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GOD, FAMILY, AND SOCIAL JUSTICE EDUCATION: A NARRATIVE STUDY OF
ADULT LEARNERS IN THE DEEP SOUTH

A DISSERTATION

Submitted by

CHRISTEN VICTORIA WARRINGTON-BROXTON

In partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

LESLEY UNIVERSITY

August 25, 2014

Abstract

The primary purpose of this study is to explore the social learning experiences and influences on adults' perceived abilities to teach for social justice in the Deep South. The Deep Southern U.S. is a unique region noted for social, political, economic, and religious conservatism that has strong historical correlations to changes in race and socioeconomic class relations. For these reasons, it is necessary to analyze the reciprocal connection between learning to teach for social justice and adults' personal lives and relationships. Narrative methods are used to explore the lived experiences of six adult doctoral students taking an advanced course in diversity and oppression in K12 curriculum. Participants recount their lived experiences with people and situations which have served as social models of how issues of social justice have or have not been dealt with in the participants' lives. Narratives are analyzed using the Voice-Centered Relational Method to highlight how individuals speak about themselves and their family, friends, coworkers, and instructors. The most prominent finding of the study is that the religious beliefs of participants' families of origin have a significant impact on participants' current identities, behaviors, and beliefs. Furthermore, participants cite the important role their families of origin play in career decisions and the importance of their own multiple and ever-changing identities as significant contributors to feelings of social justice self-efficacy and doubt. These findings suggest that adults' native to and living in the Deep South have unique experiences when learning to teach for social justice. These findings further suggest that adult learners might benefit from critical reflection on how their social learning experiences can serve as lenses through which they approach new knowledge that affirms and/or challenges their own worldviews, and subsequently the relationships and identities they have built on their views.

Keywords: social justice education, transformative learning, adult learning, social cognitive theory, Voice-Centered Relational method

Acknowledgements

Words are simply not enough to express the gratitude I have for every person who has been there for me and supported me, personally and professionally, through my journey towards completing my doctoral training and this dissertation. First, I would like to thank all of the informal educators in my life: My family, the people who made it possible for me to begin the program. I thank my husband, Adam Broxton, for his unwavering love, support, and belief in my ability to accomplish my goals. As a man of grace and integrity, you have helped me learn more than I could in any class: Love, patience, kindness, and strength of spirit. I also thank my mother, Carolyn Taylor Warrington. Mama, you were the first person to teach me what it meant to work hard. I learned from you that while I want to have a good head on my shoulders that I listen to, I should also follow my heart. Also, I thank my brother, Robert Warrington, Jr. Throughout our lives, in between all of our sibling squabbles, you have taught me the importance of integrity, the value of civil debate, and the bravery of marching to the beat of your own drum regardless of the background noise. Like my mother, I also thank my grandmother Eva Gantt Taylor, who died in 2011, hours after we had our last conversation, in which I told her I was accepted into this doctoral program. She showed had great strength of character, and it taught me what it means to be a strong-willed and passionate Deep Southern woman.

Second, I would like to thank the formal educators who have supported me during my learning and growth as a researcher. I thank my doctoral committee members, Dr. Audrey Dentith (chair) and Dr. Nancy Wolf of Lesley University, and Dr. Louise Allen of South Carolina State University. Your kind words of encouragement, tolerance for my constant flow of questions, worries, mistakes, and faux-pas, and your constructive, demanding criticisms have helped me grow not just as a writer and researcher, but also as a person in the world. Next, I

thank the faculty, staff, and advisors at Lesley university who have played a vital role in my journey: Dr. Paul Naso, Dr. Amy Rutstein-Riley, Dr. Terrence Keeney, Dr. Linda Pursley, Dr. Jo Ann Gammel (now of Endicott College), Dr. Judith Beth Cohen, Dr. Salvatore Terrasi, Dr. Vivian Carlo, Dr. William Stokes, Dr. Jonathon Gillette, Constance Vrattos, Craig Garland, Joyce Traister, Marie-Maude Petit-Frere, Julianne Corey, and Karen Shea. I admire each of you immensely and deeply appreciate your generosity of time and guidance.

Third, I would like to recognize and thank my peers. Thanks to Viki Shayna for being a constant confidant, conspirator, and shoulder to cry on. Our weekly emails helped me stay sane in knowing that someone else was walking a similar path with similar challenges. In addition, I thank my past and present cohort-mates for their support, as well: Nicole Kras, Eric Hubert, Peter Lancia, Sarit Moskowitz, Ilana Jones, Rita Jarvis, Ty Fraga, Kay McCarthy, Justin Park, Sarah O'Dell, Kerry Patenaude, Desiree Miles, Corey Rose, Joni Johnson, and Meg San Souci. Also, I thank all of the former and current cohorts of our program for their words of wisdom, support, and commiseration during late night conversations in the dorms during the summer, dinners out, adventures around Boston, and conference presentations.

Lastly, I would like to thank the participants (for this dissertation research, and the pilot and pre-pilot studies which laid the groundwork for this dissertation) and their instructors who made this project possible. To the participants: Your stories have given our experience of learning to teach for social justice in the Deep South a voice and a place in the literature. To their instructors: Your dedication to the field and task of social justice education is inspiring. I cannot thank you all enough for allowing me into your experiences and classrooms.

Christen Victoria Warrington-Broxton

August, 2014

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Chapter One: Introduction

Experiences with “Otherness”: Personal and Professional Narratives

Personal Narrative

No matter how objectively empirical research is done, my life as a teacher and a graduate student learning to teach for social justice will affect the research I choose to conduct. I knew early in my career as an educator that I wanted to teach for constructive change in addition to teaching subjects students typically found emotionally and mentally challenging, like chemistry and mathematics. Though I had content knowledge in math and chemistry, I had no formal SJE training and no idea that an entire field of study and practice existed on the topic. I sought information and began learning about SJE and similar, connected fields while pursuing my master’s and current doctoral degree. Inevitably, friends and family asked me what I was studying. When asked, I always replied and explained if needed. This was usually when the conversation turned one of three ways: Family members and friends either showed interest in this new topic they had not heard of; they gave a short response, such as “interesting”, and would quickly change the subject; or they would begin arguing with me about the goal and worth of SJE.

As a White, non-Christian female, growing up in a working class poor family, I had numerous experiences with peers and family being anywhere from somewhat to extremely intolerant of varying from traditional values and norms, like not being Christian in the Bible Belt or being from a less financially prosperous family. In my experiences, those I encountered who were less accepting of “otherness” usually tended to also be strongly conservative in terms of social issues, religion, economics, and politics. For instance, my grandmother was a woman whom I admired for her resilience. Her own parents died before she was ten, she had raised six

children of her own while struggling with generational poverty her entire life, and weathered the early death of her husband, all while remaining a rock of stability and strength for our family. Yet, there was another side to my grandmother. Her intolerance of “otherness”, or difference, ran so deeply in her veins that she was suspicious of non-Christian beliefs, became angry with people who spoke other languages in her presence, and forebode her children and grandchildren from interracial relationships. Her ethnocentricism and racism, aspects of her personality I disagreed with strongly, were as much a part of her as the parts of her that I loved and admired.

Despite how differently she and I viewed “otherness”, we never talked about how different our beliefs were. Instead, we came together on what we did share: gardening, sewing, reading, and simple pleasures of life. Unfortunately, my grandmother’s good attributes were not all that her children - my mother, aunt, and uncles - learned from her. At times my relatives, in addition to peers, would verbally attack me, completely rejecting me at times, for being “other” to them. For some, difference was and still is an affront and any mention of my own differences or those of the students I went to college with or taught could be dealt with in the harshest of ways. Conversely, some friends and family members have been accepting, sometimes supportive, of my differing worldviews.

I was born in, raised in, and have remained in the Southern United States. Not just the South, but the Deep South: An area of the U.S. which is more socially and politically conservative than the rest of the South (Black & Black, 2012; Bullock III, 2010). Given that the South is already more socially and politically conservative than the rest of the U.S., I have come to know and accept that my home is a hotbed of U.S. conservatism. This reality has shaped me, my family, friends, and the way that we all respond to ideas that challenge the traditional ways of thinking we have been socialized to understand as truth. This reality also shaped several of the

teachers that I work with and how they react to my endeavors to do SJE research and to teach for social justice. Though my colleagues' perceptions and acceptance of me can and do affect me, my family and friends are closer and nearer to my heart. Who I am, my very identity, is wrapped up in my family, and at least partially defined by my relatives and friends. Their acceptance and rejection hold a different meaning for me than would that of teaching peers, not just as a teacher attempting to teach against the grain, but as a person who also lives against the grain in my everyday life.

Professional Narrative

In November of this academic year, I presented findings for the pilot of this dissertation research project at a conference (Warrington-Broxton, 2013). Paul (pseudonym), an educator who grew up in the same Deep Southern state as I did, attended a roundtable discussion which I led. As soon as I finished outlining the key details and findings of the pilot and opened the table for discussion, Paul seized the opportunity to share his own narrative. He said that when it came to the relationships he held with his own family members prior to and after obtaining a four year liberal arts education, his transformed worldviews amounted to “cultural suicide” (Paul, personal communication, November 6, 2013). As Paul described, he no longer had much in common with his family, which he explained to be somewhat stereotypically traditional and conservative. He shared with everyone at the table a heart wrenching lived experience of his family rejecting the change in him and his views, especially those he had regarding social justice and its necessary role in education. In only a few seconds, Paul had made all of the abstractions and theory I had discussed during the session salient to other attendees who had possibly never experienced or witnessed this phenomenon. Paul's story made it real.

The other presentation attendees - some from the Deep South and others not - listened to Paul as he shared his brief but poignant story. At that point, it occurred to me that while it was likely that the attendees had some interest in social justice since they were attending my presentation, they may not have shared Paul's experiences. Perhaps their own families and friends had no qualms with any transformations they may have undergone during their postsecondary educations. Maybe they had not transformed at all, were not as open about possible transformations, or maybe they were not close enough to their families for it to have been as serious of a matter as it was for Paul and others like him. Any of them could have even had the same experience, but felt uncomfortable sharing in such a public setting with strangers. It is impossible now to know their reasons for remaining silent about Paul's story. There are innumerable unique circumstances that could have shaped their reasons for not further analyzing that shared story. In that moment, as it had been in similar past discussions, it was clear that a deeper issue was at hand. Like a figure floating along in a Southern black water river, submerged and obscured by murky silt, it was obvious that something was happening there, just beneath the surface of the roundtable interaction. The exact details are unclear, but the presence undeniable.

As individuals learn and have their worldviews challenged and changed, something unique to each person happens. Not only is a change going on within the learners themselves as they transform, but also within their social support structures: family and friends-the people outside of their work places that they go home to and share their most intimate selves with, the people who have helped shape their very identities. Whether it be warm support, general ambivalence, or direct rejection, the families and friends of learners react along with the learner her or himself to postsecondary education, especially education for social justice, and the changes education may bring about in that individual. How these experiences of familial, peer,

and community support, ambivalence, and /or rejection affect the adult learner is the core experience that has inspired this dissertation research.

This study aimed to explore the familial influences on adults' perceived abilities to teach for social justice in the Deep South. The purpose of this narrative research project was to work with a sample of education doctoral students to investigate any possible influences their family members' and/or peers' social modeling have had on their perceptions. More specifically, perceptions relating to these doctoral students' abilities to put the social justice education (SJE) course theory they have learned in their programs into practice were analyzed. The study does not seek to discuss whether the sample of adults currently practice SJE, but what they think and feel about their ability to practice SJE after having taken several doctoral level courses related to and centered on SJE, and how their family and peers have influenced those feelings. It was expected that this research project would provide an adult learning lens to the task of learning to teach for social justice, and this expectation has been met. I have used a qualitative narrative methodology to shed light on the experiences of adults living and teaching in the Deep South, and the unique situations they encounter as they explore how teaching and learning can challenge the status quo. I purposefully chose six adult students who were working on completing their doctoral coursework in education programs at the same large, urban research university.

Overview of Chapter

This chapter provides an overview of the background and context of the study. Next, the problem will be framed, followed by the explicit purpose and questions that guide the research. I will then make researcher bias transparent by outlining my own assumptions and perceptions. To explain the contribution to literature this study aims to make, the rationale and significance of the research will also be detailed. Additionally, key terms and definitions will be bounded for the

context of this study. Finally, this chapter will close with a brief summary of the organization of the dissertation.

Context of Research: Education, the Great (Un)equalizer

In the United States (U.S.), the goal of education is simple: all children will be provided with a free and equal public education (Nieto & Bode, 2012). However, the target of equitable learning for all children can be missed, resulting in an opportunity gap (Welner & Carter, 2013, p. 3) between groups where privileged students often have access to more educational opportunities. Typically, educators focus on the achievement gap, which centers on the outcomes of learning. Issues like standardized test scores and how to raise scores on those high-stakes tests have become central problems and foci of K12 classroom learning (Nieto & Bode, 2012). This trend is troubling because low standardized test scores are frequently indicative of the deeper problem of inequitable learning opportunities for every child across the nation. Then, it is further problematic that equitable learning environments tend to be conflated with students being held to the same standardized tests across school systems which are not funded equally or given equal opportunities. The issue is that the values of the dominant culture (White, middle class, male, and so forth) are placed in positions of privilege in the education system, while cultures that are “other” to the dominant culture are placed at the margins of the education system (Howard, 2006; Nieto & Bode, 2012; Picower, 2012). This privilege at the institutional level results in the cultural institution of education in the U.S. serves as a form of social organization, whether done intentionally or not by dominant culture individuals, where the privileged and underprivileged tend to be sorted into and kept in their respective social positions (Gramsci, 2000). In his nationally acclaimed book documenting the racial and socioeconomic resegregation of K12

schools he witnessed, Kozol (2005) brings life to the ways by which the dominant culture uses schools to sort children of color and children of poverty away from their young counterparts.

With this in mind, learning outcomes are inevitably affected by the inputs which have gone into the education process. “Thinking in terms of ‘achievement gaps’ emphasizes the symptoms; thinking about unequal opportunity highlights the causes” (Welner & Carter, 2013, p. 3). When educators, administrators, and policymakers shift their focus from the achievement gap to the gaps in opportunities that cause the achievement gap, a more complete picture of the inequities present in the U.S. education system can become clearer. Once the inequities are addressed, it then becomes necessary to change education in a way that addresses these inequities. Policy change is assuredly one of the most significant ways that opportunity gaps can be transformed to be more equitable. Additionally, teacher education is another significant way that constructive change in the opportunity gap can take place.

Teaching and Teacher Education as Innately Political

Freire (1970) considered education to be a political endeavor taken on by educators. He said this because he believed education to be a social tool used by the dominant culture, or oppressors, to maintain a status quo of inequality. Social justice education (SJE) is an approach to teaching and learning that directly challenges dominant discourses and the status quo of inequity. According to Adams, Bell, & Griffin (2007), SJE “needs a theory of oppression” (p. 2) that helps teacher candidates learn about: (a) the pervasive and internalized nature and history of oppression; (b) the many different and intersecting –isms that reinforce power, hegemony, and oppression; (c) their own resistance to and consciousness of these issues; and (d) their sense of agency to take action.

Framing SJE in teacher education, Cochran-Smith (2004) established six core principles of SJE theory and practice. Most of her six principles, if not all, are echoed by multicultural education researchers (Banks & Banks, 2010; Gollnick & Chinn, 2006; Grant & Sleeter, 2007; Nieto & Bode, 2012) and by proponents of culturally responsive teaching (Ladson-Billings, 1994; Villegas & Lucas, 2002). In fact, the overlaps and interconnectedness of SJE, multicultural education, and culturally responsive teaching are apparent in the many conceptualizations of each. For instance, all three frameworks for teaching and learning highlight the significance of using students' culture, language, and lifestyles as resources that teachers can use to create teachable moments everyday (Cochran-Smith, 2004; Nieto & Bode, 2012; Villegas & Lucas, 2002). SJE, multicultural education, and culturally responsive teaching also promote teachers and students acting as agents of social change in their communities. With these similarities in mind, it is essential to note that I chose SJE for this study because of the explicit attention that is paid in this framework to social activism and acting as an agent of constructive, collaborative change in the community. There are many definitions present in the literature that explain exactly what SJE is (Ayers, Quinn, & Stovall, 2009; Picower, 2012; Zeichner, 2009). I chose to use Cochran-Smith's (2004) six principles of SJE with the affirmation that each principle is reinforced by these other conceptualizations of SJE, and because of the explicit focus on teacher education in this conceptualization.

The first principle of SJE promotes teachers building on what students come to school knowing (language, experiences, culture, and so forth). This means that teachers must overcome the tendency to see students of color or students who are socioeconomically disadvantaged as deficit. Second, teachers must start where students are rather than from a predetermined point (Cochran-Smith, 2004). Third, teachers must work with individuals, families, communities, and

peers. In this principle, the need to respect the cultures and values of students and their families is made apparent and necessary to effective teaching. A fourth principle of SJE calls for teachers to diversify their assessment. Portfolios, performances, and other varied measurements complement existing standardized assessment tools and honor the diverse ways in which individuals know and are gifted (Cochran-Smith, 2004). Fifth, Cochran-Smith (2004) outlines the characteristic call for educators to model social activism and critical, democratic dialogue about privilege, power, and oppression. Last, teachers must work to create and/or participate in learning communities. This requires teachers to have high expectations for students and themselves. Furthermore, it is important for teachers to work “from a sense of their own self-efficacy” (p. 66). Cochran-Smith’s (2004) conceptualization of SJE illuminates the reality that SJE is done socially in learning communities, requires extensive modeling by teacher educators and leaders, and requires at least some level of self-efficacy from teacher candidates.

A teacher’s beliefs about her or his capability to teach for social justice can be a significant component of whether that teacher chooses to do SJE in the classroom. There are many studies which outline the obstacles faced by teachers working to teach for justice which center on how students, principals, coworkers, parents, and even the teacher him or herself accept or reject a SJE learning framework. All of this acceptance and rejection can affect teachers’ social justice education self-efficacy (SJE self-efficacy), or their beliefs about their abilities to teach for social justice. With the heavy weight that acceptance and rejection can have on SJE self-efficacy, it is important to note that little research has been done on how the families and peers of teachers and teacher candidates affect SJE self-efficacy.

Conservatism in the Deep South: Cultural Narratives

Goodman (2011) insisted “resistance can be one of the most difficult aspects of educating about diversity and social justice” (p. 52). She described resistance as a reaction which “stems from fear and discomfort” (p. 51) with learning issues of social justice, as these issues tend to challenge long-held beliefs about the true nature of systemic oppression and inequities in society. Research on teachers’ experiences with their own resistance and the resistance of their coworkers and administration has been explored in SJE research literature (Picower 2009, 2011; Vaught & Castagno, 2008; Young, 2010, 2011). However, teachers’ own and that of their current or future workplaces may not be the only considerable sources of resistance they encounter in acknowledging and challenging power, privilege, and dominance in the education system and their communities. Resistance to a nontraditional or challenging idea can lead to the rejection of that idea, and this can happen with any person: teacher educators, teachers, students, coworkers, administrators, parents, and even teachers’ own friends and families.

In the month leading up to the 2012 United States Presidential elections, the *New York Times* (2012) hosted a scholarly debate consisting of contributors who specialize in Southern culture and politics, from universities across the South. These scholars did not argue whether the South is conservative, but instead argued *why* this region of the country is so much *more* conservative than the rest of the United States. Furthermore, the Deep South, which consists of five states (Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, and South Carolina) within the Southern region of the U.S., is known as being significantly more conservative than the rest of the South (Black & Black, 2012; Bullock III, 2010). It is noted that conservatism exists on a continuum of extreme to moderate. Not everyone who is conservative will believe and behave in the manner. However, in this study, when the word “conservative” was used, it referred collectively to modern social and economic conservatism in the U.S. as typically being aligned with traditional,

Christian values, deregulated free market enterprise, lower taxes, limited federal government oversight, and restricted immigration policies (Black & Black, 2012). Moreover, conservatism in the South is more complex than these few characteristics might suggest. For example, Black and Black (2012) analyzed the role that race has played in the South's enduring conservatism throughout the region's history, a truth that was also argued in the New York Times (2012) debate. Again, not all conservative people will be Christian or even consciously consider race when voting. However, the strong relationship between race, religion, and politics in the Southern U.S. are noted as markedly significant in this study.

With the reality of a long history of conservatism marked by racial tensions in the Deep South in mind, the influence of family members, and perhaps even peers, in adults' personal lives, may present significant challenges to adults' potential or current efforts to teach for social justice and their SJE self-efficacy. These challenges may or may not be explicitly directed at adults' learning or practicing SJE by their families through intentional and/or unintentional social modeling of various skills and/or mindsets. It was also hypothesized that the degree to which certain skills needed to practice SJE (particularly skills such as critical self-reflection, hunting of assumptions, instigating and participating in emotionally safe and critical dialogue, and so forth) were and continue to be modeled in teachers' lives by family and peers, and this modeling might influence adult learners' SJE self-efficacy.

Statement of Problem

A considerable amount of research analyzing the beliefs and attitudes of teachers in regards to the importance of and need for teaching for social justice has been conducted (Cochran-Smith, 2004; Ludlow, Enterline, & Cochran-Smith, 2008; Vaught & Castagno, 2008). There also exists a wealth of empirical studies conducted by teacher educators that shed light on

practices that support and impede effective teaching and learning for social justice in postsecondary classrooms (Choules, 2007; Enterline, Cochran-Smith, Ludlow, & Mitescu, 2009; Kaufmann, 2010; Tisdell, 2008). These studies tend to focus on teacher candidate dialogue and/or resistance to acknowledging power, privilege, and oppression at a societal level. While informative to the practice of adult education for social justice, these studies do not address supports and barriers that exist outside of the classroom in the community, family, workplace, or in future practice of teacher candidates.

In an action research critical case study, Young (2010) identified workplace factors which act as barriers to teaching for social justice. A lack of support for practice and deep-seated institutional racism were identified as barriers for teachers trying to practice culturally responsive teaching. In a narrative study, Mthethwa-Sommers (2012) analyzed the personal and professional experiences of eight expert social justice educators to uncover their motivations to teach for justice. Additionally, Picower (2011) followed several teacher candidates into their first year of teaching to examine the supports that she and they created to practice SJE (as they were taught in their undergraduate teacher education program). Picower worked closely with students in this qualitative grounded-theory study as a supporting advisor, documenting interviews that communicate new teachers' frustrations and successes. The trouble is there are still a few components missing from the SJE research dialogue on understanding the influence the family plays on those who are working to teach for social justice.

Some components missing from the conversation about SJE are: First, many studies tend to be told from the viewpoint of the teacher educator, trainer, or mentor. While several researchers make considerable efforts to include the voices of teacher candidates, I believe a significant portion of research power tends to remain unshared. Unshared power in the research

process is in a sense ironic considering these studies center on SJE theory and practice, which emphasizes the sharing of power with learners. Picower's (2011) study was an example of empirical evidence using teacher candidate voices as the central source of information. Picower (2011) did not imply that her participants were made part of the data analysis process or that power of knowledge creation went unshared to a certain degree. This certainly does not mean that power-sharing did not happen, only that it was not highlighted in the study.

Additionally, SJE literature is missing inquiry into participants' personal lives (such as family dynamics and relationships) or larger social groups and communities which may or may not support teachers' SJE practice. While the social nature of teaching and learning SJE and the process of modeling are examined implicitly in several studies, teacher candidates' SJE self-efficacy (their perceptions of their ability to teach for social justice) is typically not examined at all. There seems to be an overwhelming focus on how teachers and teacher candidates deal with SJE in professional settings (formal learning and teaching, like college courses and subsequent teaching experiences) or on whether they view SJE as a worthy cause (Esposito & Swain, 2009; Keintz, 2011; Ludlow, Enterline, & Cochran-Smith, 2008; Picower, 2009, 2011; Vaught & Castagno, 2008). Another concern is that the voices of teachers in the South are not nearly as prominent in SJE literature, especially teachers in the Deep South where states are more extreme in terms of social, political, and religious conservatism than in other regions of the United States (Black & Black, 2012; Bullock III, 2010). Some studies have been conducted in Southern settings (Kaufmann, 2010; Potts & Schlichting, 2011; Vescio, Bondy, & Poekert, 2009). However, many tend to focus on urbanized areas and/or the Northeast, West, and Midwest regions (Ludlow, Enterline, & Cochran-Smith, 2008; Enterline, Cochran-Smith, Ludlow, & Mitescu, 2009; Picower, 2011; Vaught & Castagno, 2008; Young, 2010, 2011).

The studies mentioned above add to the collective understanding of learning and teaching for social justice and they make known the inequitable, often deplorable conditions brought on by modern day racial and socioeconomic segregation that inner city students and teachers face (Kozol, 1991, 2005). Still, the voices of teachers in the Deep South teaching for social justice are largely missing. It is important that these voices be heard in the national SJE dialogue, especially considering that (much like the inner city schools often made the focus of much SJE research) the Deep South contains pockets of poverty, has experienced a huge increase in the Hispanic population, and has the Modern Black Belt (an area of the United States consisting of counties in which Black Americans outnumber White Americans) stretching throughout much of the region (Sumners & Stehouwer, 2012).

Some recent doctoral dissertations have done research to shed more light on teachers' perceived social justice self-efficacy. Fuxa (2012) examined the narratives of social justice educators to explore the reasoning behind their decisions. While this research did not focus on SJE self-efficacy beliefs as they are affected by the social modeling or family and peers, the study did highlight the importance of teachers reflecting on prior experiences. Fuxa's dissertation also spotlighted the importance of understanding reasoning behind actions, which indirectly explores cognitive modeling in SJE, a needed skill as mentioned previously. Additionally, Keintz (2011) connected teacher candidate attitudes concerning the importance of SJE to their perceived training and efficacy. Though her study was not done in a Southern setting, it did show promise that the conversation concerning teacher candidates' self-efficacy had begun.

Research Purpose and Questions

The primary purpose of this study was to explore the social learning experiences and influences on adults' perceived abilities to teach for social justice in the Deep South. Family and

peer influences through prior and continued social modeling is a concern, especially for adult educators, because adults are bringing issues with them to the learning experience that appear to remain largely unaddressed in the university classroom (Knowles, Holton III, & Swanson, 2011). It was made clear in the previous section that much research has been done on teachers' attitudes and perceptions about the perceived value in the practice of SJE. However, little research has been done on teachers' perceptions of their own abilities and what they believe may act as familial social supports and/or barriers to their current or potential SJE practice. This is true, especially in a Southern setting where traditional values and socially conservative politics saturate public and personal life.

From the previously mentioned considerations of gaps in SJE and teacher education theory and literature, a primary research question was developed. What are the familial influences on adults' perceived abilities to teach for social justice in the Deep South? Secondary questions were also developed to explore a wider range of influential forces in adult learners' experiences and theories which might inform new insights into the unique context of learning and teaching for social justice in the Deep South. How do other experiences, such as those concerning peers and/or formal training, influence adults' perceived abilities to teach for social justice in the Deep South? How can an adult learning perspective inform adult and teacher educators about the role family and other social influences play in shaping adults' perceived abilities to teach for social justice in the Deep South? What implications do these research questions and findings have for the fields of teacher education, professional development, and adult education, especially in the context of the Deep South?

Researcher Perspectives and Assumptions

Assumptions about Reality

As a teacher and learner, the most significant assumptions that I brought to this study are those that stem from my prior and current experiences as a nontraditional woman from the Deep South who also remains and teaches in that region. At heart, I am an outspoken agent of change, and this aspect of my character has proven difficult at times for some to manage. As mentioned, I have experienced rejection from family members and friends more frequently than from coworkers as a result of my liberal, nontraditional lifestyle choices, in addition to my beliefs that teaching is a political endeavor which ought to be undertaken with the intention of transforming society and education to be more inclusive, democratic, and equitable.

As a result of these experiences, I brought biases and assumptions with me to the study, and it is vital to the trustworthiness of the study that I disclosed them. As a result of my experiences living and teaching in the Deep South, I first assumed in this study that teachers' own resistance and that of their current or future workplaces may not be the only considerable sources of resistance they encounter in acknowledging and challenging power, privilege, and dominance in the education system and their communities. What is more, I assumed that the influence of family members, and perhaps even peers in adults' personal lives and communities, may present significant challenges to adults' social justice self-efficacy and their potential or current SJE efforts. Furthermore, I assumed this to be especially true in the Deep South where the reality of a long history of conservatism marked by racial tensions plays a major role in legislation and education policy.

Since I brought these assumptions about the realities of teaching and learning for social justice in the Deep South to the study, it was essential for me to work purposefully to ensure trustworthiness. This means that during data collection, analysis, and synthesis I had to work

constantly to address my own biases, check for disconfirming information, and allow for the possibility that my own assumptions and hypotheses were wrong.

Assumptions about Knowing

As a female researcher, educated as a chemist, teacher, and a justice worker, my vision of knowing was described accurately by Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, and Tarule's (1997) epistemological category of constructed knowledge. They describe constructed knowledge as "a position in which women view all knowledge as contextual, experience themselves as creators of knowledge, and value both subjective and objective strategies for knowing" (p. 15). This has many implications for this study.

First, this epistemological frame provided equitable and balanced emphasis to emotions and rationality when seeking greater understandings of contextual realities. Second, I assumed that learning is a social construction best effected in critical, emotionally safe, and democratic learning communities (Cochran-Smith, 2004; Nieto, 2010; Villegas & Lucas, 2002). Central to social constructivism is the idea that "reality is socially, culturally, and historically constructed" (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008, p. 8). As a result, interpretations of reality (research) are situated in a social, cultural, and historical context as well (Patton, 1996). Reality is complex, not always understood easily or holistically when implementing quantitative methods. With this in mind, it is important for researchers and participants to work to understand the context of social phenomena and the value-laden nature of teaching, learning, and research inquiry (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008). This means knowledge, as it is gained through empirical study, is shaped by both participants and researchers. I planned to take on the work of the social constructivist researcher, grappling with the subjectivity and multiplicity of my own and participants' ways of creating

meaning from lived experiences. The positionality of the participants was a central focus, while my own positionality was made an important, but secondary consideration.

Next, I assumed in this study that reality is socially, culturally, historically, and politically constructed and situated. A critical theoretical frame of reference is indispensable to building a foundational social constructivist perspective. It was my belief that knowledge creation (research) and the systematic sharing and analysis of knowledge (teaching and learning) are both influenced and shaped by politics, the dominant culture, and an inequitable status quo. The privilege and power maintained by the dominant culture in society results in the marginalization of many groups (Brookfield, 2005; Freire, 1970; Nieto & Bode, 2012), especially in research and knowledge creation (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008). In this study, the dominant culture was defined as male, middle class, White, heterosexual, Protestant Christian, and able bodied and minded (Minnich, 2005, Nieto & Bode, 2012).

Considering the systematic marginalization of numerous groups of people in society and research, advocacy and empowerment became central to my job as a researcher. For these reasons, I worked to ensure participants' voices are heard. This was done in effort to increase the potential for participants' and my own critical consciousness to be raised throughout the course of the study (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008, p. 9). By using a narrative method of data collection and analysis that is participatory in nature, I ensured participants' voices were heard. What is more, elements of a transformative (Mertens, 2010) approach were also taken in order to address power relations (in the next section of this dissertation and during data collection and analysis); discuss issues of positionality (like race, social class, gender, sexuality, and so forth); and, to some extent, challenge the status quo of truth seeking (research) and truth communication (teaching and learning).

Rationale and Significance of Research

The significance of this study was twofold. First, it was important that this study begin a conversation that is missing in the adult learning literature. Familial social modeling and the identities that were formed by these experiences across the lifespan may have influenced how adults learned to teach for social justice and their willingness to practice SJE. These influences may have affected adults' self-efficacy beliefs concerning their own abilities to do SJE in their own classrooms. It was important to begin a dialogue in the adult learning literature regarding this matter as it may have an impact on adult educator practice in the social justice education classroom.

Second, it was important that this study employ SJE tactics of working to challenge the status quo. This is why I chose a social constructivist research approach to a narrative methods inquiry. It was true that due to the current hegemonic and patriarchal nature of "good" research, I inevitably had more power as the researcher in making decisions. I designed the study, I determined the questions to be asked and answered, and I ultimately decided what evidence was published and not. However, it was vital that I shared as much power as possible so that the traditional roles of researcher and "subject" could be challenged and learning opportunities provided for participants, me, and consumers of research. It was also important that the voices of the participants, their lived experiences, and how those experiences were perceived and storied exist as the central sources of information. From this information, new understandings concerning the implications of learning to teach for social justice in the conservative Deep South were explored.

The interview questions and the follow up member checks provided participants with opportunities to critically self-reflect on their assumptions, teaching practices, and how these

have been shaped by their experiences. Moreover, member checks gave participants the ability to confirm or disconfirm interpretations made during data analysis, especially considering that they were given their complete narrative and offered the chance to make changes if they wished (most made only small corrections). As a result of these efforts, a central tenet of this study was the significance of interrogating and directly challenging “a general unquestioned acceptance of ‘edifices of truth and knowledge’ in the unwitting reproduction of systems of oppression through research practices” (Schoorman & Bogotch, 2010, p. 262).

Limitations of the Study

Adult graduate students learning to teach for social justice are not abundant in the Deep South. This is especially true for me since I do not currently teach in any school districts, colleges, or universities, but with a for-profit, remediation-centered education agency. It was then necessary to negotiate access to this population of adult learners, and this has restricted the sample size. This study employed a small sample of participants, which limited the generalizability and transferability of the findings. Conclusions drawn in this study cannot be applied to other adult graduate students of education. Accepting that, a small, contextual sample was utilized intentionally to highlight the situated nature of adults’ lives and therefore their ways of knowing and learning. Also, since the participant sample in this study consists of only one person of color, one male, and no people who came from poverty-stricken or working class poor families, the sample population is not as diverse as I hoped it would be. The voices of people of color, males, and low socioeconomic status are not as prominent in this study as those of White, middle-class females. Finally, due to my own financial limitations, I was limited by time constrictions and unable to spend additional time interviewing and member checking past the

few months during which this study took place, beginning in August and ending in March of the 2014-2015 academic year.

Key Terminology and Definitions

Constructivist Research Paradigm: A model of research assumptions that insist learning and knowledge creation are socially constructed by people and that there is no one objective reality. Instead, the world, reality, and research can be understood from multiple subjective perspectives and research is inevitably influenced by the values and beliefs of both researchers, participants, and previous knowledge used in conducting research (Mertens, 2010).

Critical Reflection: The act of searching for and exposing the innate power dynamics of relationships between people, ideas, and institutions in addition to hunting and uncovering hegemonic assumptions. Critical thinking follows the line of critical theory which emerged from the Frankfurt School of Critical Social Theory and embodies the tradition of seeking out greater understandings of power, oppression, and hegemony in society and institutions (Brookfield, 2000).

Critical Self-Reflection: The act of searching for and exposing power dynamics in one's own life and personal relationships in addition to hunting and uncovering hegemonic assumptions one perpetuates and/or falls victim to. Critical reflection is not always on the self; therefore, critical self-reflection indicates a more personal endeavor.

Deep South: A region of the United States (U.S.), including Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, and South Carolina, that is typically more traditional and conservative in terms of politics, religion, and accepted social norms (Black & Black, 2012; Bullock III, 2010).

Dialogue: The encounter between people, mediated by the world as they work to name the world (identify oppression and power in society, systems, and relationships) and thus

transform the world through united reflection and action, or praxis. Dialogue involves love for the “other” and does not oppress or dominate others or the self (Freire, 1970).

Diverse/Diversity: Lacking in heterogeneity, especially in terms of the educational setting, of race, socioeconomic status (SES), gender, ethnicity, language, ability, presence and/or absence of religious affiliations, appearance, sexuality, age, and/or any other identifying social classification.

Dominant Culture: The group within a society that typically establishes accepted behavior and norms. In the context of the U.S. the dominant culture is typically defined as male, middle class, White, heterosexual, Protestant Christian, and able bodied and minded (Minnich, 2005, Nieto & Bode, 2012).

Equity and Equality: A real possibility that all participants in a given situation, relationship, or system will have the unfettered opportunity of achieving equal *outcomes*, rather than simply being given equal *resources* alone. This contrasts with the concept of equality in that equality provides all participants in a given situation, relationship, or system with equal resources and opportunities despite differing beginning points of each participant, often ending in unequal outcomes for each individual (Nieto & Bode, 2012, p. 9).

Frames of Reference: Assumptions that people base their actions, emotions, and ways of thinking on. Frames of reference are comprised of habits of mind (assumptions through which people filter their experiences) and the worldviews which are created as a result. Habits of mind can be derived from culture, language, personality, or religion (Mezirow, 2000; Mezirow & Taylor, 2009).

Hegemony: “An idea that understands the maintenance of political control as involving adult education and learning. It describes the way that people learn to accept as natural and in their own best interest an unjust social order [sic]” (Brookfield, 2005, p. 43).

Identity: The many group or social organizers that individuals participate in and use to define themselves and one another. These groups can include gender, religion, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, ability, language, and any other forms of social organizing that come together to shape individual, family, and cultural identities. One person can hold multiple, hybrid, and conflicting identities that are ever-changing over time (Nieto & Bode, 2012). Identity also refers to sameness and uniqueness (Tennant, 2012, p. 7).

Intersectionality: The interaction of multiple cultural identities of difference and sameness that come together to create a unique experience of oppression and/or privilege (Hardiman, Jackson, & Griffin, 2007).

Mastery Experiences: Experiences in which individuals gain a greater perceived self-efficacy through the successful testing out of new roles, skills, and/or behaviors, often those learned during social modeling/observational learning (Bandura, 1986, 2012).

Narrative Inquiry/Methods: A qualitative approach to research that has roots in the humanities and social sciences. Most generally, narrative methods focus on information and interpretations that can be gathered from analyzing stories told by people, whether verbally or in writing. Though narrative can exist in several forms, an analysis of narratives is used in this study as a form of data analysis in which paradigm thinking is used to “create descriptions of themes that hold across stories or taxonomies of types of stories” (Creswell, 2007, p. 54). To some degree, narrative analysis is also used so that storied events of participants are collected, analyzed, and restoried with a plot line.

Self-Efficacy: A person's belief in her or his own ability to take action, also referred to as mastery expectations (Bandura, 1995). Self-efficacy is notably different from self-esteem, which consists of a person's judgment of his or her own self-worth (Bandura, 2012).

Social Cognitive Theory: A social theory of learning that assumes people are not controlled entirely by their inner selves nor are they driven solely by outside forces. Instead, people are assumed to have inborn abilities to self-reflect and effect the environment around them as their environments can also continually affect them and their behavior (Bandura, 1986).

Social Justice Education (SJE): A field of scholarly inquiry, teaching, learning, and working within communities that enables those in teaching positions to engage on three levels. SJE teachers will actively address and analyze the societal injustices, -isms (such as classism and racism, among others), and the hegemony by which they are perpetuated, purposefully integrate these concepts into content and teaching practices, and willingly act as an agent of change outside of the classroom. (Picower, 2012).

Social Justice Education Self-Efficacy (SJE self-efficacy): A person's belief in his or her own ability to teach for social justice.

Social Modeling: Also called observational learning, social modeling is simply learning from observed behavior. Behavior can be modeled and observed in three distinct forms: 1) live models, in-person observation of a real person modeling a skill or behavior, 2) verbal models, hearing a skill or behavior being described by a model, and 3) symbolic models, media sources (like television, radio, music, books, and so forth) depicting real or fictional people modeling skills or behaviors. Social modeling (observational learning) is described as one of the most powerful ways in which a person can learn as it is inextricably tied to the development of mastery skills, perceived self-efficacy, and motivation (Bandura, 1986, 2012).

Systemic Oppression: The dominant groups' exercise of political and economic power in societal institutions. This exercise of power creates policies and practices which marginalize groups and discriminate based on race, ethnicity, and gender, among others (Nieto & Bode, 2012).

Transformative Research Paradigm: A model of research assumptions that explicitly highlights the political nature of knowledge creation, assumptions about reality, and research. In this research paradigm, researchers address issues of power, oppression, and marginalization. Typically, researchers will situate themselves and research participants as equals in an attempt to bring about individual and social transformation (Mertens, 2010).

Transformative Learning: A theory of adult learning based on the assumption that adults come into the classroom with unique and highly varied sets of assumptions about themselves and the world as they have been derived from their lived experiences with society, institutions, and other people that are typically more varied and numerous than those of children and adolescents. It is also a process in which students and educators participate together in reflective discourse (dialogue), critical reflection, and critical self-reflection (Mezirow, 2000). The process requires students and teachers hunt, discuss, and critically reflect on taken-for-granted assumptions so that learners may transform their frames of reference to be “more inclusive, discriminating, reflective, open, and emotionally able to change” (Mezirow & Taylor, 2009, p. 22).

Triadic Reciprocal Causation: As part of SCT, the assumption that an individual's personal factors (personality, cognitive abilities and development, emotional intelligence, and so forth), behavior, and environments all interact with and affect one another in a reciprocal manner, acting as determinants of one another (Bandura, 1986).

Organization of the Dissertation

Chapter one has discussed the background and context of the study, teaching as a political endeavor, personal and societal narratives on conservatism in the Deep South, the statement of the research problem, research objectives and questions, research perspectives concerning reality and knowledge, the rationale and significance of the study, study limitations, and key terms and definitions. Then, chapter two provides a theoretical and conceptual review of literature relevant to the study context. Chapter three then provides the study methodology including the chosen method of data analysis and the manner by which voices have been developed. Next, chapter four will present in-depth narratives of each participant that honor the context of each person's lived experience. Chapter five will then outline the findings gathered from participants' narratives. Finally, chapter six will put forward conclusions drawn from the narratives, implications of the study for the fields of adult learning, social justice education, teacher education, and professional development/continued teacher education, and will conclude with recommendations for future research and reflections on the research process.

Chapter Two: Review of Selected Literature

Overview of Chapter

In the previous introduction chapter, several topics were outlined: the background and context of the study, teaching as a political endeavor, personal and societal narratives on conservatism in the Deep South, the statement of the research problem, research objectives and questions, research perspectives concerning reality and knowledge, the rationale and significance of the study, study limitations, and key terms and definitions.

This chapter offers a brief historical narrative of the beginnings of social justice in United States (U.S.) education to spotlight how deeply the belief in the great importance of educational equity runs in the American cultural narrative. After this short historical narrative, reasoning for this study centering on social justice education (SJE) will be outlined. This is done by covering societal narratives of injustice, especially in the Deep Southern region of the U.S. Also, SJE will be approached from an adult learning perspective in order to place attention on the potential, innate risks of learning and teaching for social justice. The potential for transformation and the social learning aspect of SJE will be discussed and considered as unique perspectives that highlight issues for adults learning to teach for justice and the teacher educators who model SJE in terms of their own identities as they are challenged by the SJE process. Then, SJE will be situated as a social learning process in which social modeling and self-efficacy are key influential factors in adult learners' commitment to SJE in their own classrooms and personal lives. Framing SJE this way will highlight the role of the family in adults' perceptions about learning and social justice, and will point out the significance of this study.

Once the importance and risks of SJE and familial social modeling influence on adults' learning experiences in SJE have been outlined, present-day conceptualizations and

manifestations of SJE as an explicit field of teaching and learning will be analyzed. Fields and theories of practice that are similar to and/or overlap with SJE will also be cited. From the concepts of SJE and some of their criticisms, a working definition of SJE will be developed in this chapter. Finally, this chapter will draw attention to discourses which appear to be missing either in part or completely from the larger SJE narrative of research and scholarship. By detailing missing narratives in SJE literature, the unique gap which this study aims to fill is underscored.

Brief Historical Narrative of Social Justice in American Education

From an historical perspective, U.S. public education owes much of its existence to people who were working for social justice (Boyles, Carusi, & Attick, 2009; Pulliam & Van Patten, 2007). For instance, during the 1700 and early 1800's Thomas Jefferson held numerous roles in the formation of the United States. Among these roles was that of the education advocate. Jefferson insisted that education was vital to a democratic society and every citizen ought to be educated (Pulliam & Van Patten, 2007). Though his call for education to be available to all people was not answered in his time (prohibiting the attendance of people of color and women), Jefferson did attempt to pass several different pieces of legislation and was responsible for opening the first state university (University of Virginia).

Furthermore, the general, modern conceptualization of American public education grew during the 1800's largely out of the common school ideal developed by Horace Mann, the first Secretary of Education for Massachusetts (Pulliam & Van Patten, 2007). Mann believed that all citizens ought to be educated. He also insisted that education be free, funded by taxes, and that this formal learning framework could provide a means of upward social mobility. Mann's plan served a social justice agenda that centered on social class tensions, unequal distribution of

resources, and socioeconomic equity. While his framework has served as much of the basis for American public education, Mann's education platform also perpetuated several hegemonic narratives that still echo in school halls across the nation. European/Anglo-centered values and knowledge are still often viewed as the only valid sources of knowing, and standardization and tracking continue to perpetuate inequity and punish students' and teachers' individuality (Boyles, Carusi, & Attick, 2009). From the sustained pursuit of more just educational opportunities and the hegemonic societal narratives that continue to haunt that pursuit, a field of learning and teaching, known as social justice education (SJE), developed.

Social Justice Education is Necessary

Societal Narratives of Injustice

As outlined in the prior section, social justice has been a major concern for U.S. scholars and leaders, even before the official founding of the country itself if the educational strides of revolutionaries such as Thomas Jefferson are considered. The field of adult education is no exception. Interestingly, adult education is grounded in many of the same ideals as SJE. Founding adult education theorist Eduard Lindeman (1926) saw adult learning as a process that: challenges "static concepts of intelligence" (p. 27), challenges the status quo, is based on the experiences of learners, and resists the "rigid uncompromising requirements of authoritative, conventionalized institutions of learning" (p. 28). These sentiments clearly reflect those of Dewey (1938) and Freire (1970), authors who are common sources of theoretical inspiration in social justice and adult education theories. Both Dewey (1938) and Freire (1970) insist that education be based on experience and defy traditional lecture models.

What is more, both persisted that teachers engage students as active participants in the co-construction of knowledge (opposed to passive recipients of information). Furthermore, both

encouraged an active challenging of the dominant culture not only as an individual endeavor but importantly in the formal learning environment. Progressing with this logic, if Arnett's (2000) emerging adults (18-25) are included in the definition of "adult", a new statement can be made about adult learning: Teacher education is adult learning. Continuing along this line of reasoning, if teacher education is adult education, and adult education is a form of social justice education, then clearly it follows that teacher education holds strong potential as a process of educating adults for social justice. For this reason, it is judicious to analyze oppression and power in education, allowing this research to defend the necessity for studying teacher education for social justice and outline how endeavors to promote SJE in teacher education are affecting adult learners, more specifically in the context of the U.S. Deep South.

Freire (1970) considered education to be a political endeavor taken on by educators because education is used (knowing and unknowingly) as a social tool that privileges the dominant culture and marginalizes cultures that are "other". Scholars (Grant & Sleeter, 2007; Howard, 2006; Kozol, 1991, 2005; Nieto & Bode, 2012; Picower, 2012) detailed several ways in which the status quo in the U.S. makes it harder for marginalized groups to be successful in their learning. Educational inequalities are perpetuated by tracking, standardized testing, merit-based teacher pay and punishment, unequal school funding, anti-union measures, lack of diversity training in teacher education, biases and deficit views of teachers and administrators, and many other troubling trends in policy and practice. SJE is an approach to teaching and learning that directly challenges dominant discourses.

U.S. dominant culture is typically described most simply as White, middle-class, and masculine (Hayes & Flannery, 2000; hooks, 1994, 2000; Minnich, 2005). However, the status quo is maintained by placing value on more than three characteristics. The able-minded and

bodied (Gollnick & Chinn, 2006), those who speak standard English, have no accents, and are not only White, but American-born (Nieto & Bode, 2012) are cited as characteristics privileged by the dominant culture. Being Christian (Howard, 2006) and heterosexual (Adams, Blumenfeld, Castaneda, Hackman, Peters, & Zuniga, 2012) is also favored as “normal” and “acceptable” in the U.S. Yet, it is important to mention that dominant groups maintain control through the exercise of power, both economically and politically (Nieto & Bode, 2012). For example, proportionately there are more people of color imprisoned in the U.S. than White people, and there is a greater risk of death among the working poor who do not make enough money to afford health insurance (Smiley & West, 2012). Just as is true for the legal system or the healthcare system, the education system is marked by injustice, hegemony, and a struggle for increased equity.

According to the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) (2012), school teachers in the U.S. are 83% White and 76% female. Teachers have become only slightly more racially diverse (down 1%) but slightly more female (up 1%) since the turn of the millennium (2012). All the while, student diversity in all regions of the country continues to increase (Gollnick & Chinn, 2006; Grant & Sleeter, 2007, 2011; Howard, 2006; Nieto & Bode, 2012; Villegas & Lucas, 2002a). Therefore, as students become more and more diverse, the teacher population remains mostly female, White, and middle class. As a result, students of color rarely, if ever, see teachers who look like them and teachers often know very little, if anything, about several of the students sitting in their classrooms.

Moreover, systemic racism and classism (just to name two –isms) are serious problems that inhibit student learning in the classroom. For example, inequitable school funding heavily influenced by property taxes keeps schools in the poorest of states and districts from being able

to afford to hire highly qualified teachers certified to teach in the content areas they are assigned (Gorski, 2013; Nieto & Bode, 2012). Proportionately, students of color tend to be punished for being too active and diagnosed with learning disabilities more frequently than their White counterparts (Nieto & Bode, 2012). Possibly, the single biggest measures by which U.S. students are judged (standardized tests), are race and class biased (Gorski, 2013). Gorski (2013) cites the example that students of poverty are frequently given vocabulary questions concerning activities their families cannot afford like water skiing and boating. From this example, it is clear that students of poverty and students of color are not only disadvantaged by systemic classism and racism, but they are also being punished with lower test scores, less educational opportunities, and less life chances for success and upward social class movement based on circumstances far beyond their own control.

Furthermore, in a recent study analyzing data from multiple studies and government research, Orfield, Kucsera, & Siegel-Hawley (2012) found public schools in the U.S. have actually *resegregated*. They argued that public schools have become more segregated by race and socioeconomic status since desegregation laws were rolled back and counteracted in the last four decades (pp. 3-6). This means that students of color and students of low socioeconomic status are often nearly or completely isolated in schools while White and/or middle class students are moved into other school districts by their parents (Glenn, 2012; Kozol, 2005). This national trend is exacerbated in urban city centers where many schools have little to no White students and many students live in poverty-stricken neighborhoods (Glenn, 2012; Howard, 2006; Kozol, 2005; Orfield, Kucsera, & Siegel-Hawley, 2012). Still, the resegregation of schools is persistent across the U.S. regardless of town or city population size.

Nevertheless, the fact that many teachers are culturally different from many of their students is not the core problem. Rather, the hitch is that only nineteen states in the U.S. (including the District of Columbia) require preservice teachers to take diversity education courses for licensure (Miller, Strosnider, & Dooley, 2000). Consequently, many undergraduate teacher education programs in U.S. higher education institutions may not be adequately preparing teacher candidates to work productively and effectively with racially and socioeconomically diverse student populations. Additionally, Miller, Strosnider, & Dooley (2000) found that even of those states which require diversity training, many states are not clear about what exactly is required or whether teacher candidates in all content areas and at all levels are being required to have the same training (some states require diversity training at the elementary but not secondary level) (p. 18). It is clear that many teachers in the U.S. are possibly not receiving adequate diversity training designed to equip them to effectively teach all students in the diverse classrooms they are likely to enter.

Inadequate diversity training for a majority White, female teaching population mixed with racially and/or socioeconomically segregated schools creates an unfavorable combination that has unfortunate outcomes. Orfield, Kucsera, & Siegel-Hawley (2012) asserted that resegregation of public schools presents several troubling limits to education: “Less qualified teachers, high levels of teacher turnover, less successful peer groups and inadequate facilities and learning materials” (p. 6). What is more, the national gap between the test scores of Black and White students (NCES, 2009) and Hispanic and White students (NCES, 2011) has remained relatively unchanged from 2003 to 2011. The achievement gaps have barely budged, just as the demographics of the teacher population despite all of the education legislation that has been passed in the last decade by Presidents Bush and Obama. Simply put, diverse students are not

receiving equitable opportunities for learning in schools. This means there is not a gap in achievement, but a gap in the opportunities available to every student in the U.S. (Gorski, 2013; Nieto & Bode, 2012).

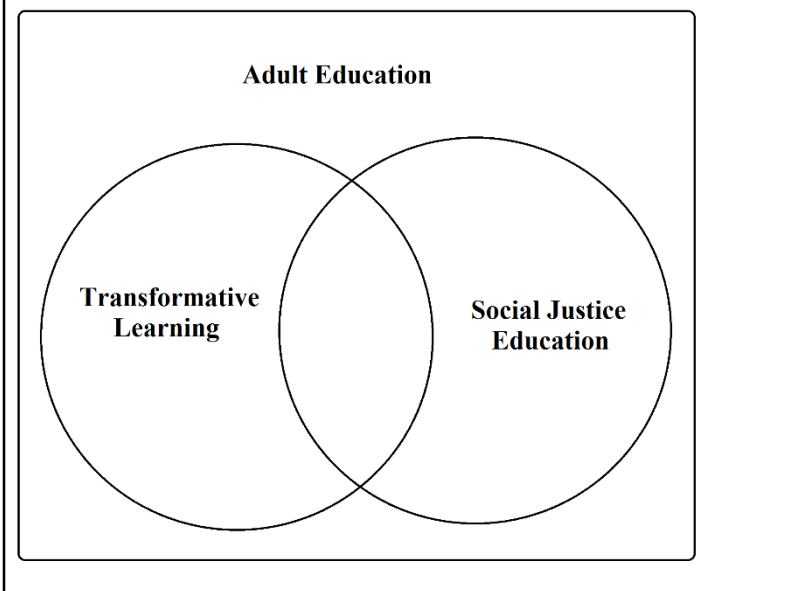
The negative effects of the educational opportunity gap in the U.S. are especially apparent in urban and rural school districts where diverse student populations and students of poverty are more prevalent than in suburban districts (Kozol, 2005). Again, this gap can be largely attributed to systemic forms of racism and classism, to name only two major systemic - isms. These systemic forms of oppression are just as apparent, if not more so at times, in the Deep Southern U.S. To reiterate, the politics of Deep South are marred by perpetual racial tensions and chronic social class struggles (Black & Black, 2012; Bullock III, 2010). This is particularly true in the Black Belt (an area of the U.S. consisting of counties in which Black Americans outnumber White Americans) (Sumners & Stehouwer, 2012), which stretches through much of the Deep South. When taking into account the reality that education policy is created in the political process, it becomes clear just how serious the educational opportunity gap can be in the Deep South. Systemic racism and classism clearly affect Deep Southern politics, thereby also affecting education policy and opportunities. From this understanding a fuller, more representative narrative of the unique struggles faced by education reforms and movements in favor of social justice can be storied.

Potential Risks of Social Justice Education: An Adult Learning Perspective

As highlighted in the beginning of this chapter, social justice has been a major concern for American scholars and leaders even before the official founding of the country itself. The field of adult education is an example of the continued pursuit for equitable educational opportunities for all because the field is grounded in many of the same ideals as SJE. Like many

SJE theorists and practitioners, founding adult education theorist Eduard Lindeman (1926) placed great value on challenging seemingly immovable standards of knowledge and knowing, challenging the status quo, the experiences of learners, and resisting authoritative learning environments. In this section, SJE will be described as a framework for teaching and learning that has strong potential to overlap with transformational learning. Then, transformational learning and SJE both fall under the wider category of adult education, as shown below.

Figure 2.1. Conceptualization of SJE within Adult Education



Of course, SJE can and does exist in K12 education. Also, not all SJE is transformative learning since not all people taking SJE courses will experience transformations in their perspectives. Therefore, it is important to note that Figure 2.1 shows SJE as it is situated within adult education for purposes of this study. The following section will outline critical theory, thinking, and reflection as necessary skills of transformative learning. Since critical theory, thinking, and reflection are also needed in learning and teaching for social justice, it follows that SJE has strong potential to be a transformative learning process for adult students.

Transformative learning, and SJE as a direct result, will also be described as identity work that has the potential to support and/or challenge learners' worldviews, relationships, and identities.

Social justice education as a transformative learning process. Transformative learning theory is “uniquely adult” (Taylor, 2000, p. 288). Mezirow (as cited in Taylor, 2000) cites transformative learning as an adult learning theory because transformative learning centers itself on the assumption that adults come into the classroom with unique and highly varied sets of assumptions about themselves and the world as they have been derived from their lived experiences with society, institutions, and other people. That is not to say younger learners do not have similar sets of assumptions, only that adults are more likely to have already defined themselves and their worlds in ways that have been shaped largely by their typically more varied and numerous life experiences.

Mezirow (1990, 2000) proffers transformative learning as a process in which students and educators participate together in reflective discourse (dialogue), critical reflection, and critical self-reflection. Also, the process requires students and teachers to hunt and work to understand and critically reflect on their assumptions so that they may transform their frames of reference to be “more inclusive, discriminating, reflective, open, and emotionally able to change” (Mezirow & Taylor, 2009, p. 22). Throughout his study of transformation, Mezirow (2000) noticed that transformative learning tended to happen in phases (see List 2.1), though learners did not always go through those phases in the same order (see Appendix A for a hypothetical real world scenario of the ten Phases).

List 1

Mezirow's Ten Phases of Transformative Learning

1. A disorienting dilemma

2. Self-examination
3. A critical assessment of assumptions
4. Recognition of a connection between one's discontent and the process of transformation
5. Exploration of options for new roles, relationships, and action
6. Planning a course of action
7. Acquiring knowledge and skills for implementing one's plan
8. Provisional trying of new roles
9. Building competence and self-confidence in new roles and relationships
10. Reintegration into life on the basis of conditions dictated by new perspective (Mezirow & Taylor, 2009, p. 19)

Regardless of the order in which a learner passes through the phases of transformation, she or he must be able to critically assess his or her assumptions before a frame of reference can be transformed. Frames of reference, as defined by Mezirow & Taylor (2009), are assumptions that people base their actions, emotions, and ways of thinking on. Frames of reference are comprised of habits of mind (assumptions through which people filter their experiences) and the worldviews which are created as a result (Mezirow, 2000). Habits of mind are derived from culture, language, personality, or religion (as examples) (Mezirow, 2000; Mezirow & Taylor, 2009). For instance, a habit of mind could be patriarchy and the resulting view point could be that public displays of emotions exhibit weakness and irrationality. Again, the primary goal of transformative learning is for learners to critically examine their taken for granted assumptions about truth and reality so that they may broaden their understandings of the intersecting worlds in which they live. Considering this, it is prudent to analyze what critical reflection and self-reflection entail so that the challenges presented to learners can be more fully detailed.

Mezirow's theory of transformative learning has long been closely associated with Stephen Brookfield's work and framing of critical thinking and reflection (Mezirow, 1990; Mezirow, 2000; Mezirow & Taylor, 2009). According to Brookfield (2005), critical theory operates on the basis of three assumptions: (a) systemic oppression exists in industrialized countries; (b) the status quo is perpetuated by the dominant culture so that it seems "normal, natural, and inevitable...heading off potential challenges" (p. viii); and (c) individuals and groups must understand the status quo in order to change it. Critical theory serves as the basis for the conceptualization of critical thinking and reflection that both Brookfield (2005, 2012, 2013) and Mezirow (1990, 2000) utilize. Brookfield (2012) defines critical thinking as "a process of hunting assumptions-discovering what assumptions we hold and others hold, and then checking to see how much sense those assumptions make" (p. 24). The process of hunting and checking assumptions is frequently accomplished in a social setting using a unique form of dialogue that Mezirow (2000) calls reflective discourse. Reflective discourse involves "searching for a common understanding and assessment of the justification of an interpretation or belief" (pp. 10-11). Brookfield (2012) explains that individuals can use critical thinking to make decisions with more evidence so that they stand a better chance of achieving the outcomes they aspire to. Critical reflection on assumptions is a valuable skill because assumptions are seldom right or wrong (Brookfield, 2012). Instead, assumptions are usually contextually appropriate or inappropriate for a particular person or group in a given instance. This is why Mezirow (2000) describes the transformative learning process as "transforming a problematic frame of reference to make it more dependable in our adult life by generating opinions and interpretations that are more justified" (p. 20). In other words, critical thinking and reflection are done to inform action, much like Paulo Freire's concept of praxis, the cycle of critical reflection and action.

In addition, Brookfield (2012, 2013) regularly discusses his students' and his belief that the process of hunting and uncovering assumptions (frames of reference) is most easily navigated in groups, as a social learning process. The process is made easier when done socially as reflective discourse because peers can serve as mirrors, allowing students and teachers to reflect ideas back and forth off of one another, and create a safe space for constructive criticism (Brookfield, 2012). Brookfield (1990) further insists that "educators seeking to foster critical reflection in adults must have as a central concern the development of media literacy" (p. 237). An example of the highly social nature of critical reflection and transformative learning is critical media literacy. Critical media literacy engages critical reflection on the messages and symbols of racism, classism, patriarchy, and other forms of hegemonic understandings present in all forms of media (Brookfield, 1990; Tisdell, 2008). Also, critical media literacy has the potential to transform how people consume media and understand the world.

Yet, even with social support of other learners and instructors, some assumptions can be more difficult than others to challenge. For instance, paradigmatic assumptions, which stem from dominant ideologies (like capitalism is patriotic) are particularly hard to uncover because they have been communicated in a hegemonic way: These assumptions may be understood as commonsense and good when they might actually be doing harm (Brookfield, 2012). Exposing paradigmatic assumptions can often shock people, acting as a kind of disorienting dilemma where what used to make sense may not any longer. When learners are attempting to challenge and transform their own habits of mind, a process called subjective reframing, educators act as facilitators who provide constructive opportunities for reflective discourse and creating meaning from that discourse, especially when attempting to reframe paradigmatic assumptions (Mezirow,

2000). The transformative learning process is “intimately dependent on others and, by extension, on wider patterns of relationship and power” (p. 25).

In terms of power dynamics, it is important to note a significant criticism of transformative learning theory. Belenky & Stanton (2000) believe that Mezirow’s theory does not devote adequate attention to the unequal power dynamics that are always undeniably at play in the learning environment, especially in reference to the ways in which women’s ways of knowing are not typically honored. For instance, traditional, patriarchal classrooms often do not consider intuition, subjectivity, and caretaking (traditionally female ways of thinking) as valid forms of thinking and coming to new knowledge (2000). Mezirow & Taylor (2009) say this criticism holds partial validity. While Mezirow may not have originally considered incongruences in power as much as he should have, he insists that he and Brookfield devote a significant amount of consideration to the affective domain of critical thinking and transformation (Mezirow, 2000). Also, intuition is offered as a possible substitute for critical self-reflection when adequate evidence is unavailable (Mezirow, 2009). Still, Brookfield (1990) reifies the importance of the critical social learning group as a source of empowerment that can increase learners’ confidence in their critical thinking ability.

Social justice education as identity work. Identity does not *dictate* how one experiences the world, but identity does *frame* how people experience it (Nieto & Bode, 2012). Identity includes the many groups or social organizers that individuals occupy and use to define themselves and one another: Gender, religion, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, ability, language, and any other forms of social organizing come together to shape individual, family, and cultural identities (2012). As Tennant (2012) explains:

...it [identity] refers to both sameness, as in one's identification with, say, an ethnic group, and uniqueness, in the sense that we use the term to describe our particular individual identity. Identity is used to refer to the continuity and unity of the individual over time, but it is also used to refer to multiple and sometimes divided, or at least conflicted, individuals. (p. 7)

This elucidates the idea that identity is not permanent, immovable, or singular. Rather, it is fluid, ever-changing, multiple, hybrid, and at times even contradictory (Nieto & Bode, 2012; Riessman, 2008). In fact, one person can hold several identities at once, and those identities are shaped by people's families, religions, political affiliations, race, ethnicity, social class, and innumerable other factors. For this reason, relationships and communities play a significant role in the shaping and continued development of identities (Britzman, 1993).

From their own experiences and relationships with others, individuals use narratives-stories about themselves, their experiences, and relationships with others-to shape and continue to develop their own identities (Riessman, 2008). What is more, these narratives serve multiple purposes, among which is the purpose of creating empathy and motivation toward action. It is therefore necessary to note that narratives, even narratives that are used to detail identities, can be described as somewhat political in nature. Identity and narratives involve political work because they maintain a social role, at times means to certain ends, and are inextricably tied to the ebb and flow of power in social groups and society (2008). Not only are identities tied to relationships with others, but the narratives that shape identity are innately political and connected to power in relationships between the self, others, and communities.

This brings into focus a consideration that is necessary to make when deciding to teach for social justice: the reality that the self and identity are not only elements *participating* in the

process of transformative learning (like SJE), but they could very well be put at risk by the process. A challenge for SJE is presented when the essential, unavoidable aspects of critical thinking, reflection, and transformation come into play. Undertaking the task of teaching and/or learning in a SJE classroom can involve transformation through critical thinking and reflection on the world, assumptions, and the self. This all has the potential for extreme emotions.

Brookfield (2005, 2012, 2013) and Mezirow (1990, 2000) frequently note the strong emotions tied to challenging taken-for-granted assumptions. This is especially true for paradigmatic assumptions since they serve as the lenses through which people view the world, their position in it, and their relationships. For example, some studies cite the extremity of negative emotions when taken-for-granted assumptions about truth, self, and society are challenged in a SJE environment (Choules, 2007; Kaufmann, 2010; Keith, 2010; Picower, 2009; Vaught & Castagno, 2008; Young, 2010, 2011). Challenging paradigmatic assumptions holds the potential to challenge learners' very identities and the relationships they are parts of and can often be met with strong emotional responses (Mamgain, 2010). In a study analyzing ethical consciousness, Mamgain (2010) describes epiphanies gained through critical reflection:

Sometimes when students experience a profound insight, instructors may underestimate the emotional enormity of the moment. Along with that Eureka moment, an entire world-view may come crashing down and relationships founded and sustained on old opinions may be changed forever. As educators, we forget that these moments of change can make one feel groundless. As a response to this, we often see students return to old habits. (pp. 25-26)

This can be especially true for adult and teacher educators in the Deep South. Compared to other regions in the U.S., the Deep South is considerably more socially, politically, and

religiously conservative (Black & Black, 2012; Bullock III, 2010). Therefore, there is great potential for adult learners of the Deep South to hold more conservative beliefs about truth, reality and knowledge, and/or maintain close relationships with people who share those same beliefs. At times, challenging those beliefs could present a rather significant and unique struggle for social justice educators in the Deep South. Adult educators teaching with a social justice lens are put to the challenge of asking adult learners to question not only their own taken for granted assumptions, but those of their families, and even the cultures in which they live outside of the classroom. Since the Deep South is more conservative, questioning their assumptions might be an even more strenuous and challenging undertaking for learners in this region. This is why Mangain (2010) advises that educators have “an exquisite sensitivity to be present to this” (p. 26).

Brookfield (2012) notes that of the numerous ways to be sensitive, or mindful, and provide support to students through the potentially transformative process of SJE, educators can act as models. “Given the risks and threats...critical thinking represents for many students, we [educators] need to earn the right to ask them to do this by first modeling how we negotiate this process” (p. 233). For instance, educators can begin with critical thinking about concepts that are as non-threatening as possible (like a story from which learners can disconnect themselves) and they can use personal narratives to provide examples and reasoning behind chosen courses of action (Brookfield, 2013). Brookfield’s reasoning on the necessity of modeling (in addition to further theory which will be discussed in a following section) is one of the reasons social modeling is a central focus of this study.

Still, it is also necessary to note that not all transformations will be painful, groundbreaking, or ruinous of relationships. Brookfield (2012) discusses a common, faulty

assumption that critical thinking always instigates huge, sweeping, fundamental changes in a person's life. For instance, in a recent article critiquing transformative learning theory, Newman (2012) conflates critical thinking and transformative learning with huge, sweeping changes by saying there was no transformation because participants did not "leave their jobs" (p. 45) or "abandon one cultural background for another" (p. 45). This critique, as Tennant (2012) describes, is a "moot point" (p. 166). Mezirow & Taylor (2009) clearly state, "Transformation may be epochal (involving dramatic or major changes) or incremental and may involve objective (task oriented) or subjective (self-reflective) reframing" (p. 23). In other words, a person does not have to quit her or his job to be transformed in some way in reference to his or her job. A (comparatively) simple change in how the job is approached or thought about can be indicative of transformation as well.

"Transformative learning involves liberating ourselves from reified forms of thought that are no longer dependable.... Adult educators are committed to efforts to create a more equal set of enabling conditions for our society, to the ideal of social justice" (Mezirow, 2000, p. 27). These statements serve as basic assumptions upon which transformative learning theory is built. Like Freire, Mezirow holds fast to the assumption that education is not a neutral endeavor. In light of this assumption, a central purpose of education is then to prepare all students, especially teacher candidates, to live in a more democratic society, working toward living as critical, efficacious, individuals with praxis-centered habits of mind. Brookfield (1990, 2012, 2013) proffers numerous powerful techniques adult educators can use to help students learn the skills needed to critically reflect and take action, such as CML. As mentioned previously, the importance of CML in learning critical thinking (Brookfield 1990) has become increasingly relevant over time as advances in technology have made all forms of media accessible via

cellular phones and tablet devices, especially through means of social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter.

With this in mind, it is important to reiterate how Brookfield's theory of learning critical thinking and Mezirow's theory of transformative learning all emphasize the power of the critical *social* learning group. As mentioned previously, each of these scholars also highlights the crucial role the educator plays as a dialogue facilitator and model for critical thinking. Brookfield (2013) posits that modeling critical thinking can be a powerful technique for teaching adults that "develops in them a sense of their own agency and a heightened self-confidence in their abilities [self-efficacy] as learners" (p. 23). Consequently, it is important to analyze self-efficacy and modeling to better understand how these influences affect adults learning to teach for social justice.

Social Justice Education as a Social Learning Process

In this review, self-efficacy and social modeling are analyzed from Albert Bandura's social cognitive theory perspective. According to Bandura (1986), social cognitive theory operates on the assumption that people are not controlled entirely by their inner selves nor are they driven solely by outside forces. Instead, people are assumed to have inborn abilities to self-reflect and effect the environment around them as their environments can also continually affect them and their behavior. Furthermore, social cognitive theory assumes that people's behavior, personal factors and cognitive aspects, and their environments "all operate interactively as determinants of each other" (Bandura, 1986, p. 23). This interaction is called triadic reciprocal causation (see Figure 2.2).

Figure 2.2. Bandura's Triadic Reciprocal Causation

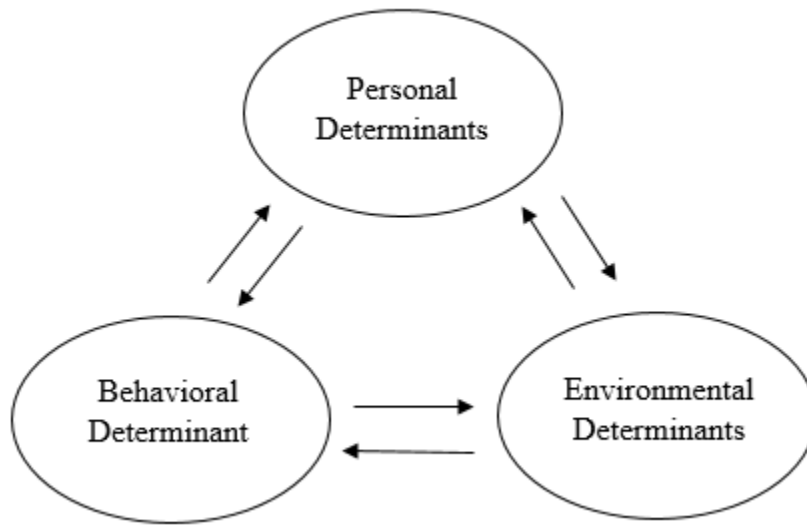


Figure 2.2. Adapted from Bandura (2011, p. 34).

Simply put, people's personal factors (such as personality, cognitive abilities and development, and so forth) affect their behavior and the environments in which they find themselves just as their environments and behaviors can affect their personal factors. All factors are interconnected and reciprocal in nature. As a result, people have the ability to affect their own thinking through personal agency, and the single biggest influence on personal agency is their sense of self-efficacy, or their belief in their own ability to take action (Bandura, 1995). Bandura cites four sources of efficacy beliefs: (a) mastery experiences which are experiences with handling of a given type of situation, successfully or not; (b) vicarious experiences which are provided by social models, both direct (people) and symbolic (media); (c) social persuasion like group dialogue and verbal reinforcement or admonishment; and (d) a person's own physical and emotional states.

When it comes to social modeling, learners develop their own self-efficacy beliefs by actively watching models, gaining insights into guiding principles that inform behavior, and developing new skills and roles (Bandura, 2012). Once learners have observed the modeled skill or behavior in multiple contexts from multiple models, they combine aspects from various models in an attempt to gain a desired effect, and thus form their own set of actions and perceptions. The level to which they are successful in new courses of action, or have mastery experiences, will affect how efficacious learners believe themselves to be. Furthermore, Bandura (1986) insists that there are “[s]ome complex skills that can only be mastered through the aid of modeling” (p. 20). Since SJE is most assuredly a complex set of skills and knowledge-as can be seen in the working definition provided previously-it is important to analyze how social models affect teacher candidates’ self-efficacy in learning to teach for social justice, a goal of this research endeavor.

First, it must be noted that social modeling is done by any person as she or he speaks or acts in a way which can be perceived by any person watching the model. Also, social modeling can be done purposefully by a person to illustrate some behavior, values, or beliefs, and modeling can be done without a person realizing he or she is serving as a model for another person. When considering modeling in the context of the learning environment, especially in a SJE classroom, it is important to address the critique that modeling imbrues group think or simple mimicry. Bandura (2012) mentions that his theory has faced criticism, insisting that learning from modeling has been conflated with mimicking and group think, and has been considered at times to be an uncreative process of absorption and learned, rote behaviors. This critique is problematic, especially for SJE, because the transformative potential of SJE demands a great deal from learners, and places great emphasis on critical reflection and self-reflection.

Teaching is already a process in which learners cannot simply adopt rote behaviors to apply to every given situation, and considering the uniquely critical nature of SJE, rote repetition becomes even more inadequate. However, Bandura notes that contrary to this criticism, learning from observations of social models is instead a quite creative process.

In the social learning process, learners utilize multiple models from numerous contexts to construct new and unique sets of perceptions and actions. Learners can choose attributes and behaviors that they like and dislike, want to try out and wish to avoid altogether. Also, developing skills or perceptions from models is itself a kind of creative process because the learner must create a new idea or skill from several contextually different ones. Patterns must be perceived, noted, and lessons of a sort must be taken from those observations. A second critique is that learning done by observing models is lacking in the cognitive reasoning which reinforces the actions of the model (Bandura, 2012). Since this criticism has validity, Bandura notes that it is important for social models to provide cognitive modeling, which means models simply voice their reasoning for their actions at critical points in learning. A challenge social cognitive theory faces, specifically in a SJE environment, is the tendency to assume that self-efficacy, as affected by social modeling, is a theory not applied across collectivist cultures as easily as it is in cultures like the U.S., which is individualistic in nature. Bandura discounts this claim by assuring self-efficacy “is exercised in individual, proxy, and collective forms” (p. 368). He insists that the ways people exhibit self-efficacy beliefs may differ across cultures, but the influence of social models holds on self-efficacy.

Regardless of the variations across culture in how self-efficacy is exhibited, teachers still require opportunities during their learning experiences that allow them to develop their own confidence in their own abilities to expertly educate. This is why teacher education programs

typically give teacher candidates ample opportunities to observe expert teachers in action, allowing candidates to learn from social modeling. Teacher education programs also require student-teaching experiences of varying lengths depending on the program, which allows candidates opportunities to test out the behaviors and roles they have accumulated through their classroom learning and field observations. Testing of roles and behaviors during teaching provides educators with mastery experiences and thus an eventual increased sense of teaching self-efficacy. This chain of events is just as true for SJE as “neutral” education. In this study, self-efficacy, as it relates to a person’s belief in her or his own ability to teach for social justice, is referred to as a person’s social justice education self-efficacy (SJE self-efficacy). For this research project, SJE self-efficacy entails what Cochran-Smith (2004) describes as one of the foremost demands of the teacher working for social justice, to make significant learning and work possible within learning communities, which requires teachers to work “from a sense of their own efficacy as decision makers, knowledge generators, and change agents” (p. 66). However, SJE and acting as an agent of change can take on different meanings to different people. For this reason, it is critical to this review to outline exactly how SJE is framed in this study

Current Narratives of Social Justice Education

Defining Social Justice Education

There are many definitions explaining SJE theory and practice in teacher education (Cochran-Smith, 2004; Zeichner, 2009), PK-12 teaching and learning (Nieto & Bode, 2012), and as a general field of teaching and learning (Adams, Bell, & Griffin, 2007; Ayers, Quinn, & Stovall, 2009; Picower, 2012). Like innumerable terms in various academic fields, there is no explicit universal definition of SJE. However, there are quite a few general tenets that can be

gathered when analyzing the multitude of descriptions for SJE available. Not all of the available designations for SJE will be discussed in this section, but several will be brought forward to highlight some commonalities in conceptualization.

According to Adams, Bell, & Griffin (2007), SJE “needs a theory of oppression” (p. 2) that helps teacher candidates learn about: (a) the pervasive and internalized nature and history of oppression; (b) the many different and intersecting –isms that reinforce power, hegemony, and oppression; (c) their own resistance to and consciousness of these issues; and (d) their sense of agency to take action. In his groundbreaking text *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Freire (1970) insisted that even those who claimed neutrality in teaching were inadvertently siding with oppressors. By not challenging the status quo, remaining neutral allowed the status quo to maintain its power and dominate the oppressed. Furthermore, the purpose of education was to teach students for a socially just and democratic world.

One of the most significant ways a teacher could challenge the status quo was to work alongside students for critical consciousness. Critical consciousness, also called conscientização or conscientization, is the process by which teachers and students work to “perceive social, political, and economic contradiction, and to take action against the oppressive elements of reality” (Freire, 1970, translator’s note, p. 35). However, to educate for conscientization, educators could not take a banking approach to education in which they see themselves as knowing and students as empty vessels to be filled with knowledge. Instead, teachers could use a problem-posing approach to education that involved participating alongside students in a loving, caring, and democratic dialogue that unmasked and challenged hegemony and oppression. Problem-posing education (part of Freire’s theory, not to be confused with problem-based learning) required teachers and students to share in each other’s roles and teach one another

because both were seen as knowing and needing to know (Freire, 1970, 1998). Emphatically, problem-posing education demanded trust of teachers and students, the rejection of predesigned lessons, and praxis, or the cycle of critical reflection and action, aimed to transform the words students read and the worlds they lived in (Freire, 1970). Globally and in the United States, SJE scholars have adapted these beliefs to challenge inequity and work for justice in the classroom.

For example, Ayers, Quinn, and Stovall (2009) outlined three pillars of SJE. First, equity is central in that opportunity gaps are to be accounted for and eliminated. Second, participation of the whole student is required so that learners can become social change agents or activists who actively work to alter the challenges that they confront rather than giving into them. Lastly, social literacy is key, and this means that teachers and students work together to build relevance, resist consumerism and the neoliberal agenda of education, and the many –isms that are ever-present in the nation’s institutions. Giroux (2011) describes the neoliberal agenda as a capitalist, market-driven view of education that dehumanizes teaching and learning and equates schools to industry, teachers to factory line workers, students to products, and families and society to consumers. Continuing the theme education as non-neutral, Picower (2012) positions SJE as a political endeavor that occurs on three levels. At the first level teachers actively recognize and understand systemic oppression and hegemony. The second level requires teachers to explicitly analyze systemic oppression and hegemony in the classroom with students. Third and finally, teachers work independently, with students, and with the community as agents of change. Picower also details the importance of working against the dominant neoliberal agenda of education in the U.S.

Additionally, multicultural education is a field similar to SJE with elements of theory and practice that overlap with SJE. Nieto and Bode (2012), notable multicultural education scholars,

provide a concise conceptualization of SJE. They posit that SJE comprises four components. According to Nieto and Bode, an education for social justice: (a) “challenges, confronts, and disrupts misconceptions, untruths, and stereotypes that lead to structural inequality and discrimination based on race, social class, gender, and other social and human differences” (p. 12); (b) provides all students with all of the resources (monetary, emotional, social, cultural, family/community outreach and collaboration, and so forth) necessary to honor their potential; (c) sees all students’ cultures (especially those typically viewed as “other” by the dominant culture), languages, and personal lives as assets rather than as deficits to be overcome; and (d) creates a learning community that promotes critical thinking and social change agency where students can be apprentices in democracy.

As a final example, Ludlow, Enterline, and Cochran-Smith (2009) define several aspects of SJE. They declare that the foremost goal of SJE is promoting the learning and life chances of students. Next, SJE is a broad body of research, practice, and movements at the grassroots and national level. Some examples of such movements and efforts include but are not limited to critical theory as it relates to education and society, multicultural education, work directed and democratic schooling, and research on language, culture, diversity, identity, and inclusion (Ludlow, Enterline, & Cochran-Smith, 2009). To continue, they outline SJE as a set of skills and knowledge. Knowledge of self, students, and communities are needed to teach for social justice as well as content knowledge. What is more, social justice educators require skills in teaching students of poverty, English language learners, exceptional students, and students of color. Finally, SJE demands teachers show a “commitment to being part of larger social movements by working as advocates and activists for their pupils” (p. 195).

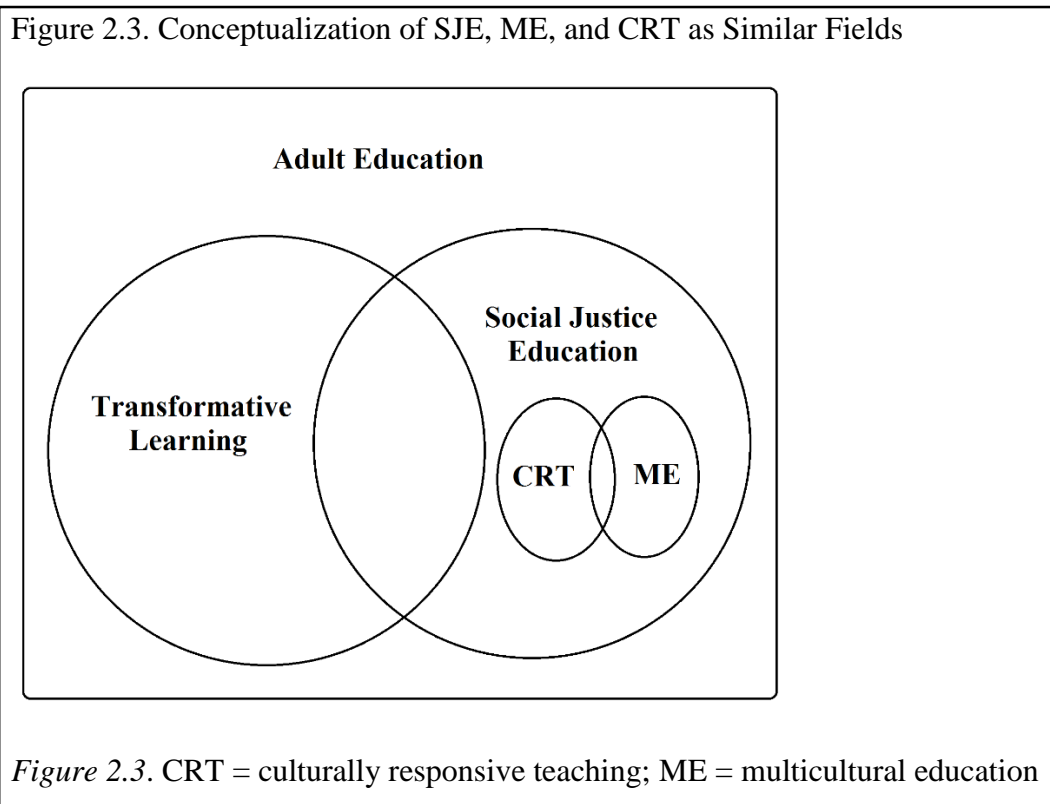
From the six conceptualizations of SJE exemplified here, some commonalities are detectable. In some fashion, all scholars mentioned students and teachers working collaboratively and sharing responsibilities. Also, it is characteristic for students to be seen as knowing contributors to the learning environment, which contrasts with the stereotype of teachers dictating to unknowing students. Then, teachers are consistently tasked with creating curricula that explicitly challenge the status quo and activism and/or community change agency. These commonalities show that while there is no precise agreement on a verbatim definition for SJE, there is general consensus among SJE scholars on the central tenets of what teaching for social justice is and how it looks in practice.

Related and Overlapping Fields

Most, if not all, of the principles and pillars of SJE mentioned in the previous section are echoed by multicultural education researchers (Banks & Banks, 2010; Gollnick & Chinn, 2006; Grant & Sleeter, 2007; Nieto & Bode, 2012) and by proponents of culturally responsive teaching (Ladson-Billings, 1994; Villegas & Lucas, 2002). Adams, Bell, and Griffin (2007), Picower (2012), and Zeichner (2009) all mention the interrelatedness of SJE to fields of research and practice including but not limited to: Black/African American studies, cultural studies, multicultural education, culturally responsive teaching, culturally relevant teaching, anti-bias education, queer theory, feminism/women's studies, critical race theory, and religious studies. In fact, the overlaps and interconnectedness of SJE, multicultural education, and culturally responsive teaching are apparent in the many conceptualizations of each. For instance, all three frameworks for teaching and learning highlight the significance of using students' culture, language, and lifestyles as resources that teachers can use to create teachable moments everyday (Cochran-Smith, 2004; Nieto & Bode, 2012; Villegas & Lucas, 2002). SJE, multicultural

education, and culturally responsive teaching also promote teachers and students acting as agents of social change in their communities.

In this study, SJE is considered a broad field of practice that encompasses numerous lenses and approaches to teaching and learning, such as multicultural education, culturally responsive teaching, gender studies, and others. Below, Figure 2.3 illustrates this relationship as it exists within the previously illustrated conceptualization of this study.



With these similarities in mind, it is essential to note that SJE has been chosen for this study because of the explicit center of this framework being social activism and/or acting as an agent of constructive, collaborative change in the community. As evidence from literature in this review has shown so far, education is not a neutral field. When teachers choose not to act, they allow the status quo to be perpetrated. It is of the utmost importance to educate not just a

majority White, female, middle class teaching population, but the entire teacher population, to be more culturally responsive in their teaching methods, which multicultural education and culturally responsive teaching help teacher educators accomplish. However, changing student demographics is not the only issue affecting the U.S. education system. There are problems in education policy, attacks on teachers' unions, pushes to privatize learning for all, and highly varied and significant issues being discussed at town hall and community meetings all across the nation. The U.S. education system and its teachers is one of the pillars on which the entire nation is built. This places a far greater responsibility on teachers' shoulders than simply being good educators in the classroom. Just as with police officers, firefighters, judges, military service people, and elected officials, teachers play a vital role to their individual communities, their states, and the nation. SJE spotlights the unique opportunities that all teachers hold to affect change as a result of the role they fill in society, and encourages teachers to make the most of their influence by working for constructive, positive, equitable change in their own schools, communities, states, and even the nation, if they can. For these reasons, SJE has been chosen as the learned skill set focused on in this study.

Choosing a Working Definition of Social Justice Education

For this research project, a single definition of SJE was chosen to act as a working definition so that not only did participants know what I meant when I said "SJE" during interviews, but also because it is necessary to detail my own interpretations of theory as a SJE researcher. I chose Cochran-Smith's (2004) six principles of SJE (mentioned in chapter one) as the basis for the working definition of SJE used in this study. As a reminder, Cochran-Smith's first principle of SJE promotes teachers building on what students come to school knowing (language, experiences, culture, and so forth). Second, teachers must start where students are

rather than from a predetermined point in a curriculum. Third, teachers will work with individuals, families, communities, and peers. Fourth, SJE calls for teachers to diversify their assessment. Fifth, educators model acting as an agent of social change and/or social activism in addition to emotionally safe yet critical dialogue concerning privilege, power, and oppression in institutions and society. Last, teachers must work to create and/or participate in learning communities. Furthermore, Cochran-Smith notes the significance of teachers working “from a sense of their own self-efficacy” (p. 66). Each of these principles will be outlined in further detail in the section outlining the working definition of SJE.

I chose to center the working definition of SJE for the study on Cochran-Smith’s six principles of SJE for several reasons, the first and most important of which being my belief that each principle is reinforced by each of the conceptualizations of SJE discussed in this section. It was also important that the explicit focus on teacher education in Cochran-Smith’s theory mirrored this study’s focus on SJE in teacher education. Finally, these six principles illuminate realities that are at the heart of this research project: SJE is done socially in learning communities (consistent of students, teachers, administrators, parents, and the greater community), requires extensive educator modeling of skills and knowledge, and it demands at least some level of self-efficacy to teach for social justice, or SJE self-efficacy. However, it was my belief that these six principles were missing some key components. Before outlining the six principles in greater detail with my additions, it is first necessary to highlight some critiques of SJE. Some of these critiques serve as inspiration for the additions I believed it necessary to make to the six principles.

Critiques of social justice education and cited scholars. *Paulo Freire and related scholarship.* There are numerous critiques of SJE as a field of educational theory and practice.

There are also critiques of SJE scholars and their own work. The scholarship of Paulo Freire is frequently cited in SJE scholarship (Adams, Bell, & Griffin, 2007; Adams et al., 2012; Banks & Banks, 2012; hooks, 1994, 2003, 2010; Howard, 2005; Grant & Sleeter, 2007; Nieto & Bode, 2012; Villeag & Lucas, 2002). Therefore, it is important to note a critique that identifies Freire's earlier work as sexist. Scholar, writer, poet, and educator bell hooks (1994) discussed the inner turmoil she faced as a feminist when she read Freire's work. Though she was greatly inspired by his writings, she insisted that Freire "constructs [*sic*] a phallogentric paradigm of liberation- wherein freedom and the experience of patriarchal manhood are always linked as though they are one and the same" (p. 49). An example of sexism in Freire's early work was his regular referencing of educators by masculine pronoun forms (for examples, see Freire, 1970). With this in mind, hooks (1994) reiterated Freire remained a significant influence on her own thinking and writing despite his sexist language. What is more, in his later work Freire (2004) directly recognized his sexist language as "not a grammatical problem, but an ideological one" (p. 55), and that he recognized his personal desire to correct his own thinking in order to be more consistent with his own views.

Secondly, Freire's popular education theory cannot be directly applied to education in the U.S. without tailoring, as his theory was based on Brazilian culture in the 20th century (Choules, 2007). Also, Freire's theory of learning will face unique pushback from U.S. learners, along with other scholarship challenging the dominant ideals of the neoliberal education agenda such as Ayers, Quinn, & Stovall (2009), Brookfield (2005, 2012, 2013), Giroux (2001, 2011), and Picower (2012), for example. These scholars challenge the privileged notions of meritocracy and independence which are systems that many people feel are of great worth to the strength capitalism and socioeconomic well-being in U.S. society. Teachers asking students to critically

examine their own assumptions on these topics may experience resistance, especially in the Deep South where people hold considerably more conservative beliefs about what can be considered traditional American values like fiscal conservatism and meritocracy.

Finally, Bowers (2009) points out the clear ethnocentrism present in the writings of scholars like Paulo Freire and John Dewey. Bowers cites Dewey referring to indigenous cultures as “savages” and Freire at least somewhat devaluing the cultures of common people. However, the larger point that Bowers makes, is that critical theory, thinking, and reflection along with the ideals of autonomy, self-authorship, independence, democracy (social system), and the implicit valuing of socialist ideals (since capitalism and unregulated free-market enterprise are so commonly criticized) are typically valued above other ways of knowing, being, and socioeconomic organizing.

This means that, for example within the SJE narrative, qualities like critical thinking for the purposes of autonomy and/or self-authorship are given privilege and are often seen as better. The goal of autonomy and/or self-authorship is masculine and Eurocentric in nature, and the privileging it devalues feminine and culturally diverse ways of knowing (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, & Tarule, 1997; Gilligan, 1982; Hayes & Flannery, 2000; hooks, 2000a; Minnich, 2005). This privileging of position runs counter to the narratives of cultural inclusion and the affirmation of difference in SJE. Also, words like democracy are often used without being defined or compared to alternatives. At times, these words can become monolithic slogans present in the collective narrative that make it seem as though it might be unwise or uncomfortable to question (Gonzalez & Pacheco, 2012). This additionally runs counter to the call of SJE to critically reflect on taken for granted assumptions. So, while forms of social and economic organizing (like democracy and socialism) might be far too serious of matters to leave

open without some consensus, the SJE literature, to a certain degree, does sloganize words and ideals like democracy and autonomy.

Teacher education for social justice. Continuing to analyze critiques of SJE, Zeichner (2009) delineates several reasons that the agenda to reform teacher education for social justice is not enough on its own to eliminate the educational opportunity gap. It is a problem that most reforms have taken place in teacher education (with unequal practice in the PK-12 setting), especially considering that even these efforts have been limited at times (education departments simply add on classes in diversity and/or critical theory to curricula rather than overhauling the entire program so that all classes contain at least some elements of critical and diversity theories). Additionally, there is great irony in teacher education for social justice not entirely successfully practicing what it preaches. As previously mentioned, most teachers in the U.S. remain White and female, and a limited amount of teacher candidates and teachers have taught diverse groups in schools that struggle economically, especially large, urban schools. Also, Zeichner insists that SJE in teacher education has unfortunately focused mostly on the transformation of White educators rather than *all* educators. Finally, he also posits that much of the literature analyzing and theorizing about SJE is written by educators who have left faculty positions as teacher educators for administrative positions. According to Zeichner, this might increase the possibility of scholarly work being produced by writers who are out of touch with practice. This supposed preference to leave teacher education for administration also highlights a duplicity that administration is somehow “better than” teacher education, or classroom teaching, in some fashion, whether it be on a basis of pay or position of power. However, it can be argued that teacher educators working for social justice see administrative positions as a way to further the agenda and push for even greater change than what they may have felt they could achieve at

the educator level. In either case, Zeichner presents four critiques that provide an opportunity for social justice educators and scholars to consider in future work, both theoretical and practical.

The conspicuousness of ecojustice. Though at times perceived as somewhat controversial for striking criticisms of seminal social justice scholars, Bowers (2011) makes some fair criticisms of SJE that are not commonly mentioned in the literature. One of his most prominent arguments is that SJE pays all of its attention to social justice and injustice while giving little, if any, attention to the increasingly debated environmental injustices occurring in the environmental commons (shared environment and natural resources like air, water, and so forth) and the global society. In other words, SJE is missing a discourse of eco-ethics, what Western (2008) defines as “acting ethically in the human realm and with respect and responsibility for the natural environment” (p. 196). That is not to say that there are no scholars producing research that brings to light the necessity of bringing eco-ethics into the classroom dialogue. Rather, it is noted in this review that there exists a general absence in several seminal SJE sourcebooks (Adams, Bell, & Griffin, 2007; Ayers, Quinn, & Stovall, 2009; Banks & Banks, 2010; Cochran-Smith, 2004; Freire, 1970; Gollnick & Chinn, 2006; Grant & Sleeter, 2007, 2011; Nieto & Bode, 2012; Picower, 2012; Villegas & Lucas, 2002; Zeichner, 2009) of scholars explicitly making eco-ethics a significant social justice topic of concern. Out of the 12 sources cited above, very few even mention environmental sustainability and none frame it as a gravely significant concern. These works are commonly referred to as resources for social justice educators and are commonly used as course texts in SJE teacher education classes. The reality is that the environment is given extremely limited attention, especially considering how significant of an issue it has become in the last decade alone.

A possible explanation for its absence may be that it is assumed to be implied as one of the many ways in which a person can participate in activism and/or act as an agent of social change. Regardless, the reality is that with the scientific evidence at hand, eco-ethics could be more explicitly addressed in SJE. While it may sound melodramatic, it is accurate to mention that having a more just social environment stands the chance of falling into the background of the undeniable consequences of crop shortages and an overheated planet if attention from eco-ethics and environmentally sustainable energy remain topics of implied rather than explicit importance.

The conspicuousness of equity literacy. Along these lines, another explicit component is often missing from the SJE narrative. In his recent book, Gorski (2013) defines a set of skills and knowledge that he calls equity literacy. Equity literacy is defined as a set of “skills and dispositions that enable us to recognize, respond to, and redress conditions that deny some students access to the educational opportunities enjoyed by their peers and, in doing so, sustain equitable learning environments for all students and families” (p. 19). Though this may sound like a reiteration of SJE principles, Gorski explains that while having knowledge of students’ cultures is necessary, it is not enough. Teachers must also have equity literacy, or the knowledge of “historical trajectories of marginalized and privileged groups” (p. 18), and the ability to draw on this knowledge in planning and practice. Equity literacy may be implied in SJE theories and definitions, and it might even be considered simple common sense. Still, it is important that this aspect of SJE become more explicit in theory so that it may be easier to ensure that teacher education programs centering on SJE are providing teacher candidates with equity literacy before and during their exposure to SJE literature, ideals, and practices.

The conspicuousness of critical media literacy. Finally, it is of value to spotlight a new and undeliberated (to my knowledge) criticism of SJE. For the most part, there exists in the SJE literature a largely missing discourse on critical media literacy. Critical media literacy engages critical reflection on the messages and symbols of racism, classism, patriarchy, and other forms of hegemonic understandings present in all forms of media (Brookfield, 1990; Tisdell, 2008). Tisdell (2008) cites media-everyday sources like television, movies, magazines, books, etc.-as holding a significant role in people's lives. In her article, she discusses a series of three studies, each of which focuses on an insight which she developed: media is a source of pleasure that affects learning; media can reinforce and resist the ideology of the dominant culture; and, it is important to teach for critical media literacy.

Tisdell points out that media portrays the dominant culture (White, middle-class, and masculine) as 'normal' and all other cultures as 'Other', which echoes feminist scholarship (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, & Tarule, 1997; Gilligan, 1982; Hayes & Flannery, 2000; hooks, 2000a; Minnich, 2005). What is more, Tisdell (2008) presents an argument that adult educators do not have to teach a course on CML in order to teach and promote CML. Like many other SJE scholars, she argues for the inclusion of CML into the curriculum of any course, making CML a method that can be considered a part of a teaching for social justice method repertoire.

Again, while critical media literacy is being talked about in research and by critical theorists, this topic is not made a significant focus in common SJE sourcebooks and course texts. For instance, Banks and Banks (2012) briefly mention critical literacy (p. 192), and Nieto and Bode (2012) cultural literacy (p. 30) aimed at understanding the changing dynamics of the changing multicultural U.S. society. Then, it is somewhat common for scholars to critically analyze media sources (Picower, 2012, p. 1), and it is common to see lessons which focus learners' attention on

critically analyzing some particular source of media (a movie, for example) (Grant & Sleeter, 2007; Picower, 2012, pp. 50-52). It is also common for scholars to refer to knowledge and skill sets (like cultural competency and initiating critical, safe dialogue) needed to be efficacious social justice educators (Cochran-Smith, 2004; Gorski, 2013; Grant & Sleeter, 2007; Nieto & Bode, 2012; Picower, 2012; Villegas & Lucas, 2002). However, it is not as common for regularly used sourcebooks and course texts (such as the several texts cited in this section) to explicitly cite critical media literacy as a valuable SJE skill that educators and teacher candidates must have in the present media-saturated U.S. culture. Though some may be able to make the implied connection and apply critical reflection on taken-for-granted assumptions in society to the media that they consume, this connection may not be as obvious for some. So, it is noted in this study, that the significance of critical media literacy is not explicitly emphasized enough in commonly used SJE sourcebooks and course texts as an indispensable skill for social justice educators and teacher candidates in the modern technology driven culture that students live in.

Many students of the Generation X and Millennial generations have grown up in environments filled with media, even in the formal education environment. Indeed, many people in the U.S., even people as young as five, have smart phones that make nearly every form of media available to them in their pockets, at the touch of a simulated button twenty four hours per day, seven days per week, in addition to books, television, movies, and magazines. Considering the heavy media consumption that many students of these generations and others exhibit, it would be wise for educators to not only use critical media literacy in their classrooms, but to also familiarize themselves with popular culture in order to increase the effectiveness of critical media literacy lessons. Also, Bandura (2012) insists that modern electronic media is a form of “varied and pervasive symbolic modeling” (p. 351) which has the potential to serve as a

“powerful vehicle for transcultural and sociopolitical change” (p. 351). Therefore, it is clear that media, as a form of symbolic modeling, is not only pervasive in society, but is also deserving of a critical lens of reflection, a lens which can be developed in SJE courses and texts more explicitly and thoroughly.

Section Summary. To summarize the critiques discussed in this section, it is noted that SJE is not perfect and is still being shaped as a field of teaching and learning by scholars and practitioners. Foundational theorists like Freire and Dewey faced criticisms by hooks and Bowers concerning biases of gender and ethnicity that existed in their work. Also noted in this review are several concerns about teacher education for social justice that Kenneth Zeichner puts forward in his recent text on the topic. Then, this review covered modern problems of ecojustice, equity literacy, and critical media literacy, salient issues of the present generation of teachers that are not poignantly conspicuous in the much of SJE literature commonly used in teacher education courses. With these critiques in mind, I have added further points to Cochran-Smith’s (2004) six principles of SJE, which have been used as the basis of the working definition for SJE in this study.

Working Definition of Social Justice Education Used in Study. Now that several conceptualizations and criticisms of SJE have been discussed, it is possible to create from this literature a working definition of SJE for this dissertation study. In light of the criticisms mentioned in the previous section, a definition for SJE has been provided that is simply a slightly modified version of Cochran-Smith’s (2004) Six Principles of Social Justice Education (additions to the original six principles are shown in italics):

Principle One: Enabling Significant Work Within Communities of Learners involves:

- *teachers coming to classroom equipped with or developing their knowledge and skills of equity literacy to be used in planning, practice, and collaboration.*
- teachers building on what students come to school knowing (language, experiences, culture, and so forth).
- teachers working to overcome the tendency to see students of color or students who are socioeconomically disadvantaged as deficit.
- teachers assuming students know and are capable of knowing.
- teachers having high expectations of all students.
- teachers having high expectation of themselves.
- teachers encouraging a learning environment that fosters shared responsibility and collaborative work.

Principle Two: Build on What Students Bring to School with Them involves:

- *teachers working to build an understanding of Equity Literacy so that they may build an inclusive, multicultural curriculum for all students.*
- teachers working from the cultural and linguistic resources, and the knowledge and interests of students, *placing significant focus on media sources, popular culture, and Critical Media Literacy.*

Principle Three: Teach Skills, Bridge Gaps involves:

- teachers being aware that not all students come to the classroom with *a priori* knowledge.
- teachers starting where students are rather than from a predetermined point in the curriculum.
- teachers scaffolding learning.

- teachers guiding students in connecting what they are learning in the classroom to what they already know.

Principle Four: Work with (Not Against) Individuals, Families, and Communities involves:

- teachers working with individuals, families, communities, and peers.
- teachers respecting the cultures and values of students, their families, and communities.
- teachers drawing on students' personal lives to make learning relevant.
- *teachers affirming the validity of diverse ways of knowing, being, and socioeconomic organizing held by students and their families, even if they clash with the ideals of SJE.*

Principle Five: Diversify Forms of Assessment involves:

- teachers diversifying their assessment to include portfolios, performances, and other varied measurements to complement existing standardized assessment tools and honor the diverse ways in which individuals know and are gifted.

Principle Six: Make Inequity, Power, and Activism/Social Change Agency Explicit Parts of the Curriculum involves:

- teachers modeling social activism, *Critical Media Literacy, eco-ethics and sustaining the cultural commons*, and critical, democratic dialogue about privilege, power, and oppression.
- teachers working collaboratively to create and/or participate in learning communities.
- *teachers explicitly including and beginning dialogues centered on power and oppression as it relates to interactions between people, people and institutions, people and the environment, and institutions and the environment.*

- *teachers creating physically, mentally, and emotionally safe spaces for students to discuss issues of power, oppression, and their own knowledge, biases, and assumptions.*

To Cochran-Smith's (2004) original Six Principles of SJE, I have added a few simple elements, some of which were missing completely, and/or may have been implied but not explicitly addressed. Again, no new principles have been added, only skills have been added, and those are listed in italics. These added elements were ecojustice, critical media literacy, equity literacy, and not privileging democracy, critical theory, or related terms and/or ideals as better than or taking for granted that these are the only or best ways of knowing. Of course, these six principles can be applied to both K12 and postsecondary learning environments, in any type of class, covering any kind of material. Indeed, applying these principles to the adult learning classroom is just as important as applying them to classrooms of younger students.

This edited definition of SJE can help researchers and learners to gain better understandings of what SJE can and does look like in practice. More importantly for this study, this edited definition provides a basis upon which I, the researcher, and the participants can come to understand the implications of SJE for educators and learners before interviews are conducted. This allows participants to know what it entailed when I ask them about their feelings concerning SJE. Now that this working definition of SJE has been established from current conceptualizations and critiques of SJE, it is also crucial to detail narratives that are missing from the current SJE narrative. Taking this step situates the importance of the study by highlighting the gaps in literature this research aims to begin filling.

Missing Discourses in Current and Significant Research

A considerable amount of research analyzing SJE from all sorts of angles has been done in the 21st century U.S. educational climate. Studies detailing beliefs and attitudes of teachers in regards to the importance of and need for teaching for social justice have been conducted (Cochran-Smith, 2004; Ludlow, Enterline, & Cochran-Smith, 2008; Vaught & Castagno, 2008). There also exists a wealth of empirical studies conducted by teacher educators that shed light on practices that support and impede effective teaching and learning for social justice in postsecondary classrooms (Choules, 2007; Enterline, Cochran-Smith, Ludlow, & Mitescu, 2009; Kaufmann, 2010; Tisdell, 2008). Also, in a more recent action research critical case study, Young (2010) identified workplace factors which act as barriers to teaching for social justice. A lack of support for practice and deep-seated institutional racism were identified as barriers for teachers trying to practice culturally responsive teaching. Along these same lines, Picower (2011) followed several teacher candidates into their first year of teaching to examine the supports that she and they created to practice SJE (as they were taught in their undergraduate teacher education program). Picower worked closely with students in this qualitative grounded-theory study as a supporting advisor, documenting interviews that communicate new teachers' frustrations and successes (2011). Additionally, Mthethwa-Sommers' (2012) narrative study analyzed the personal and professional experiences of eight expert social justice educators to uncover their motivations to teach for justice.

Then, Fuxa (2012) also examined the narratives of social justice educators to explore the reasoning behind their decisions. Despite the absence of focus on SJE self-efficacy beliefs in Mthethwa-Sommers' and Fuxa's research, their studies do point out the importance of understanding the reasoning behind actions of social justice educators, which indirectly explores cognitive modeling in SJE—a needed skill for the practice of teaching for social justice, as

mentioned previously. These two studies also illuminate some of the potential motivating factors that drive teachers and teacher candidates to teach for social justice. At the same time, there are a few components missing from the SJE research dialogue on understanding the influence the family plays on those who are working to teach for social justice.

These studies are valuable to gaining a greater understanding of what SJE looks like in practice at all levels, how teachers and teacher candidates are putting SJE into practice, and even why some are putting it into practice. Unfortunately, there are a few discourses missing from these studies. Some components missing from the conversation about SJE are: First, many studies tend to be told from the viewpoint of the teacher educator, trainer, or mentor. While several researchers make considerable efforts to include the voices of teacher candidates I believe a significant portion of research power tends to remain unshared. Unshared power in the research process is in a sense ironic considering these studies center on SJE theory and practice, which emphasizes the sharing of power with learners. Picower's (2011) study is an example of empirical evidence using teacher candidate voices as the central source of information. Picower (2011) does not imply that her participants were made part of the data analysis process, or power of knowledge creation went unshared to a certain degree. This certainly does not mean that power-sharing did not happen, only that it was not highlighted in the study.

Next, an inquiry into the factors of participants' personal lives (such as family dynamics and relationships) or in the greater community which do not support teachers' SJE practice is decidedly missing from the literature dialogue. While the social nature of teaching and learning SJE and the process of modeling are examined implicitly in several studies, teacher candidates' SJE self-efficacy, or perceptions of their ability to teach for social justice, is typically not examined at all. For instance, Farnsworth (2010) utilized narrative interviews to explore the

social nature of learning to teach for social justice and how the process was influenced by community-based learning with peer learners. Though there is no focus on SJE self-efficacy or social learning theory applied, the study does emphasize the importance of prior learning experiences, the social nature of identity formation, and role identity plays in how SJE is approached by individuals in postsecondary training.

Another concern is that the voices of teachers in the South are not nearly as prominent in SJE literature, especially teachers in the Deep South where states are more extreme in terms of social, political, and religious conservatism than in other regions of the United States (Black & Black, 2012; Bullock III, 2010). While some studies have been conducted in Southern settings (Kaufmann, 2010; Potts & Schlichting, 2011), many tend to focus on urbanized areas and/or the Northeast, West, and Midwest regions (Ludlow, Enterline, & Cochran-Smith, 2008; Enterline, Cochran-Smith, Ludlow, & Mitescu, 2009; Picower, 2011; Vaught & Castagno, 2008; Young, 2010, 2011). These studies underscore the inequitable, often deplorable conditions brought on by modern day racial and socioeconomic segregation that inner city students and teachers face (Kozol, 1991, 2005). On the other hand, it must be noted that the voices of teachers and teacher candidates in the Deep South teaching and/or learning to teach for social justice are largely missing from the discourse, especially as they pertain to the potential social and familial effects felt in the endeavor. It is important that these voices be heard in the national SJE dialogue, especially considering the Deep South deals daily with high levels of poverty, has experienced a huge increase in the Hispanic population, and has the Modern Black Belt (an area of the United States consisting of counties in which Blacks outnumber Whites) (Sumners & Stehouwer, 2012) stretching throughout much of the region.

On the other hand, Vescio, Bondy, and Poekert (2009) conducted a grounded theory ethnographic research study analyzing the perspective transformations of seven teacher education graduate students who attend and complete a course centered on critical pedagogy. The participants were chosen purposely in order to obtain information-rich data. Data was collected from interviews which asked the participants about their experiences in and perceptions of the course since taking it, as well as from papers the participants wrote while taking the course. The data was analyzed and cross-checked with the participants in order to verify validity, which means that considerable power of data analysis was shared with participants. One of the significant findings of the study was that by participating in a SJE seminar, participants had “many aspects of their lives including their identities, their personal and professional communities, and their relationships with friends and family” (p. 12) significantly influenced by their perspective transformations. This study highlights the reality that relationships are affected by SJE and any resulting perspective transformations. However, it does not detail *how* those relationships are affected, how those relationships affect the process of learning to teach for social justice, or the effects of relationships on teacher candidates’ perceptions about doing SJE in their classrooms.

Also, Suriel and Atwater (2012) conducted a narrative case study that explored five White science teachers’ “personal experiences with cultural others that either facilitated or impeded their adoption of multicultural curricula strategies in science curricula units” (p. 1271). They found that participants who had transformative experiences with cultural others experienced increased empathy and perspective transformation regarding difference and found it somewhat easier to practice multicultural education, a form of SJE, at more in depth levels with their students. Four out of five participants were native Southern students of education and had

taken a course in multicultural education led by one of the researchers. This study highlights the importance of experiences and relationships on teachers' willingness to teach for social justice, particularly Southern teachers. However, there is not a significant focus on these teachers' familial relationships or how those relationships might influence SJE self-efficacy.

Additionally, a recent narrative case study conducted by Rivera-Maulucci (2013), a single preservice teachers' emotions and positional identities as a social justice science teacher as being situated at the classroom (micro), school (meso), and community/society (macro) levels. The preservice teachers' emotions, experiences, and identity are placed at the center of how she saw herself in relation to, felt about, and practiced SJE. This study briefly mentions the influence of family on positional identity, and briefly mentions feelings of efficacy teachers draw from their emotions, which are products of their experiences. However, like others mentioned in this review, this article does not directly relate the influences of family and the SJE self-efficacy of teachers or preservice teachers.

Along these lines, some studies examined how important teacher candidates believed SJE to be (Ludlow, Enterline, & Cochran-Smith, 2008; Enterline, Cochran-Smith, Ludlow, & Mitescu, 2009). While the first step to putting SJE into practice in classrooms is teachers believing that SJE is an important aspect of progressive and inclusive education, a belief in *themselves* to effectively teach for social justice is also essential. Keintz's (2011) doctoral dissertation presented research that shed more light on teachers' perceived SJE self-efficacy. In this mixed methods study, Keintz (2011) used, among other measures, the Learning to Teach for Social Justice-Beliefs scale developed by Ludlow, Enterline, and Cochran-Smith (2008), to connect teacher candidate attitudes concerning the importance of SJE to their perceived training and efficacy. In other words, teachers' beliefs about their abilities to teach in general and for

social justice effectively, or what I call their SJE self-efficacy in this study, were connected to their perceptions about the importance of SJE. Though her study is not done in a Southern setting, it does show promise that the conversation concerning teacher candidates' self-efficacy is beginning.

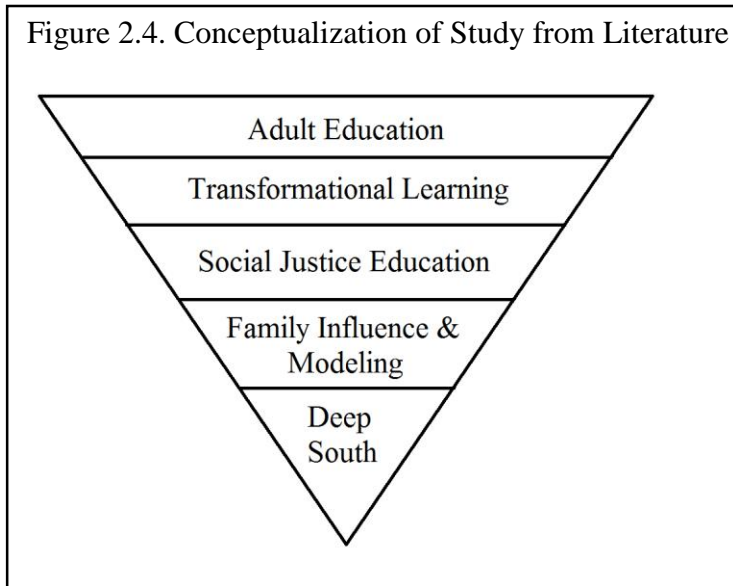
Continuing along the lines of social cognitive theory as it relates to SJE, Miller & Sendrowitz (2011) recently conducted a quantitative study analyzing the social justice self-efficacy beliefs (defined somewhat differently than SJE self-efficacy is in this study) of 229 counseling psychology doctoral students. Though this study does not analyze teacher education students, the results of the study are relevant. Findings from this study showed the direct and indirect effects that social justice-centered social cognitive mechanisms (like self-efficacy), and the supports and barriers of the training program had on students' interest in and commitment to social justice. While the study focuses on counseling psychology students, it can theoretically be applied to teacher candidates enrolled in programs with a SJE agenda. The study is pertinent because it highlights the important role that training plays in the development of social justice education self-efficacy beliefs, and how efficacy beliefs can sharply affect students' interest in and commitment to working for justice. It is unfortunate that the study does not consider the influences of family and sociocultural positionality on self-efficacy since these are considerable influences which will need to be considered in order to more effectively train adults to teach for social justice. This need, this missing discourse in the U.S. national SJE narrative, which has been outlined in this review as largely missing, is one that this dissertation research aims to answer.

Chapter Summary

“Education, as a cultural product, can be analyzed as a force of oppression and as a vehicle for embedding dominant ideologies within the psychic structures of learners [*sic*]” (Tennant, 2012, p. 69). For this reason, SJE is an essential approach to modern teaching and learning. Its foundation in Freirian liberatory education and praxis sets the stage for students to begin the process of learning critical thinking and recognizing existing forms of systemic oppression. This makes SJE a potentially transformative learning approach, both individually and collectively. The transformative potential of SJE lends it to be somewhat of a risk to learners’ and even educators’ own identities. Asking learners to critically hunt and check the validity of their own assumptions can change entire worldviews, which has the potential to challenge the relationships that learners hold with others, especially those in their private lives like family, peers, and friends. This can be especially true in the Deep South where conservative politics are deeply rooted in racial tensions, social class struggles, and a hegemonic system of patriarchy. Many higher education institutions are liberal arts organizations, and a SJE agenda of teacher education further pushes the cultural narratives of traditional conservative values.

However, individuals teaching for social justice can serve as powerful social models who work to help learners’ increase their SJE self-efficacy. A great deal of informative research has been done to understand SJE as a social undertaking in teacher education. Numerous conceptualizations of SJE from popular teacher education course texts and other recent scholarly works have been analyzed. In addition, several notable critiques of SJE and some critical missing dialogues in the SJE literature have been outlined. Still, there is a need for further exploration to be done into the social supports and barriers to adults’ perceived abilities to teach for social justice, especially in terms of teacher candidates’ professors as training models and their families as early models for challenging the status quo. Research on the influence of familial and training

social models, especially in the Deep South, will add greater understanding of adults' learning in the growing field of SJE theory and practice. Figure 2.4 shows the conceptual logic of the study beginning in the field of adult education, examining transformative learning potential, specifically SJE, and the influence of family social modeling in Deep Southern adult educators' SJE self-efficacy beliefs.



In this chapter, I have cited a brief historical narrative of social justice work in U.S. education in order to bring to light the longstanding gaps in educational opportunities and the passion of leaders and educators alike to push, in their own unique ways, for increased educational equity. Second, reasoning for why SJE is needed was presented. In this section, data was provided that outlined the current teaching population, teacher training deficiencies, the increasingly diverse student population, and the undeniable opportunity gap present in modern U.S. education. Next, SJE was looked at from an adult learning perspective in order to provide a new dimension to the social justice teacher education narrative. The skills of critical thinking, reflection, and self-reflection through the hunting and checking of taken for granted assumptions about truth and reality were analyzed as essential aspects of SJE that clearly identify SJE as

having significant, and possibly even common, potential to be a transformative learning endeavor. Critiques and challenges on this perspective were also addressed. Then, the social aspect of SJE was analyzed through a social cognitive theory lens to spotlight two important factors: the significance of adult and teacher educators' modeling of the skills needed to learn and teach for social justice; and, the social justice self-efficacy of teachers and teacher candidates to put what they have learned into practice. Again, critiques and challenges of social cognitive theory as it relates to SJE were discussed.

Following this, a section on current narratives in SJE provided numerous definitions of SJE by noted scholars in the field, a mention of fields that are similar to and overlap SJE, critiques of the cited sources, and an edited working definition that has been used in this study. Finally, current and significant research was examined for relevancy and missing narratives. From this examination it was found that while many valuable and insightful discourses are present in the SJE literature, the voices of teachers in the Deep South are missing and there is little to no analysis of the influences of family and/or community on teachers' social justice self-efficacy. This research hopes to begin a discourse on these missing topics so that it may become part of the greater SJE narrative. In the next chapter, I will outline the methods used in this dissertation research.

Chapter Three: Methodology

Overview of Chapter

The purpose of this narrative study was to explore the familial influences on adult education doctoral students' perceived abilities to teach for social justice in the Deep South. The main research question that was developed to explore the topic was: What are the familial influences on adults' perceived abilities to teach for social justice in the Deep South? Also, three secondary questions were developed. How do other social influences, such as those concerning peers and/or training, influence adults' perceived abilities to teach for social justice in the Deep South? How can an adult learning perspective inform the primary research question concerning the role family and other social influences have played in shaping in-service teachers' perceived abilities?; and, What implications might family and other social influences have for adults' perceived abilities to practice SJE have for the field of teacher education? It is my belief that it is necessary to begin a discourse that explicitly recognizes the implications involved when adult learners take on the task of social justice education (SJE).

In the last chapter, a working definition of SJE was developed from the literature. Learning to teach for social justice was positioned as a skill set requiring critical thinking and reflection and as a learning process, has strong potential to spur perspective transformation and thus transformative learning. This chapter provides a discussion of the methods used to investigate the research purpose and questions. In this chapter, I discuss the rationale for choosing a qualitative research design and for using narrative methods. Also, participants are described, in addition to the information needed to conduct the study, an overview of the research design, the IRB approval, data collection methods, participant recruitment, the rationale

for the data analysis method, ethical considerations, issues of trustworthiness, and the limitations of the study.

Rationale for Qualitative Research Design

According to Creswell (2007), researchers choose qualitative methods for many reasons: to explore a new topic not much is known about, help people empower themselves, to minimize power dynamics, to collaborate with participants, to develop new theories where none exist or are lacking in some way, and to “write in a literary, flexible style that conveys stories, or theater, or poems, without the restrictions of formal academic structures of writing” (p. 40). Considering the guiding purpose, questions, and the relative absence of research on the topic, it became clear that this study would be exploratory in nature. It was also important for me to act as a critical multicultural and social justice researcher (Schoorman & Bogotch, 2010) by constructing a study that reflected the values of SJE: honoring context, including multiple and fluid voices, maintaining a commitment to constructive transformative learning, challenging hegemony and the status quo of traditional research, doing research with adults rather than on adults, and challenging the traditional interviewer-interviewee relationship. Therefore, I chose to take a fully qualitative research approach to investigating the research questions. Moreover, it was clear to me that adults’ stories needed to be heard. The realities that are faced by adults learning SJE in such a socially and politically conservative region of the U.S. are complex, powerful, and situated. So, narrative methods were chosen with the goal of providing teacher educators greater insight into the lives, negotiations, and relationships of adult doctoral students and the choices they make as potential future social justice educators.

Rationale for Narrative Methodology

As with many terms and concepts in academia, there is no clear and concise definition of narrative as a method of research (Riessman, 2008). There are multiple, at times contradictory, conceptualizations of what narrative methods are and should be. Yet, the representation of multiple and contradictory conceptualizations, or voices, is one of the defining characteristics of narrative. There also tends to be agreement that narrative begins with the lived experiences of participants in addition to how and why those experiences are storied (Chase, 2005; Creswell, 2007; Riessman, 2008). Interviewing and reflective papers are common methods used to collect individuals' stories. Both of these methods have been used in this study. Conducting narrative research requires researchers to spend a considerable amount of time with participants, listening to and working to understand the stories participants construct around their lived experiences (Chase, 2005; Creswell, 2007). Close attention is paid not only to participants' stories, but also to how events are narrated, the reasons why they are narrated in a particular manner, and the meanings created in and by the act of narration (Chase, 2005; Riessman, 2008; Rossiter & Clark, 2007). Therefore, narrative involves the storied, lived experiences of the self, others, communities, even societies. However, it is important to note that "[n]ot all talk and text is narrative" (Riessman, 2008, p. 5). Instead, a key component of narrative is that storied events are given purpose and meaning, and are linked in ways that draw meaning. From these meanings, individuals, groups, communities, cultures, and societies develop identities, or understandings of themselves as they relate to their positions held (gender, race, SES, religion, and so forth).

From this understanding, it is clear that a great deal of identity work goes into the creation of a narrative. Rossiter and Clark (2007) outline how narrative is a part of and influences everyday life: Cultural, family, and individual narratives fill our lives at every level. The cultural narrative, or myth, creates a collective and individual understanding of the way life

is, why life is that way, and how to exist within those boundaries. An example of a cultural narrative is the previously outlined U.S. narrative of meritocracy (discussed in chapter two's section outlining critiques of SJE). There are innumerable narratives at the personal, group, and societal level that confirm and contradict the relevance and validity of meritocracy in the U.S. However, cultural narratives are typically defined by the dominant culture (2007). Accordingly, this means that the cultural narrative is marked by hegemonic narratives of patriarchy, sexism, racism, classism, heterosexism, religious oppression and discrimination, and ableism, just to name a few. As a result of the hegemonic nature of these narratives, they are deeply embedded in the group and the individual, and are therefore often quite difficult to challenge.

Then, on a smaller scale, the family narrative provides current members and generations that come after with beliefs and values that they must negotiate. An example could be a young science teacher growing up in a family that had developed a narrative identifying the family as socially and religiously conservative. Whether that science teacher decides to personally embrace or challenge the family narrative, for instance deciding what role the theory of evolution should have in the classroom, is up to that individual. This highlights the ways in which people even more specifically develop who they are from their family narratives. The individual is defined not only by the cultural narratives he or she aligns with, but also by family members and even themselves as "black sheep", matriarchs and "mother hens", troublemakers, peacemakers, confrontational, passive, sages of advice, or in need of advice. Often times, places like a grandmother's home, artifacts such as heirlooms, and even stories about family members and events are all parts which comprise the family narrative, or the "sacred bundle" (Rossiter & Clark, 2007, p. 24) of artifacts and stories that define the family as a unique unit within the larger cultural narrative. The influence of the family narrative on the individual narrative is so

significant that adult educators struggle with the ethical dilemma of the extent to which adult educators should make the family narrative a concern in the adult learning classroom.

However, as Baxter-Magolda, Creamer, and Meszaros (2010) pointed out, an individual's characteristics (like personality, socialization, and meaning-making structures) all affected the experiences people in their studies sought out and how those experiences were interpreted. With the ability to analyze the ways in which he or she has been socialized (for instance by his or her family and peers), a person increases his or her ability to negotiate that socialization and create a reality that is more representative of his or her own making, as opposed to that reality being reliant on the truths of others. This ability is part of a greater skill set called self-authorship, or a "holistic meaning-making capacity...characterized by internally generating and coordinating one's beliefs, values, and internal loyalties, rather than depending on external values, beliefs, and interpersonal loyalties" (p. 4).

In the present narrative study, the ethical consideration of the family narrative was explored because SJE is a transformative learning experience that challenges the ideals, relationships, and thus, the identities of adult learners. Consequently, SJE is unique in that the ethical weight of the family narrative becomes more involved in the course as a result of the political and transformative nature of SJE. Family, friends, and peers comprise a significant portion of people's identities through the relationships that they create between one another. When adults' ideals are challenged in SJE courses, this indirectly challenges the relationships they hold with their family, friends, and peers. This in turn challenges adults' very identities (Mamgain, 2010). In other words, because SJE involves a great deal of identity work and potential perspective transformation which can challenge the relationships learners hold and their very identities, ethics become a central concern in the SJE classroom.

Finally, cultural and family narratives settle within and help define individual narratives (Rossiter & Clark, 2007). The individual narrative is created as people negotiate cultural and family myths to define who they are and who they will be in the future. Adults can choose to accept the entire cultural narrative without question. For instance, a teacher could accept the afore mentioned narrative of meritocracy, embrace standardized testing as the most fair measure of intelligence, and compete in the Race to the Top competition (outlined in chapter two). Then, that same teacher could reject a religiously conservative family narrative that denies the theory of evolution, choosing instead to teach the theory in her or his own classroom. Each of these examples show how individuals pull from cultural and family narratives to create their own individual narratives.

Furthermore, Chase (2005) also points out the importance of analyzing how participants construct *changing* individual identities and understandings of themselves through narrative. The insistence here is that identity is constructed through narrative and can be dynamic depending on the setting and listener: the researcher's influence on the narrator, the influence of the narrator on the researcher, and the researcher's interpretation of the storied experiences all hold meaning. A similar sentiment is echoed in SJE literature (Nieto & Bode, 2012). This is why it is typical of and beneficial to narrative research for the researcher to address her or his own positionality, reactions to narrative data, and possibly even relate his or her own story of the narrative study (Chase, 2005; Creswell, 2007).

Lastly, scholars insist that participants become active collaborators in the data analysis process (Chase, 2005; Creswell, 2007; Riessman, 2008). This means that the traditional researcher-participant relationship can be challenged, even transformed into listener-narrator, researcher-co-researcher. Researchers share the power of interpretation, empowering participants

to become co-researchers and co-interpreters of their own stories. For these reasons, storied experiences, or narratives, are well-suited to exploring how family modeling influences adults' perceived abilities to teach for social justice.

Narrative in the Context of the Dissertation

Semi-structured narrative interviews were used to explore participants' life stories about their families influence on their perceived abilities to teach for social justice. Semi-structured interviews are less rigid and allow for the order of questions to be changed, and questions to be added or taken out during the interview process (Creswell, 2007). I chose semi-structured interviewing so that the flow of narrators' stories could occur more naturally. Narrative was chosen for a multitude of reasons which are shaped by the epistemological lenses through which I observe knowledge creation and the systematic sharing and analysis of knowledge. From a social constructivist standpoint, narrative allows for the positionality of the participants and me to be acknowledged and made part of the analysis process. Positionality and context are vital to gaining a more complete understanding of learners, their feelings, their decisions, and their resulting actions. As Eisner (1979) points out: "the 'straight facts' unencumbered by context, are paradoxically nonfactual [*sic*]" (p. 15). His statement points out that the absence of context leaves facts and statistics holding at least less, if not little or no, meaning. Hence, the realistically messy and contextual nature of reality is able to shine through and be better understood when using narrative methods. Also, narrative purposefully created space for me and participants to co-construct interpretations of storied events and experiences.

What is more, support for a critical influence on social constructivism can be found in choosing participants' lived experiences as primary sources of knowledge. First, participants could be empowered by the opportunity to share their own experiences and perceptions. Rather

than being reduced to statistics, each participant is a whole person with a story to be spoken and listened to. This runs counter to dominant research culture in the U.S., which is centered on clean-cut statistics and generalizable truths (Eisner, 1976, 1979). Additionally, the opportunity to present their life stories provided participants with the chance to reflect on their constructed identities, relationships, and practice as teachers. Scholars (Cochran-Smith, 2004; Nieto & Bode, 2012; Villegas & Lucas, 2002) highlight the strong role of critical self-reflection in improving practice, especially for SJE. Narrative is not only important to understanding teacher education, but teacher education is itself a form of narrative (Cochran-Smith, 2004). Rossiter & Clark (2007) called this institutional narrative, while Bloor and Dawson (1994) called this organizational and professional cultures. Regardless of how it is named, teacher education tells a story about the society in which it is happening, shedding light on the values and perceptions of the dominant group in that society. Using a social constructivist lens with critical influences creates space for considering how and why women story their lived experiences. Furthermore, Carter and Doyle (1996) detail how important life history and narrative are to learning to teach. The adult serves as a source of learning in the SJE curriculum because “personal, situated understanding is fundamental to practice, unavailable through standard forms of research on teaching, and often ignored in conventional preservice and in-service programs” (p. 121).

Finally, it was important to take steps to ensure social constructivist narrative methods directed the study. So, participants were given the opportunity to participate in a member checking process. Additionally, I negotiated with participants and the course instructor to receive additional varied sources of narrative data from the advanced SJE course all participants were enrolled in during the fall 2013 semester. All of the member check questions depended on each

participant's initial interview responses, creating a tailored member check process for each. All member checks were also taken in a narrative context and analyzed as the interviews were.

Strengths and Limitations of Narrative

Perhaps the most significant challenge facing a narrative study is that of validity and reliability. In qualitative methods, this could also be considered validity and trustworthiness. As Riessman (2008) points out, there is a dominant preoccupation with quantitative methods which often devalues qualitative methods as lacking objectivity. A lack of objectivity, it is said, compromises validity and trustworthiness. Yet, it was my goal to challenge this dominant assumption and work to transform what some may see as weakness into strength by situating qualitative and quantitative methods as two complementary parts of a whole vision of truth and knowing.

Qualitative data complements quantitative data as another avenue through which truth and knowledge can be sought. While some quantitative measures like scale scores may provide a more distanced and "objective" view, the more "subjective" qualitative method (like narrative) can provide greater insight into the context of those scale scores. Quantitative data already exists on teacher candidates who believe in and resist SJE (Enterline, Cochran-Smith, Ludlow, & Mitescu, 2009; Keintz, 2011; Ludlow, Enterline, & Cochran-Smith, 2008). Now, qualitative methods have been used as a way of gaining a more holistic, contextual comprehension of a macro (societal) and micro (individual) phenomena. A social constructivist narrative approach to this qualitative study has purposefully exposed the reality that knowledge and the systematic creation and analysis of knowledge lack complete objectivity because they are pursued and created by people, people who, by nature, lack neutrality and complete objectivity (for details on constructivism, see Mertens, 2010). Researchers determine what is studied, what questions are

asked, how those questions are framed, and even more importantly, how to interpret responses given and what they mean for larger groups. The entire process-quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods-is wrought with the thousands of decisions that imperfect, naturally biased people make throughout. In exposing my experiences, personal biases, and assumptions, I have presented a more complete and honest portrayal of the data participants present and my interpretations of those data. Therefore, it becomes possible to provide a more holistic disclosure of influences on conclusions developed in the study, allowing readers to draw their own inferences about the trustworthiness of the findings. At the same time, my point is not to argue whether qualitative methods and research is better in some way than the quantitative. On the contrary, both data forms have merits, possible situational shortcomings, and are two necessary and vital parts of a larger picture of truth.

The situated nature of data gathered in this narrative study may be an issue of concern to traditional research values (Creswell, 2007; Chase, 2005; Riessman, 2008). The sample analyzed was small, meaning it is less possible to develop generalizations for the greater population of adult SJE learners. This concern is well-advised, as the generalizability of understandings gleaned from narrative studies depends on the representativeness of the sample studied in relation to the population about which the researcher wishes to make a generalization (Chase, 2005). As a population becomes smaller in size, it becomes less representative (Creswell, 2007). Therefore, it is necessary to draw attention to the goal of this study: to explore and begin a research dialogue concerning a new adult learning-specific issue and its possible implications for future research and practice in the field of adult learning. I attempted to recruit as diverse of a participant sample as possible. Yet, it was still not my goal to make the results of this study transferrable or generalizable beyond adult SJE learners in the Deep South. Rather, my goal was

to begin a dialogue that seeks greater understanding of the unique influences on adults living in the Deep South to learn SJE and then teach for social justice in their classrooms.

Yet another possible challenge of this study existed potentially in the responses of the participants themselves. According to Chase (2005), the possibility that societal expectations may prevent participants from telling a story are significant when using narrative methods. As a result of a dominant expectation in society, individuals may feel the need to deny any natural tendency to tell stories, and can instead provide brief responses in terms of generalizations rather than details (2005). This could have a strong influence on narrative responses. Therefore, it is again important to note that this study was not focused on providing a high level of generalizability. Additionally, Chase (2005) states that the learned behavior of conciseness can be counteracted by creating broad questions that allow the participant to tell her or his story. As a result, care was also taken to do this.

Finally, Creswell (2007) identified the importance of time when considering possible limitations. Narrative research requires the researcher to spend a considerable amount of time getting to know participants and sharing the process of data analysis with participants. Since active collaboration was required, time was necessarily a factor. In the context of this study, a central goal was to develop trusting, scholarly relationships with participants that were developed during the course observation and interviewing process. By observing their course discussions, I gained some knowledge of each participants' unique context and personality.

Information Needed to Conduct the Study

In this exploratory research study, the objective was to work with a group of adult graduate students of education learning to teach for social justice in examining their perceived abilities to put learned SJE theory into practice and how these feelings were affected by the past

and current social modeling of their families and peers. In order to adequately explore their feelings and resulting actions, it was necessary to collect multiple forms of data. First, demographic information concerning participants' families and backgrounds were needed. This information helped to shed light on the ways in which participants' identities and individual narratives have been shaped. Next, participants' storied responses to interview questions were necessary. Semi-structured interview questions (see Appendix C) probed into numerous aspects of participants' lives. Six interviews were conducted, one with each participant, all ranging between one and two and a half hours long depending on participants' responses. Topics covered were past and current family and peer dynamics related but not limited to power relationships, dialogue, emotional safety in dialogue, action as change agents, overall family culture, beliefs about SJE, feelings of self-efficacy concerning SJE and its component tasks (see Appendix B), and how they believe their families and peers affected their efficacy feelings; and, member checking responses to additional questions, transcriptions, and analyses. Then, it was vital to write reflective field notes of my own immediately following each interview, and to keep research journal entries throughout the research process. These personal data sources helped me to check and balance my own biased reactions, to record nuances in interviews not captured by the voice recorder, and to track data interpretations and cross-narrative comparisons over time.

Finally, further participant reflections were gathered during the member checking process. Member checks served the purposes of sharing the power (albeit somewhat limited) of research and data analysis with participants, and confirming and/or disconfirming my own interpretations of participants' interview responses. Several member checks were done with each participant as I needed more information during the research process (data collection will be discussed further in the Data Collection section of this chapter). Before any data was gathered,

approval was gained from the Lesley University Internal Review Board (IRB) (see Appendix B for IRB Approval Information).

Description of Research Participants

Participants for this study were recruited from a population being observed, making this a sample of convenience. I observed a doctoral level course which focused on the advanced studies of diversity and oppression as related to education curriculum, which will be called by the pseudonym ED 800 in this study. This course was offered at a large, public, urban research university in the Southeastern United States, and was offered both as an elective and as a mandatory requirement for several masters and doctoral level degree programs. The overall student population of the university consisted mostly of traditional students. This means most students enrolled in the university were White, middle-class, young adults with no children attending fulltime in an undergraduate program while living on campus and either working part-time or not at all. On the other hand, the student population of the ED 800 course I observed was not representative of the traditional student population of the overall university. In the observation which constituted this study, most students taking ED 800 were characteristic of adult learners (Knowles, Holton III, & Swanson, 2011): they were in or past their 30's, many had children, worked fulltime jobs, were married at the time of the interview or had been married previously), and all were in a doctorate program at least part-time. It is important to note that I was in no way affiliated with the university at which the course was being taught. I also did not know the instructor prior to negotiating access to the course, nor did I work with the course instructor as a co-researcher during the study. Additionally, I did not personally or professionally know any of the students enrolled in ED 800 for the fall 2013 semester.

The ED 800 course was listed as hybrid, meaning that participants were to meet on campus, in person at a few scheduled times during the semester while the majority of the course took place virtually, in an online classroom. However, during the fall 2013 semester offering, the course only met once at the beginning of the semester, held no online discussion board conversations, and reported all of their assignments directly to the course instructor. This structure was agreed upon during the single course meeting at the beginning of the semester by the instructor and the students. All parties mentioned that discussion board conversations felt forced, unnecessary, and time consuming-defeating the point of online course offerings. The instructor allowed students to schedule meeting times independently. The course may seem stark, however; the instructor's strategy of tailoring the course meetings to fit the students' needs and negotiating the course requirements to fit adults' unique lives has a history of empowering adult learners (Shor, 1992).

Out of eleven people enrolled, I was able to meet ten students in person. Of these ten students, one was Korean, three were Black American, and six were White American. Also, most of these students were female (eight out of ten). Therefore, it was not surprising that most of the people who chose to participate in the study were White and female, which is representative of the overall university student population and of the field of education (U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2012). All participants were pursuing a doctoral degree in education and had prior and/or current experience as classroom teachers. It was my goal to recruit participants from the course being observed who are of varied ages, genders, racial and cultural backgrounds, income levels, and who are teaching in different content areas. Out of eleven students enrolled, nine students signed informed consent forms to participate in the study during the first course meeting, and out of those nine students, six people

followed through with participation. Below, I provide a synopsis of the six adult learners who completed the research process with me.

Table 1

Participant Demographics

Characteristic	Summary
Age	1 25-29 2 30-34 2 35-40 1 55-69
Sex	5 Female 1 Male
Sexual Orientation	5 Heterosexual 1 Homosexual
Race	1 Biracial (White/Native American self-identified) 4 White American 1 Black American
Religion in Childhood Home	1 Jewish 5 Christian, Protestant
Current Religious Affiliations	1 Jewish 4 Christian, Protestant 1 Agnostic
Political Affiliations	1 Independent 1 Republican 3 Democrat 1 Libertarian
Childhood SES	6 Middle Class
Generational Education History	1 1 st Generation College 1 2 nd Generation College 3 3 rd Generation College 1 4 th Generation College
Current Work Status	1 Administrator, K12 1 Teacher, K12 1 Instructor, Higher Ed

	2 Graduate Assistant
	1 Graduate Teaching Assistant
Years of Work Experience in Education	1 0-9 5 10-19
Doctorate Program	3 Ph.D. Literacy & Language 2 Ed.D Teaching & Curriculum 1 Ph.D. Ed Leadership
Prior Studies	1 Ed Undergrad 5 Non-Ed Undergrad 4 Ed Grad 2 Non-Ed Grad 1 Biblical/Seminary Grad

The epistemological frame of reference from which I approached the study affected the nature of the relationship that existed between the participants and me. The social constructivist lens and narrative approach demand that participants and I come to know one another more than may be considered typical or traditional for research standards. Furthermore, the power of data analysis was shared with participants. Last, conducting research with a critical lens also demanded that participants and I capitalize on and seek to develop our skills of critical thinking and democratic dialogue as learned in the ED 800 course and other similar courses in the program. This may present unique conditions for the emotional context of the interview about which participants will need to be informed.

Participant Involvement and Responsibilities

The first level of participation involved participants being interviewed, during which I was the sole interviewer. The interview consisted of several demographic questions and twenty possible interview questions which asked participants to narrate their lived experiences (see Appendix C for questions). Lengthy responses were welcomed and encouraged. Interviews

typically took between one and two and a half hours, were scheduled with participants at their convenience, and were scheduled to take place where they felt comfortable discussing their personal experiences. Some participants chose to meet in coffee shops while others were more comfortable meeting on their university campus. Participants were given the opportunity to choose their own pseudonym (fictitious name) to be used in reporting findings and many opportunities to drop out of the study if they wanted to. Demographic information was only used in the data analysis process.

The second level of participation involved participants attending a member check, conducted as a follow up in which they were offered further opportunities to provide feedback and/or clarification on my own interpretations of their responses in the first interview. This member check was offered as approximately one hour in length, to be conducted in one of two ways that participants decided on: in-person at a place of their choosing (convenience and/or comfort level) or via email correspondence. There were no set questions for this member check. Appropriate questions were determined on an individual basis as they were reliant on participants' individual responses to initial interview questions. At times participants were directly asked if an interpretation seemed representative to them, and at times participants were given new questions that sought to confirm a potential voice.

The third level of participation required participants to continue with the member checking process during the data analysis phase. The member checking process required participants to confirm, deny, and/or correct my interpretations. It must be noted that participants did not dictate what was and was not included when reporting the findings, but instead helped provide the study with added trustworthiness and validity by providing their own perspectives on interpretations gathered from their interview and member check responses. This process of

member checking promoted the presentation of findings that represent the voices of the adult learners as adequately as possible, in addition to the voice of the researcher.

Data Collection Methods and Participant Recruitment

Participant Recruitment

Students in the course were solicited to participate in the interview during the first and only course meeting at the beginning of the fall 2013 semester. Eleven people were registered for the course, but one person did not attend the course meeting. Prior to the course meeting, I held conference with the course instructor, at which time we negotiated how to introduce the study and me to the students. We agreed that I would introduce myself after the instructor and all students had a chance to introduce themselves. It was of great importance to not hide who I was or my purpose for being present from the participants, as my goal was to develop trusting and open research relationships. At the beginning of the course meeting students introduced themselves and then I introduced myself and my study. Together, the instructor and I answered questions and tried to relay all pertinent information about the study purpose, protections, and students' freedom to opt out at any given point with no fear of punishment.

During this introduction period, participants were told that, did they chose to participate, they would be asked to provide a narrative detailing their experiences with learning to teach for social justice. Each person would be required to expand on stories about their families which they would likely be required to do, but in less detail, during the course in reflective assignments. Information about their experiences, feelings, life events, family relationships, places of work and residence, work relationships, and similar topics related to their experiences with social justice education would be discussed to the degree which participants were comfortable sharing. It was also vital to mention that interviews would be recorded and transcribed. At this point,

participants were provided with a copy of the informed consent form (see Appendix D) and the interview questions so that they might have time to consider their participation. They were told that they did not have to return the forms then and could take time to read and consider participating. At this first meeting, participants took their time reviewing the documents, asking me questions during and after the meeting, and nine out of ten people returned signed consent forms during or after the meeting.

An initial, general solicitation email (see Appendix E) was sent to students asking them to participate. For those who responded positively or questioningly, a follow up email was sent containing either suggestions for meeting to conduct an interview, or a more detailed description of the purpose and procedure of the study as they are described here, respectively. Emails served to inform participants, once again, that they had the right to decline participation then and at any point. Additionally, emails contained an electronic version of the informed consent form and interview questions in case participants had lost their hardcopies given previously. I also encouraged the course students to voice any concerns and/or ask any questions they might have. Participants were provided with my contact information and the contact information of Institutional Review Board (IRB) contacts from my and their own university. Any text messages that were exchanged were initiated by the participants and were documented by me taking screenshots of them and saving those screen shots to my computer hard drive.

Data Collection

Six semi-structured interviews were conducted, one with each participant. All interviews were recorded using a small recording device, converted into mp3 files, and saved onto my computer hard drive which is protected by a password. Participants' individual interviews ranged in time between one and two and one half hours depending on participants' questions and

responses. Interviews were conducted at a location, date, and time of each participants' choosing for their convenience and so that participants could be as comfortable as possible. Furthermore, at the time of each interview I again explained the purpose and procedure of the study to participants verbally. I reminded participants that they had the right to drop out of the study at any time and encouraged them to voice concerns or ask questions about the study or the my own intentions, processes, or reporting. Participants were offered another hard copy of the informed consent form, or were provided with one to sign if they had not signed one already. I also signed the informed consent form at that time, or at the time of the meeting, depending on the participant. Participants were given a jpeg (digital photo) copy of the consent form.

Next, before beginning each interview, I also handed out a paraphrased definition of SJE (see Appendix F) that I used in the study. As was explained to each participant, there are numerous conceptualizations of SJE and several related fields, some of which this group had already been exposed to in their program coursework. This definition was provided, not to persuade students that one conceptualization is better or more desirable than any other, but rather so that students could be clear on what I meant when I asked them how they felt about SJE and their abilities to do it in practice. Finally, it was essential that participants not be deceived in any way. A goal of this research study was complete disclosure and participant involvement in the form of member checking.

Member checking was conducted throughout the entire 2013-2014 academic year. Several member checks were done with each participant as I felt I needed additional information regarding their experiences and perspectives. Some participants answered all member check requests while some answered less. Member checks were all conducted via email through my Lesley University email account. Finally, participants were provided with the same final

opportunity to view their in-depth narratives. This was done so that participants could provide feedback, make suggestions on aspects they would like to have added, changed, or removed.

This feedback process was one of negotiation between the participants and me.

Interview Transcription

Once interviews were completed, a transcriptionist was used to transcribe the conversations. The transcriber agreed to complete professional confidentiality before interviews were sent. Voice files (mp3's saved from recording device) were shared using Microsoft OneDrive, which is password protected. Once transcriptions were complete and returned, I reviewed them, listening to the voice recording and reading through, to personally ensure that they had been transcribed correctly. Furthermore, I replaced all identifying information with pseudonyms. Also, I added in information I believed was pertinent to situations as they occurred during the interviews which I had previously taken note of in my reflective journals just after each interview. For instance, I added in hand gestures and facial expressions that were used by participants in place of words.

Additionally, participants were provided with copies of the transcribed interview and offered the opportunity to suggest changes they thought would add to the discussion or request information they felt uncomfortable with be removed. Only one participant requested a change, and this was to not share the regions in which the universities she had attended were located. Therefore, an exceptionally small amount of interview transcriptions were changed. Finally, all interview transcriptions were printed for me to read through and saved in the same file folder that the original voice recordings were saved on my computer. All printed transcriptions and electronic files were not seen by other people, and they were stored securely. In the next section, I will outline how participants' interview and member check responses were analyzed.

Data Analysis: Voice-Centered Relational Method

According to the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) (2012), 76% of school teachers in the U.S. are female. Since approximately three quarters of teachers are women, narrative analyzed in a manner that pays close attention to how and why women construct their accounts can provide useful insights into the profession and the practice of SJE. Accordingly, most of the participants in this study were female. For this reason, the Voice-Centered Relational Method (VCRM) of analysis (Gilligan, Spencer, Weinberg, & Bertsch, 2003) was utilized in this study.

In her seminal book *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development*, Carol Gilligan (1982) presented a theory of development that challenged themes of sexism in other popular theories of development at that time. She synthesized data and interpretation from three studies she had conducted in the past that analyzed identity and moral development of adult female undergraduate learners. From these studies, Gilligan insisted that themes occurred in terms of how people think. She outlined learning as a process that, for women, was typically tied to relationships that they held with other people, how they viewed themselves in relation to others, and by their abilities to care for others. This did not mean that men did not also think and learn in relational terms, but that the discourse of women learning in such a way had not been previously outlined in human development literature. These development and cognition themes were significantly influenced by gender identity, but they were certainly not inextricably tied to gender identity.

According to Gilligan (1982), "the failure of women to fit into existing models of human growth [at the time] may point to a problem in the representation, a limitation in the conception of human condition, an omission of certain truths about life" (p. 2). She outlined how popular

studies and theories (like Kohlberg's theory of moral development) were either missing the voices of women and/or were misrepresented based on sexist assumptions about truth and knowledge. Often, moral judgment and human development were centered in masculine dominant preferences of autonomy and independence from others (1982). So, in a sense, Gilligan's theory does feminist work. As hooks (2000) insists, feminism is simply an antisexism movement aimed at ending "sexism, sexist exploitation, and oppression" (p. 1). By assuming that human development was qualified on masculine-dominant terms alone, women were often misrepresented in the literature as less morally and/or cognitively developed, and as less knowing than their male counterparts. However, it must be noted that while her theory is developed from a feminist perspective, Gilligan does not limit the use of VCRM to only females. In fact, Gilligan insists the theory "is characterized not by gender but by theme" (Gilligan, 1982, p. 2).

Instead, VCRM provides a relational perspective on knowing and being that complements other theories of human development. For example, Way (2001) used VCRM in a longitudinal study that examined poor and working class boys living in an urban setting. She studied boys who were in their teens, the relationships they had with their close friends, and how these relationships developed over time. Interestingly, the feelings these boys developed over time about the changing nature of their relationships with their friends was related to the unstable nature of their school environment and their relationships with their parents, further highlighting the importance of family on perceptions outside of the family institution and narrative.

VCRM is based on the assumption that relationships serve as the foundation of human development (Gilligan et al., 2003). This assumption is inherently tied to Bandura's social cognitive theory, in that most learning is social learning. Relationships-as they are shaped and

influenced by the self, others, culture, society, and history-constitute the creation of the self and “the other”. This analysis differs from Bandura’s theory in that feminist research on the role of relationships in the development of self and identity are made a central consideration.

Gilligan et. al (2003) provide guidelines upon which a VCRM analysis can be built. Readings of transcribed narratives are referred to as “listenings” (p. 159). The simple change in wording denotes the active collaboration of the researcher and participant in the analysis process. Also, this turns attention to the multiple “voices” (p. 157) of the participant and researcher. Chase (2005) promotes this take on narrative by insisting that women possess many voices which can be contradictory and/or complementary, and voices are often suppressed or silenced. By utilizing VCRM, I was able to listen for the many different voices of each participant, and subsequently readers may also be able listen to these voices.

The first listening step involved listening for the plot of the narrative and addressing my own reactions to the narrative (Gilligan et. al, 2003). In this step I listened for “what is happening, when, where, with whom, and why” (p. 160), patterns in the narrative, and reflected on her or his own feelings and thoughts. I also used my field notes, taken right after each interview, to reflect on my own emotional responses to each person’s story. In many instances, I found that I could identify and empathize with some aspect of their stories, as I had similar experiences. These reactions were noted in my field notes, and documented in my research journal during the first listening.

In the second listening, I created “I poems” (Gilligan et. al, 2003, p. 162) from transcriptions of the narrative. According to the authors, this step forces the researcher to attend to the participant’s first-person voice and how he or she speaks about her- or himself. It is possible in this step to reveal little or nothing of value to understanding participants and their life

stories. However, it is also possible in this step to reveal powerful voices, trends in participant thinking and self-perception.

The third and fourth listenings were identical in process and purpose. Gilligan et. al (2003) call these steps “listening for contrapuntal voices” (p. 164), meaning the researcher listens for voices that are contrasting and/or complementary to one another. Additionally, it is important to note that using VCRM meant that it was possible for a single statement to contain multiple meanings. These meanings could even be contradictory to one another, reflecting Nieto and Bode’s (2012) assertion that identity is hybrid and dynamic in nature, as are the stories people construct to communicate their identities. Gender, race, sexual orientation, religion, ability, ethnicity, profession, income, age, geographic location, amongst others, are all sources of information that individuals used to learn and construct understandings of their identities and positionalities in society.

Also, in the third and all subsequent listenings it was important to accomplish several reading tasks. First, it is important to identify any possible voices, attempt to define those voices, and listen for their consistency (read through the narrative, finding occurrences). Next, if necessary, voices could be redefined, and I could decide from that point whether each voice made sense and informed the analysis (Gilligan et. al, 2003). Then, each voice could be presented to the appropriate participant for a response. It was preferable that at least two contrapuntal listenings be done, which is why the steps end at four in the authors’ description. However, Gilligan and her colleagues promote listenings for contrapuntal voices that go beyond a fourth step. In light of this, it was possible to go through much more than four listenings of a single narrative if clear voices continued to emerge in the narrative. Therefore, I made it a point to individualize my approach to each person. I listened for evidence or absence of at least two

voices: a voice of social justice self-efficacy and a voice of social justice self-doubt. At the same time, it was essential that I listen with a mind open to the possibility that these voices might not be present, that there may have been additional unanticipated voices rising up from each story. From that point, I attempted to let the voices flow naturally from the listenings. If I suspected that I heard a voice, I followed the previously described procedure of identifying, defining, checking for consistency, redefining if needed, deciding if it informed analysis, and reporting to the participant.

In conclusion, there is a particular usefulness of and uniqueness to utilizing narrative analyzed with a VCRM for understanding the influences of the family on adults' perceived abilities to teach for social justice. SJE is a practice built on a foundation of critical thinking, self-reflection, democratic dialogue, the co-creation of knowledge, and shared power (Cochran-Smith, Nieto & Bode, 2012; Villegas & Lucas, 2002). With this in mind, it was sensible to choose the VCRM because it supported my own lens as a critical researcher, the theoretical foundations of SJE, and the potential to create new knowledge in a way that honored SJE. What is more, narrative created a space for democratic dialogue both interpersonally and intrapersonally, for participants and me. Furthermore, critical self-reflection is encouraged for both participants and researchers, and this aspect alone has the potential to improve practice for both parties. As Mezirow (2000) pointed out, narrative creates an opportunity for adults to critically self-reflect on their own assumptions, possibly improving learning and future teaching. When the power of data analysis is shared, narrative has the potential to help participants claim their own sense of empowerment. In choosing narrative methodology, SJE could happen in concurrence with the systematic analysis of a contextual lived experience.

Ethical Considerations

Protections

Voice-recorded interview sessions, interview notes, interview transcription hardcopies, signed informed consent form hardcopies, and any other soft/hardcopies of documents were kept in a locked file drawer in my office. Emails and digital interview transcriptions were stored on a password protected computer hard drive which was also protected by a paid antivirus program subscription. No digital information was stored on transportable hard drives (such as flash drives or external hard drives).

Participant identification was not necessary for this study. All participants were provided with the opportunity to choose their own pseudonyms and were given one if they chose to have one assigned. Pseudonyms were used in all documents except for the informed consent form to further promote identity protection. Also, the university at which participants were taking the ED 800 course in diversity, oppression, and curriculum was not named nor was the state or city in which it was located identified. The institution was referred to simply as a large, urban Southeastern university. Additionally, the identity of the course instructor was protected with a pseudonym. The course instructor was not interviewed and this person's contact information was stored in the Lesley University email database. Actual names of any people and/or places referred to in interviews were assigned pseudonyms to protect them from identification as well. Finally, participants were told at every juncture of the study that they did not have to participate if they did not want to, the study was not required for successful completion of their ED 800 course, and that they could stop the interview and/or their participation in the research process at any point without fear of punishment.

Risks

Research participants were at a slight risk of emotional and psychological stress. During the interview and member checking process, I asked participants to tell narratives regarding their families and incidents they have experienced in their teaching careers in regards to being critical pedagogues and/or teaching for social justice. This could have caused participants to recall and relive negative experiences. However, I provided an emotionally safe dialogue environment and encouraged participants to decline answering any questions they were not comfortable answering. If participants seemed uncomfortable talking about any topic, I brought this up and asked if my inquiry was acceptable.

Additionally, a small risk of identification was present in participants choosing to reveal personal information about their families. Therefore, I ensured absolute confidentiality and anonymity for participants by utilizing pseudonyms for participants, any other person they mentioned, and all locations they discussed. In any case that I perceived participants might be uncomfortable with an analysis I might provide (like identifying a family member's action as racist in data analysis), I brought this up immediately and asked if my analysis was unacceptable to them. It was my goal to have as few emotional surprises as possible come up in the member checking and data analysis process. At times participants asked that certain aspects of their lives not be revealed, and these requests were honored. Furthermore, participants were informed and reminded throughout the research process that they may discontinue the interview and/or their participation in the study if they chose without fear of punishment. Additionally, as with any study, there was a slight risk of participants' identities being discovered. As mentioned, several steps were taken to maintain the protection of participants' identities, anonymity, and confidentiality.

Benefits

Like me, all participants were doctoral students. This meant that participants were provided with an opportunity to witness a qualitative, education dissertation study and process, and to ask questions about the process if they choose to. No participants had completed their own studies. So, it was possible for them to gain insights into the internal review board (IRB), proposal, and research processes. This opportunity was often taken by participants, and I answered any questions about the IRB and research processes as objectively and honestly as possible. Also, they took the opportunity to strengthen a working professional relationship with a fellow education researcher who could be used as a professional resource in the future if needed. Furthermore, as mentioned previously, the process of narrating their experiences in SJE provided participants with the opportunity to critically reflect on their understandings of their experiences, identity constructions, and a heightened awareness of the issues around SJE. Scholars support the role of critical reflection in improving practice, especially in SJE (Cochran-Smith, 2004; Nieto, 2010; Villegas & Lucas, 2002). Finally, upon completion of the study, participants received a \$50 Visa gift card for their full participation as appreciation for their cooperation.

Reporting and Debriefing

Participants were provided with transcriptions, voices as they were developed, and the results of the study. However, it must be clearly articulated that participants were involved in the interview analysis process. I periodically checked in with participants during the data analysis process, allowing them the opportunity to confirm and/or disconfirm interpretations of their responses. This meant participants and I were involved in a member checking data analysis process. We worked together in this manner to ensure the credibility and trustworthiness of the data interpretation to the greatest extent possible. Participants were informed of this and were reminded of this responsibility throughout the study just as they were reminded of their rights to

end participation. No participants reported any long-lasting psychological or emotional distress resulting from the interview and member checking process. As a result, there was no need to report any participants to the proper mental health services for coping assistance.

Issues of Trustworthiness

Credibility and Confirmability

Qualitative research, such as this narrative study, demands that credibility be ensured through a validation process (Creswell, 2007). It is the researcher's duty to ensure in this process of validation that interpretations adequately represent the participants' intentions. I used a member checking process, multiple data sources, field notes, and a research journal to ensure that my interpretations of the data represented participants' intentions as closely as possible. As mentioned, participants were provided with interview transcripts, given the chance to alter responses, asked to review and make suggestions about all voices that I developed from listenings, and were provided with the opportunity to review findings before they were published.

Additionally, I did not rely solely on one interview as an accurate representation of a person. Instead, I used the interview as a base, upon which member checks served as additional disconfirming or confirming sources. Also, I used the VCRM of data analysis specifically because it provided a space for me to disclose my own reactions and biases, for which my field notes and research journal served as a source of reflection. This allowed me to bracket my own experiences, expectations, and any other personal baggage before, during, and after data analysis.

Dependability and Transferability

Though I attempted to recruit as diverse a participant sample as possible, it was not my goal to make the results transferrable or generalizable beyond adult SJE learners in this sample.

The situated nature of data gathered in this study is an issue of concern to traditional research values (Creswell, 2007; Chase, 2005; Riessman, 2008). The sample analyzed was small, meaning it is less possible to develop generalizations for the greater population of adult SJE learners. Since the generalizability of understandings gleaned from narrative studies depends on the representativeness of the sample studied in relation to the population about which the researcher wishes to make a generalization (Chase, 2005). As a population becomes smaller in size, it becomes less representative of larger populations, like the region or country (Creswell, 2007). For this reason, the goal of this study is to explore and begin a research dialogue concerning a new adult learning-specific issue and its possible implications for future research and practice in the field of adult learning. It was also a goal of this research project to highlight the voices of adults in the Deep South who were learning to teach for social justice. As discussed in chapters one and two, the Deep South is a region of the U.S. that is more conservative (religiously, socially, politically, and economically) than the rest of the country (Black & Black, 2012; Bullock III, 2010). As a result, Deep Southern adults are likely to have family members who are conservative, if not extremely conservative. For this reason, SJE presents a unique challenge to this group of adults resulting from the distinctly transformative potential of SJE in terms of perspectives transformation, identity work, and potential challenges to relationships built on those perspectives and identities.

The situated nature of adults' identities as potential or developing social justice educators is deeply rooted in the unique lived experiences and interpretations of the individual. This is what the study seeks to highlight: That adults' unique situated perceptions may have an impact on their perceived abilities to teach for social justice. If families do influence adults' perceived abilities to teach for justice, then this influence could be a significant aspect of adult learners'

identities. Adult educators will want to consider having learners reflect on this aspect of their identities, how their learning might be filtered through their experiences *and* their relationships with others when learning SJE, and how their decisions about SJE (including but not limited to their SJSE) are affected by these relationships. This could help ensure a more individualized focus on adults' own critical self-reflection that digs deeper into their pasts, and helps adults challenge some of their most deeply held assumptions about truth and learning. With this high level of individuality as the focus, the goal of this study was to begin a dialogue that seeks greater understanding of the unique influences on adults living in the Deep South to learn SJE and then teach for social justice in their classrooms. Naturally, this limits the transferability of the results to other adult learners, even those in the Deep South.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, an in-depth account of the study's methodologies were presented. First, rationales for choosing qualitative, narrative methods were given. Narrative was discussed in the context of the research study so that strengths and weaknesses of narrative could be outlined in detail. A description of the data needed to conduct the study was provided in addition to the IRB process followed prior to data collection. Next, I gave a detailed portrayal of the research participants, their involvement and responsibilities, how data was gathered and participants were recruited, and the interview transcription and data analysis processes. Finally, the chapter was brought to a close by highlighting the ethical considerations and issues of trustworthiness unique to this study.

In the next chapter, the findings will be presented. Each participant's lived experiences will be offered in the hopes that their narratives will shed light on the influence of familial modeling on adults' perceived abilities to teach for social justice.

Chapter Four: Participant Narratives

Stories are everywhere. We tell them, we live in them, our views of reality, of life itself, are shaped by them in ways beyond our awareness. We make sense of our experience, day by day and across the lifespan, by putting it into story form. *We are stories.*

-Marsha Rossiter & M. Carolyn Clark (2007, pp. 3)

Overview of Chapter

In the last chapter, the methodology of the dissertation research was covered. This chapter will present the in-depth narratives of six adult learners enrolled in an advanced doctorate level course in diversity and oppression in K12 curriculum. All of these learners are enrolled at least part-time in education doctorate programs at the same university, which will be referred to by the pseudonym University of the Deep South (UDS) here. All six participants were interviewed at a place, time, and day of their choosing with which they felt comfortable. Each participant shared demographic data prior to answering interview protocol (please see Table 1 in chapter three for full demographic overview).

Again, I purposefully chose the course to observe and negotiated access with the course instructor, who will be referred to by the pseudonym Dr. Jones. At the same time, students enrolled in the course participated at their own will, with no pressure or fear of punishment from Dr. Jones or me. As a result, the students who chose to participate, in part, a sample of convenience. Participants were not handpicked from the course, nor did I look for students with specific qualities other than the requisite for the study of being adult learners enrolled in the same diversity and oppression course.

This chapter will first detail the first and second listenings of the Voice-Centered Relational Method. Second, this chapter describes the first (and only) course meeting and how the participants and I were introduced by the course instructor. This is done to establish a context

for the relationship between the participants and me, and the participants and their course. Finally, this chapter provides the narratives of these six adult learners enrolled in the same 800 level education course on oppression and diversity as it relates to curriculum at the time the interviews were conducted. Each narrative will outline three significant aspects of that person's life: 1) the participant as an adult learner in the present, 2) the participant as an educator (either at the K12 or college level, at times in the past and/or present), and 3) the participant's reflections on his or her family's own social modeling. In order to preserve the organic nature of each narrative, these three aspects of each participant's narrative will be presented in the most natural order, and not necessarily in the order presented above. Narratives will be presented in the order in which they were conducted, preceded by a brief detailing of the first two listenings of the Voice-Centered Relational Method and the first class meeting where the participants and I were first introduced by the ED 800 course instructor.

Addressing the Voice-Centered Relational Method

First Listening: Listening for the Plot

In chapter three, the Voice-Centered Relational Method was outlined. In review, Gilligan et. al (2003) state the first and second steps in the Voice-Centered Relational Method are fixed steps. The first listening, listening for the plot, allows the listener (me) unique space to hear both my own reactions to the narrative being spoken and the plot of the narrative. The plot is explained as:

Repeated images and metaphors and dominant themes are noted as are contradictions and absences, or what is not expressed. The larger social context within which these stories are experienced is identified, as is the social and cultural contexts within which the researcher and research participant come together. (p. 160)

In accordance with the requirements of first listening of the Voice-Centered Relational Method, reactions to participants' unique feelings, beliefs, and situations expressed during the interview are periodically inserted into each narrative. For example, when I restory Sarah's perspectives on her own role in SJE, I briefly mention how I identify with part of her experience. These recognitions are kept brief (one to two sentences at most) so as to distract from the participant narrative as little as possible, and are done to address the first listening.

Also, listening for the plot, or the themes of participants stories is done along three strands. I noticed that when discussing teaching, learning, and their families, participants tended to speak with different emotions, facial expressions, and at times, even levels of confidence. From this listening, a theme was discovered and this theme served as the basis upon which the I-Poems were constructed.

Second Listening: Constructing I-Poems

As also mentioned in chapter three, the second step of the Voice-Centered Relational Method of analysis is the construction of I-Poems. Again, the construction of I-Poems involves isolating the "I" pronoun and the verbs which follow them. This is done to condense participants' narratives and spotlight how they speak about themselves. I allowed for additional words to remain when I believed these words conveyed strong messages that might better help readers interpret the emotional power of the I-Poems for themselves. Additionally, I have attempted to situate each I-Poem in the context of what the participant was discussing so that the context of the I-Poem, and possibly the emotions conveyed in it, can be better understood. Finally, as mentioned in the previous section, I constructed I-Poems along three veins of strong emotion I noticed during the first listening: The Adult Learner Voice, the Educator Voice, and the Family Reflection Voice.

The First Course Meeting

I began the process by negotiating access to the course with Dr. Jones via email. Dr. Jones, like other professors I have met at UDS, seems inviting and readily offers her assistance to me, a complete stranger. She describes the course in greater detail to ensure it is appropriate for the study. The course is a hybrid course, meaning that it is designed much like my own doctorate program: Most of the coursework will be done online while only a few face-to-face class meetings will be held. Together, the course instructor and I decide that I should meet the students enrolled in the course at the first class meeting.

The night of the first meeting, I show up early in hopes of speaking with Dr. Jones before the meeting to work out our plan for introducing me. Though she is busy preparing for the class in the next few minutes, she seems happy to sit down with me and devotes her attention to our conversation. We discuss our plan and agree to have her introduce herself and talk about the course first, then have students introduce themselves, and I will be the final introduction.

Once in the class, we follow our plan and every student in the class listens as I describe why I am there and what my study is about. The students appear interested, perhaps even studious, I suspect as a result of knowing they will be in the same position soon enough. During the meeting, the students and Dr. Jones negotiated terms of the course: That the class would not meet officially anymore past tonight. If anyone wanted to meet as a group or individually, they could set times and dates according to their needs. The course went from being a hybrid course to a fully online course in what seemed like an instant. However, the same material would be covered at the same pace and timing, and most of the course was already being conducted online to begin with. Not much had changed in actuality.

Immediately following the meeting, I wait around to see if anyone will agree to participate immediately. I have a few short conversations with students who ask questions about my study and are simply curious about me and my own Ph.D. program. Out of eleven enrolled students, ten are present, and nine sign consent forms to participate. I leave the meeting elated, because, although I realize it might be difficult for all of these students to follow through, nine out of eleven is a good start.

After the first class meeting, it is late, and I am tired from the drive, but I keep my promise to send all enrolled students digital copies of the forms they have signed. In the following days, some students reply and some do not, as expected. The semester has just begun and these adults are busy. Still, one by one, six learners agree to participate. Through email, we coordinate times and days to meet and discuss the interview protocol together. By the end of the month, each of the six adult learners outlined in Table 1 above met me and told me their stories, which I share here in the order by which they have been interviewed.

Voices of the Deep South: Six In-Depth Adult Doctoral Student Narratives

Kayla Sue: The Christian Leader

It is Friday the 13th. After battling downtown rush hour traffic, I feel lucky to have arrived both safely and early at the coffee shop where Kayla Sue and I are to have our conversation. Hers is the first of six interviews I am scheduled to conduct this month. Without realizing, we end up sitting at opposite ends of the coffee shop waiting on one another. I get a message from her telling me where to find her. I walk around the corner to find where she is sitting and am greeted by a pleasant smile.

Immediately, Kayla Sue seems friendly, easygoing, and open about discussing her family and life. A natural storyteller, she talks quickly, smiles and laughs often, using her hands as she

speaks. With a bachelor's in English and a master's in education, Kayla Sue is now in her first year of her Ph.D. program in Literacy and Language, with a cognate in Teaching and Curriculum at UDS. She describes herself as biracial, White and Cherokee Native Indian, with ethnic origins in England, France, and Ireland. Furthermore, she notes that she and her family were by no means wealthy, but they also never lived in poverty. From her stories, she indicates that she grew up in a middle class family consisting of her father, mother, brother, and her. She tells me she has already read the interview protocol ahead of time, and she does not hesitate to begin telling me about herself and her background. Though she says she has no stories about how she got into the field of education, she tells me a story about how she has been teaching on and off since she was fifteen years old in her family's church.

As an educator, Kayla Sue's experience in teaching is diverse and has spanned over a long period of time. Officially, she has been in the field of education for ten years, but she discovered a liking for teaching at the young age of fifteen in her family's church as a daycare provider for four year olds. As a certified teacher, she remained in our state and taught English/language arts (ELA) at a diverse, Title I, rural middle school and then two suburban high schools. Though she is currently not teaching at the K12 level, Kayla Sue is now supervising middle school teacher-interns in various content areas to fulfill her duties as a graduate assistant. In her Educator Voice I-Poem, she reflects back on how she became a teacher and her K12 teaching experiences:

Kayla Sue's Educator Voice I-Poem

I don't have a story
I taught
I just remember
I knew
I had
I...
I'm, I'm

I make a lot of my decisions
I pray
I just felt
I know
I'm going to
I'm going to teach

I am
I am an eternal optimist
I really am
I mean
I'm a realist
I mean
I know
I just think
I guess
I was
I don't know
I heard
I like
I think
I'd like to do that
I really wanted to
I wanted to pay it forward

I definitely
I definitely do
I also
I have
I love
I love that
I try to

Some words in this I-Poem suggest uncertainty (“guess,” “try to,” and “don’t know”), while others suggest confidence (“definitely,” “do,” and “know”). In either case, Kayla Sue’s common family and individual narratives of love and prayer are communicated. It also becomes apparent throughout our interview that culturally responsive teaching is very important to Kayla Sue. She uses this term “culturally responsive” to describe the actions and intentions of herself and others numerous times. She mentions that she used to feel somewhat uncomfortable with exposing an entire group of students to certain controversial or sensitive topics like race and

racism in literature like *Huckleberry Finn*. Kayla Sue used to feel that since she was “outside of the culture,” she had little right to discuss race and racism with the diverse students she taught. Now, she cites an article she has read in this semester’s ED 800 course that has helped her feel more confident in herself as a White, middle class woman to approach issues of race and racism in literature.

On the other hand, Kayla Sue remarks that even though she was too insecure about her own cultural identity to have in-depth and critical dialogue about race and racism in literature with her students in the past, she did work at “integrating multicultural literature” into her lesson plans. She says, “I also had a unit where we talked about just multicultural literature, you know, as a focus.” Still, she feels like her efforts were lacking, or missing some elements. She alludes to not having strong confidence in her abilities to approach the more critical issues of racism, classism, and sexism explicitly, and this is the first missing element she mentions. Also, when talking about how her former students received her multicultural lessons, she believes, “I think I would have had a higher buy-in if I framed it in the context of social justice.” So, it seems that now, she sees SJE as an element she may have been missing in her past teaching practices.

It seems that she either is more comfortable with or has been exposed more to the concept of culturally responsive teaching and multicultural education as it relates to race and ethnicity than she has been to SJE and intersectionality (the interaction of multiple cultural identities of difference and sameness that come together to create a unique experience of oppression and/or privilege [Hardiman, Jackson, & Griffin, 2007]). From what she tells me, it sounds as though she believes her newly gained perspective on SJE has added a new dimension to her understanding of why culturally responsive teaching and multicultural education are important aspects of an inclusive and less restrictive learning environment for all. As Kayla Sue talks about her past

culturally responsive and multicultural teaching efforts, she reveals how she is coming to understand the role of SJE, as shown in her Adult Learner Voice I-Poem:

Kayla Sue's Adult Learner Voice I-Poem

I guess
I would say
I think
I think
I would
I would
I was being
I think
I would have
If I
I did
I would do again
I taught
I did
I mean
I also had
I have
I feel
I would
I showed them
I let them see
I taught
I said
I would do that again
I think
I mean
I could see
I might
I did
I mean
I'm growing
I know

I hear Kayla Sue reflecting on her past actions and considering how she might act in her future in this I-Poem. Attending her doctorate program full-time and working as a graduate assistant, she has had to move back in with her parents. She details how she thinks it is “really weird, to be 33 at your parents’ house.” Still, she believes she is in the best situation she can be

since she and her parents have a supportive and respectful relationship, and she is actively working toward buying her own home.

Kayla Sue's immediate family consists of her father, mother, and her younger brother, but it is her father, mother, and her who live together currently. I ask about her family and she obliges. Born in Germany, her father grew up in a military family. He tried to attend college, but for financial reasons ended up joining the Navy. Kayla Sue describes him as being an intelligent man whom she greatly admires for his logic, empathy, passion, and strength of character. In the past, he took doctorate level physics courses so that he could more effectively do his job as a nuclear submarine mariner, in addition to having gone to seminary school so that he could become a pastor, which is his current status. Kayla Sue tells me a story about her father's unwavering sense of justice. Before he had become a pastor over his own congregation, Kayla Sue's father was made aware of several sexist occurrences in the family church congregation. He became offended and wrote to their congregation. Kayla Sue narrates:

So my dad...does a huge study on women's rights. He goes, "What does the Bible say about women's rights?" And he turns it into this, like, thirty page research paper with citations and sends it to the superintendent of [our state] for this denomination, and says, "It's come to my attention that such-and-such has happened...I read your bylaws...it looks like it's an...old gentlemen's club, you know, the old guy's club. And this is not Biblically sound..." And he got a letter back, I guess a month later. And the guy's like, "You know what, you are point on. You're right. This is something we're growing in, but...the wheels of change grind slowly." [laughs] And my dad had the nerve to write him back and say, "Well sometimes they grind too slow, and, you know, there's an

accountability factor here. You know, and since we're a church, we believe the ultimate accountability is God, and you know. And I would really start revising some things."

From the onset of the interview, it is clear that Kayla Sue admires her father. She tells me that, as a child, she idolized her father, especially for his intelligence and critical thinking. On the other hand, she describes her mother as being somewhat soft-spoken, a trait she used to mistake for weakness when she was younger, which caused her to hold her mother in a somewhat lesser esteem than she held her father. She details her mom as a stay-at-home mother who left the nursing field to raise Kayla Sue and her younger brother. After several years of inner debate, her mother also decided to go to seminary school to become a pastor. Though Kayla Sue says that she and her mother get along well enough, she recognizes that she has had to develop a greater empathy and understanding for her mother's personality and behavior.

To explain the nature of her family, Kayla Sue uses a metaphor from the movie *My Big Fat Greek Wedding* (Goetzman, Hanks, & Wilson, & Zwick, 2002). Kayla Sue mentions the mother in the movie telling her daughter that while men might be the head, women are the necks and they can turn the heads, or men, any direction they choose, meaning, in short, that women at the very least strongly influence what men do. Kayla Sue describes the women in her family, notably the women on her father's side, including herself, as "necks." Many women in her family are outspoken, much unlike her mother. However, Kayla Sue reconciles the differences between her and her mother. When it comes to her parents, she now admits:

I think they're a great match. And where I thought she was weak sometimes and not as much of an influence... I, I think I took for granted she was still a neck. She was just a swan neck, you know? Kind of, "At least I'll have been gentle." And that was exactly what my dad needed.

In addition to the inter-family dynamics of gender, Kayla Sue also talks about how her family handled issues of race and social class. She tells a story about how the demographics of her grandmother's neighborhood changed over time and how her family members handled this. Her family recognized what she calls "trends" in how the neighborhood went from being mostly White, lower-middle class to mostly Black, working class poor with what her family identified as gang activity. Kayla Sue admits that her grandparents "took stereotypes too far." Meanwhile, her immediate family, especially her father, still tries to maintain relationships with neighbors so that everyone lives in "community of neighbors," while she tries to expose her grandparents to more empathetic and progressive understandings of difference by "working them through that, and in a gentle way respecting your elders." At this moment I get a hunch about Kayla Sue. It seems that she explains her grandparents' intentions a great deal, so I ask her directly if she believes her grandparents are racist. I see a bit of a cringe in her eyes as she says, "Yeah... Yeah... And it's hard to say that." I feel empathy for her vulnerability. I recall what it feels like to admit to yourself that you believe some people in your family are racist. In light of her discomfort, I decide to share a brief story about my own grandmother whom I loved dearly, but who I also believed to be extremely racist. I hope that this story will show her that I identify with her experience and am not attempting to judge her or her family members, only discussing issues that many White families here in the Deep South deal with all the time, which go largely undiscussed in an academic and critical arena. At this moment, I choose to share in Kayla Sue's vulnerability, and because of this, she takes the opportunity to commiserate a bit more on habits of the generation she disagrees with before moving on.

As usual, the conversation comes back around to how central a role her family's Christian faith plays in her life. From the beginning of the interview, Kayla Sue reveals how

prominent Christianity is in both her family narrative and her own individual narrative. Her mother, father, and brother all attended seminary school and became certified as pastors. In fact, Kayla Sue is the only person in her immediate family who is not a pastor. Though her parents did not necessarily grow up in Christian homes, the role of Christianity in Kayla Sue's parents' lives is a major one. She cites their religion as a serious factor in their never having voted along democratic party lines and "the Golden Rule" of treating others as you would wish to be treated as a significant driving force in her parents' empathetic and respectful behavior towards all people. The relationship between her father and mother was meaningfully affected, just as their advice as parents, by the family narrative of Christian faith:

But they, my dad in particular... he was like, "There's a scripture that says husbands are to love their wives as Christ loves the church. He gave himself up for her." And he said, "I think about that scripture every day when I'm working with your mother, because Christ died on the cross!" [laughs] ... And he said, "That's a tall order that I take seriously." And he says, "You, you, you know, to me, you don't settle for a man who is gonna treat you any less. I've done my best to say and model, you know, what a loving marriage looks on my end." And then to my brother, of course, "Pick carefully, and love carefully. Uhm, that woman, that you know, you're gifted with as a wife, you know, because... it's an amazing thing, an amazing responsibility."

It is at this point in our discussion that I begin to think that Christian faith is considerably more than a theme in Kayla Sue's life. Rather, it seems her and her family's religion is a *lens* through which life is viewed, behavior is judged and corrected, if needed, and how ideas, politics, and even others are dealt with. Considering this lens, I ask her, more pointedly, about how her parents' modeling has affected her, how she teaches, and how she thinks about justice.

Immediately and without provocation, the theme of Christian faith in her own individual narrative, as it has been shaped by her family narrative, surfaces:

I really can't discount that element because I was brought up on a Christianity that was personal, that was loving, that was compassionate, and a Jesus who was for social justice, without ever hearing that phrase in my life...I think because I saw that modelled out...But if it'd never been modeled, I don't think I would have come away with that same, uhm, that same understanding. I think I would have had that disconnect that a lot of my friends have, where they're like, their parents were. Like, "Do as I say, not as I do," you know? I just hated that hypocrisy, you know? And uhm, I'm sure that was a tough thing for my parents because they were young once, and... when they decided to raise me that way that they would live that way.... They, they totally made sure they modeled everything and that, uhm, I think that helped.

Kayla Sue explains that through her family's modeling she has experienced Christianity differently from most of the children she knew growing up. Having grown up in the same area of the Deep South as Kayla Sue (and therefore, the Bible Belt, which maintains a strong cultural narrative of Christian religiosity), and having seen the narrative of Christian faith that most children in this region are raised with, I see her point that she is in a way somewhat unique to our generation. She appears to genuinely have a relationship with the god in which she and her family believe. Since her understanding of justice is so strongly tied to her faith and her family's modeling of just behavior, I ask her about how she feels about social justice education (SJE) and her ability to do it in a classroom. In her Family Reflection Voice I-Poem, Kayla Sue tells me:

Kayla Sue's Family Reflection Voice I-Poem

I think
I've got
I wouldn't even say

I wouldn't
I loved
I'm grateful
I'm getting to
I mean
I loved a lot
I guess
I saw
I was saying
I don't think
I mean
I just
I'm saying
I love you enough to tell you
I'll love you if you still do it
I think
I'm sure
I don't know
I think
I really do think
I felt
I was raised to believe
I really can't discount
I think
I saw
I think
I was told
I'd been encouraged
I don't think
I would have
I think
I would have
I just hated hypocrisy
I'm sure
I mean
I even think
I think
I think
I think
The person I am today

Ending Kayla Sue's narrative with this I-Poem, I chose a poem in which her most common themes seemed apparent. With her repeated use of the phrases "I think" and her emphasis on knowing and not knowing, she conveys both confidence and self-doubt as she

deliberates how her past experiences serve as filters for her new experiences, the information she is being exposed to in the SJE course, and what she sees in her future.

John: The Cautious Leader

It is the next day after my interview with Kayla Sue, but John and I agree to meet at another of the many coffee shops surrounding the college. I wait for him to arrive as I listen to the caffeine fueled conversations of academia and social issues. John arrives, smiling pleasantly. He seems to be easy going in nature, and still perhaps a bit nervous of being recorded for the interview, as he clears his throat several times during our discussion. Despite this, he seems open, willing to talk about his life and his family.

John tells me about his background. He is the first in his family to obtain a postsecondary education. Since his high school years, he knew he loved French. So, when he got accepted to UDS, he attended the undergraduate education program in secondary level French. Uninspired by his teaching job, he left the field on what he now jokingly calls his “sabbatical,” only to discover during his time off that “the grass is *not* greener on the other side.” He returned to his calling of teaching high school French. John tells me that this is when he found his passion for education. What is more, he obtained his master’s in French, also at UDS, and has been at the same school since his return to the field.

Now, John is currently working to complete the Ed.D. in Teaching and Curriculum at UDS. He truly loves the district he works in and the school community he is part of, insisting that he feels lucky and “spoiled” in his work. He mentions that he has “too many leadership hats on in my school and in my district as well.” As a result, he is not sure whether he wants to go into administration within his school or district, or whether he would like to take a college teaching job if he could find one. It seems that John feels torn between his loyalty to his current

work community and a potential future community. In the meantime, he tells me that he has been “bad” with the assignments for the ED 800 course because he has not gotten to any of them yet (it is only been in session for two weeks and no official assignments other than reading have been given at this point). He tells me about his many worries about contributing to our discussion, about his workload, and about his research topic in his Adult Learner Voice I-Poem:

John’s Adult Learner Voice I-Poem

I will
I have
I don’t even have time
I used to
I messed up
I have too many leadership hats on
I’ll get it done
I will get it done
I will get it done
I always land
I land on my feet
I always

I want to
I want to look at GSA
I want to see
I want to try
I want to
Can I
Can I

I know
I had to
I want to
I want to
I even
I want to
I would like to
I mean
I may
I may have to go through
I figure it will be tough
I’m planning on it

In phrases like “have to,” “want to,” “I will,” and “Can I,” John seems to convey conflicting emotions of confidence and doubt in his ability to fulfill duty and necessity regarding his necessary work as a teacher and desired research as a doctoral student. Though it seems that he doubts his ability to contribute to my research and is planning on his own research being “tough,” I discover that he has taken four other diversity and oppression based courses (gender, sexuality, race, and the introduction level course were all taken mostly during his doctoral program here at UDS). He is more than qualified to contribute. Still, he worries. He also tells me that he had no SJE courses during his bachelor’s program.

Next, we discuss John’s family. He has always lived in the metropolitan area in which UDS is located. Therefore, John is a Deep Southerner, born, raised, and continuing. He and his younger brother lived with their mother until John was about nine years old after their father was jailed several years before. John tells me that while their mother clearly does care for and love him and his brother, she was a single woman whom he feels is “selfish” and “very involved in her life in the moment. Uhm, and, she hurts people on the way, on her journey, whatever that may be.” He tells me about her several tumultuous relationships, him visiting his father in jail, and while I do not mention it, I empathize deeply with John’s experience. His mother had no college education and her many broken relationships eventually resulted in the boys going to live with their paternal grandparents. He does tell me that, albeit imperfect, he and his mother do have a relationship today.

On the other hand, the relationship John presently has with his grandmother is more like the stereotypical mother-son relationship. He looks at his situation growing up as a positive one in which “my grandparents were more stable, brought us up in uh, a respectable fashion. And uhm, I, I had some good opportunities that I may not have had otherwise.” Though not college

educated, his grandparents (all of them) were employed by the Air Force and then went into government/civilian positions after retiring from the military. Therefore, John and his brother grew up in a middle class family, despite the rougher beginning in life with their mom.

When I ask him what the culture of his family was and is like, he uses only a few simple words that, as a Deep Southerner, I understand quite well: “It was all church, church, church... *Very* church.” His family (his paternal grandparents) are Southern Baptist, which is what John was raised to be. Though he now identifies as Agnostic, he was raised according to the Golden Rule of treating others as he would want to be treated, just as Kayla Sue mentioned in our discussion the day prior, and just as I had been taught as a child. Though I did not ask either of these participants about this aspect of life, it starts to become salient to me at this point how thoroughly steeped the Deep South is in Christian Protestantism. Still, John says that his family taught him to try his hardest at whatever he did and to treat others with respect no matter what their difference, especially when it comes to being “respectful” and saying “Yes, Ma’am” and “No, Sir.” In this Family Reflection Voice I-Poem, John talks about his experiences growing up with his grandparents:

John’s Family Reflection Voice I-Poem

I guess
I don’t know
I, I got a lot
I wouldn’t say
I lived in a suburban, White area
I grew up pretty *normal*
I guess
I don’t know
I mean
I don’t know
I was raised *differently*
I think
I still say, “Yes, ma’am”
I can’t *help* it

I felt very, very sheltered
I went
I was
I did not know
I was shell-shocked
I stayed
I started to branch out
I was brought up
I don't
I'm trying to think
I know
I never heard
I don't think
I think
I hear my grandparents
I did not
I mean
I grew up
I don't know
I mean
I didn't even know
I mean
I heard
I'm going to be
I know that much

John notes that his family was “normal” and “respectable.” However, as seen in his Family Reflection I-Poem, he grew up quite naïve of reality due to his grandparents’ heavy emphasis on “church,” conservative Christian values, and a “Don’t-ask-don’t-tell” policy his grandparents may have adopted during their time with the U.S. military. John is gay, and when it came to knowing, as a child, his own sexuality and that there were other people like him in the world he says:

I don't know, it was just, it was really church, church, church.. uhm. I mean, I didn't even know about the whole [lowers voice] *gay* population or anything like that, until probably high school. And hearing about it from other people, I mean, and I heard... the word “faggot”, uh, once in a while as a kid, because that's just kids being mean on the

playground and things like that. But uhm...never anything else like that. It's...I'm going to be, uh...Iso--, uh, very isolated. I know that much.

Even now, John tells me, he wishes he could, but he cannot and does not, bring his significant other to Christmas dinner. With this reality, John says, "It's fine." But the shift in his body language and look on his face hints that perhaps his nonchalant reaction could be a way to cope with this rejection. As with Kayla Sue not wanting to admit her grandparents were racist, it may be quite difficult for John to say that his grandparents are homophobic. Perhaps it is even more difficult for John since he was raised by his grandparents and because he is gay or "other" from them, while Kayla Sue was not raised by her grandparents and is White, or "same" as her grandparents. Continuing, John tells me that growing up and branching out from his family by going to college caused him to feel "shell-shocked" by the realities of sexuality and diverse people.

As an educator, John's upbringing manifests itself in his teaching goals and strategies. He is a high school French instructor teaching courses ranging from introduction level French language skills to International Baccalaureate level French culture, conversation, and textual resource analysis. He cites a strong desire to get his students to use critical thinking skills:

Uh, because I like to... being from... uh, a conservative state, a conservative district, sometimes I do push those buttons. 'Cause I want them to think outside that town limit. And I think that's very important, because otherwise students will parrot back things that they hear from home. And I want them, my goal is to have them come up with an o-, an opinion, and it might be the same opinion of their parents. I don't care. But back it up. Justify it. Tell me why you think that way.

Still, John is not comfortable with using these teaching strategies consistently across all of the French courses he teaches. His school sets strict policies of “staying in language” during all, especially introduction language courses. As a result, John only feels comfortable using valuable instruction time to discuss vital cultural and societal issues with his more advanced students, as they have the language skills at that point to stay “in the language.” Regardless of this unfortunate truth, John finds other ways to be an agent of change. He sponsors the Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA) club at his school, and he tells me a story about how he inspired the president of the club to transform the club from a simple after-school hangout to a “safe space zone” that addressed bullying in a school community. I see that in some ways, John is acting as an agent of change in his school. So, I ask him about how he feels his ability to teach for social justice in his French classes. In his Educator Voice I-Poem, John tells me:

John’s Educator Voice I-Poem

I took
I said
I think
I have questions
I don’t know
I really think
I take, seize the opportunities
When I can

I think
I feel very confident
I mean
I don’t know
I’m, I’ll be honest
I’m one of those
I don’t want to
I do believe
I don’t know
I just
I never had an opportunity
I have that opportunity
I can think

I talked

At this point, as we are nearing the end of our conversation and John seems to be at odds. In his Educator I—Poem, he again expresses dual feelings of doubt and confidence concerning how he sees himself in respect to SJE. He feels “very confident,” yet there is still a great deal about SJE which he is uncertain, he had and did not have opportunities, and he is thinking inwardly and talking outwardly about it all. Despite the numerous courses he has taken in diversity and oppression as they relate to K12 education, his own experiences being part of a marginalized group of people, and his role as the GSA sponsor, he is still quite worried. He says, “I’ll be honest with you. I’m one of those people that, I don’t want to do something that’s going to cause me to get fired. Uhm, because it [teaching] is my bread and butter.” John seems torn between his job security and the potential he sees in his role as a leader and educator to challenge the status quo and put even introduction level French students to the task of critical thinking. When it comes to his free time, John is dedicated to providing a marginalized group of students with the opportunities to participate in a safe space and to smooth relations between students, teachers, administrators, and parents. However, when it comes to his time on the job of teaching French, it seems that, like UDS did with John during his master’s education degree, John’s high school is doing also by withholding critical discourse for only the highest academic level of students. At this time, this is a status quo which John is not yet willing to go too far in challenging.

Lila: The Peace Leader

Lila and I decide to meet at the same coffee shop that John and I met. It is the closest location to the hall in which all of their education courses are being held. So, despite it having been several days since the interview with John, I find myself listening again to the chatter of

young undergraduate students as I wait for Lila to arrive. It does not surprise me that it is less crowded and conversations are being held at much lower volumes today than the last time I was here, since it is 10:00 a.m.

When Lila arrives, she orders some breakfast and eats while we talk. During our interview she seems contemplative, often looking down at the table or away, observing others to give herself a moment to think before she answers my questions. Lila is a 35 year old White woman who has an undergraduate degree in Spanish, a Masters of Arts in Teaching, and a certification from a Christian Seminary school. She works as a graduate assistant and is raising her adopted son who is two years old. Born and raised in a progressive, middle class, urban college town in a neighboring state, Lila is not native to the Deep South. Regardless, she is still a native to the South, and has been living in our state (which is in the Deep South) for over a decade now. She tells me that she came to our state to go to seminary school. So, from the beginning of our talk, it is clear that religion has played a significant role in Lila's life, just as it has with several of the other participants.

In her childhood, Lila was raised to be "very conservative Christian, like Presbyterian", and that while she still identifies as Christian, she has become "more influenced from yoga" philosophies in addition. She also says that she was raised to be politically conservative, but that she is now "more moderate, a little more progressive." As we talk, I notice that she is quick to distinguish herself from her childhood family. I do not have to wonder why she is so quick to do this for long, as she is quite open with sharing her childhood experiences.

Lila's family of origin consists of her mother, father, and older brother. She tells me, "I would say mom has probably been the biggest influence in my life." Her mother is college educated with an undergraduate degree in anthropology. She describes her mom as an incredibly

intelligent woman whom she believes could have and should have been “a college professor and an attorney. But she grew up in a time where, you know, women weren’t necessarily pushed to... have jobs outside them, so she’s never really had a career.” Continuing to explain her mother, Lila tells me that she has a strong personality and can be “very uptight, and intense, and scares people.” Often, conversations with her mother about life or society devolve into fights. Not arguments, but fights. She says that her mother is strong in her beliefs, to the point of taking opposing beliefs “as a personal insult.”

On the other hand, her father had a career first as a physical education teacher, then as a goldsmith, owning his own business in this field. She describes her father as “very easy going and fun and everyone loves him.” Even when she and her dad disagree, she says, “He might be disappointed, but he’s not going to be *upset* with me, you know.” Still, as she was growing up, Lila recalls that “church, church or religion, was a huge, huge, just the over-riding... emphasis in our home.” As Lila explains:

Everything goes back to the Bible. What the bible says about it...What would God want us to do? You know? What would the Bible...have to say about that, basically. That, that’s the guide for everything, how to live, and how to be, and how to make decisions, and how to, what to think, and how to vote, and...*everything*.

Furthermore, her family would only donate money if it was through their church or a Christian organization they trusted. It was also common for her family to go on Christian missions to other countries and protesting abortion clinics. Her mother believed in social justice and activism, but again, it was always filtered through the lens of fundamental, conservative Christian values. As Lila reveals, her mother’s convictions against abortion rights were quite extreme:

I used to be like proud of it ‘cause of the, you know, the s--, the group of people that I was with. And now I’m almost like *embarrassed*. But like when I was like, I think, fourteen maybe. I was good friends with a little girl whose dad was part of the whole Operation Rescue [a pro-life Christian activist organization]. Which is like, you know, blocking the doors to abortion clinics...So I participated in one of those and got put in jail...When I was fourteen, yeah. And uhm, for doin-, trespassin. I mean that’s [trails off, eyes wide]...But my parents were really proud of me for having, you know, wanted to make a difference in saving babies lives, you know. Like that’s... that’s the way I was raised [laughs].

As a child, Lila’s older brother went through a strong rebellion against their parents in which he went to jail as well, but for much different reasons. Lila remembers that her mother and brother used to “butt heads like crazy...I think that was why I was so pleasing and trying to do the right thing all the time, because I was trying to like balance that out or whatever.” In order to keep the peace in her family, Lila sided with and agreed with what her mother believed. However, in the last several years her brother “got his life on track” and “accredits it to God and the church.” Now, she is considered the “black sheep” of the family because it is her disagreeing with her mother more frequently, rather than her brother. In fact, Lila has had a difficult time in the last year and a half with her family treating her negatively after a legal separation from her husband, from whom she is now divorced. In her Family Reflection Voice I-Poem Lila describes how she has changed over time and how this has affected her relationship with her mother:

Lila’s Family Reflection Voice I-Poem

I think
I’m kind of like her worst nightmare
I’m like
I was brainwashed

I actually started
I'm not
I just don't
I just try
I mean
I've worked
I have strong feelings
I mean

I mean
I didn't hear from her
I didn't hear from her
I didn't hear from her
I thought
I sent
I'm sorry
I got so upset
I was
I mean

I do
I don't think
I don't think
I think she
I think
I just let her
I'll get back to you

This I-Poem is particularly emotional because it has elements of the same narrative of rejection as Paul's (as told in the introduction chapter). Lila recognizes that she once thought as her family taught her, or was "brainwashed." Now, Lila says that she is distinctly different from her family, especially her mother, in that she is passionate about her beliefs, but considerably more accepting of diverse worldviews. Consequently, she suspects she has become her mother's "worst nightmare." This feeling is reinforced by her and her mother inevitably disagreeing, resulting in her mother rejecting. Though her mother's rejection was temporary, it still clearly takes an emotional toll on Lila as she disbelievingly and sorrowfully repeats the phrase, "I didn't hear from her."

Continuing with her narrative, Lila cites experiences during her doctoral program in literacy and language at UDS as life-changing events. She tells me that she got to hear noted multicultural education scholar Sonia Nieto speak at UDS during her first semester as a doctoral student, and that experience which “really set the stage...for the rest of my learning experience. And it’s been, it’s been really good.”

Recalling her first encounter with the concept of deficit perspectives, critical literacy, and other aspects of SJE in her program, Lila says, “it literally blew my mind!” At that time in her life, she began reflecting back on her own teaching experiences, asking herself “Oh my gosh! Do I have that perspective?...I’ve been going in and trying to fix these families and trying to help them, you know, assimilate into the culture and all this stuff?” Now, she has worked closely with Latino communities as a Spanish instructor largely for students whose first language in Spanish. Her words and actions appear to value all cultures as equal and affirming diversity, of not only culture, but worldviews. In her Adult Learner Voice I-Poem, Lila discusses her change in perspective since she started her doctoral program at UDS:

Lila’s Adult Learner Voice I-Poem

I think
I can help
I even realized
I think
You know what I mean?

I think
I think
I think
I would say
I would consider
I would consider

I don’t know
I mean
I feel

I feel
I love
I think
I think
I guess
I feel
I love
I heard

Lila seems to be communicating optimism and change in this I-Poem. Though she has distanced herself from her mother, to some extent, Lila expresses “love” for what she is currently experiencing in her life as she explores the realms of possibility at work and in her doctoral program. Since Lila is a graduate teaching assistant working with introduction level students who are mostly middle class White females like her, she tells me that it has been easy for her to carry her new perspectives over into her classroom teaching practices. Recalling how she deals with SJE in her classes, Lila imitates herself as she talks to her students:

I try to say, “You know, y’all, you can do this. These are tough things to think about and it might be uncomfortable right now in class that we’re talking about these things. But it’s okay, you know. It’s okay to talk about it. We can get through this. You’re going to get there. We’re all going to be okay.”

Clearly, Lila believes that her doctoral program of study at UDS has helped her grow as an educator and as a person in general. She seems to no longer feel bound to the conflict she knew in her family, and has instead embraced more constructive, yet still critical dialogue. So, I ask her how she feels about her ability to teach for social justice. In her Educator Voice I-Poem, Lila tells me:

Lila’s Educator Voice I-Poem

I think
I mean
I think

I seek out opportunities
I think
I try
I try
I just try

I try
I can
I am
I actually do
I mean
I think
I've had
I feel
I'm able to say
I feel
I have a voice
I've examined my White privilege
I, like, started *thinking*

In Lila's Educator I-Poem, a clear voice of confidence shows. She seems to have found self-assurance to "try," "feel," and "think" about her past, identity, and how they affect her feelings about SJE and her ability to use the theories she is learning in this ED 800 course in her current teaching endeavors. According to Lila, the SJE courses that she has taken at UDS have given her "a broader perspective on what positive change looks like." She says that before, she would think that "if it didn't end up in someone converting, giving their life to God and coming to Heaven, you know, like, then that didn't really feel like it was that important of a contribution to life." Now, she says, "Actually that door is much more open than I even realized."

Realizing how much her religious upbringing has impacted her as a person, I ask Lila how her family has influenced her teaching. She explains:

I think growing up in a Christian home too, it's like, very, very kind of strict Christian home...I think it adds to that mindset of, I'm going to save everyone and everyone needs to be saved, you know. And so, I think coming from that background. You know, so it's

like when I came here, it was like, “Okay, maybe I don’t have to save anyone [laughs]. You know? Maybe [laughs]...we’re all just trying to get along and doing the best we can. And I can learn from them and they can learn from me.”

Sarah: The Theoretical Leader

It is later in the same day that Lila and I spoke at the coffee shop. Sarah and I had previously decided to meet at the café inside the UDS library, but it proved quite difficult to find a place for us to sit. After wandering around the floors of the library looking for a suitable spot, we both settle on sitting outside the library on a bench, in the sun. It is a pleasant day and there is plenty of car, plane, train, and human noise to give our conversation a more relaxed feel.

We settle on the bench outside and we spend the first several minutes talking about the interview and research process of this study so that Sarah can have a better understanding of what we will cover in our interview. As we begin the interview, I realize Sarah seems uncomfortable sharing her experiences, or at least uncomfortable going into much detail. She is careful about what she wants presented in this study and what she wants to keep out. At first she seems concerned about privacy and her own anonymity, but in truth, I am unsure of her reasons. Regardless, I respect her requests without question or pressure.

We talk about her background briefly. When I ask her what her race and ethnicity are, she replies, “Jewish.” She also tells me that, in terms of religious and political affiliations, she is “Um, Jewish and, um, very democrat? [laughs]. Very liberal, rather [laughs].” Also, she is not currently teaching. Instead, she is working as a graduate assistant. Though she has had experience working with seniors in a role similar to that of an art therapist, Sarah recalls that most of her experience in education consisted of her teaching at Jewish preschools in large urban areas in the U.S.

While she does not want to tell me where she is from, I can tell from Sarah's accent that she is likely not from the Deep South, nor the South. On the other hand, she is willing to discuss her past education: Her undergraduate degree is in sociology and her master's degree is an education degree focused in the arts. The doctoral program she is in at UDS is the teaching and curriculum program, the same that John is in, which has the strongest focus out of all the doctoral programs on SJE.

Next, we talk for a bit about Sarah's family. She describes her family as political independents and as Jewish. She was raised in what seems to be a middle class family and is at least third generation college educated. Describing the influence of her grandparents on her life, she says, "They really valued education, and... they, they you know, helped inspire me to get a higher degree." Likewise, her mother has a degree in art while her father holds a degree in math and science. According to Sarah, her mother is "creative" while her father seems to be more logical.

It was not typical in her family of origin to discuss current events and critical issues when Sarah was young. When it came to talking in her childhood home, Sarah says:

I think my dad tried to shelter me from a lot of...violent things when I was growing up as a kid, but we did talk. Me and my mom more so I think...talked about that. Yeah, my mom and I definitely did actually. Yeah. [Laughs]...I would just more like vent to her, like, about the problems, and then she would... just kind of say she agreed. I don't know...[laughs].

On the other hand, when describing her parents as an influence, she tells me that they played a significant role in her life through storytelling. She recalls, "I remember when I...I, I think when it came to like, yeah, like anti-Semitism, we would talk about that. *They* would

initiate that a, a *lot*. A little *too* much...” So, while her parents may not have initiated many conversations about current events and critical issues outside of their home, they did create a family narrative of what it is to be Jewish in a Christian-dominant society. Her family narratives and past experiences with anti-Semitism have helped shape who Sarah is now and why she wants to become an educator for social justice. In a member check response, Sarah details:

My parents would tell me [their] stories about discrimination they experienced. These storytelling experiences helped me understand that feeling different for being Jewish was linked to a long history of others being discriminated against. My parents always helped me to remain strong and not worry about fitting in. This helped me to grow as an individual but also inspired me to help others who are "othered" and marginalized in our society. Over my life, I developed a strong desire to teach about racism, heterosexism, classism, sexism, ableism, and anti-Semitism. My family still using storytelling to discuss social justice issues; this is the method we use rather than talking about current events. By talking about our own personal history and things we have directly experienced, it reminds us that even in our own lives we have dealt with Anti-Semitism.

Additionally, Sarah mentions that her older brother and her husband have both played significant roles in her life. She believes her brother to have played the most significant role out of anyone in her life. Her brother is described as “an independent thinker,” a freelance artist who is “all over the place” in terms of the forms of art he creates and “really tries to do his own thing and not let other people decide for him what’s right.” Additionally, Sarah describes to me the influence of her husband in her life. Like her, Sarah’s husband is in a science and technology graduate program, is liberal, and nearly the same age. I note that she and her husband, are similar in interest to her mother and father, at which she laughs and agrees.

When I ask Sarah who she has deep conversations with about social justice, she says that it is her husband who these discussions happen with the most. She describes their conversations: “Uhm, we’ll just, like, complain about problems and then we’ll try to find answers. Like, how we can get involved and do activism, or do theory.” I ask if they are involved in their community and she replies, “We try... I don’t know...we’re always thinking of ways to really get started. We haven’t really done that much, or at least I haven’t...Uhm, yeah, he’s done like a lot of uhm, like community service type stuff.” From this, I gather that while Sarah has not become involved in her community, she plans to. Based on what she said to me, it appears she and her husband talk about ways for him to get involved again and for her to begin her own involvement in acting as agents of change in their community. For now, she is still immersed in theory and possibilities. I see Sarah having a strong desire to work for social justice, but as perhaps being in a place right now where she feels unable to do it. Perhaps she is waiting to graduate from her program at UDS and begin teaching again, or some other reason. Regardless, it is clear that her family has played a significant role in influencing her passion for social justice. In her Family Reflection Voice I-Poem she talks about how her family shaped her desire to be involved in SJE and learn more about how to act as an agent of change:

Sarah’s Family Reflection Voice I-Poem

I feel
I mean
I experienced
I feel
I feel
I became drawn to this

I guess
I focused
I feel
I have
I feel

I can then look

I mean

I think

I think

I didn't watch it happen to someone else

I feel

I don't know

I feel

Sarah's Family Reflection I-Poem conveys a focus on her feelings, quite obviously, with her repeated use of the phrase "I feel." Her experiences as a Jewish woman who has both experienced "otherness" and is heir to a strong family narrative of coping with marginalization have helped shape the distinct feelings she expresses now in our interview about justice. Though at first her answers are brief, after a few minutes of talking, her responses become a bit longer, more descriptive. She tells me that she wants to come across in the study as being knowledgeable about SJE, and in an effort to reassure her, I remind her that the focus of the study is on how her family influenced her feelings about SJE, not her willingness or abilities. Throughout the conversation, as she talks about SJE, I do believe that she knows a great deal, probably as much, if not more than I do, about SJE. At the same time, I recognize that her experience teaching for social justice might be somewhat limited, as it has been with most of the participants in this study. Like all of the other adults I have spoken with at this point, Sarah is still immersed in the theoretical aspects of SJE. In fact, when deciding what to use as her Adult Learner and Educator Voice I-Poems, it was impossible for me to separate the voice of the adult learner in her and the voice of the theoretical future social justice educator she wants to become:

Sarah's Adult Learner and Educator Voice I-Poem

I would

I think

I feel

I have
I definitely feel a lot more ready
I've really thought about it
I would be
I really didn't think it through
I was aware of some of it

I'd like to
I'd like to
I wouldn't want
I would want
I think about it
I've been thinking more
I feel
I'm sorry

I said
I feel
I'm trying to
I can
I mean
I'm trying to
I haven't quite figured it out yet
I'm kind of torn
I mean
I want to
I want to
I definitely feel
I can
I don't necessarily know

In this I-Poem, Sarah continues to communicate her rich emotions through her focus on “feeling” phrases. “I’m trying,” “a lot more ready,” “would,” and “want to” are expressions that indicate a sense of anticipation, that her courses in social justice have been preparation for a lifestyle to which she seems ready to dedicate herself. Moreover, it appears that Sarah’s thinking about SJE being mostly theoretical, regarding a future self she sees for her life. Sarah does not currently teach, her life as a learner seems to be shaping how she might one day educate. Since she does not reflect back on her past teaching experiences much (as Kayla Sue did, for instance), it becomes difficult for me to separate her adult learner and educator voices from one another.

As Sarah continues, she tells me that she is disappointed that most, if not all, of the diversity and oppression courses required for the education doctoral programs at UDS have been online (like this current ED 800 course). Still, she has a clear view of what she can do once she is able to teach once again:

I would, you know, just really encourage critical thinking in the classroom and make sure that students understood at an age appropriate level, you know, different issues of, you know, poverty and inequality and racism and sexism and heterosexism and how... they can work... inspire them to make a change. But make that, you know, focus for a change first, they have to, that that's, you know, the one of the core drives, you know, to provide students with basic skills and help them do what they want to for their career, but it should be equally important that the... really teaching them to challenge the problems in America and in the world, and then, and then inspiring *them* to make a difference.

At this point, I wonder if Sarah is unsure of what to do in the community at large to work for social justice because she currently sees her role in SJE as an educator who inspires her students to become agents of change. Regardless, she gives the impression of confidence in her abilities to teach for social justice in the future, especially after taking the courses in diversity and oppression at UDS:

I definitely feel a lot more ready to do it *now* though after, really, I've really thought about it. Before it felt more like haphazard. Like I would be just like [makes noises] you know, "[in high voice] People are poor, and it's not fair! What are we...". You know, more like that and not like, I didn't really think it through so much for my curriculum. It was more just, yeah. All over the place... I've been thinking about it more and more [laughs]. Uhm, but I feel like there's a lot of things to take into consideration and a lot of

challenges depending on the grade level, depending on the culture of the school, depending on the subject you're teaching.

While it appears that Sarah has a relatively clear view of the role she wants to play as a social justice educator, she is not sure how it will actually happen. Again, this seems to be more of a problem of her not being in a teaching position where she can try out the new roles that have been modeled for her, at least vicariously through the literature she has been exposed to in the program if not also directly by others in her life and degree program. If she is waiting to graduate, then hers is a feeling I can identify with, as I am in quite nearly the same position.

As we close our conversation, I ask Sarah how her family has influenced her feelings about her ability to teach for social justice. She replies:

My family...not to like...turn them into like cartoons or whatever, but I feel like, like the whole thing about anti-Semitism...That was something we talked about a lot, growing up...I experienced a little bit but they had experienced more...I feel like that really has become the *core* of, like, why I became drawn to this area [SJE]. And then studying sociology, then made me really understand, like, you know, the, the full depth of it, of all the problems...not just in the school institution but *all* social problems. And then, I feel like, so I have a really wide understanding of *all* social problems...Racial issues, uhm... you know, poverty issues... uhm, problems with like policy and uh, problems of capitalism [both laugh]. Basically everything.

Sarah asks me if the answer she gives is what I mean for her to say. Again, trying to reassure, I smile and I tell her that it *all* means what *she* wants it to mean. To this she replies, "Well my mom's always been really focused on, uhm, treating everyone fairly and my dad too..."

but, uhm, yeah so definitely my family... did have a lot to do with it, in their own way. They did, yeah.”

Like other participants, it may be that Sarah is figuring out how she feels about what I am asking for the first time, as we speak, because no one has ever asked her questions like those I am asking. She asks me several times if I know what she means, and I always reply “yes.” It is clear to me in moments like this one, with Sarah and others, that this research is important. The overarching concepts in our lives, like family narratives and the individual narratives that are formed from them, can go as unexamined as systemic injustices at times. It is vital to reflective practice, not just as a social justice educator, but as simply an educator, to ask teachers to critically reflect on how their experiences, both professional and *personal* (especially when it is as personal as family), affect their worldviews of truth and justice.

At the beginning of our interview, when I asked Sarah how her mother and father’s views had affected her own thinking, she told me, “Um...I don’t think it has.” When I pressed further and I asked if her brother influenced her she replied, “I don’t know. I just never really thought about it.” It is quite possible that no one has asked Sarah, or maybe even any of the adults who have participated in this study, to actively reflect on the roles their family members have played in shaping them as learners, educators, and potential agents of constructive social change. Yet, at the end of our interview, it seems like Sarah is in just as deep a contemplation over the role her family has played in shaping her life as she is over her role as a potential future social justice educator.

Cathryn: The Unsure Leader

It is October now. A slight chill is present in the air, not cold enough for even a light sweater, but enough to take the edge off Southern summer heat. It has been nearly a month since

the interviews with Lila and Sarah. Cathryn and I have agreed to meet with one another in the same coffee house I met with other participants in, near the UDS education building, so that they do not have to travel far in the city traffic to meet with me. Once again, the coffee house is filled with intellectual musings of mostly young undergraduate students sitting around us as we talk.

Cathryn's voice projects with what I take as confidence, without being loud. She is friendly and seems open to what our conversation will bring. Cathryn readily begins telling me about herself: She is 34 years old, White, middle class, third generation college educated, and currently working as a middle administrator, or assistant principal. Cathryn describes herself as a nondenominational Christian and a Republican, though she tends more toward Libertarianism. In explaining her views, she recalls debates with family members at holiday gatherings about her belief that government should play a more limited role in what drugs are illegal. Noting that though her family often disagrees with her, she describes these debates as "fun" and in a way, the debates appear to be simple, open, friendly discourse between relatives. She also notes that while she believes in limited government involvement, she does believe in this idea to the extent that no one's rights are infringed upon.

Growing up, her family was, and still is, middle class, Republican, Episcopal Christian, and "very well-educated, very smart." She and her family seem to be the one exception to the participant group of this study: Though they identify as Christian, she tells me that she nor her family have ever been "very religious." In fact, after this point, religion does not come up again in our conversation.

As a traditional nuclear family, her family of origin consists of her father (a working radiologist medical doctor), her mother (a college educated woman, whom Cathryn says "was lucky enough to be able to stay home"), Cathryn, and her siblings. Cathryn is the eldest of four

children: “My sister [the second eldest] is a pharmacist. I have, uhm, my brother [the youngest] is in medical school...The [third eldest] sister has not finished her college degree yet but...she went to Vanderbilt.”

Cathryn describes her mother as a “stereotypical housewife” whose job it was to “get up at 6:00 in the morning, get us fed, out the door, go, come home, do whatever, pick us up from school, and then she always had dinner ready for my dad when he got home from work.”

Cathryn tells me that working hard as a wife and mother was her mom’s contribution to the family, and at this, I get the feeling by how much she is explaining, that Cathryn suspects me of disapproving of her mother’s lifestyle. So, I assure her that I am a feminist and I do still agree with her about her mother’s work being a contribution, and with this Cathryn seems to be more at ease talking about it. She continues to talk about the influence of her mother, and says, “I *hope* I’m like my mom. She is really great. She is one of the most selfless people I’ve ever met.”

Cathryn notes the strong, nurturing role her mother has played, not only in her own life, but in the lives of everyone in her family, including her grandchild, Cathryn’s niece. Yet, Cathryn admits that her mother has begun to doubt the worth of her contribution to her family, a thought Cathryn believes is “crazy” considering how much her mother has done and still does. Though Cathryn believes her mother to be intelligent and will listen to her when she has something to say about current issues, she does admit that she usually goes to her mother to have conversations about life, “mainly because she [her mother] would think that she is not educated enough.”

On the other hand, Cathryn does commonly go to her father to have debates and conversations about current events and critical issues. Repeatedly in our discussion, she notes his ability to think logically and to provide a well-reasoned defense for his position on any topic. She also points out how well-informed she believes him to be, a trait which she aspires to:

My dad is, for fun reads books on Winston Churchill and on, I mean, I can't remember what he's reading right now. But that's just the kind of person that he is...he's also influenced me in that way too. I mean I, I like to listen to the things that he talks about because I feel like I have so much more to learn about current events and what goes on in the world that I need to be more knowledgeable about. So I, you know, we do talk about things a lot now, but not when I was, probably not when I was growing up.

Though her parents did not discuss current events or critical issues with Cathryn, she describes her childhood as open. She insists that she felt safe being open with her parents about anything that was going on in her life. While noting that her family is well-educated, I take note that Cathryn is quite well-educated as well. Like Hazel and Lila, she did not intend to go into the field of education. After obtaining her bachelor's degree in English, Cathryn decided to become a sales representative. She tells me she was "no good at it." In the open fashion her family seems to exist in, she decides to have a conversation with her father about what she should do for a living:

So...when I knew that it wasn't going well, I'd gone back to my dad and I said, "I think I want to go get a master's degree, but I don't know what I want to get it in yet." And then I really did get fired from that sales job, and when I got fired, I came back to my dad, I said, "Okay, I got fired, so now I gotta figure something out." And he said, "Well what about that master's?" and I, he said, "What do you want to do?" and I said, "Well, I al-, I *kind* of want to teach, but they don't make any money." And he said to me, "The rewards are not going to be financial." And I thought, "He's exactly right, but it, it would be very rewarding, it just might not be financial, but it'll be rewarding in a whole different way."

Though she had already mentioned how much she admired her father for his intelligence and ability to use logic and reason in creating and defending his stance on an issue, the true weight of the role that Cathryn's father plays in her life becomes more salient at this point in our conversation. I ask her who in her family has influenced her the most. In her Family Reflection Voice I-Poem, Cathryn talks about the influence of her mother and father:

Cathryn's Family Reflection Voice I-Poem

I just
I guess
I mean
I've just always
I, I think
I think
I think
I definitely get that from my dad
I mean
I wanted to keep on working at it
I certainly get that from him

I have three master's degrees
I told
I tell
I think
I going to
I love
I think
I'll just do

I mean
I don't remember
I, I do remember
I've learned
I've gone
I do
I mean
I don't
I don't really remember
I would talk
I mean
I mean
I, I'm not trying to

I mean
I can't remember
I mean
I, I like to listen
I feel
I have so much more to learn
I need to be more knowledgeable
I was probably not
I was growing

In her Family Reflection I-Poem it is clear that, likely because of her father's significant emphasis on learning and education, being knowledgeable and educated is quite important to Cathryn. She places emphasis on learning and growing, constant improvement. In fact, when she describes her husband, she also describes him first in terms of his intellect and education:

He's great. He's also extremely smart, very well read, ...has an undergrad degree in secondary education English and a masters in it and he also has a second masters in administration which is how, and now he's the assistant principal. Uhm, and, so his undergrad, his degree is probably better than mine because his first, his masters in secondary education English is actually... you know, like, substance....We have similar jobs in that he also does curriculum in his school.... So a lot of times I'll ask him a question...and he has these great ideas or he's just so logical in the way he approaches things. And maybe that will come from me with time or confidence, and you know, as I continue to do what I do. But I just really look to him for a lot of advice in what I do because I just feel like he's such a...I just really value his opinion.

Again, a clear comparison of herself to her husband is drawn, just as she seems to do with her father, and arguably with her mother as well. It seems that Cathryn might see herself in a constant state of becoming: Becoming more like the characteristics and skills she sees in others that she admires and wants to incorporate into her own behavior and skills sets. Continuing, she

tells me about her stepchildren, her husband's middle school-age daughter and younger son from his previous marriage. She recalls a particular story about her stepdaughter in which she and her husband discuss that they are unsure of whether she fits in at the school she is attending. She is one of a few White children attending the school and, though she says the daughter does not view herself as an outsider, they are worried she will be seen as an outsider. As we talk, Cathryn often questions whether or not she and her husband ought to include the young girl in the conversations that she and her husband have about the racial issues they see at play in the girl's school. When I ask her if they have these conversations with their daughter, she says, "...we probably *don't*. And maybe we should."

I am unsure of whether her doubt is a reflection of her newly gained perspectives in her doctoral work, or that she might again be feeling as though I am judging her. I try to assure her I am not asking to judge, only to understand her better. Again, she seems to feel more at ease. I decide to change the topic, and I begin asking her more about the courses she has taken in diversity and oppression at UDS. She tells me about how the courses she has taken in her doctorate program have affected conversations with her family. In regards to her conversations with her father, Cathryn says:

I mean, I just finished last semester taking a class on socio-cultural theory. And I'd come home and I'd be like, "Dad! Oh my God! Guess what? You are totally racist and you don't even know it!" ...He'd be like "[Cathryn]" [said in a calm but exasperated voice], and we'd have these long conversations. And my mom would just be like, "[Cathryn], what are you talking about?" And I'm like, "What I'm talking about," and she listens.

Again, Cathryn outlines the clear differences in how her mother and father handle conversations. At the same time, she is also pointing out how her conversations with her parents

have changed to include the new perspectives she has gained in her diversity and oppression courses at UDS. Yet, as Cathryn's perceptions about SJE have been changing, so have her perceptions on her past teaching experiences. In her Adult Learner Voice I-Poem, Cathryn talks about the previous course she took (the one mentioned in the quote above) and how that course and this current course have changed how she reflects back on her teaching:

Cathryn's Adult Learner Voice I-Poem

I think
I, I think
I began to realize
What I was getting at
I guess

I took a class
I can't remember
I'm terrible
I know
I don't know
I don't know
I guess
I just
I have definitely picked the right program for me
I am thoroughly enjoying
I am learning
I can see things
I don't mean
I have just thought
I just kind of make assumptions
I shouldn't

I do
I do
I did
I mean
I can't even think
I couldn't remember
If I could say
I can't think

I hate to say it
I really haven't

I did
I can't
I don't
I don't
I mean
I began to think
I just can't
I guess
I've done more

As conveyed in this I-Poem, the SJE literature she has been exposed to has caused her to reflect and has made her think about her past teaching, but also how she has not gone back to the material. Through the use of phrases like “began to realize,” “I am learning,” and “I can see,” she communicates changing perspectives as a result of what she is learning. Also, when she restates “I don't,” perhaps Cathryn does not believe she is doing all that she can in terms of SJE. She may be too busy, intimidated by or unsure of how to change what she has noticed is not right in her eyes. Whatever the cause, it is clear that she felt changed, at least in respect to her perspectives about what SJE really is, but perhaps she feels she has not done much to act on those changes.

Since she is currently working as a middle school assistant principal, I ask Cathryn how the courses she has taken have affected her thinking about her past teaching. She begins to describe to me the change in how she reflects back on her previous high school teaching experiences, as shown in her Educator Voice I-Poem:

Cathryn's Educator Voice I-Poem

I'm realizing now
I was nowhere
I was thinking
I was

I started
I mean
I was just

I was totally wrong
I, I've never done a good job
I need to
I'm terrible at this

I mean
I really took away
I...think
I...
I don't know
I was teaching
I felt
I had
I thought
I needed
I thought
I guess
I just didn't know any better
I realized
I, I didn't do *anything*
I, I just didn't
I, I, I hadn't considered
I needed to
I, I just hadn't *learned* enough
I didn't know enough
I didn't know

Again, Cathryn's I-Poem expresses changing perspectives. She is thinking about her past teaching experiences in reference to all that she has learned in her SJE courses. Highlighting her changed perspective, Cathryn says, "I felt guilty kind of for thinking I was doing the right thing and realizing I was falling into that trap of White privilege." She feels guilty for not knowing then what she has learned in her doctoral level diversity and oppression courses. Hers is a feeling that I can empathize with. I had no exposure to SJE literature in my undergraduate or master's level education programs either. So, as seems natural, once she reads and learns new ways of thinking, she often reflects back on previous experiences so that she might see these happenings through new lenses. I believe that, at times, teachers can see both missed and harnessed opportunities which can make educators feel conflictingly both competent and ignorant all at

once. It is my belief that to some extent, these may be the emotions Cathryn is struggling with as she describes her thinking.

Despite Cathryn's inner struggle to reconcile her new knowledge with her past teaching, she notes that since taking these doctoral courses at UDS, she has "done a better job of kind of valuing that [difference, especially race] and embracing that and being, like, aware." She tells me a story about her most recent efforts as an administrator to bring about significant changes in curriculum and assessment practices within her middle school. Becoming visibly more excited and animated, Cathryn describes a recent trip she took to a west coast state to observe a progressive new curriculum and form of student assessment. She returned to our state inspired by a project-based learning model in which students are assessed in a variety of ways, focusing on final projects which can eventually be ways of giving back to the community. While Cathryn admits that only one wing of her middle school has taken on this progressive new curriculum and assessment program, she is hopeful that, as she continues to help teachers and students at her school hone their skills and streamline the program, it may become a school-wide change.

Actively talking out her thinking about her endeavor for change, Cathryn says:

And one thing I think is that there's a lot of kind of hidden curriculum in that... And I don't even know what all the hidden curriculum is yet that I, that, that I know is in there.... I spent a lot of my time in my first, my seven years in the classroom, a lot of my time was spent with students who are traditionally or historically underserved students for whatever reason.... And I think that there is something there. I don't know yet what it is [laughs], but I think that there is something there. In this program, in this, this, uhm... pro--, um, I don't know even know what you call it. An approach to teaching that brings with it a whole different...second layer of curriculum that's not available elsewhere, and

I'm really interested in looking at what that does to students that are traditionally not good students.... I'm still kind of stringing it out, you know.

It is at this moment that I notice an aspect of Cathryn I find interesting. She seems to be trying out new roles as an agent of change in her school. Still, as she talks about the important role she has played in significantly changing how her school assesses underserved and marginalized student populations, she is actively doubting the importance of her role:

I also don't feel exactly responsible for that because I'm not the one in the classroom, you know? I'm just the one that's over the program...I, I just I--, you know, am there to kind of... answer questions or... Guide, well I *hope* I guide. That's my, that's, that's what I *try* to do [laughs].

I decide to seize the moment and tell her about a parallel I believe I see in how she describes her mother and how she also talks about herself:

[Christen]: So for a while there I was, when we first started talking, I was thinking, "Well she sounds a little bit more like her dad even though she said she was a little bit more like her mom because it sounds like she likes the logic and the...and being involved and knowledgeable and debate like her dad does." But now that...that you explain this situation, I see you being like your mom because you describe your mom as being so influential and more focused on the relationships...

[Cathryn]: Mm-hmm.

[Christen]: ...and, and all of that. And her not thinking that she had a really big impact. And here you are saying the same thing about yourself.

[Cathryn]: [Laughs loudly]

[Christen]: [Laughs]

[Cathryn]: I never really thought about that. Yeah, you're right! That's...[looks astounded and amused] *yeah!* I *am* like my mama!

It is clear to me, as we close our conversation, that Cathryn is actively “stringing it out.” She is stringing out SJE, how she thinks about SJE, how she sees herself playing a role in bringing the new theories and concepts she has learned into her own life. I hear her considering how to bring new ideas and ways of being into several aspects of her life: her life as a middle school administrator trying to bring about assessment and curriculum change, a stepmother considering the inclusion of children in critical discussions, and a peer asking me quite often “Do you know what I mean?” Each time, I offer the only thing I can: Affirmation.

Hazel: The Legal Leader

I am sitting in the break area of the education department at UDS, waiting for Hazel to arrive. This is the spot that Hazel and I have agreed to meet and there is already a group of education students behind me talking about some topic quite excitedly. Hazel's is the final interview. I begin to feel glad that we chose this spot since it is more informal than the stuffy and uncomfortably silent conference room adjacent to the canteen, which I had used in the previous semester to interview pilot study participants.

When Hazel walks into the canteen her smile is warm and she is dressed casually. It took a few tries for Hazel and I to get our interview scheduled. Like all of the people I have spoken with for this study, she works while attending this education program. She works full time as a law instructor at a local historically Black college/university (HBCU), attends her doctoral classes, and has a daughter who is currently in her second year of college. Despite how busy she is, she reminds me that she is a fellow doctoral student trying to pay the good karma forward by helping another graduate student collect data because she knows she will be in my position in a

matter of months. We commiserate on the unique experience of being doctoral students, and it seems to me that Hazel is positive in a way that she seems to be supportive of the people in her life. I believe that she is being supportive of me at this point, as a fellow graduate student.

We begin our interview and Hazel tells me that she is an African American woman of 56 years with a background in law. She was born in this city where UDS is located, and she has lived here all of her life working as a prosecuting lawyer, defense attorney, and law instructor. She recognizes how unique her journey from law to education is, so she explains how she has come to this intersection in her life. She recalls, “I didn’t have teacher experience. I had practice experience, but, of course, then I had to return to school and start learning the teaching aspect of it...Which was important. I didn’t think it was important, but it’s *real* important.”

Still, she insists that there was more involved in her decision to return to college than the need to obtain a doctorate in order to remain an instructor at the college where she teaches. Hazel details not only a desire to learn more about the education aspect of being an instructor, but also her research interests as reasoning for entering into an education doctorate program from her previous criminology programs. She tells me about what she is interested in researching and how her dissertation committee has responded to it:

I got a dissertation topic my committee wasn’t comfortable until I had an African American person on the committee. And, uh, was a female, and I was so thankful. Um, because I was just saying that, the, uhm, “I’m going to study the rise of crime among girls in schools...and I think it’s because there is no African American role model in administration who the girls feel are role models. The African American administrators may feel they’re role models, but that’s not enough. You’ve got to have the girls.” And my committee made up of White males said, “We don’t see how that’s important

because...if you start interviewing, they're [the girls] all going to say the same thing."

And I said, very nicely as I could, "No they're not." [laughs] As nice as I could say,

"African American females are not the same, and don't look at each other the same"....

And the Black female committee [member] had to say, "[sigh] We're not the same."

From the very beginning of our conversation it is clear that Hazel's experiences as a woman of color in the Deep South were life-shaping. However, it is in this moment that as a fellow doctoral student researching a topic inspired by my own experiences which I am passionate about, the aspect of race in Hazel's life becomes salient to me. Yes, I had to show evidence why my research topic was necessary, but she is having to defend her dissertation research topic against race-based notions of what questions are and are not *worth* asking. This is a struggle that, as a White woman, I have never had to face. As a fellow graduate student I can at least appreciate to some extent the gravity and significance of this hurdle for Hazel: Feeling as though some members of her committee may be against her simply based on who she is rather than the work she is putting forth.

Still, Hazel is not deterred. In addition to the ever-present issues of race and race relations in her life, she has also faced tension as an adult learner. At times, her experience as a lawyer and district attorney sparked tensions between her and instructors. She recalls briefly that she believes her life experiences were not validated by instructors at times when classroom power was exerted, as shown here in her Adult Learner Voice I-Poem:

Hazel's Adult Learner Voice I-Poem

I had to
I see

I started
I was
I still had
I was teaching

I was the only minority
I had to
I got to
I was exhausted
I had the experience
I was an adult
I had more experience

I felt
I had the status
I was
I was
I just said
I quit
I said
I was
I learned
I didn't know
I had to
I had to
I had to
I had to
I was learning
I needed

Like John, Hazel's I-Poem communicates necessity through her repeated use of the phrase "I had to." Her voice in the poem is active, rather than passive, indicating that she has confidence. Regardless of the negative experiences she has mentioned, Hazel makes sure that her true feelings about learning are known: "I *love* it, being a student!" What Hazel seems to focus on, as an adult learner, are the positive aspects of her experience: Her newfound respect for the aspect of teaching and learning that can only be learned in education courses, and the validation she has felt concerning her beliefs about the role of social justice aspects like critical race theory, gender studies, and social class inequality in education. She explains:

Well, anyway...they gave me the permission. Because I-, I'm a very intuitive and instinctive person. So I play instincts a lot. Which...my mother's always said is a God-given gift to get me through life...Well, this course just validated what I'm doing...And,

and they have-, give you all of the procedures, policy and, of why you're doing it. And I was doing it anyway. So I say, "Hot dog! I'm doing it because [motions with her hands as if to show something in a book]." "Why are you doing it that way?" "It's because it said to do it that way." [taps the table] [laughs]

She insists that what she has learned in her doctorate program at UDS is "the best kept secret of grad school." Again, Hazel makes me think how so few individuals seem to have been exposed to any kind of SJE topics in any of their undergraduate education. Now, through its focus on SJE, the program at UDS has reinforced Hazel's beliefs of teaching for justice and critical thinking. What is more, she highlights her experiences with her church. As an adult student in her church's Sunday school program, Hazel not only enjoys the community of learning in which everyone shares thoughts about modern issues in the news, but also the role she maintains in that church community as a voice of sound legal guidance.

In fact, Hazel's role as a legal advisor overflows into her life as a formal adult student as well. The doctoral education programs at UDS have an SJE focus and are taught through an SJE lens. The exploration of critical issues in which courses that center on critically examining gender, race, class, and sexuality are required of all doctoral students. Hazel tells me about how she has been sought out frequently by her classmates for advice in regards to SJE:

They all, they're under the radar, scared to death, getting ready to be fired, can't do it. I go, "Aw, y'all please!" Yep! [laughs]...It is so necessary that you infuse gender, uhm, racism, teachings, in there. You *have* to. But I do understand you want to keep the job in these hard economic times. I do. And that is what I wanted to look at in the high school is, you're flying under the rad-iar, radar, hurting students. 'Cause that's what I think, I

think y'all are being so careful and cautious. I think, that's what happening to kids. Why they're turning to crime.

Hazel's critical awareness of racism, sexism, and classism extend into her life as an educator as well. As she talks about the undergraduate law students she teaches at a local historically Black college/university (HBCU), issues of race and class surface in her story. She tells me that typically her students are from working class poor families and that classes are mostly, if not at times completely, consistent of students of color. She tells me that she believes her students often come to class with negative assumptions: "All my classes think they, everybody's a racist, everybody's a sexist. Uhm, my gay students think everybody hates them....What I have to say is, 'Not necessarily.' And then I have to sort of pull them back to the middle." It is a natural act for Hazel to participate with her students in critical discourse concerning the many -isms present in society and formal learning. In her Educator Voice I-Poem, Hazel talks about the interactions between her and her students, how they feel about society, and how she wants them to think more critically about their own experiences:

Hazel's Educator Voice I-Poem

Now I have
I have to
I have to
I'll pull them back to the middle
I have to try
I've had
I feel
I mean
I'm Black

I think
I teach poor kids
I *see* why
I just have to say
I try to tell them
I infuse into my teaching

I try to
I didn't have

In this and her other I-Poem, Hazel says she “sees,” meaning because of her identity as a Black woman, who has experienced marginalization, she is in a unique position to understand and communicate SJE to her students and through her research as a doctoral student. Hazel tells me that she teaches her students and her daughter in the same ways that she was taught by her own parents. Hazel is fourth generation college educated and grew up in what she considers a “political middle class family.” Her childhood family consists of her mother, father, and younger brother. Her father grew up in poverty and became a political official and superintendent. She tells me that she and her father “argued all the time” because of their “identical personalities,” but that he instilled in her and her brother an appreciation for what poverty meant to him in his lifetime. Also, Hazel’s mother was a teacher who came from a more privileged, upper class background. She recalls her parents teaching her and her brother the value of their heritage and critical thinking by exposing them to many of the great African American writers, activists, and scholars of the Civil Rights Movement like James Baldwin, Richard Wright, and Lorraine Hansberry. Hazel remembers, “The whole life was built around making sure my brother and me had the right-, had-, had the morals, had the discipline, had the education, were raised right. And uhm, they did that.”

She describes her family as “the ideal family” and the neighborhood they grew up in as “the ideal family neighborhood, all African American.” As John, a White man, considered his nearly all White neighborhood normal, Hazel, a Black woman, similarly believes her childhood neighborhood to be the standard. Continuing, she explains, that she and her family are “Democrat and Baptist. Black Baptist.” She describes her family as a “religious family” who attended a “Black church, big church. Big, political church” which she still attends today. She

tells me that the person who helped integrate UDS, along with several other prominent political figures in the community, still attend church with her. She is part of a community of religious believers and her family strongly believed that service is a person's "sole purpose whether your job be doctor, lawyer, Indian chief, [or] engineer. You are here to help other people. So teaching was what they did and my brother too. But as law, I had no intention of doing it."

Like most of the participants in this study, Hazel never intended to go into the field of education. Her mother and father were already in education when she was a child, and then her brother became an assistant principal as well. Hazel says she resisted education for two reasons. First, she says, "Because y'all [family members] work too hard for no money." Second, she recounts the childhood moment when she knew she wanted to become a lawyer:

I remember my brother and I were very...my brother was a baby in the sixties, and I was a little girl. So when I wanted to become a lawyer was watching television, and you saw the dogs attack the African Americans. So, and I was horrified, *horrified*. Little girl watching a big black and white TV. And that's why my father said, "Let me tell you what's happening here. Uhm, people don't want Black people anywhere. And he, he took the time to say here in [this city], in [our state] they don't want us here either... Well, and that's why, "How can I help people?" And they said, "You have to be a lawyer." And I knew *then* – I was maybe four, real little. I told them, "Well, I was going to be a lawyer." My whole life. I was going to be a lawyer to help people, because I saw the dogs attack African Americans. B-, but what I did was, I began to look.

Hazel seems so comfortable talking about -isms. She tells me it is because her family made sure they always talked about them in their home. So, I ask her how her family influenced

how she feels about her ability to teach for social justice. In her Family Reflection Voice I-Poem, Hazel answers:

Hazel's Family Reflection Voice I-Poem

I was little
I thought
I said

I came
I felt
I wanted
I said
I am
I'm not
I teach
I teach the same way
I do

I do it all the time
I can do it
I have to know
I have to read
I just can't say
I hate all this
I can't do that
Understand what I feel
Why I feel
I'll say
I think
I say
I do

This I-Poem of Hazel's is particularly poignant. She begins by speaking about herself as a child and quickly moves into the present, using phrases like "I can," "I have to," "I feel," and "I do" to show how her experiences have given her a sense of responsibility, it seems, to work for all who have experienced injustice as she has. It becomes clear to me that Hazel is resolute and I am glad to have had the chance to talk with her. It seems that Hazel's resolve in the importance of SJE can be traced, at least in part, if not mostly, back to the experiences and

realities of race and racism in the Deep South which have played such a strong role in shaping her and her family. Her desire to become a lawyer developed out of a family and community focus on service and her own desire to help, and not just people within her own racial group, but all groups, just as she has done in helping her peer adult students in the UDS program with legal counsel. Despite her childhood resistance to the field of education, Hazel says, “I found the pull to go ahead and be service oriented. So that’s why teaching was a good fit, because teaching a basically poor student body is a great fit for the way I was raised.”

Chapter Summary

This chapter provided detailed narratives of six adult learners taking an advanced course in diversity and oppression in the K12 curriculum. Each narrative outlined how the respective learner talked about her or his own experiences as an educator, as an adult learner, and as a member of their families. I-Poems were created from their interview responses to highlight how they speak about themselves and their beliefs about SJE as they are affected by their roles as educators, adult learners, and being a member of their family. Some of my own reflections have been added in to highlight the inevitable presence of researcher voice in the restorying process of narrative methodology.

Again, each of the adults participating in this study was taking the same ED 800 course at the time of their interviews, though they were each in their own program of study. Participants were also involved in the research process through member checking, were given the opportunity to read the interview transcriptions, and to read their own narratives before finalization to provide feedback. In the next chapter, findings from participants’ narratives will be presented and discussed in depth.

Chapter Five: Discussion of Research Findings

Chapter Introduction

The last chapter presented six in-depth narratives of adult learners enrolled in education doctoral programs focused in social justice education (SJE) and taking an advanced course in diversity, oppression, and curriculum. In these restoried narratives, the impact of each adults' family, training, and other forces of social influence are detailed in order to provide a rich context for better understanding how their respective families and other social models have influenced each adults' SJE self-efficacy beliefs.

Overview of Chapter

The purpose of this study is to explore the social learning experiences and influences on adults' perceived abilities to teach for social justice in the Deep South. It was my hope that perspectives gained in this research project will give teacher educators, professional development/continued teacher education leaders, and adult educators new insights in guiding and assisting adults in the conservative Deep South with the potentially transformative learning process of learning to teach for social justice. Family and other social influences, through prior and continued social modeling, are important aspects of adult learners' lives and identities. Adults bring perspectives about truth, justice, and education with them to the learning experience that might go unrecognized (Knowles, Holton III, & Swanson, 2011) as vital sources of information filtering and as opportunities for perspective transformation in the postsecondary classroom.

This chapter presents the findings from six semi-structured interviews and several member checks with participants. The findings are organized according to the listening which uncovered their existence. From the data collected, nine major findings emerged:

1. Most (five out of six) participants cited their family of origin's religious beliefs as having a significant impact on participants' current identities, behaviors, and beliefs.
2. Most (five out of six) participants cited the important role their family of origin played in career decisions.
3. Few (one out of six) participants indicate their family of origin's political views as having a significant impact on participants' current identities, behaviors, and beliefs.
4. Most (four out of six) participants expressed a sense of doubt in their ability and willingness to practice SJE.
5. All (six out of six) participants expressed a sense of self-efficacy regarding their ability and willingness to practice at least some aspect of social justice education.
6. All (six out of six) participants cite their identities (ethnic, racial, socioeconomic, gender, sexual orientation) as sources of social justice self-efficacy or doubt.
7. All (six out of six) participants expressed a change in their perspectives and beliefs regarding social justice education since beginning a doctoral program with a social justice education focus.
8. Half (three out of six) participants pursued education degrees but had little to no prior direct exposure to social justice education literature in undergraduate or master's programs.
9. Half (three out of six) of the participants expressed a desire to have social justice education courses as in-class rather than online and/or hybrid.

An in-depth discussion of each finding will be given in the following section. Details from adults' narratives will be used to rationalize and represent each finding. It is important to provide participants' voices as evidence of findings because the voices of participants and the

meaning they construct around their lived experiences are the central focus of the study and source of data. The inclusion of direct quotes from participants' interviews plays a vital role in the trustworthiness of the study findings. This allows the findings and overarching explorative themes to be grounded in reality. As Denscombe (2010) says of qualitative methods in general, this kind of data has its "roots in the conditions of social existence" (p. 304), which each of the participants bring to the study. The following discussion of the findings is situated in the interview and member check responses of participants and organized into third, fourth, fifth, and sixth listenings, as they have been conducted in accordance with the Voice-Centered Relational Method (the first two listenings were detailed in chapter four, preceding participant narratives).

Third Listening: Listening for the Influence of Family

Finding One: Most (five out of six) participants cited their family of origin's religious beliefs as having a significant impact on participants' current identities, behaviors, and beliefs.

The most prominent theme in participants' narratives had to do with the role that their family of origin's religious beliefs has played in shaping their current identities, behaviors, and beliefs. This finding is perhaps the most surprising and unsurprising. Participants were not specifically asked to elaborate on the role of religion in their family narratives, but religion is also a strong cultural narrative of the South, especially the Deep South. In the demographic portion of each interview, participants were asked about their families' and personal religious affiliations. However, participants independently and frequently either mentioned or detailed the role of religion in their upbringing and present day experiences.

The golden rule: Religion as a guide on fairness and empathy. Several participants cited the significant role of religion in their understandings of how to treat people they view as

“other” or different from themselves. Half (three out of six) of the participants mention the Golden Rule explicitly or allude to a general concept of treating others fairly as it relates to their religious experiences:

They [parents] just treated, they just love people, that’s, that, that was something was something that I loved a lot. They love people, no matter how you came, what shape you were, or, you know, class, whatever. They just loved people. In word and deed. It sounds a little scriptural to say it that way, but it’s true, they did it. Uhm... and so did my grandparents on both sides loved people, so there was some, I guess it’d be explicit because I saw it. (Kayla Sue)

It was all church, church, church. Yes. Very church. Uhm... and, uh, I don’t know. Just...I, I got a lot out of that. Uh, like, you know the Golden Rule and things like that. Treat others how you would want to be treated. (John)

Well my mom’s always been really focused on, uhm, treating everyone fairly and my dad too... but, uhm, yeah so definitely my family... did have a lot to do with it, in their own way. They did, yeah. Yeah, they would just tell me stories about their lives growing up, and unfair things that happened to them, or unfair things they saw. They actually did that a lot. (Sarah)

I think that she [mother] instilled, and the same thing with the growing up in the church and wanting to help people and wanting to do the right thing and wanting to live in a way that’s, you know, kind and caring and, you know, the Golden Rule and *all* of that stuff. I think that that, those are all a huge part of who I am, and who I am as a teacher and who I am as a person. (Lila)

God and justice: Religion as a motivator to advocate and serve. In addition to religion playing an important role in how to treat “others”, participants also indicate the importance of religion in their earliest understandings of what it means to be an agent of change and to serve one’s community. Half (3 out of 6) participants described how their conceptualizations of justice and their own willingness to act as agents of change in their communities have been shaped by their family’s religious beliefs and practices:

My mom is very active in, like, the right to life movement, and had me out, you know, picketing, I mean my brother’d be out like picketing at, at abortion clinics and that sort of thing. Like when we were kids, you know. So it’s like, social justice in her mind is there, it was important, but it’s a different. It’s just everything’s from that fundamental Christian slant. (Lila)

We were raised with a philanthropic theme in the house. Social service where you are here on earth – religious family – you are here on earth to serve others. That is your sole purpose whether your job be doctor, lawyer, Indian chief, engineer. You are here to help other people. (Hazel)

My family... uhm... well... not to like... turn them into like cartoons or whatever, but I feel like, like the whole thing about anti-Semitism. That was something we talked about a lot, growing up... and... they had experience and I had ex... I mean, I experienced a little bit but they had experienced more, it’s like, so I feel like that really... I feel like that really has become the *core* of like why I became drawn to this area [social justice]. And then studying sociology, then made me really understand, like, you know, the, the full depth of it, of all the problems. (Sarah)

Political views and values: Religion as a motivator in voting. The influence of religion does not stop with participants' understandings and motivations to act as agents of change. One third (two out of six) of the adult learners in this study mention a connection between their family's religious beliefs and their voting practices. Participants recall this influence in the following ways:

My parents politically are pretty much straight ticket Republicans because they've never met...mmm, you know, a Democrat candidate they think, was gonna be aligned with their values. So...they never vote Democrat, no matter what. Like they'll vote, either vote for nobody, or vote for Republican. (Kayla Sue)

I mean, it's very much the conservative Christian thing. Where it's like, you know, you would never vote for someone that, unless they were against abortion. It didn't, it doesn't really matter what else they thought of, you know. Like that's a deciding factor, you know. (Lila)

Finding Two: Most (five out of six) participants cited the important role their family of origin played in career decisions.

Another prominent theme in most adult learners' interview and member check responses is the role of family in shaping their career decisions. Participants cited their family as a motivating factor in entering college, choosing a field of study (whether education or another), and current decisions as a teacher.

Family as career choice guidance. Half (three out of six) of the participants state specific family members having a significant effect on the field they chose to enter after leaving home:

My dad was never a public school teacher, but he was one of those people who was good at teaching, so, uhm... I always really admired him for many reasons besides that, and he was somebody who loved to read and who loved to study and loved to, uhm, converse, and even teach people when he got a chance about what he knew...that [church group] was a good opportunity for him to teach his love of, uhm, of the Bible to people and involve them in discussion and such. So, I think the seeds were planted there, and then, uhm... I got a chance to work with the preschoolers at church and found out that even though that was a huge learning curve to deal with people who can't sit still for five minutes. (Kayla Sue)

So when I wanted to become a lawyer was watching television, and you saw the dogs attack the African Americans. So, and I was horrified, *horrified*...And that's why my father said, "Let me tell you what's happening here. Uhm, people don't want Black people anywhere. And he, he took the time to say here in [this city], in [our state] they don't want us here either. That's why you have to know to go to your signs "for Colored only", "for White only."...Well, and that's why, "How can I help people?" And they said, "You have to be a lawyer," and I knew *then* – I was maybe four, real little. I told them, "Well I was going to be a lawyer." (Hazel)

When I knew that it wasn't going well...and when I got fired I came back to my dad, I said, "Okay, I got fired, so now I gotta figure something out." And he said, "Well what about that master's?" and I, he said, "What do you want to do?" and I said, "Well, I all, I kind of what to teach but they don't make any money." And he said to me, "The rewards are not going to be financial." And I thought, "He's exactly right, but it, it would be very

rewarding, it just might not be financial, but it'll be rewarding in a whole different way.”

(Cathryn)

The role of Sarah's family in her career decisions is somewhat indirectly stated. When she describes her mother, she says simply, “She's really creative. She likes art and ...education... [laughs]”. Sarah also has a master's degree in art education. Though she does not say that her mother's interest in art affected her own interest in art, it is difficult to imagine that it did not, considering Sarah obtained nearly the same undergraduate degree as her mother. However, more directly, Sarah says her grandparents influenced her decision to pursue postsecondary education: “They really valued education, and... they, they you know, helped inspire me to get a higher degree.”

In these selections, all four women clearly indicate the influence their respective family members had on how they choose the careers they have been in previously and are in currently. It is noteworthy to mention that three people out of six explicitly cited the influence of their fathers on their decisions to enter certain careers as adults; however, further research may be required to more completely understand any importance.

Family as career action guidance. In addition, to family serving as guidance in choosing a career, adults in this study also cited family members as helping them make decisions within their careers, affecting how they did their chosen jobs in some way. One participant directly mentions the role her family and upbringing has had on the courses of action she takes and decisions she makes in her current teaching career:

I think that a lot of how I act is because, it's probably a reaction to that feeling of being judged, you know, so it's like I just want to make sure that other people feel free to, you know. Uh, we had a dialogue in my house. It's not that. It's just... there kinda was

always a right answer, you know. So it's like, I guess I try to, uhm... but that's just my personality in general. I always want people to feel comfortable, and good, and not, you know. I don't want 'em to be upset and, you know. Like that's just my personality anyway, so it probably just comes through in the classroom. (Lila)

When she speaks about being judged, Lila is speaking about her mother judging her. As a result of this experience, she now feels the need to make her students feel comfortable and accepted.

On the other hand, the influence of John's family on his career actions is more indirectly stated. Early in the interview John says:

We didn't talk about stuff like that [social issues] very much. It was, it was kind of weird, I felt very, very... sheltered. When I went to college for the first time, I was...my mouth was on the ground at the time. I did not know half the stuff that went on...I don't know, it was just, it was really church, church, church. Uhm, I mean, I didn't even know about the whole *gay* population or anything like that, until probably high school.

Mentioning how the conservative nature of his grandparents led him to feel sheltered and unaware of even his own identity, he then explains that the choices he makes as a teacher are affected by his desire to ensure that other young people are not left as naïve as he believed himself to be. Later on in the interview, when talking about how he has decided to teach his French students, John says:

Uh, because I like to... being from... uh, a conservative state, a conservative district, sometimes I do push those buttons. 'Cause I want them to think outside that town limit...And I think that's very important, because otherwise students will parrot back things that they hear from home. And I want them, my goal is to have them come up with

an o-, an opinion, and it might be the same opinion of their parents. I don't care. But back it up. Justify it. Tell me why you think that way.

In these selections, it can be seen that John's grandparents' sheltering early on in his life made him feel unaware, even of his own identity. Now, as an educator, John wants to encourage his students to explore a world of knowledge outside of their families in case other children may be as limited as he felt when he was growing up. From each of these selections, there is a theme of family members influencing the decisions that adults make while they are performing their jobs in their chosen careers.

Finding Three: Few (one out of six) participants indicate their family of origin's political views as having a significant impact on participants' current identities, behaviors, and beliefs.

Contrary to what I expected, most participants did not cite their family of origin's political views as significant contributors to their behaviors or beliefs, even those regarding social justice education. Only Hazel mentions the distinct connection between her family of origin's political views and her current beliefs and actions:

Oh yes, we talk about political news. We are very politically astute, because my father was a politician. So we're very politically astute. We talk about politics. *To. The. Hilt.* She [daughter] said, she doesn't want it being, but we talk about it. We talked about Trayvon Martin. We talk about, uhm, federal government, who it hurts the most now. With um, what's going on with the shutdown. We talked about Obama. We talked about how when he was in the debates. The subtle cues of "I'm better than you," uhm, that Romney had. And, and uhm, we talked about if he did that on national TV to the

president who is absolutely brilliant, just imagine what he would do to us if elected.

(Hazel)

It is important to note that while much of the experiences of the participants were in fact political (as in ideologies typically pertaining to specific groups) in nature, participants instead insisted that much of the political views of their families were shaped more by religion than politics. With this and the connection between religion and political views and voting practices in mind, I expected to hear connections between the families' political views and the participants' current beliefs and behaviors surface. Yet, this did not happen with most participants. Hazel's narrative is the only exception. Furthermore, Hazel indirectly addresses the political nature of teaching for social justice by discussing the legal issues and counseling she and her colleagues face together. John also does this indirectly when he insists that, though he believes in the purpose of SJE, he does not want to do anything that will get him fired from his job as a teacher. He avoids at least some of the political reality that teaching for social justice is, and appears to choose the courses of action he knows are safe for him. Further research will be needed, especially more developed interview questions, to more explicitly explore how adults are affected by their family of origin's political views. For now, this finding highlights the absence of direct mention from participants. In fact, when I ask how her parents' political views have shaped her, Sarah replies, "I don't think it has."

Fourth Listening: Listening for All Social Influences

Finding Four: Most (four out of six) participants expressed a sense of doubt in their ability and willingness to practice SJE.

Findings four and five are closely related, one as an expression of social justice self-efficacy and the other of social justice self-doubt. These two findings may seem as though they

could be collapsed into one finding. However, because both findings appeared at times within the responses of same participant, it is important to present them separately. In doing this, the duality and conflicting nature of participants' senses of social justice self-efficacy and doubt could be emphasized.

And I'll admit, I was quite, quite conservative with my kids on the whole group novel sense, because I wanted to know my classroom and I wanted to know, if I would push them a little bit more than they, you know, maybe would have pushed themselves, but also wasn't like a complete culture shock, you know, for any significant number, and I think we need to honor that.... Part of that's, uhm, a person bias. I mean, I, I'll admit that. But, uhm... I, I guess that's been more on my mind because I'm reading so much [young adult literature] right now...Some of which's greatest messages I wouldn't feel comfortable teaching whole-group. (Kayla Sue)

I think that, I feel very confident in being an educator, and trying to develop skills in students. Now getting out in the community [hesitant]. I mean it depends on what the situation will be. I don't know. 'Cause, I don't know exactly...how the laws work in [our state], but I'm, I'll be, I'll be honest with you, I'm one of those, those people that, I don't want to do something that's going to cause me to get fired. Uhm, because it is my bread and butter. Uhm, but at the same time, I do believe in, in, in causes and things like that too. I don't know. (John)

Well, I've been thinking about it more and more. [laughs] Uhm, but I feel like there's a lot of things to take into consideration and a lot of challenges depending on the grade level, depending on the culture of the school, depending on the subject you're teaching... I feel like there's a lot of different things to think about, uhm, but I'm trying to just to

focus on specific areas so I can... deal... I feel like that's too broad, so I'm trying to just become competent in one ar... one subject, one age range. I'm trying to, but I haven't quite figured it out yet. (Sarah)

Kayla Sue mentions how she sees young adult literature as a particular challenge when she thinks about SJE in practice. She says that she chooses the side of caution, and likewise, John also describes how he chooses the side of caution when it comes to SJE. On the other hand, Sarah seems to be uncertain of what area she will center her attention on and how theory will look in practice, which could be indicative of an issue with practical application in their UDS coursework, but this would require further research.

Additionally, several of Cathryn's responses directly and indirectly touch on the doubt she feels about her ability to put the social justice theories she is learning into practice within her job as a middle school assistant principal. The following direct quote has been chosen specifically because it will spotlight, again, an overlap in voices. In regard to her feelings of social justice education, Cathryn says, "I would like to transform my actions, but I don't know how to do that yet. I true, I truthfully am not sure what all of this looks like in practice just yet. For me." In this remark, she is indirectly alluding to finding seven in which participants discuss their changed perspectives. Cathryn indicates here that she would like to change her actions more, but that she still needs to learn more, a common theme in Cathryn's narrative.

Finding Five: All (six out of six) participants expressed a sense of self-efficacy regarding their ability and willingness to practice at least some aspect of social justice education.

The overlapping nature of findings regarding self-efficacy and doubt in a perceived ability to teach for social justice has already been noted in this chapter. Still, it is important to reiterate that findings four and five are separated to explicitly show how four participants speak

both efficaciously and doubtfully about their ability and/or willingness. To reiterate another key concept, self-efficacy refers to a person's belief in their ability to do something. This is not to be confused with efficacy, which is how well, or effectively, a person does something. At times self-efficacy is stated stronger than doubt and vice-versa. While the presence of contradictory voices in a single person has already been situated in this study as normal, the presence of both voices is purposefully spotlighted in this findings chapter by purposefully holding the two voices in contradictory positions. In the following responses, participants reflect on their perceived ability and willingness to teach for social justice:

And I want to see. I want to try to get the kids point of view. And are these clubs meeting their vision or their purpose? Is bullying still happening? Is it on the rise? Is it, uhm... are these GSA's [Gay-Straight Alliances] assisting school climate and making it easier for kids to just exist and be themselves and not be afraid? So I just want to see. I want to kind of get a pulse on it. And there has, there's nothing been done in the South, really, on this topic. So there's a need. (John)

And I've just always felt like I can make a difference in other ways that seem more substantial to me. And I think through non-profit work, through education, that's kinda my way of making a difference, and reaching people. And I think teaching teachers is even more of an opportunity than just teaching was because it's like, hopefully I can affect, you know, all of these people that are going to go out in the schools, you know. Then they'll affect all of their kids, you know, all of the kids they see. And so hopefully that's, you know... making a bigger impact than going out and holding a sign, you know, on the side of the road or whatever. (Lila)

I think what I would do is I would really make sure I was being... not only implicit, but explicit with a social justice issue. Calling it that, not just calling it “controversial topic” to look up or calling it a “synthesis activity” or something like that. Because one I think I would have had a higher buy-in if I framed it of the context of social justice, now and then, you know. And of course the range of topics are broader and different in some cases, uhm... But by the same token, I think it’s easy...when you make it implicit only, to think you’re doing a pretty good job of covering the bases, but particularly...everyone one wants to see are classical texts and things like that, you realize how limited the canon is. (Kayla Sue)

Yeah. I definitely feel like I can put it into practice, but the way it will be received I don’t necessarily know, if like, if will necessarily be received well at the specific school depending on the culture of the school. (Sarah)

John’s sample is taken to show his self-efficacy to not only work as an agent of change in his school as the GSA sponsor, but also to do research that is centered on GSA’s in schools and how effectively they fulfill the role they claim for the young people they serve. Next, Lila’s quote is chosen to show how her past has given her a sense of self-efficacy to take what she learned from her mother’s religious activism, adapt it, and apply it to the new concepts she is learning and her career as a teacher educator. Also, Kayla Sue actively reflects on her past multicultural teaching endeavors, speaking about how she would change her approach considering what she has learned, in what appears to be a self-efficacious voice. Then, Sarah has a quite direct statement of self-efficacy.

Hazel’s direct quotation showing her self-efficacy to work for social justice is listed last so that the overlapping nature of this remark can be noted. Hazel is speaking from a voice of

self-efficacy, especially as it relates to the legal ramifications possible in dealing with social justice education in the K12 setting. Her remarks are interesting because, as a lawyer, the legal ramifications are no hindrance to her feelings of self-efficacy. At the same time, she notes the feelings of social justice self-doubt those legal ramifications can cause her doctoral program peers, as John did in his direct quotation in finding four. Hazel reflects:

They [teachers] all, they under the radar, scared to death, getting ready to be fired, can't do it. I go, "Aw, y'all please!" Yep...I think it's [social justice] so much fun because it's necessary. It is *so* necessary, that you infuse gender, uhm, racism, teachings, in there. You *have* to. But I do understand you want to keep the job in these hard economic times, I do. And that is what I wanted to look at in the high school is, you're flying under the radar, hurting students. 'Cause that's what I think, I think y'all are being so careful and cautious. I think, that's what happening to kids. (Hazel)

Finding Six: All (six out of six) participants cite their identities (ethnic, racial, socioeconomic, gender, sexual orientation) as sources of social justice self-efficacy or doubt.

Again, like many of these six adult learners' direct quotes indicate, voices can often overlap. For example, in the exemplification of finding 1 concerning the role of family religion in participants' early understandings of empathy and justice, Sarah says in her direct quote, "My family...the whole thing about anti-Semitism. That was something we talked about a lot, growing up...I experienced...I feel like that really has become the *core* of like why I became drawn to this area [social justice education]." Clearly, she is not only indicating the role of her family's religious beliefs on her life and career choices. She is also indicating in this passage her identity as a woman of Jewish heritage who has experienced marginalization and feels empowered to take action to create social change. In the following section, evidence is provided

to show *all* participants reflecting on how their identities have affected their senses of social justice self-efficacy:

Yeah! I mean, I think so. And I think it was really just you know being a kid and having been discriminated against when it didn't make any sense to me. It happened like directly to me, it wasn't like...I didn't watch it to happen to someone else, it happened directly to me. I feel like that, you know. (Sarah)

I think that my life experience is, because I am, like, a middle class White... gir--, woman, from a Christian background. I actually do relate very easily with most of my students [laughs]. You know, I mean, in education, that's the majority. And so I think... being able to, but yet having had the background I've had with other cultures and with my son...I feel like I have a voice. Because it's like, I've examined my White--, I'm examine--, in the--, always in the process of examining my own White privilege. And examining my background, and having been in the place where I think a lot of my students are...(Lila)

I have to know when to apply it. I have to know when teachers get in trouble applying it in a school system. I have to know exactly what, why did you do that? And then I have to be able to translate it into the law part. Yeah. And th-, and that's why I always have a joke, that...we don't need a lot of lawyers, but you do need teachers that are lawyers. You do need that. Because if you push social justice, and then that's contrary to the policy of your school, then you can easily get terminated...And then a lawyer has to come in. And then the lawyer's either going to go through a learning curve or the lawyer already knows and says, "Let's see if we can figure out how to get you out of this." And I've done that with my classmates. (Hazel)

First, Sarah cites her identity as a Jewish person who, in youth, experienced being seen and treated as “other” by other children. She cites these experiences as sources of inspiration to learn how to teach for social justice, which indicates her identity as a source of empowerment and self-efficacy. Furthermore, Lila cites her identity as a White woman, who has gone through the disorienting dilemma of examining her own White privilege as a source of self-efficacy to serve as a guide for a mostly White, female teacher population in examining White privilege, one of the aspects of SJE. Though Hazel cites her identity as a woman of color several times in her interview, I chose a quote that points out another aspect of her identity, the lawyer, who is empowered to challenge the status quo, not only because she has experienced marginalization and oppression in her lifetime, but also because she knows how to protect herself and others from the potential political ramifications of teaching for social justice, if necessary.

Two participants do not directly connect their identity to feeling more capable to work for social justice in their work settings. Still, John does provide enough implication to connect his role as a gay male educator in the Deep South and the work he does within his school community as Gay-Straight Alliance club sponsor for students:

And, that’s when I realized that I do make a difference in kids’ lives, and... when they come back and validate you years later, or whatnot, so... That’s where I knew, I know exactly what I was supposed to be doing. Plus, uhm, some of that extracurricular things like, I sponsor clubs, GSA [Gay-Straight Alliance] club at our high school, and so. I feel like that makes a difference in some kids of lives, you know? It’s, that’s a lot to deal with. So I can offer them that space to be themselves or just to have a place to vent. And, that...not many pe--, people are rising up to volunteer to do that kind of stuff. Mm-hmm. And especially not in [our Deep Southern state]. (John)

Also, Cathryn mentions her identity and how it relates to how she is thinking about aspects of social justice education like critical race theory, multicultural education, and culturally responsive or relevant teaching. While she does not directly connect her identity to an increase in her feeling more able to teach for social justice, she does indicate how her identity as a White woman has been affected by what she has learned in her courses at UDS. Again, this also shows an overlap in voice with finding seven (concerning changed perspectives). Cathryn reflects on her learning in the following way:

And I think that I, I think that when I uhm...took these classes and began to think about really what it means to be diverse. I began to realize that just because you're White doesn't exclude you from not being diverse. (Cathryn)

On the other hand, only one (1 out of 6) participants cited her identity as a source of social justice self-doubt in the past:

Because I would feel like I'm someone from, not so much in Huck Finn's case, but of course in Jim's case, uhm, not only historically outside the culture...outside *any* culture but this, kind of White middle class culture. You know what I'm saying? I might have felt like, oh I automatically...can't teach on these issues. So part of the argument that [author of article from SJE course] makes in that article is, I mean, I think we need to understand we're limited by certain things. I mean, there are, but, it doesn't mean don't tackle issues of social justice just because you can't identify with a particular group that needs more social justice. (Kayla Sue)

Again, Kayla Sue actively reflects on her past teaching experiences and how she feels about them now, as she is being exposed to SJE literature in the ED 800 course at UDS. In this quote, she talks about how she used to view her identity as a deficit she had to overcome in order to

practice multicultural education. While it seems that she still does see herself as an “outsider”, she cites an article from the SJE course as a source of empowerment to overcome the feelings of doubt she has concerning her identity as a White woman talking with young people about race and racism in literature.

Fifth Listening: Listening for Affirmations of Experience

Finding Seven: All (six out of six) participants expressed a change in their perspectives and beliefs regarding social justice education since beginning a doctoral program with a social justice education focus.

Among Kayla Sue’s numerous direct quotations, it can be seen that, at times, voices overlap within one quotation. In the previous section listing Kayla Sue’s narrative quote about how her identities intersected with her sense of ability to teach for social justice, a clear alignment with finding seven can be seen when she says, “I think where, before I might have avoided certain texts” and “I might have felt.” These phrases indirectly indicate a distinct change in her thinking about social justice education. However, it is important to provide direct evidence when possible. In the following section, Kayla Sue and other participants provide direct remarks about how the courses they have taken in their doctoral programs at University of the Deep South (UDS) have affected their thinking, how they reflect on past teaching experiences, and how they envision their teaching futures:

How has-, it [coursework] *strengthened* me as agent of change. It has *strengthened* me as an agent of change and it has helped me. Because, you, you know, you have teachers who are better, teachers who are better at it...So my teachers were masters of social justice and change. And they could take whatever I was doing and help strengthen it. (Hazel)

Uhm, I definitely feel a lot more ready to do it now though after really I've really thought about it. Before it felt more like haphazard. Like I would be just like [makes noises] you know, "People are poor, and it's not fair! What are we..." You know, more like that and not like, I didn't really think it through so much for my curriculum. It was more just, yeah. All over the place. (Sarah)

So, uhm... I guess what I would say is, I think, I think what I would do is I would really make sure I was being... not only implicit, but explicit with a social justice issue. Calling it that, not just calling it controversial topic to look up or calling it a synthesis activity or something like that. Because one I think I would have had a higher buy-in if I framed it of the context of social justice, now and then, you know. And of course the range of topics are broader and different in some cases, uhm... But by the same token, I think it's easy, ev--, when you make it implicit only, to think you're doing a pretty good job of covering the bases, but particularly when you're in these honors classes, you know, and what everyone one wants to see are classical texts and things like that, you realize how limited the canon is. (Kayla Sue)

I think that's come with time, age, experience, uhm... And of courses, courses have expanded the realms, you know, that I have talked about. Like... uhm... sexuality and being able to discuss that comfortably with other people. Uhm... maybe not, you know, the biology of it, but um, maybe the identity part of it. How somebody identifies... as an individual kind of thing... I think that in courses it definitely expanded the realm of possibility, and uhm... comfortability of talking about things. But yeah. It's, I mean, I could see a, a transition. It's almost like a tree growing. The more experiences you have, the bigger the branches grow. (John)

I spent a lot of my time in my first, my seven years in the classroom, a lot of my time was spent with students who are traditionally or historically underserved students for whatever reason: low socioeconomic status or, you know, a minority population or... first generation col--, or, you know, nobody's gone to college and they want to be the first one in their family to go to college. Lots of different reasons why they might be underserved students...but I think that there is something there in this program...I don't know even know what you call it. An approach to teaching that brings with it a whole different...second layer of curriculum that's not available elsewhere...(Cathryn)

Now this cla--, this program has been really life-changing for me, I think. Sometimes I'm sad that, I'm not sad, but sometimes I'm frustrated it's taken me so long...I've taken one or two classes at a time every semester, so it's taken, you know, it's what, like four years now that I've been doing it. But, at the same time, it's given me the, the chance to really internalize so much of what I've been reading and discussing and learning...I think it's been good for me because I've really been able to reflect and learn and grow as a human being as a result of...you know, interacting with the text and the theory and the, my other classmates that sort of thing and my professors...I'm a reflective person. I'm open to... I don't know, just whatever. It is what it is. It's been a good program. I've learned a lot.

I've changed a lot. (Lila)

Sixth Listening: Listening for Critiques of Experience

Finding Eight: Half (three out of six) participants pursued education degrees but had little to no prior exposure to social justice education literature in undergraduate or master's programs.

Below, Table 2 provides a visual of each participant's educational background:

Table 2

Participants' Undergraduate and Graduate Degrees

	Kayla Sue	John	Cathryn	Sarah	Lila	Hazel
Under-graduate Education	English, Secondary Education	French, Secondary Education	Spanish	Sociology	English	Journalism
Master-Level Education	Education	French	Education & Christian Seminary	Art & Education	Education (2 previous) Ed. Administration (current)	Juris Doctor

Of the six adult learners participating in this research study, only two had pursued undergraduate degrees in education (Kayla Sue and John). Four participants pursued non-education undergraduate degrees; however, four participants had taken masters level courses. Only one participant, Hazel, had not pursued any degrees in education prior to enrolling in the education doctoral program at UDS. Out of the five participants who had taken education courses during either their bachelor's or master's program, only two can remember at least hearing about some form of social justice issues. In their interview and member check responses, participants recount their pre-doctoral program experiences with social justice in the following ways:

Before starting this program, I took very few courses that dealt with social justice. I took the Exceptional Child in undergrad, which did not prepare me well, in my opinion...During my MA program, I took a couple of education courses. One of them was multicultural themes in education. Turns out, it's actually in my degree program now,

but since I'd already taken the course, it could not be used again, so I had to take an extra diversity course or two. (John)

I did not have any courses before this program dealing with social justice until now, though my advisor in undergrad and university supervisor taught overseas most of his career and shared his experiences with us. I didn't know social justice was a course topic until this year; however, my [subject] classes certainly touched upon culturally responsive teaching without focusing time exclusively on it. (Kayla Sue)

No, I did not take any courses dealing with those [social justice] issues in undergrad. I don't remember them being mentioned (but I didn't take any education classes until I started my MAT). I don't really even remember them being discussed in my MAT either. (Lila)

John, Kayla Sue, and Lila all discuss how little exposure they had to SJE concepts in their pre-doctoral studies. Considering that John and Kayla Sue had undergraduate degrees in education, and that all three people had master's degrees in education, it is noteworthy to mention that issues of justice were largely absent from their liberal arts programs.

Finding Nine: Half (three out of six) of the participants expressed a desire to have social justice education courses as in-class rather than online and/or hybrid.

In addition to pre-doctoral exposure to justice issues, it was also important to note the course delivery participants mentioned during their interviews. A considerable number of the adults in this study detailed this ED 800 course and several of the other SJE courses they were required to take being offered online only or as a hybrid. Below, some students remark on the SJE course deliver modes they have experienced at UDS:

Well, I think that the conversations, I think the conversations are good because it's easy, it's easy to read something. But it's another thing to engage in a conversation and apply that kind of stuff, you know. So I, I, while I'm thankful that we don't have to go to class at seven o' clock at night on a Wednesday night until 9:45. I do really appreciate a good face-to-face sit down. Even if I don't say anything, 'Cause I don't like, sometimes in class I, you know, I don't like to talk, or I don't like to... I like to listen. So, even if I don't say anything, just to be a part of a conversation, or be in the room with a conversation going on I think is very enlightening. (Cathryn)

In this quote, Cathryn takes note of both the positive and negative aspects of taking a course online or with less class meetings than the traditional college course. Yet, I notice that she centers on what might be regret of not being able to at least listen in on and learn from the potentially rich and risky conversations that SJE can entail. It seems that Cathryn recognizes potential missed opportunities to learn from the expert knowledge and social modeling of professors, and the questions, discussions, conflicts, and resolutions with fellow adult learners.

It didn't always make me feel like, I agreed with what they were saying but I didn't really... it was different than being with them in the real classroom 'cause you can't like see them, and you can't ... it .. it definitely took some aspect of the interaction away... Yeah, yeah, that's a tough part of online classes. (Sarah)

Likewise, Sarah also tells how she does not always feel comfortable with how conversations go on online discussion forums, since they are missing the human element of face-to-face interactions.

It was interesting, but... it was tough. I... am more practical minded. Theory aggravates me. Because theory is uh, sometimes very hard to wrap my head arou-, head around.

Uhm, so it's good that I have those classes there so I can talk it out and listen to ideas of other people and kind of see, get these interpretations of it. 'Cause, it, it's tough sometimes, all that crazy theory speak....So, and we had to react to other peoples' uhm... posts, and...I can't stand having to do the discussion boards and all that, 'cause, when I'm ready to do it there's nothing there. But, then I have to go back and do it at different times and it's just, ugh...Fully online. (John)

I listed John's remarks last to highlight his feelings of disappointment. Similar to Cathryn, John believes that there is more to be learned in the classroom through interaction and dialogue. This aspect of their responses was important to spotlight. Considering the transformative potential of SJE courses and that most participants expressed significant changes in their thinking about teaching and justice while taking this particular course (which met only once, discussing only course logistics and planning, and was then fully online), it is reasonable to suspect that direct modeling from professors and interactions with other adult learners could have had an even more substantial effect on participants.

Chapter Summary

This chapter presented nine findings revealed during the course of this research project. Each of the findings was organized according to the Voice-Centered Relational Method listenings which uncovered its presence. In an effort to provide this study with increased trustworthiness, all evidence for the findings was taken directly from participants' interview and member check responses.

The most prominent finding in the data was that participants' families of origin's religious beliefs had a significant impact on participants' current identities, behaviors, and beliefs. This finding manifested itself in five out of six participants while there were other

findings which appeared in all participant responses. Still, the pervasiveness of this finding is what makes it the primary finding. All five participants continuously kept bringing up the role of religion in their childhood and current lives, talking at length about the influence religion has had on their perspectives. On the other hand, some of the other findings participants only mention in brief.

Continuing on the listening for family influence, the second finding cited most participants detailing the important role their family of origin played in career decisions. At times, this manifested as family influencing career choices through modeling and through advising, while at other times, it manifested as affecting career decisions or actions taken while at work. Finally, in this listening, the third finding was that only one out of the six participants indicated her family of origin's political views as having a significant impact on her current identities, behaviors, and beliefs. This ran counter to what I expected after seeing the significant impact family religion had on participants.

When listening for all other social influences, three more findings emerged. The fourth, fifth, and sixth findings of the study are grouped into this listening and are closely related. The fourth finding stated that most participants expressed a sense of *doubt* in their ability and willingness to practice SJE. Contrarily, the fifth finding stated all participants expressed a sense of *self-efficacy* regarding their ability and willingness to practice at least some aspect of social justice education. Though these two findings could have been collapsed, they were kept separate to highlight the ever-presence of contradictory nature of voices and multiple identities. Lastly, in this fourth listening, the sixth finding points out how all participants cite their identities (ethnic, racial, socioeconomic, gender, sexual orientation) as sources of social justice self-efficacy or doubt. Again, while this finding might be collapsed with four and five, it was separated to show

the uniqueness of identity as an influencing force in participants' feelings of social justice self-efficacy and doubt. It was also important to show that social justice self-efficacy and doubt existed pervasively outside of the effects and influences of identities.

The next listening involved listening for how participants spoke positively about their learning experiences. Finding seven shows evidence that all participants express a change in their perspectives and beliefs regarding social justice education since beginning a doctoral program with a social justice education focus. It is crucial to note that all participants seemed to view their changed perspectives as positive forces in their lives as learners and educators.

In the sixth and final listening, it was important to listen closely also to how these adult learners critiqued their learning experiences. From this listening, two final findings were uncovered. Finding eight spotlights what seems to be a typical withholding of social justice education literature and exposure to graduate education students. Half of the participants in this study pursued education degrees but had little to no prior direct exposure to social justice education literature in undergraduate or master's programs. Furthermore, finding nine drew attention to half of the participants expressing a desire to have social justice education courses as in-class rather than online and/or hybrid.

In the next chapter, these nine findings will be organized according to the research questions they address. Also, the data presented in this chapter will be interpreted using social justice and adult education literature in order to present conclusions and recommendations for the fields of teacher education, professional development/teacher continued education, and adult education.

Chapter Six: Interpretation and Synthesis of Research Findings, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Overview of Chapter

The last chapter presented nine findings that emerged from the interview and member check responses of six adult learners enrolled in an education doctoral program, all taking the same ED 800 course, an advanced study in diversity and oppression relating to curriculum. Those nine findings were ordered according to the Voice-Centered Relational Method listening in which they were discovered. This chapter will organize the nine findings according to the research questions they address and into explorative themes. In addition, the findings will be interpreted using literature on Southern politics and social justice and adult education in order to present conclusions and recommendations for the fields of teacher education, professional development/teacher continued education, and adult education.

The primary objective, or purpose, of this study was to explore the social learning experiences and influences on adults' perceived abilities to teach for social justice in the Deep South. The social modeling influence of family and other social models, through prior and continued social modeling, play a significant role in adult learners' lives and the creation and modification of adults' identities. As the findings have clearly shown, adults bring perspectives about truth, justice, and education with them to the learning experience that might go unrecognized (Knowles, Holton III, & Swanson, 2011) as vital sources of information filtering and as opportunities for perspective transformation in the postsecondary classroom. From the research objective the following research questions were developed:

1. What are the familial influences on adults' perceived abilities to teach for social justice in the Deep South?

2. How do other experiences, such as those concerning peers and/or formal training, influence adults' perceived abilities to teach for social justice in the Deep South?
3. How can an adult learning perspective inform adult and teacher educators about the role family and other social influences play in shaping adults' perceived abilities to teach for social justice in the Deep South?
4. What implications do these research questions and findings have for the fields of teacher education, professional development, and adult education, especially in the context of the Deep South?

Though this is an exploratory study and there is likely additional data that could possibly emerge from the data in this study, these research questions were essentially answered. The most prominent findings in the study have to do with the prevalent influence of family, particularly in regards to a family's religious beliefs and practices, on adult learners' perceptions and behaviors. This influence of the family of origin, especially families living in the Deep South, on adults has played an important role in how these adult learners have viewed themselves as efficacious or unsure of their abilities and willingness to teach for social justice in their current and future practice.

This section outlines the explorative themes developed, and groups the findings and research questions according to theme. The first theme is the process of continual negotiation between cultural, family, and individual narratives and how this affects educator narratives. Secondly, there was a theme of supports and barriers influencing adults' perceived abilities to teach for social justice. Table 3 below shows the relationship between the research findings, research questions, and the explorative themes which have been developed:

Table 3

Research Questions, Findings, and Explorative Themes

	Research Questions	Research Findings
Explorative Theme 1	1-3	1-7
Explorative Theme 2	3 and 4	8 and 9

In Table 3, explorative theme one addresses the first three research questions and draws parallels across the first seven findings. Likewise, explorative theme two addresses the third and fourth research questions while drawing parallels across the eighth and ninth findings. It is important to note the explorative themes are named as such highlight the exploratory nature of this study since (as noted in the literature review chapter) there has been little to no research done into this specific topic of familial influences on adults’ perceived abilities to teach for social justice in the Deep South. In developing the explorative themes, I looked for themes that emerged among findings. In analyzing the themes, connections between findings are revisited and there is a search for connections across themes. Furthermore, relevant literature is used to both situate the research findings into the larger narratives of adult, teacher, and social justice education, and to provide a concise view of the contribution of this study to these fields.

When interpreting the research findings, aspects vital to the clarity of the thematic analysis were used to shape the discussion:

1. How the participants’ voices connect to each other’s and how they overlap with their own.

2. Voice, or how each of the adult learners speak about their experiences, beliefs, and perceptions.
3. Voices and findings which were expected and unexpected.
4. How the findings and explorative themes do and do not relate to adult, teacher, and social justice education literature.
5. What the study says that the literature might not speak to currently.

Of course, the literature being analyzed, in conjunction with the study, are taken from the fields of Southern politics, teacher education, social justice education, and adult education. The implications and recommendations taken from this study are intended to supplement each of the afore mentioned fields, informing practice and professional development endeavors for adult learners, educators, and those working toward social justice. The goal of the study is, by applying an adult learning lens to social justice education, to highlight the importance of reflective practice that values, not just teaching experiences, but also prior lived experiences and a deep appreciation of culture and identity in teacher education. Therefore, it is important to check the findings and explorative themes against the researcher assumptions presented in the introduction chapter one.

Explorative Themes

Explorative Theme One: The Process of Continual Negotiation between Cultural, Family, and Individual Narratives and How it Affects Educator Narratives

The primary research objective of the study, and the first research question, was to explore how the family of an adult learner influenced that adult's perceived abilities to teach for social justice in the Deep South. While it was true that quite often the voices of social justice education (SJE) self-efficacy and doubt were heard in the responses of the same adult, it is

important to note that the strongest voices of SJE self-efficacy were heard in participants whose families had provided them with substantial prior experiences in dealing with issues of justice in their own communities. Hazel's strong voice of SJE self-efficacy shines when she says:

We were raised with a philanthropic theme in the house. Social service where you are here on earth – religious family – you are here on earth to serve others. That is your sole purpose whether your job be doctor, lawyer, Indian chief, engineer. You are here to help other people.

It is clear to see in this quote that Hazel's family has played a crucial role in shaping how Hazel currently teaches and her views of justice and service to the greater community. Additionally, what Hazel says here connects to the influence that her family's religion and political views had on her. So, not only does the family narrative tell of the importance of service to one's community, but Hazel also alludes to a Southern cultural narrative in which "religion was an important part of the civil rights revolution of the 1950's and 1960's" (Rozell & Smith, 2010, p. 136). In fact, Hazel cites her church as a "Black church, big church. Big, political church." Attending church every Sunday alongside Hazel and her family are individuals who were involved in the desegregation of the very university she is enrolled in now and attended to obtain her previous degree. In addition, Hazel tells stories about being inspired to become a lawyer when she was four, about discussing current critical issues in her adult Sunday school class, her role as a legal advisor among her church and college peers, and as an educator working to bring her students back to "the middle." In all of these narratives, Hazel makes several distinct connections.

First, her story brings forth the strong historical Southern cultural narrative of Black (usually Black Baptist) churches serving as communities devoted to service, inspiration, support,

and advising. In other words, Southern Black churches are not just religious, but also political, in that church members are involved in Deep Southern politics, especially as they relate to issues of social justice, like human rights (Rozell & Smith, 2010). In addition to the strong ties between social justice and Black Christian churches in the Deep South, the Black population has typically voted along democratic lines in elections since the 1960's (Macmanus, 2010). This reality runs counter to the social and political activism of Southern Christian conservatives, a population that is mostly White and typically votes along Republican lines during elections (Macmanus, 2010; Rozell & Smith, 2010). For these reasons, it is vital to recognize that Hazel, as the singular Black individual in this study, is the only person who explicitly acknowledges the ever-present truth that Christianity is, indeed, quite entangled in Southern politics. Perhaps, Hazel's ability or willingness to explicitly recognize the ties between Deep Southern religion and politics is related to the reality that White participants have White privilege, giving them the ability to ignore such salient truths.

Second, Hazel's remarks spotlight the Southern cultural narrative detailing how embedded racial tensions are in Southern politics (Black, 2012). Then, it is clear that the Deep Southern cultural narratives just mentioned became part of Hazel's family narrative of service and acting as an agent of change, and that family narrative has been incorporated in her individual narrative, guiding her career choices and actions. All of the cultural, family, and individual narratives converge to influence how Hazel is perceiving her ability to teach for social justice in her own university classroom, as part of her educator narrative.

On the other hand, while Hazel appears to have embraced the cultural and family narratives, seamlessly incorporating them into her unique individual narrative, Lila seems to be in a stage where she is moving away or separating herself from much of her family narrative and

possibly even her cultural narratives. In a powerful mock dialogue with her mother, who is a strict and critical conservative Christian woman, Lila uses space to show herself as distanced from her mother:

I don't think, I don't think she wants, she, I think she hates that [agreeing to disagree] 'cause she likes to, you know, to talk about things, and debate and discuss, but...It's just not really an option right now [laughs] for, it's just not...Because the emotions getting in the way. So. And I think I just let her influence my thinking for so long that its part of this, it's just me, and being like, "Just let me do my own thing for a little while, and [laughs] I'll get back to you." [Laughs].

Notably, Lila's remarks in her final statement, "I'll get back to you." From this statement, it can be understood that while she is currently in an awkward position of situating her individual narrative away from her family narrative of debate and arguing, she may try, at some undetermined point in her future, to move the two narratives closer together again in an attempt to reintegrate either her individual narrative into the family narrative, or vice versa. Of course, this negotiating process is directly connected to Lila's educator narrative. As her perspectives become even more changed by the UDS coursework, her individual narrative becomes more distanced from that of her family because, as she says:

I think that that she sees... you know, the fea--, just the fear that a lot of conservative Christians have of like higher education, particularly getting on up higher and higher is that lib--, everything's just so liberal, you know. "[in high voice] You're just going to become liberal." And so it's, like I'm kind of like, her worst nightmare, you know [laughs]. Its like, "Oh no, she's become liberal!"

Just as Hazel, Lila suggests the influence of a Southern cultural narrative: the strong tie of the current White Southern conservative Christians to the Republican Party (Rozell & Smith, 2010). Though this narrative used to be quite different in past decades, Rozell and Smith (2010) detail just how pervasive of a norm it is for White Christian conservatives in the South to adhere to the Republican voting ticket. Of course, several examples from Kayla Sue and John in finding one further exemplify this trend of White conservative Christians typically voting along Republican political lines.

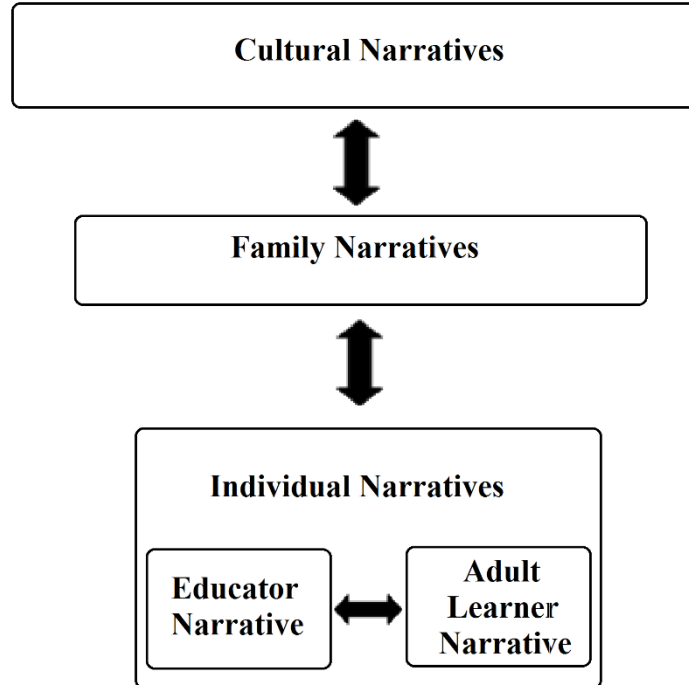
In Lila's case, just as in Kayla Sue, John, and Cathryn's, the Southern cultural narrative runs its course through her family narratives which she is at odds with in her own individual narratives. In the South, the evangelical Christian right has been a distinct source of social and political activism: "This mobilization is rooted in the traditional approach to particular social issues, especially abortion" (Rozell & Smith, 2010, p. 134), among others. As Lila tells it, this Southern cultural narrative of evangelicalism became part of her family narrative. Though she once accepted, and now rejects, this family narrative, it is clear that it has, in a way, found its way into her educator narrative by making her more comfortable with the idea of acting as an agent of change in her community, a concept she has been exposed to at length in her doctoral courses at UDS.

Hazel and Lila's cases show how Southern cultural narratives of race, politics, and religion all coinciding with one another to affect the ways in which these women not only view themselves as people, but also as lens through which they are filtering their new experiences and changing perspectives (finding seven) as adult learners. At the same time, these women are similar in that they both seem to be deciding how their cultural and family narratives fit into their individual narratives, including their educator narratives. "Perhaps the most relevant relation to

adult learning is the empowering realization that to critically reflect on one's life story is to claim the authority to rewrite it." (Rossiter & Clark, 2007, p. 25)

In their interpretation of Sam Keen's concepts of narrative, Marsha Rossiter and M. Carolyn Clark (2007) point to the power of the ever-changing individual narrative as it integrates, separates, and reintegrates family and cultural narratives. They cite this process as a transformative one, where people experience disorienting dilemmas by which their assumptions about reality and knowing are challenged and altered to some extent (Mezirow, 2000). Boes, Baxter-Magolda, and Buckely (2010) insist that what the adults in this study are experiencing is a process of learning in which adult learners make connections between what they knew and what they have learned, resulting in "a process of constant revision" (p. 5). Thus, it is clear, especially in light of the Deep Southern cultural narrative relating to politics, race, and religion, that changing perspectives resulting from new information being integrated into individual narratives (as cited in finding seven) hold potential for transformative learning experiences with adults. As adults learn new material in their courses, they hunt, discuss, and critically reflect on taken-for-granted assumptions (some of which they may have gained from their cultural and family narratives). This process might result in a transformation in their frames of reference so that they become "more inclusive, discriminating, reflective, open, and emotionally able to change" (Mezirow & Taylor, 2009, p. 22). In the diagram below, the interactions between life narratives has been shown. It is important to note the reciprocal nature between narratives, which indicates the process of negotiation between these narratives. Also, note the educator and adult learner narratives are both part of the individual narrative:

Figure 3.1. Life Narrative Flow



The difference in how Hazel and Lila accept and reject family narratives could be a result of family modeling in regards to how emotions are dealt with in critical discourse (with confrontation or acceptance), just as easily as they could be the result of exposure to new and more liberal perspectives, which in Hazel's case affirms her family narratives and in Lila's, may challenge some of her family's narratives as they connect to both Black and White Deep Southern Christian cultural narratives. Regardless, it is clear that both women carry with them strong feelings of social justice self-efficacy, in addition to both being members of families that exposed them to ideas of justice and acting as an agent of social change at an early age. That is, when participants grew up in families that modeled self-efficacy in acting as an agent of change, it appears that participants might have been exposed to more opportunities to gain mastery experiences and thus, developed a greater sense of self-efficacy toward being a change agent in

their communities (see Bandura [2012] for more on the effect of mastery experiences on self-efficacy).

Just as there are participants with strong feelings of social justice self-efficacy, there are also participants who expressed strong doubts about their abilities to teach for social justice. While Sarah and Kayla Sue seem to fall somewhere on the spectrum between efficacious and doubting (at least in the form of uncertainty regarding their roles), John and Cathryn express clear doubt in their capabilities to practice SJE. At multiple points in the interview, John expresses concerns over the legal ramifications that SJE could entail. He says that teaching is his “bread and butter”, that he is “one of those people” (the people Hazel alludes to), who does not “want to do something that’s going to cause me to get fired.”

John’s grandparents, the people he addresses as his childhood parents who raised him and his brother, are also conservative Christians, voting along Republican Party lines. John did *not* cite his grandparents as agents of social change (like Lila and Hazel’s were). Additionally, he *does* cite them modeling a “don’t-ask-don’t-tell” policy regarding the “otherness” they see in John being gay. When it comes to John negotiating between his individual narratives that include his identity as a gay man, and his family narrative of Christian conservatism, he notes the emotional tensions between him and his grandmother when his sexuality was discussed. John has come to understand that he can exist safely without the fear of rejection within his family narrative if he adheres to the “don’t-ask-don’t-tell” policy. In avoiding his own “otherness” to his family, he does not talk much about his sexuality and he does not bring his partner to family gatherings. In essence, John temporarily denies a critical aspect of his identity in order to avoid rejection from his family. Likewise, when it comes to acting as an agent of change in a larger capacity, he worries about the legal ramifications, or rejection he might experience from parents,

teachers, and administrators. While he notes his involvement in the Gay-Straight Alliance at his school, he also points out that he moves within the legal limits he sees as safe. As directly quoted in chapters four and five, John believes in the cause of SJE, but he will only take SJE as far as he feels safe out of fear that he will risk the loss of his job as a teacher. It might be possible that John is carrying over his family narrative of avoiding potential rejection through temporary avoidance of identities into his individual, and thus, educator narrative.

Similarly, Cathryn clearly expresses doubt in her current ability to teach for social justice. As can be seen in chapters four and five, Cathryn does not cite her family as acting as agents of change within their communities. Though her family was the single exception to finding one (the influence of family religion on adults' identities, behaviors, and beliefs), Cathryn does detail on multiple occasions that her family did *not* model critical discourse about current events and societal -isms with her or her siblings until they were adults. She notes her father is an educated man who values knowing about current issues and participating in critical discourse with her now that she can be considered knowledgeable enough to participate. The absence of critical discourse between parents and children in her family could have been a choice made by Cathryn or her father. She could have perceived herself as unready to participate, or she could have been perceived by her father as unready. In either case, it is clear that Cathryn carries the concept of being unready from her childhood family narrative into her educator narrative. She has taken more than one SJE course at UDS, but she still mentions her doubt and discomfort with her knowledge of SJE, believing that she does not yet know enough to efficaciously put SJE into practice.

As directly quoted in chapters four and five, Cathryn frequently describes how the SJE courses at UDS have changed her perspectives (finding seven), but how she also sees herself as

“still stringing it out.” In fact, when discussing the lack of critical discourse between her, her husband, and her stepdaughter, Cathryn openly considers the possibility of changing this frame of reference in what could be considered her parent narrative. This willingness to revise her parent narrative could indicate that Cathryn might be in the process of transforming her frames of reference to include the possibility of increased comfort with critical discourse. Gaining more mastery experiences (Bandura, 2012) with including young people in critical discourse by practicing with her stepdaughter and husband could, in turn, affect her self-efficacy beliefs regarding her ability to practice SJE within her middle school.

Section summary. In this section, the process of continual negotiation between cultural, family, and individual narratives and how it affects educator narratives was discussed. Across all of the adults’ stories told in this study, the role of cultural narrative and family narrative in the ever-changing individual narrative is undeniable. The adult learners who participated in this study make clear that their educator narratives exist as an essential collection of voices-contradicting voices of doubt and self-efficacy-within their individual narratives that describe who that are as unique people. Adults in this study may be doing what Boes, Baxter-Magolda, and Buckely (2010) call self-authoring, or “internally generating and coordinating one’s beliefs, values, and internal loyalties, rather than depending on external values, beliefs, and interpersonal loyalties” (p. 4).

However, it is possible that all of this negotiation is not done completely internally with no influence from external forces. Clearly, the external influence of their UDS courses in diversity and oppression is the source of their changing perspectives. As Bandura’s (1986) Social Cognitive Theory states, an individual’s personal factors (personality, cognitive abilities and development, emotional intelligence, and so forth), behavior, and environments all interact with

and affect one another in a reciprocal manner, acting as determinants of one another. This is called triadic reciprocal causation. As their course work transforms their frames of reference to be more inclusive (Mezirow, 2000), these adults find their perspectives changing, perhaps even transforming. In the next section, explorative theme two will be discussed.

Explorative Theme Two: Supports and Barriers Influencing Adults' Perceived Abilities to Teach for Social Justice

Cultural and family narratives as supports and barriers. First, it must be noted that the term barrier is not meant to suggest insurmountable obstacles that adult learners are incapable of moving past in their learning processes. Rather, in this discussion, barriers are understood as obstacles that impede progress completely or temporarily, but can also be overcome.

As seen in the previous section, cultural and family narratives of the adult learners participating in this study both affirmed and challenged adults' changing perspectives as they moved forward in their doctoral programs at UDS. Since family overflows even into the second theme, it is clear just how pervasive the influence of the family is in adults' perceived abilities to teach for social justice. As a result, it is also noted that the two themes overlap one another, as well. This section will detail how cultural and family narratives can serve as supports and barriers to adults' perceived abilities to teach for social justice.

Hazel's story showed how her cultural and family narratives of race, religion, politics, and acting as an agent of change had been incorporated into her individual narrative, shaping how she chose her previous career as a lawyer and her current teaching endeavors as a law instructor. These narratives serve as a support for her as she gains new perspectives in her SJE courses. As Hazel learns more about SJE in her doctoral courses, she feels an increased sense of self-efficacy to incorporate her new role as a social justice educator into her educator narrative.

Likewise, Lila's story illustrated how aspects of her cultural and family narrative of race, religion, politics, and acting as an agent of change have been written into and edited out of her individual narrative. While rejecting the conservative Christian evangelical aspect of her family narrative, Lila has remained comfortable with the role of social agent of change. As Lila's perspectives have been transformed in her doctoral program, she feels a sense of self-efficacy, as a White middle class woman, to teach for social justice in her current position as a graduate teaching assistant, serving her mostly White, middle class female student group as an empathetic mentor. Not only does part of her family narrative serve as a support, influencing her belief in her ability to practice SJE, but, like Hazel and all of the other participants, so does her very identity.

In contrast, John's story indicated how his cultural and family narratives of race, religion, politics, with *no* modeling of acting as an agent of change have affected his individual narrative. Like Lila, he has also rejected the conservative Christian narrative of his family. Furthermore, like all of the other participants, John cites his identity as a support of his belief in his ability to act as an agent of change, in that he is comfortable serving his school as a Gay-Straight Alliance sponsor. However, as seen in Cochran-Smith's (2004) six principles of SJE, there is more to a social justice educator than acting as an agent of change. It seems that John might still be at a critical point. He may be negotiating between his family narrative of "don't-ask-don't tell," where avoidance signifies safety, and his new perspectives as they are changing due to the doctoral SJE courses. It seems that John is dealing with a barrier: A cautious view of SJE, despite having taken four doctoral level SJE courses.

Finally, Cathryn's story illustrated how her family narrative of not involving children in critical discourse has been carried forth into her individual and educator narratives. Whether she

or her parents saw the younger Cathryn as unready to participate in critical discourse with adults, Cathryn brings an uncertainty about her capabilities as social justice educator in the form of feeling unready, or not yet knowing enough about SJE. Her feelings of inadequacy are serving as a barrier for her as she imagines a future for herself as a social justice educator.

Formal training as supports and barriers. Setting aside the barriers and supports of family narratives, it is clear that the coursework completed by the adult learners in this study has served as supports and barriers that influence these adults' perceived abilities to teach for social justice. Finding seven outlined how all of the participants expressed a change in their perspectives and beliefs regarding social justice education since beginning a doctoral program with a social justice education focus. Participants' changed perspectives. Regardless of how their cultural or family narratives affected their self-efficacy to teach for social justice, they all mentioned how differently they were thinking about themselves, their families, and their prior and current experiences as educators. While this finding does not indicate any kind of solid social justice self-efficacy, it is indicative of perspective transformation. As their frames of reference transform to become more inclusive, these adults seem to feel an increased sense of self-efficacy with all or some of the six principles of SJE (Cochran-Smith, 2004). When it came to the influence their formal training had on them, Kayla Sue noted an increased comfort with racial issues as they appear in young adult literature she used with students, John said that he felt more comfortable talking with other people about his sexuality, Sarah felt like she had more direction, and Hazel felt like the courses affirmed her past and current efforts. It is clear that their doctoral courses in SJE have served as supporting influences.

In contrast to the supporting role their doctoral courses have played in the adult learners in this study feeling increased self-efficacy to teach for social justice, participants noted how

their courses have also served as barriers. Of the six participants, half pursued education degrees but had little to no prior exposure to social justice education literature in undergraduate or master's programs. This may seem like a small barrier since so many participants did not even pursue education undergraduate and/or master's degrees. However, as noted in chapter two, social modeling plays a vital role in increasing self-efficacy (Bandura, 2012). As learners observe direct social models (people modeling a behavior in real time) and symbolic social models (people modeling a behavior in media, like books and television) they gain insight into how to creatively construct their own unique sets of skills and beliefs about a specific role. The more models that learners can observe, the more opportunities they have to see a role in different contexts, thus allowing them to pick and choose characteristics they like and dislike, want to and do not want to emulate. As they try out their new roles, learners gain mastery experiences through successful and unsuccessful attempts at playing out the traits they have learned from social models (Bandura, 1986). This leads to an increased sense of self-efficacy. Yet, the adult learners in this study have had little to no undergraduate and/or master's level SJE exposure.

What is more, half of the participants expressed a desire to have social justice education courses as in-class rather than online and/or hybrid. While this may also seem like a smaller barrier, it must be reiterated that, as outlined in chapter two, there are potential risks associated with taking on the task of learning to teach for social justice as an adult learner. SJE is a potentially transformative social learning process. This means that there is strong potential for SJE to transform the worldviews of adults. As the worldviews of adults become challenged and possibly even changed, the relationships adults have socially constructed with others (families, peers, and students, for example) can also be challenged and changed. This, in turn, can challenge and change the very identities that adults have constructed around those relationships

(Mamgain, 2010). Mamgain (2010) notes that changed perspectives, which in this study is a noted result of SJE courses, can make adults feel “groundless” (p. 26), often causing them to “return to old habits” (p. 26). This could explain why John and Cathryn return to their family and individual narratives of avoidance and doubt of readiness. This is also where the SJE courses could work to expose these adult learners to direct social models, instructors who teach for social justice, instigate and regulate critical discourse about societal –isms, and work as agents of change in their communities.

However, as participants have noted, most (at times, all) of their SJE coursework has been completed online. As it is pointed out in chapter four, the ED 800 course I recruited all of these students from was supposed to be a hybrid course in which students met with the instructor once per week. While the decision not to meet at all was made jointly by the students and instructor, it is clear that much of the social modeling that these adults have received in their doctoral programs at UDS has been vicarious through symbolic social models they observe by consuming media, such as scholarly journal articles, course and supplemental texts, movies, and online videos. It is then likely that the participants have had few experiences seeing a social justice educator in action, modeling the complex social skill set of SJE. This is problematic because it has given these adults a great deal of theoretical and symbolic insights to pull from and little real-life insights to pull from as they attempt to construct their own unique skills and beliefs (Bandura, 1986), or narratives of what it looks like to be a social justice educator. When this is considered in light of the fact that these doctoral courses are the only exposure that many of the adults in this study have had, the lack of direct social modeling of SJE could likely be serving as a barrier to the participants’ perceived abilities to practice SJE.

Section summary. The doctoral level SJE courses that this group of adults has taken at UDS have served as supports for their sense of SJE self-efficacy by significantly changing their perspectives. Yet, some adults also note barriers, like a lack of prior exposure to SJE in their education histories and discontent with the SJE coursework being offered mostly or completely online. The connection between explorative themes one and two are seen in the role that the family plays in acting as supports and barriers to these adults' perceived abilities to teach for social justice. Also, the coursework clearly acts as a support by providing at least symbolic social models and by transforming adults' frames of reference to be more inclusive, while simultaneously acting as a barrier by providing limited direct SJE social models.

Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to explore the social learning experiences and influences on adults' perceived abilities to teach for social justice in the Deep South. Conclusions will be presented in this section as they are based on the findings outlined in chapter four. The conclusions are presented so that they address three exploratory areas of concern: a) family influences on social justice self-efficacy (findings one-three); 2) overlaps in family influence and coursework influence on social justice self-efficacy (four-seven); and, 3) coursework influences on social justice self-efficacy (eight and nine). Following each area of concern is a brief discussion of each of the nine findings as they fall within the areas of concern. Finally, recommendations will be outlined based on the conclusions drawn.

Family Influences on Social Justice Self-Efficacy

The first and most pervasive finding of this research project is that most of the participants in the study cited their family of origin's religious beliefs as having a significant impact on participants' current identities, behaviors, and beliefs. The conclusion that can be

drawn from this finding is that adult learners born and raised in the Deep South may come to the adult learning classroom with unique and pervasive family narratives of religion that have likely shaped their past and current identities, and will influence their beliefs about their abilities and their subsequent behaviors. While this can be true for any adult learner from any region of the country, the reality of the Deep South being typically more conservative than the rest of country, especially in regards to traditional Christian values, should be noted as a significant potential influencer on adult learners' prior learning experiences and how learners approach new and challenging information. This can be especially true for SJE courses in which students' cultural, family, and individual narratives will be challenged, as this indirectly challenges the relationships they have and the identities they have constructed around those relationships. The pervasiveness of conservative Christian religious beliefs in the Deep Southern cultural narrative indicates unique contexts for White and Black adult learners and adults who are not Christian.

A second finding was that the majority of the participants cited the important role their family of origin played in career decisions. One conclusion which is drawn from this finding is that when it comes to learning to teach for social justice, adults' families will likely be sources of inspiration and/or anxiety. Since adults often go to their elders (mothers, fathers, and grandparents) for guidance on what to do when choosing a career and deciding on courses of action within a career, it is probable that, as adults in the Deep South learn to teach for social justice, they will receive support, ambivalence, and/or rejection from their families. Also since families play such vital roles in how adults come to understand concepts of fairness, equity, justice, and acting as an agent of change, it is likely that families will at least indirectly shape how adults perceive what they are learning in their courses.

A third and unexpected finding of the study was that only one out of the six participants indicated her family of origin's political views as having a significant impact on participants' current identities, behaviors, and beliefs. A conclusion that can be drawn from this finding is that either students in this study were not as influenced by their families' political views as they were their families' religious beliefs, or their families' political views are so intertwined with their religious beliefs that students are not able to separate the two from one another. Deep Southern politics, both in regards to Democratic and Republican voting trends, are strongly connected to conservative Christian values. It is just as probable that religion overshadowed politics as it is that religion is so inseparable from politics that adults were not able to distinguish between the two.

Overlaps in Family Influence and Coursework Influence on Social Justice Self-Efficacy

The fourth finding in this study was that most of the participants expressed a sense of doubt in their ability and willingness to practice SJE. In spite of all of the participants having had at least some coursework in SJE, they still express doubt about their abilities to take what they have learned in their courses and put it into practice as educators. The conclusion that can be drawn from this is that simply taking courses in SJE will not be the sole factor in how students feel about their abilities to teach for social justice. Closely related to finding four is the fifth, which was that *all* of the participants expressed a sense of self-efficacy regarding their ability and willingness to practice at least some aspect of social justice education. One conclusion drawn from this finding is that SJE courses can directly influence how students feel about their abilities to practice SJE. While the family plays a role in creating the voice of self-efficacy, it is clear that coursework also played a key role. Another conclusion which can be drawn from the fourth and fifth findings together is that voices of self-doubt and self-efficacy occur in unison.

Despite their conflicting nature, these voices comprise a complete self that sees itself as both knowing and needing to know.

A sixth finding in this study was that all of the participants cite their identities (ethnic, racial, socioeconomic, gender, sexual orientation) as sources of social justice self-efficacy or doubt. Again, this is closely related to findings four and five, but it was important to separate them so that both the role of identity could be highlighted and the contradictory voices of doubt and self-efficacy could be heard. The primary conclusion taken from this finding is that the personal factors of an individual (like identity) play just as important a role in their perceived abilities to teach for social justice (which shape their behaviors) as external influences like their environments (such as family and coursework). This spotlights the importance of self-efficacy beliefs within the individual. Additionally, it suggests the connection between cultural, family, and individual narratives as they affect educator narratives.

Next, the seventh finding showed that all of the study participants expressed a change in their perspectives and beliefs regarding social justice education since beginning a doctoral program with a social justice education focus. A conclusion that can be drawn from this is that, especially in light of the amount of students who felt doubt concerning their abilities, SJE courses do directly influence how students feel about their abilities to practice SJE, regardless of the influences their families have. It is important to note that again, this places emphasis on the exchange between the environment (courses) and personal factors (perceptions about self-efficacy), or coursework and individual narratives.

Coursework Influences on Social Justice Self-Efficacy

An eighth finding of this research was that half of the participants pursued education degrees but had little to no prior direct exposure to social justice education literature in

undergraduate or master's programs. The conclusion drawn from this finding is that despite the reputation most public universities carry of providing a liberal arts education, courses centered on issues of injustice, oppression, and diversity are not as prevalent as might be assumed. One participant cites her conservative mother as fearing her daughter's liberal arts education would make her more liberal. While it may be assumed that any students pursuing a degree with a liberal arts university will automatically be exposed to the concepts of diversity, oppression, and social justice, this may not be the case at all. These issues are not withheld only from education students. Sarah mentions having been exposed to them while pursuing her sociology undergraduate degree. However, she did not obtain that degree in the Deep South, nor was SJE a focus in her art education master's program.

The final finding of this study was that half of the participants expressed a desire to have social justice education courses as in-class rather than online and/or hybrid. The conclusion drawn from this finding is that despite being enrolled in at least one doctoral SJE course, adult learners may still not be receiving a sufficient amount of direct SJE social modeling in their learning experiences. While the SJE focus of the UDS doctoral programs in education is commendable, the fact that so many students have taken several SJE courses online may present a barrier to adults' perceived abilities to teach for social justice

Recommendations

In this section, I offer recommendations for the following areas: teacher educators, social justice educators, and professional development/continued teacher education leaders; education program administration and staff; adult learners, and future research. The recommendations provided are based on the study's findings, interpretations, and conclusions. Following this

section will be a brief reflection on the study and the journey I have taken as a doctoral level adult learner, also learning to teach for social justice.

Recommendations for Postsecondary Education Instructors and Leaders

It is important to first note that recommendations to each of the professionals in the fields of teacher education, adult education, social justice education, and professional development/continued teacher education were not separated. Recommendations are presented in this way because the lines between social justice and teacher education have already been outlined in this dissertation as, at times, indiscernible. Likewise, several of these fields quite often overlap with one another, with more than one field existing in the same classroom at the same time. Therefore, it is advised that, based on the findings, interpretations, and conclusions of this study, that professionals in the previously listed fields:

1. Make adults aware, from the beginning of a course, of the typical discomfort faced by most students in SJE courses. This suggestion is not aimed at asking educators to warn students about every single bit of information they are going to encounter. Rather, it is suggested that educators make adults aware of the potentially transformative nature of SJE and what that can entail in regards to challenging frames of reference, relationships built on frames of reference, and the identities and individual narratives that are built on those relationships. The tendency for SJE courses to evoke tense moments of interpersonal and intrapersonal conflict has been illustrated in this study. It would be wise for all educators, whether at the college or K12 level, who plan on teaching even a lesson in SJE, to make students aware of how their cultural, family, and individual narratives may be challenged or affirmed by the material being covered. This might prepare students to be more receptive to any conflicts that may arise during the lesson or course.

2. Become knowledgeable about their students' identities and individual narratives as they are influenced by their cultural and familial narratives. Just as a vital part of SJE is connecting the material being learned to students' contexts and lived experiences, an essential component of adult learning theory is recognizing that often adults come to the classroom with a vast array of experiences, beliefs, and biases. When educators know more about this aspect of students' lives, course material can be presented in ways that are easier for students to understand and negotiate into their own ways of knowing. Educators can provide students with the opportunity to share experiences they believe have shaped them as learners and teachers (if applicable) in writing assignments or during class conversations.
3. Be aware that students' families can play a significant role in their beliefs about what they are learning, especially in SJE courses. Students may come to class with family narratives of racism and sexism, cultural narratives of evangelical Christian conservatism or meritocracy. It is important for educators to not only be as aware as possible of these narratives, but to also recognize and respect the power those narratives have in how students process the information presented in a SJE course. One possible way to become aware of learners' familial influences could be to have students respond to critical reflection prompts by writing or participating in dialogue in class or online discussion boards, as appropriate.
4. Be aware that adults can feel both self-efficacious and self-doubting at the same time and in reference to the same course material. This does not apply only to SJE; it could apply to mathematics or science. The reality is that students carry preconceived notions about the material, their abilities, their willingness, and their contexts with them into the

classroom. Educators and leaders should be aware of the duality of voices and accepting of both so that emotionally safe and trusting learning communities can be developed between students and educators. Furthermore, when educators sense or are directly told there is SJE self-doubt, they can provide social modeling experiences directly (by explaining scenarios, for example) or vicariously (with videos of expert SJE teachers, for example).

5. Maintain high and realistic expectations concerning the amount of time it may take for students in SJE courses to come to terms with the content to which they are being exposed. It is crucial to note that this does not mean that educators should expect that all students will eventually accept every concept they have been taught in an SJE course. Rather, this suggestion indicates that educators should be aware that some students may come to the SJE class with more conflicting information already in their knowledge reserves, and that it may take these adults time to at least come to terms with the information they are being asked to process in the course. By being aware of this reality, in conjunction with being aware of students' contexts, educators can provide a more empathic, accepting, rigorous, and genuine SJE learning environment.

Recommendations for Education Program Administration and Staff

Administration and staff within education programs, both undergraduate and graduate should:

1. Develop curricula that include reflective assignments that are more targeted on the specific influences that students' cultural and family narratives have played in their current beliefs and behaviors. Reflective practice is crucial to teaching and learning to teach, especially when social justice education is involved. Ample opportunities must be

provided for adult learners of all backgrounds to reflect, not just on their practices as an educator, but on their backgrounds and how this comes to bear on them in the present.

2. Require all SJE courses be offered as in-class, in addition to online options, rather than offering SJE courses as online only when they are required for degree completion. Since SJE has such strong potential to be transformative learning (which can result in changed worldviews, relationships, and identities), it is recommended that administrators always offer in-person course options for any SJE course that is required for degree completion. By doing this, administrators allow adults more opportunities to observe direct social models and greater understandings of the course material through the perspectives of other adults as they are gained in group and one-on-one critical discourse.
3. Design undergraduate programs in education that require all education students, regardless of concentration, to take at least one course on SJE. This does not include the typical courses centered on exceptional students. The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) (2008) does require that teacher education programs provide training on how to effectively teach diverse students (according to unit standard four). However, it is up to the discretion of each individual program how diversity is approached, whether diversity is seen as a deficit students must overcome, or as assets teachers utilize in the classroom to make learning more relevant and engaging. Since education is an undeniably political endeavor, it is the job of liberal arts colleges and universities to provide courses that prepare students and future educators to participate in accepting yet critical discourse about concepts of citizenship, justice, inequity, power, oppression, privilege, and the many systemic –isms with diverse people and groups.

Recommendations for Adult Learners

When adult learners are considering enrolling in any program that has a focus on SJE, they should:

1. Be as aware of and critically reflective as possible of the influence cultural and family narratives can have on their perceptions about the validity of SJE and the role they play as potential social justice educators. In truth, this concept can and should be applied to every course a student takes since family shapes so much of who people are. Students in this study repeatedly commented on how they had not previously considered this aspect of their life, which is surprising and somewhat unfortunate.
2. Carefully select the delivery of every course in which they enroll themselves. Being cognizant of the gap in direct social modeling that online and hybrid courses inevitably entail is crucial to ensuring a student learns what he or she wants. If a student desires to gain a significant amount of core knowledge or to learn new complex skill sets (like being a social justice educator) from a course, especially a course centered on SJE, it is important to weigh the benefits and costs of taking an online or hybrid course as opposed to taking an in-person course.
3. Create space for discomfort when deciding to enroll in SJE courses or SJE-centered programs. SJE courses have been established in this study as sources of affirmation and challenge for adult learners. It would be preferable for students to be aware of the potential for perspective transformation prior to enrolling in courses, but this is unrealistic. Instead, it is more realistic to expect adults to be open to the learning experiences that each new course brings them, accepting that some will be more emotionally trying than others, especially when it comes to SJE courses.

Recommendations for Future Research

In light of the limitations of this study, I recommend that further research be done in the future:

1. Due to the unexpected nature of finding three, a similar narrative study, using the same criteria for participant selection to further analyze the relationship between students' family's political views and religious beliefs as they relate to students' perceived abilities to teach for social justice.
2. In light of the limitations of this study, especially sample size and researcher bias, a larger and more comprehensive survey should be designed to better understand the interactions between students' cultural, familial, and individual narratives and their perceived abilities to teach for social justice.
3. Also, a comparative study should be pursued to explore the cultural, familial, and individual narratives of adults who have received training to practice SJE and choose to or choose not to practice SJE.

Reflections

This study tells a story. It is a story about a search for better understanding of experiences, of what it means for people living in the Deep South to go against the grain, to be willing to risk or affirm worldviews, relationships, and identities to learn social justice education. As I draw this research study to a close, I reflect back on why I became so interested in knowing more about how the families and peers of adults influence how they take on social justice education. I recall early experiences in my childhood of what it meant to be liberal and concerned with social justice for all people while growing up in the Deep South. I also draw on moments of affirmation and challenge I experienced as I told family members and friends that I wanted to obtain a doctorate degree. Then, I remember how my research topic was similarly

received. I even recognize how little I was exposed to and knew about social justice education until I sought it out in my doctoral studies. These experiences all led me to the questions that inspired this explorative project: What experiences do we share? How are our experiences different? How do I construct a study that will not only uncover those experiences, but also tell the story to the rest of the world about how unique the Deep Southern experience can be?

Conducting the pilot study provided some clues that my experience is not a singularity, indicating others were going through similar experiences as they learn to teach for social justice in the Deep South. Yet, it was not until the encounter with Paul at the conference roundtable discussion that the emotional and social impact of the Deep Southern liberal and social justice educator experience became salient as an important story and research topic to me. In the first chapter, I compare the tensions that constitute the Deep Southern experience of learning to teach for social justice to an object floating under the surface of a black water river. Now, I can give a name to that obscured presence lying just beneath the surface: the influence of cultural and family narratives.

It might seem like an anticlimactic end to this story, but it is not. In reality, the cultural and family narratives exist beneath the surface of all that people say, do, think, and believe. While those narratives are not the sole sources, they play a vital role in how individuals think and act. Cultural narratives can influence how we think about the race of our teachers, for example, like Hazel did as a Black woman never seeing Black teachers until her doctorate program. Family narratives can influence whether we see ourselves as ready or unready to take on a new task or role in life, just like Cathryn is currently weighing. Like Lila has seen, our individual narratives can influence how we create space for our own beliefs, even when they contradict our families' and push us further away from them.

Finally, I reflect on the adults who worked with me to complete this study. As the social justice education coursework at UDS continues to change their perspectives, these adult learners reconsider, possibly even rewrite, how they think about so many aspects of their lives, their understandings of truth and ability, and how what they thought they knew as it is being challenged and/or affirmed. Though identity is an ever-shifting construct, the challenge that social justice education brings with it is unique. What these adults and I keep in our own individual and educator narratives from our cultural and family narratives about liberalism, conservatism, justice, and the role of religion in all of it, may be challenged and/or affirmed by all of the people with whom we are willing to share it. It is in the endeavor of learning to teach for social justice that a new and more complex social negotiation process begins and adult learners self-edit, writing and rewriting who we were, who we are, who we want to be, and what we believe we are capable of.

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Appendix A

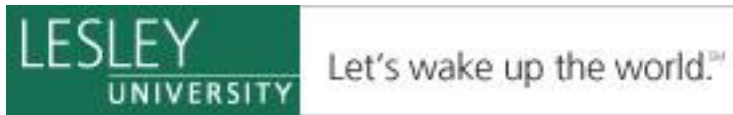
Hypothetical Real World Scenario of Mezirow's Ten Phases of Transformative Learning

The trigger of perspective transformation and thus a transformative learning experience is the disorienting dilemma event. This event can be a significant change in a person's life (positive or negative in nature, like getting a job promotion, for example), or an accumulation of events and/or perspectives that lead to an "aha" moment of sorts. Upon the disorienting event, a person's assumptions about themselves, others, society, and/or truth and reality are challenged. From this point, the stages are relatively self-explanatory. As a hypothetical example of the ten stages of transformation playing out, I will imagine that after completing my dissertation and doctoral program requirements, I am offered a job I have never held, but want to: an assistant professor position at a postsecondary institution. Upon taking the position, I would definitely begin self-examination. I would reflect on and assess my current abilities for the expertise needed to efficaciously fulfill the new duties required by the job. If I assumed that I already had all of the skills needed to do this new job, I would only realize, once I took the position and critically assessed my own assumptions about the reality of the required duties, that I was not fully capable yet. At this point, I would find myself extremely discontent with the realization that I was unqualified in some way to do a job. Then, I might even feel despondent or frustrated about having to learn new skills. However, after processing my frustration, I could decide to set my apathy to the side and begin exploring new roles, relationships, and courses of action to take, as so that I might be more prepared for those needed job skills. Once this exploration has begun, courses of action could be planned out and new knowledge could be acquired. I could also try out the new roles and skills I had developed up to this point. After trying these new skills out, perhaps failing and succeeding in different attempts, I could build self-confidence, or self-efficacy, in my ability to effectively manage the duties of this new job. Finally, I would likely have new perspectives about my abilities to fulfill the new job of assistant professor (needing more development with one skill while feeling efficacious in another), and I could reintegrate my life with these perspectives as new understandings of myself and my capabilities. At the same time, I could have gone through these stages in mixed around orders, even skipping some.

Appendix B

IRB Approval Information

Prior to beginning any interviews, approval was granted by the Lesley University Institutional Review Board (IRB). The study plans and participant protections were detailed, and approval was granted with the provision that if any changes in study design or participant recruitment. The IRB for the participating university was also contacted. I described the study to the IRB and was told that no approval was needed from this university if the participating course instructor was not acting as a co-researcher, which this person did not. Once approval was received from Lesley University's IRB, the participating university IRB and the participating course instructor were both informed. They were also provided with my own and the contact information of the Lesley University IRB for assurance purposes.



29 Everett
Street
Cambridge, MA
02138

August 5, 2014

To: **Christen Victoria Warrington-Broxton**

From: Robyn Cruz and Terrence Keeney, Co-chairs, Lesley IRB

RE: Application for Expedition of Review: *Exploring familial influences on adults' perceived abilities to teach for social justice.*

IRB Number: 13-012

This memo is written on behalf of the Lesley University IRB to inform you that your application for approval by the IRB through expedited review has been granted. Your project poses no more than minimal risk to participants.

If at any point you decide to amend your project, e.g., modification in design or in the selection of subjects, you will need to file an amendment with the IRB and suspend further data collection until approval is renewed.

If you experience any unexpected "adverse events" during your project you must inform the IRB as soon as possible, and suspend the project until the matter is resolved.

An expedited review procedure consists of a review of research involving human subjects by an IRB co-chairperson and by one or more experienced reviewers designated by the chairperson from among members of the IRB in accordance with the requirements set forth in 45 CFR 46.110.

Source: 63 FR 60364-60367, November 9, 1998.

Date of IRB Approval: August 26th, 2013

Appendix C

Experiences and Influences on Learning to Teach for Social Justice

Interview Questions

Interview Questions: *This interview consists of several demographic questions and twenty interview questions. These questions will help me gain important insights into the many contextual experiences which have shaped your practice and your beliefs in your abilities.*

Feel free to talk as much or as little about each question as you like. You are not expected to remain brief, nor are you expected to answer every question if you are not comfortable doing so. I invite you to tell your story as you see appropriate and to the degree with which you feel comfortable. No identifying information that you provide will be shared at any time and you are always free to drop out of the study at any time. If you chose to dropout, all interviews responses will be disposed of safely and immediately.

What pseudonym would you like to be named as in the study?

Demographic Information, You and Your Family: *This will be used only in the data analysis process. No identifying information will be shared at any time, and you can refuse to answer any of these questions if you wish.*

Your Gender:

Your Age:

Your Race and Ethnicity:

Your Own Religious and Political Affiliations:

Your sexual orientation:

Postsecondary Institutions You Attended & Degrees You Have Earned, if applicable:

Jobs You Have Held:

How long you have been in the field of education:

Please describe any schools in which you have worked (student body, rural/urban/suburban, public, private, charter, online, PK12, postsecondary, coworker relations, school climate, and so forth):

Any other pertinent information you would like to share that you feel is relevant to the study:

Narrative Interview Questions

How and why did you become an educator?

Probe: How did your background and personal relationships affect your decision? This can include you, your parents, spouse, children, siblings, friends, other family members and can pertain to many factors like your religion, socioeconomic status, gender roles, education attainment or a lack of it.

Please give me a brief overview of your family. When you were growing up, who were the members of your immediate family who lived with you, raised you, and were close to you?

Describe what the culture was like in your family growing up when it came to social justice issues. An example could be women's rights and the passage of Title IX in 1972, or more recently, the racial tensions of the Trayvon Martin case.

Probes: How do people in your family deal with racism/classism/sexism/and so forth in their personal lives? Were/are conversations about these topics usually constructive and accepting, do people avoid them, or do they tend to break down into arguments? Is there a person in your family who is "different" from most? Has your family's culture changed from then to now? Is there anything that was or is talked about (explicit) or not talked about yet understood (implicit) in your family?

Let's talk about your mother/mother figure. How do you describe her and her role in your life?

Probes: Your mother's job, highest level of education, race/ethnicity, political, and religious views. How did she deal with issues of injustice? How did/does she talk to you about controversial issues? How did she deal with racism/classism/sexism? Were/are conversations about these topics usually constructive and accepting, do people avoid them, or do they tend to break down into arguments? Do you remember any instances of her directly or indirectly confronting other people about tough issues or injustices in any positive or negative ways? Can you recall any situations in which she acted as an agent of change, whether positive or negative, within the family or on larger scales?

Also, please describe your father/father figure and his role in your life.

Probes: Your father's job, highest level of education, race/ethnicity, political, and religious views. How did he deal with issues of injustice? How did/does he talk to you about controversial issues? How did he deal with racism/classism/sexism? Were/are conversations about these topics usually constructive and accepting, do people avoid them, or do they tend to break down into arguments? Do you remember any instances of him directly or indirectly confronting other people about tough issues or injustices in any positive or negative ways? Can you recall any situations in which he acted as an agent of change, whether positive or negative, within the family or on larger scales?

If you have siblings, please describe them and the roles they have played in your life.

Probes: Your siblings' jobs, highest levels of education, races/ethnicities, political, and religious views. How did they deal with issues of injustice? How did/do they talk to you about controversial issues? How did they deal with racism/classism/sexism? Were/are conversations about these topics usually constructive and accepting, do people avoid them, or do they tend to break down into arguments? Do you remember any instances of them directly or indirectly confronting other people about tough issues or injustices in any positive or negative ways? Can you recall any situations in which they acted as agents of change, whether positive or negative, within the family or on larger scales?

Let's talk about your grandparents. Describe them and their role in your life, please.

Probes: Their jobs, highest levels of education, races/ethnicities, political, and religious views. How did they deal with issues of injustice? How did/do they talk to you about controversial issues? How did they deal with racism/classism/sexism? Were/are conversations about these topics usually constructive and accepting, do people avoid them, or do they tend to break down into arguments? Do you remember any instances of them directly or indirectly confronting other people about tough issues or injustices in any positive or negative ways? Can you recall any situations in which they acted as agents of change, whether positive or negative, within the family or on larger scales?

Describe your extended family members, like aunts, uncles, cousins, nieces, nephews, even in-laws. How are these family members figures who stand out in regards to talking and dealing with issues of injustice like sexism, classism, racism, heterosexism (bias against people in the LGBT community)?

Probes: How did they deal with issues of injustice? How did/do they talk to you about controversial issues? How did they deal with racism/classism/sexism? Were/are conversations about these topics usually constructive and accepting, do people avoid them, or do they tend to break down into arguments? Do you remember any instances of them directly or indirectly confronting other people about tough issues or injustices in

any positive or negative ways? Can you recall any situations in which they acted as agents of change, whether positive or negative, within the family or on larger scales?

Who in your childhood family, your birth family, do you identify with most closely? Why?

Probes: If you haven't already described this person, would you mind describing her/him? How did this person deal with issues of injustice? How did/do this person talk to you about controversial issues? How did this person deal with racism/classism/sexism? Do you remember any instances of this person directly or indirectly confronting other people about tough issues or injustices in any positive or negative ways? Can you recall any situations in which this person acted as an agent of change, whether positive or negative, within the family or on larger scales?

If you have a significant other (life partner, husband, wife, fiancé, boyfriend, girlfriend, and so forth), please describe that person/people?

Probes: Your significant other's job, highest level of education, race/ethnicity, political, and religious views. How did they deal with issues of injustice? How did/do they talk with you about controversial issues? How did they deal with racism/classism/sexism? Do you remember any instances of them directly or indirectly confronting other people about tough issues or injustices in any positive or negative ways? Can you recall any situations in which they acted as agents of change, whether positive or negative, within the family or on larger scales?

If you have any children (born to you, foster, adopted, children of spouses from previous relationships, or other younger people you are a legal guardian of), please describe them?

Probes: Were you responsible for them from birth? Can you describe how you deal with issues of injustice together in their younger years and now, if there has been any change over time? How did/do they talk to you about controversial issues? How did they deal with racism/classism/sexism? Do you remember any instances of them directly or indirectly confronting other people about tough issues or injustices in any positive or negative ways? Can you recall any situations in which they acted as agents of change, whether positive or negative, within the family or on larger scales? If applicable, their jobs, highest levels of education, races/ethnicities, political, and religious views.

How do you and your immediate family, people you live with now (parents, significant other, children, roommates, and others) deal with situations of injustice? For example, do you discuss instances of racism, sexism, classism, and so forth in the media or the community, do they go undiscussed, are they safe discussions, do they breakdown into arguments?

If you can, please tell any story that sticks out in your mind about your spouse, children or friends, where you were discussing an issue of social class, gender, race, sexuality or any other controversial topic. Explain how you felt during that conversation about what was being said by you and the other person or people.

Please share a story that sticks out in your mind about an early experience you had with injustice. It doesn't have to involve family members if you don't want it to.

Probes: Describe how this made you feel about yourself and those acting in the experience.

How have your experiences in your degree program affected your thinking about social injustices?

Probes: How did meeting new people from different contexts affect your thinking? How did the ideas and thinking of professors affect your thinking? How have peers, friends, and professors dealt with social injustices?

How did conversations in your social justice education courses (intro, gender, sexuality, this advanced course) make you feel? These could be online or in-person.

Probes: How did/do they make you feel about yourself as an individual or as a teacher? How did/do they make you feel about other people in your life like your family, peers, coworkers, professors, or others? How do/did they make you feel about institutions like the college, the school you teach, even society?

How do you feel about social justice education?

How do you feel about your abilities to teach for social justice?

If you can, please tell me a story about you teaching for social justice or challenging the status quo in your own classroom.

Probes: How is it common for your lessons to be like you have described or is this uncommon for you?

How do you feel the ways you've seen injustice accepted and/or challenged in your family and personal relationships affect your feelings about your abilities in your classroom?

Probes: Do you feel your personal relationships create support systems, conflicts, both, or neither? Do you feel like your training supported you in teaching for social justice, do you feel like it created conflicts, both, or neither.

Appendix D

Informed Consent Form

LESLEY UNIVERSITY

What are the familial influences on adults' perceived abilities to teach for social justice?

Christen V. Warrington-Broxton

Introduction and Purpose

You are invited to participate in research study conducted by Christen V. Warrington-Broxton. I am a doctoral student in the low-residency Ph.D. in Educational Studies, Adult Learning program at Lesley University. I am conducting a research study as part of the requirements for my doctoral degree, and I would like to invite you to participate. This study will be small in scale and is designed only to fulfill my dissertation requirement. The primary objective of this study is to explore the social learning experiences and influences on adults' perceived abilities to teach for social justice. A secondary objective is to continue developing narrative interview protocol, initiated in the pilot study, and a member checking process which sheds light on the social learning experiences and influences on adults' perceived abilities to teach for social justice. This form explains what you will be asked to do if you decide to participate in this study. Please read it carefully and feel free to ask any questions you like before you make a decision about participating.

Description of Study Procedures

The study is designed to be small scale qualitative study primarily focused on me, the graduate researcher, developing appropriate interview protocol and for collecting and analyzing data for my dissertation.

You are being asked to participate in this study because you are a graduate-level student who has taken a course that is focused on social justice through the study of diversity as it relates to school structures and curriculum. You have also had the opportunity to put the theory you learned into practice in your own experiences or reflect on your past teaching experiences.

The aim of this study is to explore the social learning experiences and influences on adults' perceived abilities to teach for social justice, and to continue developing narrative interview protocol, initiated in the pilot study, and a member checking process which sheds light on the social learning experiences and influences on adults' perceived abilities to teach for social justice. The first level of participation will involve you being interviewed by me, the researcher. The interview will consist of questions which ask you to narrate your lived experiences. Lengthy responses are welcomed and encouraged, but are certainly not required. The interview will take approximately 2 to 3 hours depending on your responses. The interview will be scheduled with you at a time that is of your convenience and a place where you feel comfortable discussing your personal experiences. You will be given the opportunity to choose your own pseudonym (fictitious name) that will be used in reporting findings. Your demographic information will be only used in the data analysis process.

The second level of participation will involve participants attending a member checking appointment, conducting as a follow up in which you will be offered further opportunities for providing feedback and/or clarification on my own interpretations of your responses in the first interview. The second interview will be approximately one hour in length and will be conducted in one of two ways that you decide on: either in-person at a place of your choosing (convenience and/or comfort level) or via email correspondence. There are no set questions for the member checking process. Appropriate questions will be determined on an individual basis as they will be reliant on participants' individual responses to initial interview questions.

The third level of participation will involve you continuing to participate in periodic member checks during the data analysis phase. I will analyze your interview for your various "voices", or your own ways of thinking about your lived experiences. I will communicate these to you and request your feedback on them. You may confirm a "voice" interpretation as truly representative of you. You may also correct an interpretation you feel is inaccurate or missing information. Additionally, you may request a "voice" not be included if you are uncomfortable with it being expressed. This process of having you confirm, deny, and/or correct my interpretations will help provide the study with trustworthiness, or validity.

Risks of Participation

You may experience certain risks or discomforts associated with this research. These may include loss of time, frustration, embarrassment, anger, or other negative feelings associated with recalling any negative experiences you wish to share. In order to minimize the risk of this occurring methods have been chosen with attention to time consumption in mind. I, the graduate researcher, will be constructive and respectful of your emotions during the interview and data analysis processes. Your responses will be kept confidential and your identity will be kept completely anonymous.

Benefits of Participation

As a graduate student, you may benefit from participating in this study by witnessing the research process and having the opportunity to collaborate with a doctoral student in a different learning environment and in a different phase of doctoral study than yourself. Also, this research may help us understand what connections adult learning theory and practice have to one another. By participating you will have the opportunity to witness a qualitative research process and you will be encouraged to critically reflect on your teaching practice, a tactic which is known to help improve practice.

Costs

There will be NO costs to you for participating in this study (other than your time devoted to participating, if this time detracts you from any working hours).

Payments

Participants who complete the study will receive a \$50 Visa gift card as a sign of the researchers' appreciation for their cooperation and participation.

Circumstances for Dismissal from the Study

You may be dismissed from the study without your consent for various reasons, including the following:

- If you do not participate in all aspects of the study.
- If you are disrespectful, rude or violent during the interview.
- If the investigator believes that it is not in your best interest to continue in the study.

Confidentiality of Records

The only documents with your name on them are email correspondences and this informed consent form, as this is unavoidable. Your interviews and email responses will only be labeled with your pseudonym, which will not be linked to your identity. The university will only be referred to as a large, public, urban, research university in the Southeastern United States. Any instructors you might mention, or the courses they teach, will never be referred to by name in any way. Only general terms and pseudonyms will be used. Therefore, it is highly unlikely that anyone will be able to identify which information you might supply to the researcher. Study information will be stored in locked filing cabinets and on password and virus software protected computer hard drive at the home of the researcher.

The results of the study MAY be published or presented at meetings, and will be presented to fulfill dissertation completion requirements. Your identity will always remain completely anonymous when presenting the findings of this study in any circumstance.

Contact Persons

If you have any questions about the study itself, please feel free to contact: Christen V. Warrington-Broxton, Ph.D. Candidate, Lesley University, Cambridge, MA 02138, (803) 707-6884, E-mail- cwarring@lesley.edu

The researchers' senior advisor, Audrey Dentith, Ph.D., E-mail adentith@lesley.edu

If you have any questions about your rights as a research subject, you may contact an Internal Review Board official at my institution, and/or at your own:

Terrence Keeney, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Lesley University Internal Review Board Co-Chair, tkeeney@lesley.edu, (617) 349-8234.

Thomas Coggins, Director, Office of Research Compliance, University of South Carolina, Columbia, SC 29208, Phone - (803) 777-7095, Fax - (803) 576-5589, E-mail tcoggins@mailbox.sc.edu

Voluntary Participation

Participation in this study is voluntary. You are free not to participate or to withdraw at any time, for whatever reason, without negative consequences. In the event that you do withdraw from this study, the information you have already provided will be kept confidential and will be deleted from my records at your request.

Signatures /Dates

I, the research participant, have read (or have had read to me) the contents of this consent form and have been encouraged to ask questions. I have received answers to my questions. I give my consent to participate in this study, although I have been told that I may withdraw at any time without negative consequences. I have received a copy of this form for my records and future reference.

Participant Signature _____ Date _____

As the graduate researcher of this study, I have explained to the participant or the participant's legally authorized representative the purpose, the procedures, the possible benefits, and the risks of this research study; the alternatives to being in the study; the voluntary nature of the study; and how privacy will be protected.

Researcher Signature _____ Date _____

Appendix E

General Solicitation Email to Course Students

Hi Everyone,

I enjoyed meeting each of you tonight!

As a reminder, my name is Christen and I will be observing your course in advanced studies of curriculum and diversity this semester. I know you are busy and your time is valuable, so I apologize in advance for the necessary but lengthy nature of this email.

I'm writing you as a follow up after tonight's meeting, to see if you are interested in participating in an interview for my dissertation study I am completing this year. Some of you have already agreed, yet I still like to provide an opportunity via email for you to consider and decline if you choose to. Please take your time in responding to this email, to read the informed consent and interview questions which are attached to this message.

Again, I will be analyzing the social learning experiences and influences on teachers who are learning social justice education. The experience will provide you with an opportunity to participate in a study that begins a dialogue about the needs of adult learners, like you, in courses like this EDCS 820 course.

Please feel free to openly decline this solicitation or disregard this email if you are not interested in participating. You are not required in any way to participate for the course. There will be no negative repercussions if you chose not to volunteer.

If you are interested in participating and would like further details about the study (purpose, interview questions, consent form, and protections), please let me know as soon as possible. I am always open to questions and concerns, because I hope to facilitate a trusting research relationship. For those who signed consent forms already, I will email you a scanned version of it so that you have it for your own documentation. Please keep in mind that you are free to drop out at any time you wish, even if you signed a consent form.

Finally, your identity will be kept confidential at all times, and the interview can be scheduled at your convenience, at any time and location you are most comfortable. Also, upon completion of the study all participants will be given a \$50 Visa gift card (usable anywhere, for anything) as a token of my appreciation.

Thank you all so much for your attention tonight at the class meeting! I look forward to working with you.

Warmly,

Christen V. Warrington-Broxton

cwarring@lesley.edu
(803) 707-6884 (cell)

Appendix F

Social Justice Education Definition

You may have heard the terms “social justice education” (SJE), “multicultural education”, “culturally responsive teaching”, and/or “antibias education” in your teacher training experiences and been exposed to these theoretical frameworks. I am providing you, the participant and storyteller, with this SJE definition not to elicit agreement from you or to convince you that this conceptualization is “better” than others. I am providing this framework for you to analyze before and during our conversation about your experiences so that you can more clearly understand how I envision SJE and what I am asking in various interview questions.

Marilyn Cochran-Smith (2004) explains SJE as consisting of six core principles of practice:

- Teachers working to create and/or participate in learning communities where teachers to have high expectations for students and themselves, feel confident in their content knowledge, and their ability to teach diverse students.
- Teachers building on what students come to school knowing (language, experiences, culture, and so forth) and not seeing students from diverse backgrounds as deficit or having to overcome in order to learn.
- Teachers starting where students are rather than from a predetermined point in a curriculum.
- Teachers working with students, families, and communities to respect the cultures and values of students and their families.
- Teachers working to diversify student assessment like portfolios, performances, and other varied measurements complement existing standardized assessment tools and honor the diverse ways in which individuals know and are gifted.
- Teachers model social activism and critical, democratic dialogue about privilege, power, and oppression.

Cochran-Smith, M. (2004). *Walking the road: Race, diversity, and social justice in teacher education*. New York, NY: Teachers College.