and interviewed people who were eye witnesses.” After the trip, James developed a curriculum that relied entirely on primary sources, narratives, supplemental readings, and virtual websites.

James also incorporated many quotations from people to discuss issues and engage students in critical thinking. For example, James used a quote from Frederick Douglas’s who wrote a letter to William Lloyd Garrison about slavery. Students analyzed the quote in a critical discussion, discussing the author’s background, purpose and goal in the quotation, and determining the author’s use of language and tone. “So we use that framework to talk about anything.” Using quotations, personal interviews, and government records allow students to focus on personal narratives and facts instead of someone else’s interpretation on historical events. James emphasized the importance of learning from direct experience and insisted students make their own study of history and events.

Margi created her own primary sources for her history classes; feeling a sense of responsibility to her students. She also created opportunities for her students to do research using primary sources. Margi spent a lot of time using the library and conducting research to find material suitable for her students and their reading levels. Many of Margi’s high school students possess low reading abilities, comparable to students with a second to fourth grade reading level. To engage them Margi uses picture books and reduces the challenge of reading primary sources by reducing their length; breaking them into small parts and asking students to read and interpret the passage a little at a time.

Like other teachers, Margi possessed a collection of primary sources; including speeches, quotations, statistics, and interviews to supplement her social justice lessons. She introduced students to primary sources because she values presenting students with an alternative view of social justice issues. Margi possesses a “fundamental belief that we should be fostering students who can think and critically examine how the world works and instead of just repeating and sort of doing a kind of status quo.” She teaches students to engage in critical thinking by encouraging them to use the resources to identify their assumptions and gather significant facts to check the assumptions with reality thus developing their own conclusions.

Like other social justice teachers, Andres wants his students to become innovative thinkers. He encouraged these skills by using primary sources in his senior (Grade 12) social justice class. He believes the inclusion of primary sources allows students to focus on issues using academically rigorous and in-depth material. He wants students to make their own interpretations about the material by reading original sources. He believes this helps his students develop their own independent perspective instead of absorbing someone else’s assumptions and interpretations.

Andres likes students to look at primary sources “with their own lens; to use critical thinking about and to discuss it, and to come up with their own interpretation.” Andres developed an activity in which students conduct their own research about gender roles. Students collect their own data by observing and recording data in the form of field notes. Andres explained the importance of observations as “primary source” data. He believed direct observations are free from the biases and interpretations of others.

While observing and collecting primary source data as a “direct” observer, Andres believed students might use the data to make inferences about gender and identify concerns related to gender issues. Andres believed this process emulates the key features of critical thinking.

All teachers incorporated primary sources to foster critical thinking; engaging students in work similar to historians and social critics. They integrated primary source documents including: speeches, testimonials, quotations, visual images and artifacts, government documents and statistics, and interviews. Social justice teachers recognized the importance of providing students with primary sources to facilitate critical thinking, a key factor in developing “critical awareness” about social justice. Examples of assignments using primary sources appear in Appendix H. A third type of resource used by radical teachers involved the adoption of alternative and oppositional texts.

### **Alternative and Oppositional Texts**

Social justice educators use alternative and oppositional texts in their social studies classroom. These works of nonfiction and fiction provided alternative views to the American history textbook. Teachers bypassed the standard “White” constructed version of history, instead opting for a revisionist interpretation of American history, including the experience of oppressed people. Emma and Lola used Zinn’s (2003) book, *A People’s History of America*. Zinn’s book tells the forgotten stories in America’s history. He includes many marginalized voices in his revisionist interpretation of history, moving away from the stories of presidents, business leaders, and politicians and refocusing on the voices of women, people of color, laborers, and immigrants (Zinn, 2003). Zinn presents American stories left out of mainstream history textbooks.

Emma used her “assigned” American History textbook in class occasionally. Students received a historical reading assignment; however, she used alternative books and articles to

provide additional perspectives and challenge dominant narratives found in traditional American History textbooks. Emma assigned students to read their assigned textbook about the American Revolution but she also assigned a chapter from Zinn's *A People's History of America*. Then she introduced a third perspective, such as an article written by Pat Buchanan. "I'll use like a Pat Buchanan – so I'll give the opposite, because he's [Zinn] the extreme left, and then I'll use the extreme right and then let them decide." Emma used the assigned textbook, Zinn's book, and other alternative interpretations of history to foster critical thinking. Students practice recognizing unstated perspectives and evaluating the validity of a historian's elucidation of historical events by reading multiple interpretations of history. Encouraging students to view assumptions from different perspectives fosters critical thinking (Brookfield, 2012). Exposing students to a variety of sources and encouraging them to view issues from a variety of perspectives promotes critical thinking.

In order to introduce her unit on human rights, Emma used human rights books such as *Stand Up for Your Rights* which contains short narratives, poems, interviews, and quotes given by children regarding their thoughts on human rights (Atgwa, Bakyayita, Boltauzer, Boga, Granada, Guha, & Jasinski, 2000). Emma used this book as a springboard for her human rights unit. She utilized this book to provide a radical interpretation of human rights that other books might not discuss. Emma also made use of social justice materials created by the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC). Founded in 1971 by two civil rights lawyers; the Southern Poverty Law Center provides numerous social justice curriculum resources free to teachers and parents. The SPLC dedicates itself to "fighting hate and bigotry, and to seeking justice for the most vulnerable members of society" (<http://www.splcenter.org/who-we-are>). The SPLC tracks and exposes hate group activities. They also provide a free of charge program called Teaching

Tolerance. Teaching Tolerance provides K-12 teaching materials such as the *Teaching Tolerance* magazine, documentaries on civil and human rights, books, and lesson plans. Emma used Zinn, *Stand Up For Your Rights*, and books and magazines from the Southern Poverty Law Center to focus on specific social justice issues, provide alternative perspectives, and promote social activism.

Lola also used supplemental books in her American History class. She does not incorporate the “assigned” social studies textbook in her class. She used alternative and oppositional text to provide a radical or revisionist interpretation of history. Like Emma, Lola included Howard Zinn’s book; *A People’s History of America* in her curriculum. “Howard Zinn has a completely different story than a mainstream textbook.” With this book and others, she invited students to find critical questions in the text. “Just trying to get them to think of what if or how does that happen or why or who’s involved.” Lola used Zinn to instill critical thinking skills such as recognizing historical discrepancies and using abstract ideas to make inferences about historical events.

Lola used another alternative book in her history class. She included Paulo Freire’s book *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. First published in 1968, Freire introduced a new pedagogy of social activism, education, and community building. Freire explores the causes and explanations of oppression, and recommends that teachers, students, and communities build new relationships and institute a new teaching methodology to bring about change (Freire, Ramos, & Macedo, 2000).

Lola incorporated alternative perspectives such as Freire’s book to confront dominant narratives. Lola used this book when discussing events in history associated with oppression, marginalized groups of people, dissent, or political and social movements. Lola used Freire’s

book to explain the reasons for oppression, events of social and political unrest, and change. She used the book to teach students how to become social activists in their impoverished and crime-ridden communities.

Besides Zinn and Freire, Lola utilized an alternative history book: *Sundown Towns: A Hidden Dimension of American Racism* by Loewen. She used the book to combat historical bias found in many mainstream history textbooks. In his book, Loewen recalls an American story called *Sundown Towns* that few read. *Sundown Towns* explains how White neighborhoods and suburbs developed due to political systems and laws that promoted overt and systemic racism and segregation. Loewen strives to make the reader aware of the history of racism as well as the role racism still plays in American society today (Loewen, 2005).

Lola liked using books like Loewen's to also provide an alternative perspective to the "dead White male" history presented in most American History classes. She encouraged students to analyze the different interpretations of history, which fostered critical thinking skills. Lola taught students how to "pull things out and argue, what kind of meaning can you make from just knowing that there's two different stories out there?" She draws upon books like *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* and *Sundown Towns: A Hidden Dimension of American Racism* to discuss critically oppression, historical and political pressures, facts, and stories and narratives of marginalized voices. Lola also utilizes these books to show how political action and change can happen at a grassroots level.

Like Emma, Trisha also used the Southern Poverty Law Center's *Teaching Tolerance* books and magazines to discuss social justice issues of race and discrimination. The Southern Poverty Law Center provided Trisha with videos and lesson plans on America's Civil Rights Movement, bullying, the Holocaust, and labor rights. Throughout the year, the *Teaching*

*Tolerance* magazine provided Trisha with the latest news on hate groups, bigotry, and civil liberties, GBLTQ, labor, and immigration rights. Trisha appreciated the radical perspectives and activities presented in the books and articles. She felt they exposed students to ideas they would not read in ordinary books or magazines. She also liked the in-depth attention the books and magazine gave to social justice issues.

When Trisha taught the subject of poverty, she used a book called *If the World Were a Village* to discuss poverty in Africa and the world. The book tries to open readers' eyes so they learn "world-mindedness", providing statistics and activities on food security, energy, population, and health (Smith, 2002). Trisha started the school year using this book in her eighth grade social studies class and continues to use it throughout the year to develop a clearer picture of poverty around the world. The Southern Poverty Law material and *If the World Were a Village* provided Trisha with age and academic appropriate material that focuses on specific social justice issues and provided engaging, high interest material and activities. Trisha used these curriculum resources in an attempt to create open-minded, concerned citizens who will actively participate in their community.

Trisha also incorporated a book called *Lives of Extraordinary Women: Rulers, Rebels and What the Neighbors Thought* by Krull into her eighth grade social studies class. She used the book to study and illustrate women who have made a big difference in world history. She commented that mainstream textbooks often focus mainly on men, founding fathers, and male political and military leaders; these books only briefly focus on the important role women played in history. This book examines governments run by women and women who exercised power. The book portrays the successes, failures, and flaws of 20 historically influential women. The book discusses powerful women queens, warriors, prime ministers, first ladies, and revolutionary

leaders as humans. Trisha appreciated this perspective since most mainstream history books portray men as idealistic heroes and rarely discuss women's accomplishments. Trisha appreciated the retelling of famous stories of Cleopatra, Joan of Arc, Harriet Tubman, and Eleanor Roosevelt and the recounting of stories rarely told about Nzingha, Tz'U-His, Gertrude Bell, Golda Meir, Indira Gandhi, and Wilma Mankiller. Including rarely told stories about women exposed students to different perspectives, developed empathy, and expanded their multi-cultural knowledge about powerful and influential women around the world; hopefully reducing ethnocentrism.

Margi sought out numerous types of alternative and oppositional text to present multiple perspectives to her students, hoping to encourage critical thinking skills. She used an alternative text called *Lies My Teacher Taught Me: Everything Your American History Textbook Got Wrong* (Loewen, 2007). Like Zinn, Loewen's book tells a revisionist interpretation of American history. This interpretation allows teachers and students to challenge dominant narratives often found in traditional history textbooks. Loewen reviewed 18 popular American history textbooks and concluded these "traditional" history books provide a "combination of blind patriotism, mindless optimism, sheer misinformation, and outright lies, these books omit almost all the ambiguity, passion, conflict, and drama from our past" (Touchstone Publishers, 2007). The book helped Margi's students examine two historical versions and provided an alternative and oppositional interpretation of American history.

When Margi instructed students about sustainable communities she incorporated a book that focused on environmental activism. *The Better World Shopping Guide: Every Dollar Can Make a Difference* by Jones; describes ways that average Americans can make a difference in the world. Jones's book provides citizens with a comprehensive guide to living in an



environmentally sustainable way. He offers practical ways to become better citizens, help people around the world, and reduce the carbon footprint (Jones, 2012).

I think that climate change is an ethical issue, I think that climate change is now becoming kind of like the 21st Century's big global social justice issue because the people producing most of the emissions are not the ones being the most impacted by it – I think that's huge.

Margi used this book to focus on specific social justice issues like environmentalism. She wanted students to become social activists so she used the book to give them practical ideas they could start right away.

Margi also used a book called *U.S. Economy Field Guide of the U.S. Economy: A Compact and Irreverent Guide to Economic Life in America* by Teller-elsberg, Folbre & Heintz to introduce students to economic concepts at the beginning of the year. The reader-friendly guide allowed students to read short vignettes about current economic concepts. Written by progressive economists; the book also includes many social justice issues surrounding the topic of economics: such as welfare, healthcare, government spending, the global economy and prison-industrial complex, foreign aid, and the environment (Teller-elsberg, Folbre, & Heintz, 2006). Margi used this book because of its inclusion of people of color, labor and human rights issues, and its simplistic reading level and focus on economic concepts and their relation to social inequities.

Using multiple sources allowed students to learn different perspectives and to think critically about the validity of their own assumptions. Exposing students to different points of view allowed students to evaluate the merits of social studies topics such as alternative economic systems. For example, in her history course, she presented different economic systems besides capitalism. Margi used a curriculum unit called *Teaching Economics as if People Mattered: A*

*Curriculum Guide for Today's Economy*. Margi really likes this curriculum because it contains lesson plans with supplemental readings that focus on income, wealth, wages, globalization, the stock market, taxes, and CEO pay (Giecek, 2007). “Some people would argue it’s like socialist. . . that’s not necessarily a bad thing. I do a lot on communism and socialism in my history class, so we look at Marx and stuff like that.” Margi used alternative books because they provided an alternative perspective on the capitalist economy. She also used it to focus on specific social justice issues that involve economic concepts.

Margi incorporated social justice themes by using books that purposely provided radical perspectives, not found in mainstream social studies books. These alternative texts allowed Margi to present historical facts and events that mainstream history or social studies textbooks do not. Margi enjoyed presenting social justice material and activities that challenged the standard core curriculum. Her own curiosity and her students’ desire to learn more about social inequality and injustice, encouraged her to seek out teaching materials that “critically examined” how the world *really* works. “I almost have a responsibility to address in social studies so that we’re talking about these concepts as societal creations – things that people have created. And that opens the door to looking at how we can challenge them.”

Margi fostered critical thinking by providing alternative perspectives. Margi focused on critical questions and discussions about income disparity and encouraged students to develop strategies and policies that increase global equality. She believed these activities improved her students’ problem solving and critical thinking skills. Margi used alternative and oppositional books to provide alternative perspectives on income, wealth distribution based on gender and race, and global sustainability. Alternative and oppositional books encouraged Margi’s students to draw conclusions and reconstruct their belief patterns to include wider perspectives.

Encouraging students to challenge assumptions and interpret historical events allowed students to practice their critical thinking skills according to Brookfield's critical thinking model (2012).

Tim used a book by Kozol called *Ordinary Resurrections: Children in the Years of Hope* to provide alternative perspective in his social studies class. After making personal observations in the South Bronx schools for four years Kozol writes *Ordinary Resurrections*. Kozol's narrative discusses the racial disparities within the educational system. The book makes the claim that inferior education within the United States still exists. *Ordinary Resurrections* tells the stories of children who despite their poverty status, crime filled neighborhoods, or ineffective schools, still show resiliency and hope in their future (Kozol, 2000).

Using Kozol's book in his history and economics course allowed Tim to present alternative perspectives. Tim taught in a socially conservative community; the assigned textbooks present a conservative interpretation of history and economics. Tim chose liberal, social justice oriented books to provide additional perspectives and to develop critical thinking skills. Tim fought an uphill battle to get students to acknowledge *the existence of social inequality*. He exposed students to Kozol's book so they learned multiple perspectives and revised their belief patterns regarding social inequities. Using the book challenged students to identify, check, and alter their assumptions regarding social justice issues. Tim hoped students progress to the last step of Brookfield's (2012) critical thinking model of critical thinking: fight social, economic, and political disparities.

Andres also used a book by Kozol entitled *Amazing Grace: The Lives of Children and the Conscience of a Nation* (1995). *Amazing Grace*, like *Ordinary Resurrection*, focuses on children living and going to school in one of the poorest areas in the United States: the South Bronx. Kozol told the stories of poverty in the South Bronx, stories affluent people rarely hear.

Kozol claimed people living in the South Bronx experience poverty because of social, racial, and economic systems that mainly benefit White society (Kozol, 1995). Students used Kozol's book to investigate causes of poverty that existed in the south Bronx in the 1980s and still exist today, as well as the systems that perpetuate inequality. The book helped students realize the negative costs of low income, poor healthcare, and ineffective schools.

Andres used a fictional piece of work called *The Handmaid's Tale* by Margaret Atwood. Atwood's book, a dystopian science fiction novel, tells the story about citizens who live in the Republic of Gilead. The Republic of Gilead contains a totalitarian, theocratic, far-right nation-state. The book discusses issues of gender, class, caste, race, and religion in a society set far in the future (Atwood, 1998). Andres selected challenging books and then required students to conduct critical discussions. He used this book to create a project where students discovered issues raised in the book and investigated additional social justice issues such as economic, educational, sexual, and political power.

Finally, students analyze their social justice issue and speculate on future equity solutions. Andres's classroom purposely contained circular tables to easily facilitate student dialogue and engagement in this and all activities. Circular tables and periodic seating changes allowed students to build community and good communication skills. Critical discussions and speeches allowed students build their critical thinking skills or as Andres calls them; 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills. (see Appendix I for an illustration of alternative and oppositional text assignments).

Ryan taught a class called AP Economics. At the end of the school year students take a standardized test in hopes of acquiring college credits. While Ryan must incorporate content, including an AP Economics textbook, to prepare students contextually for the test, he also included supplemental readings to provide additional detail and social justice perspectives the

standard textbook fails to do. For example, he included Thomas Friedman's book *The World is Flat*. In 2005, Friedman wrote a book that looks at the brief history of globalization. The invention and increased use of the Internet and the ability to communicate and trade goods, money, and commodities in a matter of minutes has created a flat world that communicates and runs at a faster pace. Friedman wonders if globalization and the increase in pace will allow political and social systems to remain stable and adjust to a "new world order". Using foreign, economic, and political examples, he contemplates the effects on countries, companies, society, and governments (Friedman, 2005).

Ryan also used a supplemental chapter from *Economics by Example* by David A. Anderson to discuss the economic concept of externalities. "I think the most important part to showing social justice is making sure that your curriculum and the materials you use are varied. I mean, taking from one content source is not going to give you the perspectives that you need to show the true depth of what really social justice is." Ryan hoped to produce "productive and meaningful dialogue" by providing alternative readings. Productive and meaningful dialogue promoted critical thinking skills such as abstract thinking. Ryan incorporated alternative books as opposed to traditional textbooks to present alternative perspectives and engage students in academically rigorous material.

Teachers used alternative and oppositional books to teach students to examine, question, and interpret perspectives critically. Book selection played a crucial role in allowing the instruction of issues and the design of more critical thinking activities. Brookfield (2012) explains that critical thinking occurs when people (1) acknowledge assumptions that play a role in behavior and thoughts, (2) become aware of their assumptions and check the accuracy and validity of the assumptions, (3) view assumptions from a variety of perspectives, and (4) take

informed action. Teachers used these alternative resources to provide radically different views on social justice issues that mainstream books refuse to acknowledge. This dissatisfaction with mainstream information motivated teachers to find their own curriculum, books, and primary sources. Instead of relying on the interpretation promoted by the assigned textbook, teachers provided students with alternative, oppositional, and social justice texts and curriculum that encouraged students to read and discuss critically, interpret perspectives, develop conclusions, and become socially active.

Teachers used diverse texts like biographies, primary resources, and alternative or oppositional text as opposed to the assigned textbook, to elicit critical thinking skills and social action. By using alternative resources, textbooks, and curriculum, teachers can develop critical thinking skills. Incorporating these alternative texts as opposed to the assigned textbook required students to identify their assumptions about social justice issues and check the degree to which their views were accurate. Utilizing alternative texts also allowed teachers to introduce different perspectives and content depth, encouraging students to challenge their assumptions from multiple perspectives. Finally, in order to foster social activism in their students, teachers used these alternative resources to develop and make students apply their critical thinking skills to social justice issues. Next, I show how the implementation of active learning methodologies such as role playing and simulations encourages critical thinking and 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills (Rosefsky Saavedra & Opfer, 2012).

### **Strategy Two: Emphasize Active Learning and 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills**

Seven teachers used active learning activities to foster 21<sup>st</sup> century skills and social action. Twenty-first century skills include helping students learn how to investigate, interact with content, work collaboratively, and create their own interpretations (Rosefsky Saavedra &

Opfer, 2012). Active learning requires students to be physically and mentally active to conduct their own learning, discover their own answers and concepts, and create their own interpretations (Page, 1990). Active learning, as opposed to passive learning, allows students to explore their values and attitudes to get involved in more critical thinking exercises, such as analysis, synthesis, and evaluation (Page, 1990).

Social justice teachers described active learning activities as follows: debates, Socratic questioning (Paul & Elder, 2008) and discussions, investigation projects, role-playing activities and simulations, Think-Pair-Share (Lyman, 1981) questions, and reflective writing and journaling (Dunlap, 2006) exercises. Role playing and simulations, investigation projects, and debates encourage students to examine resources and discover their assumptions as part of critical thinking (Brookfield, 2012). “Think-pair-share” questions, reflective writing and journaling exercises, and Socratic questioning promote cooperative learning and foster critical learning. Starting with debates, I next describe the types of active learning activities used by teachers starting with debates.

Lola believed that critical discussions and reflection exercises develop critical thinking skills such as making reasoned judgments and evaluating sources (Beyer, 1995). Lola taught students to engage in appropriate conversations with each other by not arguing or getting into fights. She wanted students to listen to one another and to exchange opinions. “You can stand outside and hold a sign all you want but it’s knowing that you’ve interacted personally with someone and that’s how you create change.” Lola believes students need historical and social justice knowledge in order to converse successfully with others.

Lola allowed students to view multiple perspectives, assess their ideas, and conceptualize theories by using simulations. During these simulations, students research various groups of

people involved in a historical event. A simulation about slavery allows students to play various parts: a slave, a free black, a plantation owner, an abolitionist, and a Northern industrialist. In a critical thinking simulation, she wants her students “to think of what if or how that does happen or why or who’s involved.” In a discussion about the abolitionist John Brown or President Lincoln the class talks about historical and political pressures during that time period. She also includes examples of how historical events and people used political action to create change.

Trisha used many different teaching methods to elicit critical thinking. She used debates to incite critical thinking skills as well as visual materials such as video clips, storytelling, visual aids and posters, guest speakers, and small group projects to raise cultural awareness. Trisha introduced multiple perspectives regarding globalization, poverty, and religious tolerance by engaging students in active learning.

For example, after students learned about the Rwandan Genocide, Trisha brought the concept of personal narrative to the forefront by inviting a guest speaker to her eighth grade class. The guest speaker, who taught at a Rwandan international school, presented a perspective students would not find in a textbook. This person provided firsthand knowledge about Rwanda and his or her teaching experiences from a year of living in Rwanda. Trisha encouraged students to write three questions down before the speaker presented and to take notes as the guest spoke. Students gained a wealth of knowledge from this speaker, which increased the students’ cultural awareness.

Trisha also explored the topic of “outsourcing jobs” in her social studies classes. She used a debate project to foster critical thinking skills. Trisha assigned students one side of the debate, asking them to argue opposing positions: “Outsourcing is good for America” or “Outsourcing is bad for America.” Students researched their respective side, found and recorded



key points, developed key questions, outlined arguments, and formed opening and closing statements. During the debate, students argued their side, even though they personally might not agree with their assigned position. This active learning technique increased their exposure to multiple perspectives (see Appendix J for an illustration of active learning and 21<sup>st</sup> century skills assignment).

When Trisha taught eighth grade students, she implemented an investigative social justice project called “Be the Change”. The yearlong project allowed individual students to investigate and create an action plan pertaining to a global issue. She broke the project down into three trimesters. During trimester one, students utilized databases to select a global issue topic. During the trimester, students gained a deeper understanding of their topic and found current event articles and information. At the end of trimester one, students presented their information in a formal speech and visual aid.

During the second trimester, students researched their topic on a deeper level, investigating various points of view to understand the “sides” of the topic. Students also created a thesis, established their opinion on the topic, and made the connection between the global topic and their lives. At the end of semester two, students presented their in-depth research of the global issue in a “mini-science fair gathering”.

During the third and final trimester, students focused on making a difference, taking action, persuading and publishing their findings to others, and showing leadership. During the final trimester, students worked on deepening their persuasive thesis and developed an action plan. Students published their information to a larger audience and carried out their action-based plan. Finally students presented their work in a round-table forum and reflected on the potential for future leadership and social change.

Trisha introduced the concept of critical thinking to her eighth grade social studies classroom by providing multiple perspectives in order to invite students to make “informed change”. Trisha found it difficult and time consuming in recent years to complete or even introduce her social justice project “Be the Change”. Her school requires high stakes testing, which consumed a lot of class time, leaving less time to implement social justice projects. Another teacher Emma, simulated an African Unity Conference to engage students actively.

Emma taught many different social studies classes depending on the year. In the past she taught economics, World Studies, or World, European, or American history. When she taught the World Studies class, Emma implemented a conference project to encourage critical thinking. Called the African Unity Conference, students investigated a country’s economy, culture, and political systems, to identify ways their “country” might improve its deficiencies. Students then developed and presented improvement proposals to the rest of the African Unity Conference. This conference project allowed students to teach others about their “assigned” country, providing other students with many perspectives about a misunderstood and underrepresented continent in global society.

I observed Emma teaching her American and European history students to be critical thinkers by directing them to disseminate information first to themselves, then to the teacher, and finally to the entire class. Emma completed two active learning techniques, such as role playing and simulations, to raise student involvement in learning. Emma used two activities at the beginning of the year to introduce the concept of critical thinking: the “personal journey” and “meeting of the minds”. The “personal journey” activity required students to investigate how life events affected their perceptions about the world. Students identified key experiences and analyzed how these experiences shape their ideas. To help students grasp the concept, Emma

modeled her “personal journey” by describing her experience growing up impoverished and living with a mentally ill father.

The second activity, called the “meeting of the minds” involves a dinner in which students portray a fictional character. The character reports to the group about their identity and beliefs. Next, Emma encouraged the rest of the class/group to acknowledge and embrace different perspectives. According to Brookfield’s (2012) description of critical thinking, Emma started the critical thinking process by encouraging students to investigate their own assumptions and assess the validity of those assumptions. Next students were exposed to multiple perspectives, requiring them to evaluate their positions and increase awareness of different perspectives and experiences.

In another active learning activity, Emma provided students with knowledge about sexual preferences, encouraging students to actively fight discrimination and oppression through “informed action”. Emma helped one high school student to organize a silent protest called ‘A Day of Silence’ in her school. Students took a pledge of silence for a day to represent and relate with others who suffered in our world. Although ‘A Day of Silence’ started in the GLBTQ community, her students expanded it to include those suffering from mental illness.

Another teacher concentrated on raising his student’s use of critical thinking while living in a conservative community. Tim stated, “I think my goals are a little bit different than some social justice teachers in that I want eyes opened to critical thinking.” Tim taught the concepts of critical thinking as a process. Tim’s process started with small easy activities and as the course went on, he challenged students with controversial concepts and sometimes intellectually painfully classroom experiences and discussions. He wanted his students to look at an issue, recognize the scope of the issue, and then create some element of social action. Tim taught in a

small, religious, conservative farm community. Many of his students have made inappropriate comments regarding issues of racism, sexism, or poverty; making him “cringe” at some of their comments.

Tim believed teachers should not disregard a student’s ignorant perspective to get students to engage in critical thinking. He hoped to open his students’ eyes to social justice issues and change assumptions by teaching them to use critical thinking and, eventually gain a different perspective and take action. “If I can open their eyes to it, they’ll get to the action piece and then they’ll be so much more effective than if I stamp them out.” Tim believed social justice education and learning critical thinking skills would change his students’ perspectives over time.

Tim reduced large social justice issues into manageable pieces, so students did not feel overwhelmed by the information, potentially causing his students to shut down in process. To “move the ball down the field a little bit”, he relied on a quasi-Socratic questioning method, posing some challenging questions. As the year progressed, Tim used Socratic questioning more. He enjoyed challenging his students’ assumptions through questioning; he hoped students would start to realize how they formed their belief systems. Tim formed strong relationships and developed trust with his students as the year progressed. The strong relationships and trust allowed him to implement activities designed to challenge their thinking about social justice issues.

Tim wanted students to see and interpret issues from multiple perspectives by the end of the school year. He hoped students would then take action to change social inequality. When he provided alternative perspectives; he tried to avoid “walls, defense mechanisms, or tripwires” that students put up because they do not encounter racism, poverty, or any level of oppression.

Discussing social justice issues proved difficult in Tim's classroom and he wanted to avoid "this rejection that there is an issue". Often times he had to "dance" around an issue or use an activity to explore a social justice issue so it did not appear as if Tim was indoctrinating students with liberal ideals. Tim viewed teaching multiple perspectives as a process. He taught students about social justice issues and then "works around" the causes to avoid the "tripwire". If he accomplished this, a fantastic discussion usually followed. "So for the semester that's my goal – we're going to get there but I have to be more patient than I sometimes feel like I should have to be. It is what it is and they are who they are." Tim worked throughout the school year to open student minds to other perspectives.

Tim hoped by presenting social justice issues and using a Socratic questioning technique, students would eventually take action. Tim wanted his students to be socially active in fighting social injustice. However, Tim found it difficult to execute Brookfield's (2012) final critical thinking element-taking "informed action" (p. 12). Tim taught in a small rural school for four years, seeing his first class finishing their senior year and graduating from high school. Tim worked with these students on the critical thinking process to recognize social inequalities and encourage social change.

Tim worked with a group of three to four seniors who showed interest in social justice issues for three years, saying, "This year is kind of personal where I feel like I'm a part of their lives, and I'm going to be really intrigued at what they go out and do." He felt a connection with these students and possessed great hope these students will continue to fight social injustice.

Another teacher, Ryan, emphasized 21<sup>st</sup> century skills such as analysis and evaluation, and prepared students to attend college and advocated for social justice. Ryan taught his students to think, read, and write critically. Ryan taught his economics class, a freshman level

Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) class, about the process of writing critically. To foster change, he conducted productive and meaningful dialogue about social justice issues. He felt “preachy” at times, but Ryan loved talking about social issues in all of his classes. “I really love pushing students to the point where they’re really uncomfortable.” He believed this un-comfortableness fostered “a genuine conversation, and I can hear [their ideas] . . . , instead of their parent’s talking points at dinner.”

Ryan’s technique of conducting genuine conversation allowed him to help students discover their assumptions, using debates to get students to question the validity of their assumptions. He debated the merits of unemployment, minimum wage, fiscal policy, or welfare with students. During any debate, Ryan wanted students to discover their views and also hoped they encountered various perspectives. For example, during a fiscal policy debate, Ryan asked a leading question: “Given today’s economic climate (sluggish economic growth), what sort of fiscal policy should the US government implement?” He demanded his students gather and form clear arguments including credible evidence to support their position. Ryan graded students on their formation of arguments, use of credible evidence, development of critical thought-provoking questions, and ability to engage in “thinking on their feet”.

Ryan also purposely tried to “strike a nerve” when discussing social inequalities and other social justice issues. He liked playing the devil’s advocate to invite discussion and challenge his students’ thought processes. “I like being controversial. It helps the level of thought, and it helps address these very, very important issues.” Ryan often encouraged discussions on race, gender, and class issues. He liked how these conversations did not feel like “learning”; instead, students feel like “they’re talking with someone who wants to know their opinion and ideas and at the end of the day they walk out of the class and they’re like, ‘I think I

know something now.’” He allowed students to control the dialogue and think out loud, which gave students a sense of ownership regarding their points of view.

Ryan used a second technique, critical writing assignments, to get students to check the validity of their assumptions. At the end of the year, students write a five to seven page paper on globalization or free trade. They must take a stand, whether positive or negative, and justify their point of view. The critical writing exercise allowed students to take content they learned throughout the year and develop an argument and basis for their position. This powerful tool allowed Ryan to create “cognitive dissonance”, an inner struggle with new ideas. Ryan feels gratified when he sees a student actually stop and genuinely try to debate the merits of an argument.

At the beginning of the year Ryan taught students the importance of reading critically; he then reinforced the skill as the year went on. Exposing students to many points of view enables students to converse with others, evaluate the merits of their own points of view, and possibly make an informed decision to act as described in Brookfield’s (2012) model of critical thinking.

Ryan hoped to get students active in the community through participation in extracurricular activities. Every year he formed a Frisbee team to interact with the community. He tells the group, “Look we are here in Stony Village and we should really be positive influences on this community. We have a great opportunity to not only get together and play a game that we really love but also do something really positive.” He recognizes the group doesn’t hold fundraisers or bag groceries at the local store, but they do seek out opportunities to build relationships with the community.

The Frisbee group seeks out ways they can interact, become a part of a larger community, and show they care. The group may volunteer at food shelves, homeless shelters, or helping

people around their homes. Ryan helped the group take action in their area. He wanted to plant the seed with his students about the importance of forming relationships and building community. Another teacher, James, challenges his students to take action.

James allowed students to assess their personal views by exploring social justice issues like genocide. James challenged students to take action to fight social injustice, telling students “You have to make a decision if you’re going to do something to stop it.” According to James, critical thinking, reflection, and conversations foster socially active students.

James taught two social justice classes to eighth and ninth graders. He believed his grade 8 students moved from concrete thinkers to abstract learners. “I think it’s the perfect time to really pull them and stretch them.” James believed pulling and stretching students’ ability to think critically should happen in every social justice unit. Every day he engaged students with concrete learning and attempted to move them to a more abstract thought process. He used the following analogy with his students:

It’s kind of like being in the house – if you’re just there all the time doing nothing, it’s boring. You go on vacation and that might stretch you a little bit but at some point you want to go back – you’re happy to be home because it’s not as comfortable on vacation, even if you’re at luxury hotels, it’s just not your routine.

James invited students to think abstractly by giving them a platform to express their ideas. “It can’t be my information that they are forced to understand or absorb, it’s got to be their thoughts and their ideas, even if they’re not great.” This platform allowed students to discover their own ideas and theories. When James asks questions in class, he rarely tells a student they are wrong: instead he might ask, “Well what do you mean by that? Let’s go deeper than that.” James believes students need to feel like they can voice their opinions; *the act of voicing an opinion plays an important role in the development of critical thinking abilities.*



As a teacher in a Catholic school, James must include the perspective of the Catholic Church and the “Seven principles of Catholic Social Teaching” (Jenkins, 2011). In one social justice packet, he encouraged students to examine their assumption about social justice and then let the class examine the Catholic Church’s social justice perspective. At the end of the unit students completed an “Injustice Action Journal”. In this journal he asked students to reflect about times when they witnessed an injustice and what they did in that situation. This reflective exercise allowed students to examine their actions and address injustice in their daily experience. As his students mature, James hopes they will eventually become socially active and fight injustice.

James taught students the process of critical discussion, and used a discussion activity called “Think-Pair-Share” (Lyman, 1981) to prevent students from blurting out answers or their views at inappropriate times. When he taught a unit called “Introduction to Genocide”, he posed the following questions: “What do you know about the Holocaust? And what role did Mr. Lemkin play in the word Genocide?” Students first think about their views and write them down; then they meet as a pair to discuss, and finally they share answers with the entire class. This activity allowed James to check student’s learning, viewpoints, and critical thinking processes.

Oftentimes, James’ eighth graders felt powerless to make social change. He reminded them taking action can mean “going home and telling their parents about the genocide in Sudan.” He reminded the class action means getting involved in social change. He challenges and motivates students to take action in any small or large way. James told his students “at some point you have to do something.”

Incorporating active learning activities and 21<sup>st</sup> century skills allowed teachers to foster critical thinking. Still other teachers found engaging students in service learning and civic action projects also elicited critical thinking skills and fostered social change.

### **Strategy Three: Engaged Students in Service Learning and Civic Action Projects**

Five participants used service learning and civic projects to expose students to alternative perspectives and elicit change. Service learning experiences contain three distinct qualities: service learning (1) increases academic, civic, and community knowledge base; (2) allows teachers, students, community members, and social organizations to collaborate toward a common goal; and (3) fosters critical thinking by involving students in critical reflection activities (Felton & Clayton, 2011). Service learning experiences prove most successful when they include content learning, reflective exercises, and relevant services (Felton & Clayton, 2011).

Service learning and civic action activities promote critical thinking skills by allowing students to actively plan and implement social interactions outside of the school. They also involve students in meaningful experiences and discussions to explore experiences and perspectives in diverse communities. Service learning and civic action projects allow students to realize and practice their rights and responsibilities as democratic citizens to create a more egalitarian society. Next, I show how a teacher promotes service learning through school trips.

Andres strengthened his students' critical thinking skills by getting them involved in social justice trips. Andres encouraged his students in the senior social justice class to get involved in justice education trips. Andres's high school offered 13 different justice education trips, not "service trips". Building lifelong relationships not "fixing" people or their situations, continued to be the goal of these social justice trips. Andres and his students participated in a

Civil Rights trip to the Bronx, New York. The senior social justice class talked and learned about the socioeconomic status of people living in the poorest area of the United States. Andres believed, “If you go to different parts of this country and it’s like you peel back the rug and you see places in this country that we would presume would only be in underdeveloped countries.” On that particular trip, students learned about the United States’ economic systems. Students realized during the trip that economic systems do not necessarily function or help Americans as they are supposed to.

The last component of Brookfield’s (2012) critical thinking definition involves taking “informed action” (p. 12). Tim’s class accomplished this by going on service trips and financially “adopting” an impoverished student. Tim stated that a student group traveled to an impoverished area in Mexico and worked with the community. “It’s actually one of the more impactful things the kids can do here and get to see and live along side of that as well as do service projects and they do service projects around that for the rest of the year.” During the school year, this student group continued to perform service projects throughout the community and inner city. Students often times worked with special needs children or at-risk students.

Tim’s economics class started a service project at the beginning of the school year. The class sponsored an orphaned, impoverished child from Mexico. Throughout the school year, his students held fundraisers and sent money. Money sent to this child went to pay for his education. Periodically, students received updates about “their child”. The students took ownership for this child’s livelihood and education. This service project allowed students to make an impact in society one child at a time.

James taught his students to think critically about how they could become socially active citizens in his social justice classes: Genocide or The American Experience. Once in college,

former students continued their interest in social justice activism, majored in engineering, and used their skills to build special wells in rural Rwanda. James also took his students on school trips to both Rwanda and the United States South where they focused on the civil rights movement. He hoped these trips evoked a passion for activism and community building.

James plans Rwanda trip every two years, and students travel for three weeks to explore the country and people of Rwanda. Students spend time before the trip learning about the history of Africa as well as the history of the genocide, culture, and language of Rwanda. James felt students must listen to Rwandan narratives before they go on the trip and continue to listen to their stories throughout their travel in Rwanda. One of the most important elements of the trip besides the personal, spiritual, and academic growth of the student becomes the “End-of-Experience Reflection” and project. During the reflection and project, students describe how the experience changed their view of themselves, and the world, and how the experience helped them become a better servant leader and/or global leader.

Most of Margi’s students came from disadvantaged or immigrant communities. The student’s communities included members who have little education, and experience language difficulties, economic disparities, racism, and prejudice. Margi easily implemented social justice themes in her lesson plans since her students live and see oppression every day. Students related and engaged in discussions of social justice issues. Margi’s students possessed personal experiences of oppression; she found it important to make students critically examine social injustices. “I have a fundamental belief that we should be fostering students who can think and critically examine how the world works.” Most students consciously understood the inequity issues around them, while others did not.

Margi had difficulty getting students to think critically about social inequity.

They don't get out of their little world. I think a lot of them do have really strong cultural attachments and family values and strong immigrant families. I mean these immigrant families especially are very intact. So they don't necessarily see themselves... because they are literally growing up in this little immigrant community.

Margi recognized the importance of presenting social justice issues and challenging students' perceptions. She hoped the use of a civics project would persuade students to fight actively against social inequalities.

Margi found it difficult to get her students to assess the legitimacy of their perceptions. Many of her students maintained immigrant or first generation immigrant status. Her students wanted to become an "American" in every way as teenagers hoping for acceptance. They wanted to talk, act, look, and possess beliefs like other American teenagers.

Margi often encountered students who did not realize the barriers in the way of their success or see the benefit of working and staying in school. They possessed few examples of economic, educational, or political role models in their communities. "I have to remember, they're not coming from a position of seeing themselves as agents of their own change." To combat this belief, Margi used conversations, simulations, and civic action activities. She recognized that students grasp critical thinking skills when she implemented a civic action project and conducted discussions. These conversations allowed students to verbalize the challenges they faced and examine their assumptions.

Margi avoided teaching the "standard" social studies curriculum; instead she motivated students to question critically society's social structures that perpetuate oppression. She feels a responsibility to teach these disadvantaged students the "truth" about how these structures continue to oppress people. Many of her students came from homes where English is a second language; consequently, they possessed low reading and writing skills. In small steps, Margi

implemented exercises and projects to help students learn how to think critically. Teaching these skills to her students remained an important goal in her teaching.

Margi taught her students to become critically and socially aware of oppression by having them complete a civics project. An important component in the civics project involved teaching students their rights and responsibilities as American citizens. Margi hoped the project encouraged students to foster change in their immigrant communities.

Margi and her school maintain a schoolwide curriculum focused on conflict resolution, respect, community, peace, and social action. Every ninth through twelfth grade social studies class possessed some sort of social action and justice lesson or curriculum unit. Eleventh graders completed a civic engagement project called “Citizenship Project”, in their social studies class. All juniors did something to give back to the community.

Students studied a local, state, or international social justice issue and conducted a service learning activity in Margi’s class. They start the project by examining an essential question: “How can I use my rights and responsibilities as a resident and/or citizen of the United States to make the world a better place?” Margi explained the objective of the project: students explore how individuals can foster change in society. The semester-long project contained many steps. Students needed to identify a social problem, gather information about the problem, explain the problem, and identify, select, plan, and implement a social action plan. At the end of the semester, students presented the results in an action plan and reflected on their learning experience.

In the past, students have researched homelessness, written to the governor voicing their concerns and possible solutions, and gathered volunteers to help at a homeless shelter. One year students also began a Day of Silence (like students in Emma’s school) to bring awareness to

GBLTQ issues at their school and in their communities. Others have focused on hunger and poverty and then organized a group of people to go to Feed My Starving Children (FMSC). FMSC is a Christian nonprofit organization formed in Minnesota in 1978. The organization purchases the raw ingredients of soy, rice, dried vegetables, nutrients, and vitamins and then relies on volunteers to package the nutritional food packets, which FMSC mail to 70 of the poorest countries in the world ([www.fmsc.org](http://www.fmsc.org)). This past year a group of students used the presidential general election to foster social change.

One student, concerned about a lack of political awareness in her immigrant community, researched, planned, and implemented a “Rock the Vote” social action plan. The student recognized low voter turnout in her immigrant community. The student wrote local and state officials regarding this social issue. The student then planned a voter information and presidential debate gathering where immigrants from the community learned about the candidates and received directions to polling sites. The project’s success gained the local newspaper and television media’s attention, and they featured the junior’s project in the news.

Margi’s wants her students to develop critical thinking skills by completing the civics action project (see Appendix K for an illustration of Service Learning and Civic Action related assignments). During the project, students used 21<sup>st</sup> century learning skills by defining a problem, examining evidence, developing solutions, and evaluating their civic projection action plan and collaboration skills.

Andres also implemented a service-learning component in his social studies class to foster critical thinking and social activism; this service learning strengthens 21<sup>st</sup> century learning skills, practices communication and interpersonal skills, construct conclusions, and develops social action plans.

Andres encouraged students to develop their assumptions about social justice issues presented in a class called Institute for Extensive Guidance (IEG) Spectrum:

I want you to have an opinion and I don't want it to be because it's what your parents think or it's what TV tells you, it's what your friends think or this is what you think your teachers think. I want it to be yours and I want it to be *authentic*.

Students live in a developmental stage where their brain develops more than it ever will again, Andres believes. This fact inspired Andres to create a classroom space where students listened to each other, thought for themselves, and exposed many perspectives. He wanted students to say by the end of class, "This is who I am and this is what I'm about." Andres proposed students make their personal manifesto real and authentic. Andres made a conscious effort to get students to examine their personal assumptions. First, he taught students how they formed their personal assumptions. Andres explained, "When I frame something and I see something a certain way, I have to recognize that it's going to impact how I feel and what I do."

Andres believes guilt serves no purpose in his class and stayed away from it. However, he pushes students to recognize their privilege and power and to recognize the different levels of privilege and power in a society. Seniors came from a variety of different areas of power and privilege. Some students possessed education privilege; some also held race privilege and power. Andres used a technique he called 'intentional agitation' to get students to examine their assumptions. "I want to agitate them to think about those things there, try to push them a lot to think about their experiences and how it shapes . . . how quickly they start to view something."

Andres's social justice class incorporated a variety of sources and assessments, which encouraged students to assess their assumptions and expose them to multiple viewpoints. Students enrolled in the IEG class spend ninety minutes a week working at designated field sites.



Students need a satisfactory completion of the fieldwork and a critical reflection and presentation by the end of the experience to complete the class successfully.

The service-learning requirement exposed students to multiple perspectives in many ways. One day a week students worked at a variety of fieldwork sites. Working and building relationships with people from these community sites exposed students to different perspectives. During the other four days of class, students met in small groups and discussed and reflected on their experiences. During the school year, students meet, interact, and form relationships with marginalized populations from their communities. Meanwhile in class, students use their experiences to discuss issues like economic, social, sexual, gender, religious, racial, and political inequality, and the systems perpetuating oppression. Service learning allowed students to see social justice issues from a variety of perspectives. “I’d like them to look at with their own lens to critical thinking about and to discuss it and to come up with their own interpretation.”

Andres’s social justice class spent four of the five class days in class reading, watching films, working through simulations, and discussing content. The teaching team (Andres’s teaches with two other colleagues) stressed the importance of encountering different marginalized communities as a part of the curriculum. On Thursdays, students left the classroom to perform their weekly fieldwork. Andres called the student’s work outside of class, fieldwork not service learning; he believed these weekly fieldwork experiences involved building and making relationships with marginalized groups in their community, not ‘fixing or telling them how to do something’:

I think it’s more about synapses firing and for them when they’re seeing some of the things that we were talking about, that they’re seeing and experiencing in their own lives and in the real world and for the first time and that they . . . it’s energizing to see them develop their visions.

During the entire year students worked in their fieldwork assignment with marginalized groups: students of lower socioeconomic status, immigrants, people living in homeless shelters, and people with mental or physical disabilities. The students also completed field work in organizations providing meals for people suffering from HIV/AIDS. The goal of the fieldwork assignment involved forming relationships and motivating students to take action and promote social change around them. Andres wants students to know and experience the circumstances of others, so the student will ask themselves, ‘Is this ok, how does this sit with you?’

According to Furco (1996), “Service-learning programs must have some academic context and be designed in such a way that ensures that both the service enhances the learning and the learning enhances the service” (p. 5). Service-learning and civic action activities incorporate service into the course (Furco, 1996). Teachers used this strategy to foster change and to raise critical awareness of global issues and marginalized populations. Critical discourse and reflection played an important role in creating transformational experiences for students. According to Furco (2010), service learning also increases student achievement and engagement, enhances civic engagement and responsibility, and augments social and communication skills. Next, I discuss how integrating the art in a social studies classroom raised cultural awareness and appreciation.

#### **Strategy Four: Integrate the Arts to Raise Cultural Awareness and Appreciation**

One teacher Lola, integrated the arts in her social studies classroom to increase cultural awareness and appreciation. Integrating art into a classroom allows students to create paintings, sculptures, poems, raps, collages, protests, and computer generated graphics. This alternative methodology can foster elements of critical thinking skills like exploration, investigation, analysis, reasoning, abstract thinking, and interpretation. This strategy engaged students with

different academic abilities and strengths. Integration of the arts allowed students to practice critical thinking skills in a way other strategies could not:

The arts provide a more comprehensive and insightful education because they invite students to explore the emotional, intuitive, and irrational aspects of life . . . Human beings invented each of the arts as a way of representing particular aspects of reality in order to understand and make sense of the world, manage life better, and to be able to share these perceptions with others. The arts therefore enrich the curriculum by adding important extensions of awareness and comprehension at the same time they affirm the interconnectedness of forms of knowing. (Fowler, 1988, p. 55)

Lola taught at an inner city urban alternative high school. The student body included many students who experienced economic, social, educational, and racial inequality. Lola taught American History and a class called Arts for Social Change. When Lola taught about the Civil Rights Movement, she showed the video, “Black Is, Black Ain’t” (Riggs, 1995). She wanted students to think about their Blackness and how it impacted their perceptions of the world.

Integrating art into activities encouraged students to present social issues in a different format. Students used computer graphic software, drawings, music, dramatic readings, and protest to express their social justice views. Lola encouraged students to be “intellectual” when discussing social issues, and to use art to present issues in an alternative way. An art project from her Arts and Social Change class contained many elements. Students incorporated United States (US) History, completed a Google Sketch-up design, and professionally presented their project. The project involves students in defining, hypothesizing, interpreting, and critically analyzing an historical event that creates inequality in history. Students then took the historical event and analyzed the impact of the event on American society today.

Students researched issues, such as urban poverty, crime, unemployment, lack of affordable housing, drug addiction, or dropout rates, and started to think of ways to solve this issue. Students then illustrated and designed (using Google Sketch-up; see Appendix N an

illustration) a building model that solved the current urban issue. Finally, students presented their Google Sketch-up design and described how to diminish the urban issue. Lola assessed students on their ideas for social change and equity, appropriate dress, code switching (Black to English vernacular), and organization (see Appendix M for an illustration of an art integration assignment and rubric).

Many of Lola's students belonged to oppressed groups, including students from dysfunctional and impoverished homes and crime-ridden communities. Her marginalized students had difficulty finding the motivation to create social change. Lola ran into organizational and motivational difficulties. Despite her difficulties, the school possessed a group of students who involved themselves in community action events. Last year, the school group marched from the high school all the way to the downtown section of a Midwestern city. They made posters and sang protest chants to elicit attention for their causes. The group marched four miles to protest and bring awareness to the poverty and oppression in the urban community.

Some of Lola's students used a different art form to foster social change or awareness called "Spoken Word" to create change creatively. Students performed "Spoken Word"; a type of performing poetry in various arenas around their community. Many of her students won awards for their "Spoken Word" performances. Lola mentioned "Spoken Word" allowed her students to connect with the community and foster social change creatively.

While many teachers use some aspect of the arts in their teaching, Lola more purposeful used art as a social justice pedagogical method to reach her disengaged learners.

### **Summary of Social Justice Strategies**

The strategies described illustrate the connection between social justice pedagogy and critical thinking (see Table 3 Applying Brookfield’s (2012) model of critical thinking to social justice pedagogy). Most strategies raised awareness of issues, but few led to social change with the exception of service learning and civic action projects. The main goal in social justice education for students in high school involves identifying and challenging assumptions. The following table outlines strategies social justice educators used to incorporate critical thinking skills and social activism. The table identifies how each strategy incorporates some or all elements of Brookfield’s (2012) critical thinking model of social justice pedagogy. While some strategies encouraged students to identify assumptions, check for accuracy and validity, and investigate alternative perspectives, the study revealed that active learning strategies and activities such as service learning and civic action experiences were the strategies that encouraged the deepest level of critical thinking: taking informed action.

Strategies	Identifying assumptions	Checking assumptions for accuracy and validity	Looking at ideas and decisions from different perspectives	Taking informed action
S1: Adopting alternative texts and resources: Bibliographies	X	X	X	
S1: Adopting alternative texts and resources: Primary Sources	X	X		

S1: Adopting alternative texts and resources: Oppositional texts	X	X	X	
S2: Emphasize Active Learning and 21 <sup>st</sup> Century Skills	X	X	X	Trisha, Emma, & Ryan's activity foster action
S3: Engages Students in Service Learning and Civic Action Projects	X	X	X	X
S4: Integrate Acts to Raise Cultural Awareness & Appreciation	X	X	X	

---

Table 3. Applying Brookfield's (2012) model of critical thinking to social justice pedagogy.

Social justice educators utilized Brookfield's model of critical thinking in each of the four strategies presented. Next I show how teachers used Dewey's (1910, 1916, 1925, 1934 & 1938) model of constructive learning theory to foster critical reflection and social change.

### **Social Justice Educators Use of Constructive Learning Theory**

John Dewey, writer and educator, pioneered democratic and experiential learning, even though he never actually used the term *experiential* (McKenzie, 2013). Many others, such as Kolb in 1984, added to Dewey's original ideas of "experienced-based education" and the impact

on student learning (McKenzie, 2013, p.26). Experiential learning theory, defined as “a philosophy and methodology in which educators purposefully engage with learners in direct experience and focused reflection in order to increase knowledge, develop skills, and clarify values”, helps students construct learning (Breunig, 2005, p. 108). Dewey expressed his belief that subject matter should not be learned in isolation, and that education should begin with student experience and should be contextual (in Breunig, 2005).

Social justice educators provide students with active learning and critical thinking experiences related to social justice issues because these teachers understand that learning is a process grounded in experience and abstract thinking (Nagda, Gurin, & Lopez, 2003). “Dewey developed the conception of experience in his works *Experience and Nature* (1925) and *Art as Experience* (1934). Dewey presented his conceptions of reflective thought and learning most clearly in his works on thought and logic: *How We Think* (1910), *Essays in Experimental Logic* (1916), and *Logic, Theory of Inquiry* (1938)” (Merriam, 2000, p. 65). Brookfield’s (2012) critical thinking model closely aligns with Dewey’s (1910, 1916, 1925, 1934 & 1938) philosophy of active learning and critical reflection.

Dewey believed constructive learning occurred in five phases. In phase one, people form habits or ideas from experiential situations, leading to the second phase involving intellectualization, or requiring individuals to define a problem from their thinking or experience (Miettinen, 2000). The third phase involves analysis and development of problem solving skills; the fourth phase encourages learners to test their working hypothesis. In the final stage learners test their new habits, ideas, or assumptions by taking action (Miettinen, 2000). All the participants in this study used a variety of strategies to encourage constructive learning.

Andres, Trisha, Emma, Tim, Lola, James, Ryan, and Margi used biographies, primary sources, and alternative textbooks to challenge student's habits and ideas. Exposure to alternative perspectives made students question their ideas and assumptions and look deeper at social issues. Students came into class with preconceived ideas, and teachers challenged students with alternative readings. Teachers then created alternative activities to help students intellectualize about a certain social justice issue.

All teachers used debates, simulations, discussions, and role-playing, providing students with experiences to challenge them to think intellectually about social justice issues presented in the text or through engagement in activities. When teachers challenge students to think intellectually about an issue, reflection follows. This reflection allows students to think about the issue or problem, define it, and develop possible problem solving methods.

Providing opportunities for students to think critically proved instrumental in their pedagogy. Dewey's third step in learning occurs when students take the problem and use critical thinking skills to develop problem-solving skills (Miettinen, 2000). All teachers used critical thinking activities as a necessary component in Dewey's learning theory requiring students to engage in analysis and development of problem solving skills (Miettinen, 2000). Lola integrated art activities to help students creatively analyze social issues. Margi used a citizenship action assignment to define a social problem and find ways to solve that social problem. Analyzing and developing problem solving skills not only encouraged students to reexamine their habits, ideas, and assumptions but also led to critical thinking. Critically thinking about one's assumptions, the validity of the assumptions, and issues from multiple perspectives aligns with Dewey's (1910, 1916, 1925, 1934 & 1938) theory of experiential learning and Brookfield's (2012) model of critical thinking.



Teachers such as Margi and Trisha provided experiences requiring students to examine social justice issues and develop ideas for social action. They did this by using citizenship and service learning activities and experiences. Andres, Tim, James, and Ryan encouraged students to build relationships with their local and global communities, think critically about social justice issues, and engage in some form of social activism. They did this by following Dewey's (1910, 1916, 1925, 1934 & 1938) constructive learning theory.

Using constructive learning theory, all teachers fostered some form of social action. Andres, Trisha, Emma, Tim, Lola, James, Ryan, and Margi fostered student activism by providing classroom and community experiences to challenge students' ideas and habits and critically reflect on these experiences.

Using a variety of reading materials, active learning activities, service learning and civic action projects, and art integration builds character, advances critical thinking and reflection skills, and motivates students to become socially active in the world.

### **Summary**

Teachers used a variety of strategies to foster critical thinking and social change. This included using a variety of books such as biographies, primary sources, and alternative and oppositional texts, alongside incorporating active learning and 21<sup>st</sup> century skills to promote critical thinking skills. Service learning and civic action projects exposed students to a variety of perspectives, encouraging students to build relationships with diverse others and to foster social change in marginalized communities. Lastly, one teacher integrated the arts to raise cultural awareness and appreciation in a creative way, adding novelty and an affective dimension to teaching. Brookfield's (2012) model of critical thinking shows the purpose and intention of

social justice teachers: change the way people think to change the world. Dewey's (1910) model illustrates how experiential learning and critical thinking foster individual and social change.

In the next chapter, I summarize the findings, discuss the implications, and make recommendations for future research. I close with a personal statement about the importance of social justice education.

## **CHAPTER SIX: SUMMARY, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

I examined the circumstances causing some high school social studies teachers to become advocates for social justice in their professional practice, and I also identified the social justice curriculum and pedagogy used by teachers to raise awareness and advocacy for social justice in their students. These “radical” educators transformed the lives of their students by providing alternative perspectives, activities, and assessments to increase critical thinking and awareness of social justice. I investigated the formative experiences and practices of eight social studies teachers who served as agents of social change in their advocacy for others. I described the factors inspiring some to become social justice educators in chapter four and the central features of social justice pedagogy in chapter five.

I provide a summary of central findings from each chapter and then describe the implications and recommendations for professional practice. The first section describes findings related to becoming a social justice teacher, and the next section includes findings regarding social justice curriculum and pedagogy. I end this chapter with recommendations for further research and also add a personal note to all teachers regarding the importance of becoming an advocate for social justice.

### **Becoming a Social Justice Educator**

I identified and described the circumstances motivating social justice teachers to get engaged in social change. These included: (1) personal and family experiences of oppression fueled a passion for social justice, (2) involvement in childhood multicultural experiences, student activism, and adult mentors, and (3) participation in service learning, study abroad programs, and personal travel during and after college.

### **Personal and Family Experiences of Oppression**

Personal and family experiences of oppression fueled a desire to fight for social justice. Participants experienced oppression because of their socioeconomic, ethnic, sexual preference, non-nuclear family, and mental illness status in society. Participants identified feelings and experiences of oppression at the hands of teachers, administrators, members of hegemonic society, and mental health, economic, and educational systems. Resistance to the oppression strengthened their commitment to social justice work, compelling them to teach in a non-traditional manner. Two implications and recommendations stem from this finding regarding personal and family experiences of oppression: (1) schools should provide greater advocacy for students likely to be marginalized in school, and (2) teacher education programs should actively recruit diverse teacher candidates.

The study revealed the need to address the oppression some students encounter due to their diversity or experience living in disadvantaged home circumstances. I recommend a special liaison, teacher, administrator, or a counselor in both junior and high school establish more connections and outreach with marginalized students. Personnel interacting with marginalized students should receive professional development regarding the effects of oppression and learn strategies to help students resist their circumstances. This includes “naming” the source of oppression to awaken consciousness and resist oppression. Marginalized students should find education institutions, social groups, and careers allowing them to break the cycle of oppression.

Diverse teachers with a passion for social justice possess a special ability to help their students name and resist their oppression. Based on their personal experiences, diverse teachers can promote colleges, careers, and social groups allowing subjugated students an opportunity to develop and foster positive self-identities. Teacher education programs should recruit candidates

by contacting high school guidance counselors and people leading campus diversity clubs, organizations, and social groups. Starting a student club in a high school to promote the teaching profession may attract some diverse students to consider a career in education.

Those without direct experience with oppression become more sensitive to experiences of diverse students through cultural experiences and service learning opportunities.

### **Childhood Multicultural Experiences, Student Activism, and Adult Mentors**

Childhood multicultural experiences, volunteerism and student activism, and adult mentors motivated participants to become social justice educators. These experiences and interactions with adult mentors created a deeper moral consciousness in the participants. Teachers traced their passion for social justice from experiences living and working with other cultures and social justice organizations. Cultural experiences, activism, volunteering, and interaction with adult mentors exposed participants to oppressed populations, different ethnicities, and alternative perspectives. This exposure had the effect of making the participants acknowledge their privilege and cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986).

I recommend programs promoting exposure to diverse cultures and populations beginning in elementary school and continuing through college. School personnel and social justice organizations should form partnerships to allow students to connect and build authentic relationships that will hopefully last a lifetime. Schools should work with social justice organizations within the community. Schools should contact organizations offering food for the poor, nursing homes, homeless shelters, crisis centers, or non-profits organizations to build relationships and allow students to volunteer alongside, advocate for, and interact with members of marginalized groups. Organizations and schools might work together to bring in lecturers to educate students regarding the facts associated with homelessness or poverty. Students might

use data for presentations or in a mathematics class, or work together to raise funds for needy organization, exposing others to the organizations' needs. Offering students opportunities to build relationships with various groups of people exposes them to social justice issues and alternative perspectives.

### **Service Learning, Study Abroad Experiences, and Personal Travel**

Service learning, study abroad programs, and personal travel during and after college transformed philosophies and teaching methodologies. Exposure and full immersion with other cultures stood out as a major factor in motivating participants to become social justice educators and to use their classrooms to foster social activism. Teachers, motivated by their experiences felt motivated to provide their students with service learning and travel experiences to learn about diverse and subjugated populations. Many schools now require student participation in service learning.

Service learning, study abroad ,and travel experiences provide an experiential learning environment, allowing students to develop pro-social values and increase their contextual knowledge regarding social issues and communication skills. Experiential learning opportunities provide the critical cultural awareness needed to become a social justice educator. To maximize learning and the richness of the experience, service learning, study abroad, and travel experiences should have the intention of equally benefiting students as learners and the recipients of the service or interaction. Students benefit by gaining knowledge regarding social issues, and students increase their compassion for others through exposure to alternative perspectives. Diversity experiences provide an empathetic cultural awareness, inciting critical reflection and thinking regarding social issues. Colleges, and in particular teacher education programs, should require service learning courses and study abroad experiences as a part of the required education

curriculum. Advisors, professors, and the teaching program should promote service learning courses and study abroad programs.

College service learning programs and travel abroad experiences played a significant role in the formation of social justice educators. These experiences exposed participants to diverse populations and alternative perspectives, increasing their contextual understanding and compassion for diverse populations and inspiring social change as a result of their experiences. Teacher education programs should provide teacher candidates service learning organizations and programs as well as study abroad opportunities *as a requirement* within a college course leading to a degree and license.

Teacher exchange programs or required field experiences in diverse school settings may provide pre-service teachers with exposure to diverse populations and offer opportunities to establish authentic relationships with others. Pre-service teachers programs should emphasize critical thinking skills and provide time to reflect and develop social justice lessons and activities used with students.

### **Social Justice Curriculum and Pedagogy**

To promote student activism, radical teachers implementing social justice lessons and activities should emphasize critical thinking skills. Designing, modifying, or enriching new curriculum with social justice issues served as a central component of the teachers' social justice pedagogy. Developing and practicing critical thinking skills allowed students to understand and check the validity of their assumptions as well as look at social justice issues from a variety of perspectives and become socially active in fighting injustice. Radical educators used a radical pedagogy in their classrooms to foster student activism.

“Many teachers ‘trained’ in our universities seem ill-equipped to deal with issues of social references in the classroom based on the inadequate time provided for courses on multiculturalism or social difference.” (Renner, Price, Keene & Little, 2004, p. 139). Teacher education programs are notorious for delivering an Anglo-Eurocentric curriculum and pedagogy (Chan, 2002). “Teacher education programs are expected to prepare mostly White teachers to work with the increasing ethnic minority student population and address the chronic and pervasive low academic performance of these students” (Artiles, Alfredo, Trent, Stanley, Hoffman-Kipp, Lopez-Torres, 2000, p. 79). This practice needs change.

Many teacher education programs (Artiles, Alfredo, Trent, Stanley, Hoffman-Kipp, Lopez-Torres, 2000; Garmon, 2005) have revamped their curriculum to include multicultural theories and methodology with little success in creating additional social justice educators: I recommend a more radical approach. I recommend teacher education programs completely revamp the entire program curriculum and adopt a focus centered on social justice theories and goals, pedagogies, and alternative teaching methods. Furthermore, I recommend that teacher education programs include service learning, study abroad, and diverse field experiences. I recommend at first social studies methods courses provide social justice education theory and methodology, with an implementation of social justice education theory in language arts, math, science, and world language methods courses. The profession needs to change and recognize the needs of oppressed people.

I also recommend teaching candidates be exposed to alternative teaching methodology and radical perspectives to expose and provide alternative views on social issues. Pre-service teachers should be required to explore resources, such as alternative books, alternative primary



sources, and alternative instruction in order to practice implementing social justice curriculum and activities.

Teacher education programs need to challenge teacher candidates to think critically about social justice issues. Programs and instructors need to ensure pre-service teachers examine their belief systems and the formation of their ideas, and these programs then need to expose pre-service teachers to alternative perspectives. Teachers must experience social justice methods as part of their pre-service program.

Teaching programs need to deconstruct fundamentally the belief systems possessed by teachers with a dominant White perspective and reconstruct it with social justice attitudes, goals, and theories. Pre-service teachers need to be committed to social justice education to have the greatest impact on diverse students. The goal is to create radical teachers, teachers that examine their belief systems, understand social issues, experience multiple diverse and intercultural experiences, possess tools needed to implement social justice curriculum, provide support systems to ensure radical perspectives gain power, and feel fully committed to using their classroom as catalysts for social change.

Based off the four strategies compiled from interviews, observations, and document analysis, I developed a model depicting social justice curriculum and pedagogy below in Figure 2. This model provides four strategies teachers can use to teach about social justice issues and reinforce critical thinking skills. Using alternative texts and supplemental resources, emphasizing active learning and 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills, engaging students in service learning and civic action projects, and integrating art into social justice curriculum elicits critical thinking skills such as gathering, organizing, and evaluating information. These elements help teachers and students to recognize and accept their own and another's perspectives, reflect, assess

solutions, and communicate effectively. Critical thinking used in this way can create students who are morally aware, critically reflective, and socially active. These strategies would work in any curriculum area and in any school environment.

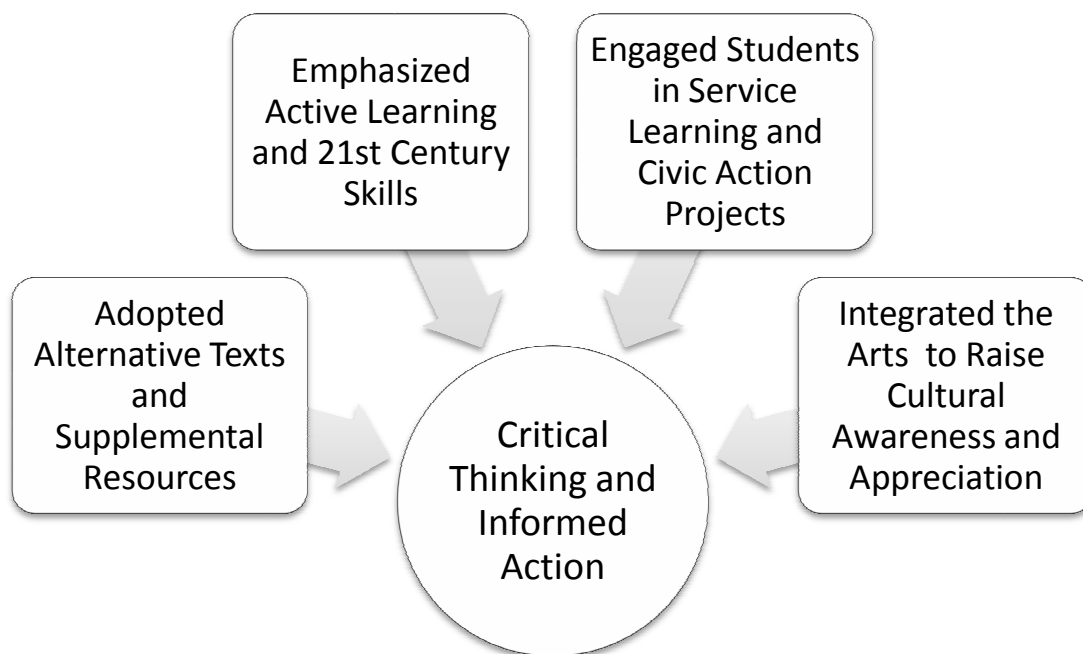


Figure 2. Pottebaum's social justice curriculum design and pedagogy.

### **Recommendations for Further Research**

Increasing the number of social justice educators is a worthy and imperative venture. My research showed that social justice teachers experienced transformational experiences and used these experiences to call attention to injustice and promote social activism. To find the best methods of attracting diverse candidates to the teaching profession, additional research needs to be conducted regarding effective programs to attract and provide to marginalized students interested in the teaching profession.

This case study included eight participants. To increase the validity of the results, I recommend conducting larger studies on teachers acting as agents of change. The eight

participants proved to be a unique group of teachers willing to take risks in their classrooms and careers. Not every teacher has the context, support, motivation, and transformational experiences to change him or her into social justice educators. I also suggest studying a more diverse group of educators and including persons of color and varying socioeconomic statuses. Most participants taught in a metropolitan (inner city or suburban) school. It may be beneficial to study social justice educators teaching in rural schools as well as teachers from more diverse ethnicities, backgrounds, and religions.

My research also indicated five strategies social justice educators used to foster critical thinking and social activism. Additional research needs to find which methods may prove effective to foster critical thinking with more students.

Additional research might also investigate the longitudinal effectiveness of social justice education. How should social justice educators measure the effectiveness of their teaching and critical pedagogy methods in creating socially active students? Social justice education seeks to create an oppression-free, democratic society, and researchers might investigate the long-term success of creating a more equitable society through social justice education.

My research showed that exposure to diverse and radical pedagogies, theories, groups of people, people of color, professors/advisors, courses, and travel experiences increased the cultural awareness and consciousness of pre-service teachers. Research studies might examine the effects of a multicultural or social justice education programs on teachers' beliefs and classroom implementation of social justice pedagogies. Research aimed at examining effective teaching methodologies, best practices, conditions needed for effective adult learning would add to the knowledge base regarding how some individuals become social justice teachers and the effects of their efforts on promoting social justice. Further research aimed at examining critical

thinking/reflection in teacher education programs would also add to the knowledge base regarding how some individuals become social justice teachers and the effects of their efforts on promoting social justice.

### **The Need for Radical Educators**

The purpose of education according to Freire, Ramos, and Macedo (2000) involves opportunities to grow. “The duty of public education is to end the oppression of these students” (Brown, 2006, p. 701). Moses and Cobb (2002) described teachers at the forefront of a civil rights movement continually striving to reduce oppression and increase social justice for marginalized students. Freire, Ramos, and Macedo (2000) believed teachers needed to shift from a personal awareness of oppression to social activism. Radical educators embrace, inform, and foster “advocacy, solidarity, an awareness of societal structures of oppression, and critical social consciousness” (Brown, 2006, p. 703). The goal of social justice educators is to show and build relationships with minority voices and perspectives.

Educators must not only express concern regarding social justice and equitable schools but also take on the roles of transformational leaders, critical and intellectual practitioners, and activists fighting for equality. Social justice education can benefit all learners and all curriculum areas. Race, class, gender, healthcare, and sexual orientation inequality greatly affects learning. Educators truly vested in the whole student and their lifelong learning success should create a learning environment to ensure students think critically about social justice issues.

All teachers must go beyond the monthly celebration of certain ethnicities and embrace social justice pedagogy and incorporate these issues into every subject and lesson plan. Social justice education goes beyond a multicultural approach where teachers simply use culturally responsive techniques. Social justice education focuses on social change, critical thinking, and

opportunities for transformational learning. This study showed how childhood and young adult transformational experiences elicited teachers to use their classroom as an impetus for social change. Social justice educators use the knowledge gained from their transformational experiences to create social activists in their classrooms. My study showed that there is a strong link between critical thinking and transformational learning experiences.

All teachers need to foster social change in their classrooms to create a socially just society. Pre-service teachers and those already serving as professional educators need to become agents of change as a moral duty and obligation to society. I hope my study advances this change.

## References

- Adams, M. (2007). Pedagogical frameworks for social justice education. In M. Adams, L.A Bell, & P. Griffin, (Eds.), In *Teaching for diversity and social justice* (pp. 15-34). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Ali, S. R., & Ancis, J. R. (2005). Multicultural education and critical pedagogy approaches. In S. R. Ali, (Ed.), In *Teaching and social justice: Integrating multicultural and feminist theories in the classroom.* (pp. 69-84). Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association.
- Allman, P. (2009). Paulo Freire's contributions to radical education. In A. Darder, M. Bartodano & R. Torres, (Eds.), In *The critical pedagogy reader* (pp. 417-432).
- Anderson, D. A. (2006). *Economics by example.* New York City, NY: Worth Publishers.
- Aronson, E. (2000). Nobody left to hate. *Humanist*, 60(3), 17-21.
- Artiles, A. J., Trent, S. C., Hoffman-Kipp, P., & Lopez-Torres, L. (2000). From individual acquisition to cultural-historical practices in multicultural teacher education. *Remedial & Special Education.* 21(2), 79-91.
- Atgwa, P., Bakayayita, J., Boltauzer, D., Boga, G., Granada, A., Guha, V., & Jasinski, C. (Eds.). (2000). *Stand up for your rights.* Lanham, MD: Two-Can Publishers.
- Atwood, M. (1998). *The handmaid's tale.* New York City, NY: First Anchor Books.
- Banks, J. A. (2006). *Race, culture, and education.* New York, NY: Routledge.
- Banks, J. A. (2007). Multicultural education: Characteristics and Goals. In J.A Banks & C.A Banks, (Eds.), In *Multicultural education: Issues and perspectives* (pp. 3-26). Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- Banks, J. A. (1992). Multicultural education: Its effects on students' racial and gender role

- attitudes. In J. P. Shaver (Ed.), In *Handbook of research on social studies teaching and learning*. (pp. 459-480).
- Bell, L.A. (2007). Theoretical foundations for social justice education. In M. Adams, L.A Bell, P. Griffin, (Eds.), In *Teaching for diversity and social justice* (pp. 1-14). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Beyer, B. K. (1995). *Critical thinking*. Arlington, VA: Phi Delta Kappa International.
- Bloomberg L.D., & Volpe, M. (2008). *Completing your qualitative dissertation: A roadmap from beginning to end*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Bogdan, R. C., & Biklen, S. K. (2003). *Qualitative research for education: An introduction to theories and methods*. Boston, MA: Pearson Education Group, Inc.
- Bourdieu, P. (1986) The forms of capital. In J. Richardson (Ed.) *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education* (New York, Greenwood), 241-258.
- Bourdieu, P., & Passeron, J-C. (1990). *Reproduction in education, society, and culture*. New York, NY: Sage, Inc.
- Boutte, G.S. (2008). Beyond the illusion of diversity: How early childhood teachers can promote social justice. *The Social Studies*, 99(4), 165-173.
- Breunig, M. (2005). Turning experiential education and critical pedagogy theory into praxis. *Journal of Experiential Education*, 28(2), 106-122.
- Brookfield, S. D. (1995). *Becoming a critically reflective teacher*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- Brown, K. M. (2005). Social justice education for preservice leaders: Evaluating transformative learning strategies. *Equity & Excellence in Education*, 38(2), 155-167.
- Brown, K. M. (2006). Leadership for social justice and equity: Evaluating a transformative

- framework and androgyny. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 42(5), 700-745.
- Cambron-McCabe, N., & McCarthy, M. M. (2005). Educating school leaders for social justice. *Educational Policy*, 19(1), 201-222.
- Casey, M. (2009). *Che's afterlife: The legacy of an image*. New York City, NY: Vintage Books.
- Chan, K. C. (2002). The visible and invisible in cross-cultural movement experiences: Bringing in our bodies to multicultural teacher education. *Intercultural Education*, 13(3), 245-257.
- Charmaz, K. (2006). *Constructing grounded theory*. London: Sage Publications, Ltd.
- Chubbuck, S. M. (2010). Individual and structural orientations in socially just teaching: Conceptualization, implementation, and collaborative effort. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 61(3), 197-210.
- Cranton, P. (2006). *Understanding and promoting transformative learning*. (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.), San Francisco, CA: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- Creswell, J.W. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Dallaire, R. (2003). *Shake hands with the devil: The failure of humanity in Rwanda*. New York City, NY: Carroll & Graf Publishers
- Dewey, J. (1910). *How we think*. Retrieved from <http://archive.org/details/howwethink000838mbp>
- Dewey, J. (1916). *Democracy and education*. New York, NY: Macmillan.
- Dewey, J. (2008/1925) *Experience and nature. The later works of John Dewey Vol. 1*. J.A. Boydston (Ed.). Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press.
- Dewey, J. (2008/ 1929) *The quest for certainty. The later works of John Dewey Vol. 4*. J.A.



- Boydston (Ed.). Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press.
- Dewey, J. (2008/1934) *Art as experience. The later Works of John Dewey Vol. 10.* J.A. Boydston (Ed.). Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press.
- Dewey, J. (2008/1938) *Logic. The theory of inquiry. The later works of John Dewey Vol. 12.* J.A. Boydston (Ed.). Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press.
- Dewey, J. (1938). *Experience and education.* New York, NY: Kappa Delta Pi.
- DiCamillo, L., & Pace, J. L. (2010). Preparing citizens for multicultural democracy in a U.S. history class. *The High School Journal, 93*(2), 69-82.
- Duany, L., & Pittman, K. (1991). Latino youths at a crossroads. *Education Digest, 56*(5), 7-11.
- Dunlap, J. (2006, Nov/Dec). Using guided reflective journaling activities to capture students' changing perceptions. *Technology Trends: Linking Research and Practice to Improve Learning. 50*(6), 20-26.
- Edelman, M. R. (1992). *The measure of our success: A letter to my children and yours.* Boston, MA: Beacon Press.
- Eisner, E. W., & Peshkin, A. (1990). *Qualitative inquiry in education: The continuing debate.* New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Ellsworth, E. (1994). Why doesn't this feel empowering? Working through the repressive myths of critical pedagogy. In L. Stone (Ed.) In *The education feminist reader* (pp. 300-327). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Felton, P., & Clayton, P. H. (2011). Service-Learning. *New Directions for Teaching and Learning. 2011*(128), 75-84.
- Fesmire, S. (2003). *John Dewey and moral imagination: Pragmatism in ethics.* Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.

- Fishman, S. M., & McCarthy, L. (1998). *John Dewey and the challenge of classroom practice*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Flick, U. (2009). *An introduction to qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Fowler, C. (1988). *Can we rescue the arts for America's children?* New York, NY: American Council for the Arts.
- Freire, P., Ramos, M. B., & Macedo, D. (2000). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. New York, NY: Continuum Publishers.
- Furco, A. (1996). Service-learning: A balanced approach to experiential education. *Expanding Boundaries: Serving and Learning*, 1, 1-6.
- Furco, A., & Root, S. (2010). Research demonstrates the value of service learning. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 91(5), 16-20.
- Gadotti, M. (1994). *Reading Paulo Freire: His life and work*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Garcia, J. (2008). Reinventing social studies: By all means. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 89(9), 660-663.
- Garii, B., & Rule, A. C. (2009). Integrating social justice with mathematics and science: An analysis of student teacher lessons. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 25(2), 490-499.
- Garmon, M. A. (2005). Six key factors for changing preservice teachers' attitudes/beliefs about diversity. *Educational Studies*, 38, 275-286.
- Giecek, T. S. (2007). *Teaching economics as if people mattered: A curriculum guide for today's economy*. Boston, MA: United for a Fair Economy.
- Giroux, H. (1997). *Pedagogy and the politics of hope: Theory, culture, and schooling*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Giroux, H. (2001). Pedagogy of the depressed: Beyond the new politics of cynicism. *College*

*Literature*, 28(3), 1-33.

- Giroux, H., & McLaren, P. (1986). Teacher education and the politics of engagement: The case of democratic schooling. *Harvard Educational Review*, 56, 213-238.
- Given, L. M. (Ed.). (2008). *The Sage encyclopedia of qualitative research methods*. (pp. 848-853). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Glaser, E. M. (1941). *An experiment in the development of critical thinking*. New York City, NY: Teachers College Columbia University.
- Gonzalez, R., & Ayala-Alcantar, C. U. (2008). Critical caring: Dispelling Latino stereotypes among preservice teachers. *Journal of Latinos and Education*, 7(2), 129-143.
- Grant, C.A., & Sleeter, C.E. (2009). *Turning on learning: Five approaches for multicultural teaching plans for race, class, gender and disability*. (5<sup>th</sup> ed.). Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- Grant, C.A., & Sleeter C.E. (2007). Race, class, gender, and disability in the classroom. In J.A Banks & C. A. Banks, (Eds.), *In Multicultural education: Issues and perspectives* (pp. 63-82). Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.
- Grauerholz, L. (2007). Getting past ideology for effective teaching. *Sociological Viewpoints*, 23, 15-28.
- Gribov, S. (2001). "John dewey's pragmatism and moral education". In *Philosophy of Education Yearbook*. (pp. 373-380). Urbana, IL: Philosophy of Education Society.
- Habermas, J. (2001). *The postnational constellation: Political essays*. Cambridge, MA: MIT.
- Hackman, H. W. (2005). Five essential components for social justice education. *Equity & Excellence in Education*, 38(2), 103-109.
- Haley, A., & X, M. (1964). *The autobiography of Malcolm X*. New York City, NY:

Ballantine Publishing Group.

- Hardiman, R., & Jackson, B. (2007) Conceptual foundations for social justice education. In M. Adams, L.A Bell, P. Griffin, (Eds.), In *Teaching for diversity and social justice* (pp. 34-65). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Hill-Jackson, V, Sewell, K. L., & Waters, C. (2007). Having our say about multicultural education. *Kappa Delta Pi*, 43(4), 174-181.
- Hobson, A. J., Ashby, P., Malderez, A., & Tomlinson, P. D. (2009). Mentoring beginning teachers: What we know and what we don't. *Teaching & Teacher Education*, 25(1), 207-216. doi:10.1016/j.tate.2008.09.001
- Hook, S. (1939). *John Dewey: An intellectual portrait*. New York, NY: Cosimo.
- Ilibagiza, I. (2007). *Left to tell: Discovering god amidst the Rwandan holocaust*. Carlsbad, CA: Hay House.
- Jenkins, R. E. (2011). *Forming consciousness for faithful citizenship*. United States Conference of Catholic Bishops: Washington, DC.
- Jenks, C, Lee, J. O., & Kanpol, B. (2001). Approaches to multicultural education in preservice teacher education: Philosophical frameworks and models for teaching. *The Urban Review*, 33(2), 87-105.
- Jewett, S. (2007). The stories of people's lives: Thematic investigations and the development of a critical social studies, *The Social Studies*, 98(4), 165-171.
- Jonassen, D. H. (1991) Objectivism versus constructivism: do we need a new philosophical paradigm? *Educational Technology Research and Development*, 39(3), 5-14.
- Jones, E. (2012). *The better world shopping guide: Every dollar can make a difference*. Gabriola Island, BC, Canada: New Society Publishers.

- Kao, G., & Thompson, J. S. (2003). Racial and ethnic stratification in educational achievement and attainment. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 29(1), 417-442.
- Kincheloe, J. L. (2004). *Critical pedagogy primer*. New York, NY: Peter Lang Publishing.
- Knowles, M. S., Holton, E. F. & Swanson, R. A. (1998). *The adult learner* (5<sup>th</sup> ed.). Houston, TX: Gulf Publishing.
- Kose, B. W. (2009). The principal's role in professional development for social justice: An empirically-based transformative framework. *Urban Education*, 44(6), 628-663.
- Kozol, J. (1995). *Amazing grace: The lives of children and the conscience of a nation*. New York City, NY: Crown Publishing Group.
- Kozol, J. (2000). *Ordinary resurrections: Children in the years of hope*. New York City, NY: Crown Publishers.
- Lester, D., Hvezda, J., Sullivan, S., Plourde, R. (1983). Maslow's hierarchy of needs and psychological health. *Journal of General Psychology*, 109(1), 83-86.
- Leonard, Z. (2004). Critical social theory and transformative knowledge: The functions of criticism in quality education. *Educational Reader*, 33(6), 11-18.
- Lekuton, J. L., & Viola, H. (2003). *Facing the lion: Growing up Maasai on the Africa savanna*. New York City, NY: National Geographic Society.
- Loewen, J. W. (2007). *Lies my teacher told me: Everything your American history teacher got wrong*. New York City, NY: Touchstone.
- Loewen, J. W. (2005). *Sundown towns: A hidden dimension of American racism*. New York City, NY: Touchstone.
- Lucas, A. (2010). Distinguishing between multicultural and global education: The challenge of conceptualizing and addressing the two fields. *The Clearing House* 83(6), 211-216.

- Lyman, F. (1981). The responsive classroom discussion: The inclusion of all students. In A. S. Anderson (Ed.), *Mainstreaming digest*. (pp. 109-113). College Park, MD: University of Maryland.
- Mandela, N. (1994). *Long walk to freedom*. New York City, NY: Back Bay Books.
- Marshall, J., & Klein, A. M. (2009). Lessons in social action: Equipping and inspiring student to improve their world. *The Social Studies*, 100(5), 218-221.
- Marshall, C., & Rossman, G. B. (1999). *Designing qualitative research*. (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Marshall, C., & Rossman, G. B. (2011). *Designing qualitative research*. (5<sup>th</sup> ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Maxwell, J.A. (2005). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach*. (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- McCracken, G. (1988). *The long interview*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- McKenzie, K. B., Christma, D. E, Hernandez, F., Fierro, E., Capper, C. A., Dantley, M. Gonzalez, M. L, Cambron-McCabe, N., & Scheurich, J. J. (2008). From the field: A proposal for educating leaders for social justice. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 44(1), 111-138.
- McKenzie, M. (2013). Rescuing education: The rise of experiential learning. *Independent School*, 72(3), 24-28.
- McLaren, P. (2006). *Life in schools: An introduction to critical pedagogy in the foundation of education*. Boston, MA: Addison Wesley Longman.
- McLaren, P. (1999). A pedagogy of possibility: Reflecting upon Paulo Freire's politics of education. *Educational Researcher*, 28(2), 99-124.

- McLaren, P., & Hammer, R. (1989, Fall). Critical pedagogy and the postmodern challenge: Toward a critical postmodernist pedagogy of liberation. *Educational Foundation*, 29-62.
- McNeal, K. (2005). The influence of a multicultural teacher education program on teachers' multicultural practices. *Intercultural Education*, 16(4), 405-419.
- Menzel, P., Mann, C. C., & Kennedy, P. (2005). *Material World: A Global Family Portrait*. San Francisco, CA: A Sierra Club Books Publication.
- Merriam, S. B. (2004). The role of cognitive development in Mezirow's transformational learning theory. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 55(1), 60-68.
- Merriam, S. B. (2008). Adult learning theory for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In Sharan B. Merriam (Ed.), *In third update on adult learning theory* (pp. 93-98), San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Mezirow, J. (1991). *Transformative dimensions in adult learning*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Mezirow, J. (1998). Transformative learning and social action: A response to Inglis. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 49(1), 70.
- Mezirow, J. (2000). Learning to think like an adult: Core concepts of transformation theory. In J. Mezirow & Associates (Eds.), *Learning as transformation* (pp. 3-34). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Mezirow, J. (2003). Transformative learning as discourse. *Journal of Transformative Education*, 1, 58-63).
- Mezirow, J. (2009). Transformative learning theory. In J. Mezirow & E. Taylor (Eds.), *In Transformative learning in practice: Insights from the community, workplace, and higher education*. (pp. 18-31). San Francisco, CA: John Wiley & Sons.
- Miettinen R. (2000): The concept of experiential learning and John Dewey's theory of reflective

- thought and action. *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, 19(1), 54-72.
- Moore, B. J. (1998). Situated cognition versus traditional cognitive theories of learning. *Education*. 119(1), 161-172.
- Morrow, R. A., & Torres, C. A. (2002). *Reading Freire and Habermas*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Moses, R., & Cobb, C. E. (2002). *Radical equations: Math literacy and civil rights*. Boston, MA: Beacon.
- Nagda, B. A., Gurin, P., & Lopez, G. E. (2003). Transformative pedagogy for democracy and social justice. *Race, Ethnicity, and Education*. 6(2). 165-191.
- Noonan, S. (2011). Hall of fame nomination [Class handout]. Department of Leadership, Policy and Administration, University of St. Thomas, St. Paul, MN.
- North, C. E. (2009). *Teaching for social justice. Voices from the front lines*. Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers.
- Page, M. (1990). *Active learning: Historical and contemporary perspectives* (Doctoral Dissertation.). (ED338389) Retrieved from ERIC database.
- Parra-Cardona, J.R., Bullock, L.A. Imig, D.R., Villarruel, F.A., & Gold, S.J. (2006). Trabajando duro todos los días”: Learning from the life experiences of Mexican-origin migrant families. *Family Relations*, 55(3), 361-375.
- Paul, R., & Elder, L. (2008). Critical thinking: The art of socratic questioning. *Journal of Developmental Education*, 31(3), 34-35.
- Perreira, K. M., Harris, K. M., & Lee, D. (2006). Making it in America: High school completion by immigrant and native youth. *Demography*, 43(3), 511-536.
- Pong, S., & Hao, L. (2007). Neighborhood and school factors in the school performance of



- immigrants' children. *International Migration Review*, 41(1), 206-241.
- Pratt, D. D. (2002). Good teaching: One size fits all? In J. Ross-Gordon (Ed.), *An up-date on teaching theory* (pp. 5-15), San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Renner, A., Price, L., Keene, K., & Little, S. (2004). Service learning, multicultural/antiracist education and social foundations of education: Weaving a cultural studies' pedagogy and praxis in an accelerated teacher education program. *Educational Studies*, 35(2), 137-157.
- Riggs, M. (Director/Producer). (1995). *Black is...Black ain't*. [Motion picture]. San Francisco, CA: California Newsreel.
- Rosefsky Saavedra, A., & Opfer, V. (2012). Learning 21st-century skills requires 21st-century teaching. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 94(2), 8-13.
- Ross, E. W. (2000). Diverting democracy. In D.W. Hursh, & E.W. Ross (Eds.), *In Democratic social education: Social studies for social change*. (pp. 203-228). New York, NY: Falmer Press.
- Sleeter, C. E. (1996). *Multicultural education as social activism*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Smith, D. J. (2003). *If the world were a village: A book about the world's people*. Toronto, ON Ontario, Canada: Kids Can Press.
- Smith, S. R. (2006). Stop and think: Addressing social injustices through critical reflection. *Education Canada*, 47(1), 48-51.
- Shor, I., & Freire, P. (1987). What is the dialogical method of teaching? *Journal of Education*, 969, 11-31.
- Soares, L.B., & Wood, K. (2010). A critical literacy perspective for teaching and learning social studies. *The Reading Teacher*, 63(6), 486-494.

- Spring, J. (2008). *The American school: From the puritans to no child left behind*. Boston: McGraw, Inc.
- Taylor, E. W. (2008). *Transformative learning theory*. In S. B. Merriam (Ed.), *In Third update on adult learning theory* (pp. 5-15), San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Teller-elsberg, J., Folbre, N., & Heintz, J. (2006). *U.S. economy field guide of the U.S. economy: A compact and irreverent guide to economic life in America*. New York, NY: The New Press.
- Theoharis, G. (2007). Social justice educational leaders and resistance: Toward a theory of social justice leadership. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 43(2), 221-258.
- Thornton, S. J. (2005). *Teaching social studies that matters: Curriculum for active learning*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Trent, S. C., Kea, C. D., & Oh, K. (2008). Preparing pre-service educators for cultural diversity: How far have we come? *Exceptional Children*, 74(3), 328-350.
- Wade, R. (2007). *Social studies for social justice: Teaching strategies for the elementary classroom*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Watt, K. M., Johnston, D., Huerta, J., Mendiola, I., & Alkan, E. (2008). Retention of first-generation college-going seniors in the college preparatory program AVID. *American Secondary Education*, 37(1), 17-40.
- White, C. (1999). *Transforming social studies education*. Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas Publishers.
- Wright, S., & Grenier, M. (2009). Examining effective teaching via a social constructivist pedagogy “case study”. *Education*, 130(2), 255-264.
- Wolk, S. (2003). Teaching for critical literacy in social studies. *The Social Studies*, 94(3), 101-

106.

Yin, R. K. (2009). *Case study research: Design and methods* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA:

Sage.

Zevin, J. (2007). *Social studies for the twenty-first century* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). New York, NY:

Routledge.

Zinn, H. (2003). *A people's history of America*. New York City, NY: HarperCollins

Publishers.

## Appendix A

# CONSENT FORM UNIVERSITY OF ST. THOMAS

[Mission Possible: Teachers Serving as Agents of Social Change]

[IRB B11-352-01]

I am conducting a study about how social studies teachers serve as agents of social change in their classroom and promote student activism through radical teaching methodologies. I invite you to participate in this research. You were selected as a possible participant because of your work as a social studies teacher who teaches with social justice curriculum and transformative pedagogies. Please read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

This study is being conducted by Holly Pottebaum, a doctoral student in the Department of Leadership, Policy, and Administration, under the advisement of Dr. Sarah Noonan, Associate Professor through the University of St. Thomas in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

### **Background Information:**

The purpose of this study is to investigate the characteristics of social studies teachers as agents of social change, including their personal and professional beliefs and actions with regard to social justice, as well as instructional methods and pedagogies that promote social activism in and outside the classroom. I also want to research the transformative learning experiences of teachers who teaching with social justice pedagogy methods. My goals are to encourage, support, and advance social justice pedagogies in secondary social studies classrooms to meet the needs of diverse students and inculcate the desire for social activism in their students and colleagues. There are no direct benefits to participating in this study.

### **Procedures:**

If you agree to be in this study, I will ask you to do the following things from May 2011 through December 2011: (1) participate in an interview, (2) provide documents related to your teaching and (3) allow me to conduct a classroom observation. I will also provide an opportunity to engage in an optional experience using a critically reflective journal to prompt reflection about your teaching. I will ask you to reserve two hours for an interview at your convenience. The interview will include a series of scripted questions, which I will email to you in advance. Also at that interview, I will ask you to bring ten lesson plans, including pieces of student work, worksheets, and journals to illustrate your social justice curriculum. At the interview, I will request an appointment time to observe you teaching a classroom lesson, implementing a social justice lesson plan or activity. Finally, I will provide an optional critical reflection component and invite you to participate in this process.

### **Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study:**

The study has minimal risk. By participating in this study, someone might be able to identify you from reading my findings from this study. However, every precaution will be taken, (assignment of pseudonyms for name, school, identifiable characteristics), to ensure that this does not happen. These precautions will be further described in the confidentiality section below.

You will not receive any cash or token payment for participating in this study, and there are no direct benefits for participating in this study.

**Confidentiality:**

The records of this study will be kept confidential. In any sort of report I publish, I will not include information that will make it possible to identify you in any way. I will use pseudonyms for your name, school, or any other identifiable characteristics. The interview tapes and transcripts, social justice document portfolio, observation notes, and optional journal responses will be kept in a locked file cabinet. I am the only one who will have access to the records. Records may be viewed by my dissertation chair, Dr. Sarah Noonan, and by members of my dissertation committee. If it becomes necessary for me to hire a transcriber, that person will sign a confidentiality agreement as a condition of their employment with me. I will destroy all the records within two years of gaining approval of this study from the Institutional Review Board (May, 2013).

**Voluntary Nature of the Study:**

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with me, your employer, or the University of St. Thomas. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time without any penalty from me. Should you decide to withdraw from this study, you have the option of whether or not to remove from the study any data collected at the time of your withdrawal.

**Contacts and Questions**

My name is Holly Pottebaum. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you may contact me at 952-457-7014. You may contact my Dissertation Chair, Dr. Sarah Noonan, at 651-962-4897. You may also contact the University of St. Thomas Institutional Review Board at 651-962-5341 with any questions or concerns.

**You will be given a copy of this form to keep for your records.**

**Statement of Consent:**

I have read the above information. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I consent to participate in the study.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Study Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Researcher

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## Appendix B

### Interview Script

Thank you for allowing me to interview you. This interview will take between 45 to 60 minutes. I will be tape recording this interview: it will be transcribed verbatim and returned to you to check for accuracy and additional comments. You will have the opportunity to participate in this study before the interview begins.

The purpose of this interview is to gain insight into your social justice philosophy, anti-classist, sexist, and racist curriculum and methodology techniques, and transformational learning experiences, as well as successes and difficulties implementing activism in the classrooms and students. First, I will review the confidentiality agreement with you and ask you to sign it. Next, I will ask you to complete some demographic questions. Finally, I will begin the interview with a series of pre-scripted questions. These questions are meant to gain additional information pertaining to my research questions. My research questions serve as a framework for the following interview questions. I ask that you answer the questions as honestly as you can. If you do not want to answer a particular question, you may pass. If you need further clarification regarding any question, please ask me. Please know that I potentially could ask additional questions if an answer or subject warrants it.

#### CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

#### DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONS

#### TURN ON TAPE RECORDER

1. Describe your current teaching situation (grade, subject, schedule etc).
2. What childhood or adolescent experiences may have led you into the education field?
3. While in elementary, junior high, high school or college, did you participate in any social justice activities (volunteer, protest, wrote letters etc.)?
4. Did you travel abroad or have cultural experiences as a child, adolescent, or college student?
5. What is your definition of social studies? What do you believe is the main purpose/function of social studies?
6. What does social justice mean to you? What does teaching for social studies for social justice mean to you?
7. What experiences helped you become a teacher interested in social justice and change?

8. Why do you teach for social justice? What motivates you to be a radical educator?
9. What teaching strategies do you feel are essential in teaching for social justice?
10. What teaching materials do you use in classroom? Discuss posters, primary resources, art, supplemental readings etc. you might use. What materials, resources, or curriculum do you find essential in reaching your social justice goals?
11. What specific social justice topics, issues, or concerns do you focus on in your teaching?
12. What are your goals for yourself, your students and their level of social justice activism?
13. Do you have administrative, colleague, parent, student, and community support? Discuss.
14. What barriers or challenges have you met in teaching social studies for social justice?  
Who or what makes your social studies teaching for social justice complicated or challenging?
15. How does your students' school community experience belonging and affirmation in their lives? Do any of them identify as subjugated members of society?
16. Do your students have contact with students from different ethnicities, disabilities, affectional preferences, or social classes?
17. Do you have any comments you would like to add to help me fully understanding your practice and involvement in social justice work?
18. What evidence do you have that shows student or community activism?
19. May I call or email you if I have additional questions?

Thank you for your participation.

## Appendix C

### DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION UNIVERSITY OF ST. THOMAS RESEARCH STUDY

Mission Possible: Teachers Serving as Agents of Social Change  
[IRB# B11-352-01]

**Your responses to these questions are optional. Should you choose to answer the questions, this information, like your identity, will be kept confidential. These questions are important for study and this information will be helpful in my data analysis. If you have questions about how this information will be used, who will see it, or how I will use it in my data analysis, please ask. Thank you for your time.**

Today's Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Participant Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Gender: \_\_\_\_\_

Race: \_\_\_\_\_ Ethnicity: \_\_\_\_\_

Are You a Targeted or Oppressed Group in Society (circle one): Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, please identify oppressed group: \_\_\_\_\_

Current Position and Employer: \_\_\_\_\_

Length of Time at Current Employer: \_\_\_\_\_

Type of School (private, public, charter, parochial): \_\_\_\_\_

Type of School Community (affluent, blue collar, mixed income, inner city, rural etc.): \_\_\_\_\_

Total Number of Years in Education: \_\_\_\_\_

Grade(s) Currently Teaching: \_\_\_\_\_

Subject(s) Currently Teaching: \_\_\_\_\_

Years of Formal Education Since High School: \_\_\_\_\_

Highest Degree Attained: \_\_\_\_\_







## Appendix F

### Post-Observation Conference Planning Guide

#### Phase 1

- Purpose: Gather Information, promote teacher reflection, promote trust
- Supervisory Approach: Non-directive
- Purposeful Actions: listening, clarifying, reflecting

#### Open-ended question #1

#### Open-ended question #2:

#### Narrowing the focus question:

#### Phase 2

- Purpose: To reinforce positive aspects of the lesson
- Supervisory Approach: Directive/Informational
- Purposeful Actions: Encouraging, presenting, reinforcing

#### Select teacher actions for reinforcement, present objective data, state a recommendation and rationale:

#### Phase 3

- Purpose: Develop goals for future growth by the teacher
- Supervisory approach: Collaborative
- Purposeful Actions: presenting, problem solving, negotiating

#### Growth areas and actions for improvement:

#### Phase 4

- Provide closure to the conference
- Supervisory approach: Non-directive
- Purposeful Actions: listening, clarifying, reflecting, encouraging

#### Write your question that will cause the teacher to reflect on the instructional conference:

## Appendix G

Genocide & Social Justice | *Left to Tell* by Immaculee Ilibagiza

## Assignment #15 | Stanton's Stages of Genocide

State of Genocide	Example of State (Line from Book)	Page #
<p><b>Classification &amp; Symbolization</b></p> <p>Description of this state:</p>		
<p><b>Dehumanization</b></p> <p>Description of this state:</p>		
<p><b>Organization</b></p> <p>Description of this stage:</p>		

**Genocide & Social Justice** | *Left to Tell* by Immaculee Ilibagiza  
**Stanton's Stages of Genocide**

State of Genocide	Example of State (Line from Book)	Page #
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Polarization</b></p> <p>Description of this state:</p>		
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Identification</b></p> <p>Description of this state:</p>		
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Extermination</b></p> <p>Description of this stage:</p>		
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Denial</b></p> <p>Description of this stage:</p>		

Points this section: \_\_\_\_\_ (10 pts)

## Appendix H

### Abolition & Reform Notes & Activity #8 (Seneca Falls Declaration of Sentiments & Resolutions)

\*VOCABULARY: When you find a term in the document that is in BOLD write the meaning of the term based on how it was used (context definition) in the margin.

### Seneca Falls Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions

“When in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one portion of the family of man to assume among the people of the earth a position different from that which they have hitherto occupied, but one to which the laws of nature and nature’s and nature’s God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the cause that **impel** them to such a course.”

\*Summarize the above paragraph in your own words.

---



---



---



---

”We hold these truths to be **self-evident**: that all men and women are created equal; that they are endowed by their **Creator** with certain **inalienable** rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; (A) that to secure these rights government are **instituted, deriving** their just powers from the consent of the governed. Whenever any form of government become destructive of these ends, it is the right of those who suffer from it to refuse allegiance to it, and to insist upon the institution a new government...”

\*Summarize the above paragraph in your own words.

---



---



---



---

\*What document is the Seneca Falls Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions

“borrowing” or from?

---

## Appendix I

### A Handmaid's Tale: Issue in Feminism

Atwood's 1986 novel imagines a dystopia in which all the gains on the women's movement are rolled back. Your task is to prepare and deliver a four-minute speech on one of the issues she explores (see list below). In your speech you should:

1. Describe how Atwood raises the issue in The Handmaid's Tale (Include concrete examples and/or quotes.)
2. Give a brief overview of the issue, explaining its history and significance for the women's movement
3. Analyze and envision: Where would Atwood and other feminists see this issue still alive and well in 2011? What would they hope the world for your daughter (and sons) might look like relative to the issue you have researched? What key, specific gains will women have made?

Issues:

economic power (work, pay, ownership)

education (access, roles, subjects, "Title IX")

language (Who controls it? What power does it have? "inclusive language", power of naming)

religion (authority, roles, ritual, myth/sacred story)

sexuality (objectification, pornography, control, trafficking)

reproductive rights (sex education, birth control, abortion)

violence against women

political enfranchisement (suffrage, ERA, representation in leadership)

marriage and family (roles, relationship expectations, equality)

war, slavery, environmental destruction and/or other social issues

You should prepare notes cards to assist you in your delivery, and you should have one visual aid. You may not use PowerPoint or other electronic media.

Your speech needs to integrate information from at least four different credible sources, which should include Zinn's book and other materials you are given in class. Be sure to cite these sources in your speech.

## Appendix J

## CLASSROOM DEBATE

### TOPIC: **OUTSOURCING**



**STATEMENT A: (Pro) Outsourcing is good for America**

**STATEMENT B: (Con) Outsourcing is bad for America.**

Purpose: You will be assigned one of these statements to research and defend. You must try and convince your classmates that you are right!

Process:

1. You will be assigned a statement to research (it may or may not be how you really feel). You will also research the other side to be prepared!
2. You will record your findings on the research in the packet given to you in class.
3. You will be responsible for a portion of the classroom debate-this will be assigned to you.

Options:            opening statement  
                               Key points/key questions to ask the other side  
                               Closing statement

4. During the debate you must speak at least one-but THREE other people have to speak before you do again.
5. When responding to the opposing side, you will REPEAT what they said before giving your thought.
6. During the debate you will take notes on the other sides key points.
7. Finally, you will decide for yourself how you feel about the topic AFTER all sides are presented.

Grading Process: You will be graded on-

1. Did you use your research time well?
2. Did you complete your assigned task?
3. Did you respectfully speak during the debate?
4. Were you a respectful listener?
5. Did you record the other team's point of view?



The Debate:

Side A will give their opening statements.

Side B will give their opening statements.

Side A and Side B will debate all of their key issues in a respectful way—giving facts about your side and asking questions about the other side.

Side a will give their closing statements.

Side B will give their closing statements.

After the final closing statements, you will be asked to reflect on the debate and your opinion.



## Appendix K

**Objective:** Students will explore how an individual (and a small group) makes a change in society by identifying a community issue, research the issue, writing a persuasive letter to a politician and planning, executing, and evaluating an action to improve the issue.

**Timeline:** During the Citizenship Project, we will allot from 1-5 days a week to CP work. the rest will be spent on our final Civics topics of the semester. Throughout the project, you will be responsible for completing various STEPS by certain days. Below is a list of work days and due dates.

### Step 1: Identifying the Problem

Date Accomplished: \_\_\_\_\_

*What problems exist in my community?*

### Step 2: Selecting a Problem for Group Study

Date Accomplished: \_\_\_\_\_

*What problem do I want to focus on for 2 months?*

### Step 3: Gathering Information on the Problem

Date Accomplished: \_\_\_\_\_

*How can I prove this problem exists?*

### Step 4: Explaining the Problem

Date Accomplished: \_\_\_\_\_

*How can I use the information, I gathered to explain the problem to others?*

### Step 5: Identifying Possible Responses

Date Accomplished: \_\_\_\_\_

*What can my group do to make a positive difference regarding the problem?*

### Step 6: Selecting Your Response

Date Accomplished: \_\_\_\_\_

*What is the best response for making a positive difference regarding the problem in the time we have available?*

### Step 7: Planning Your Response

Date Accomplished: \_\_\_\_\_

*How will I make sure our response will successfully happen during Active Citizenship Week?*

### Step 8: Implementing Your Response

Date Accomplished: \_\_\_\_\_

*When will we perform our action?*

### Step 9: Identifying and Reporting Results

Date Accomplished: \_\_\_\_\_

*Was our action successful? How do I know?*

### Step 10: Reflecting on Your Learning Experience

Date Accomplished: \_\_\_\_\_

*Was my project successful, overall? How do I know?*

***Power is the ability to change something-MEGAN CHERRY***

## Appendix M

	United States History	Google Sketch-Up Design Content	Art of Presentation
	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4
<b><u>Content Knowledge</u></b>	<p>*I can define and explain historical terms</p> <p>*I can summarize historical content in my own words</p> <p>*I can hypothesize the effects of historical events upon society</p> <p>*I can interpret and critically analyze historical events</p>	<p>*I can use my model to illustrate and show an increase in equity</p> <p>*I can use history to inform my attention to detail within my design</p>	<p>*I can use history and class work to inform the presentation of my model</p> <p>*I can summarize historical knowledge succinctly and apply it to my model via presentation</p>
<b><u>Reasoning</u></b>  <b>Racial Equality</b>  <b>Physical Structures</b>  <b>Future Presence</b>	<p>*I can explain the racial inequities experienced by people of color and immigrant populations</p> <p>*I can interpret the differences and stipulations used to construct cities and reconstruct urban areas</p> <p>*I can infer and judge the future effects of social change using history</p>	<p>My model solves these urban issues:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.</li> <li>2.</li> <li>3.</li> </ol>	<p>*I can present my ideas for racial equity and change</p> <p>*I can present my ideas for change/ reconstruction of physical structures</p> <p>*I can present my ideas that will inform a positive future presence in my urban community</p>
<b>Skills</b>	<p>* I can summarize textbook information</p> <p>*I can analyze and decipher primary documents</p> <p>*I can synthesize my thoughts and apply my knowledge using a reflection grid</p> <p>*I can use geographical knowledge to map global wars and historical events</p>	<p>*I can use the pencil tool</p> <p>*I can use orbit, pan, and zoom</p> <p>*I can rotate objects</p> <p>*I can draw a simple structure</p> <p>*I can download models from 3D warehouse</p> <p>*I can type in required text</p> <p>*I can alter an existing model</p>	<p>*I can dress appropriately to give a presentation</p> <p>*I can code switch if necessary</p> <p>*I can remain calm, composed, and organized while in front of a small audience</p>

Appendix N

Friday, December 2, 2011



PHOTOS