Living and teaching for social justice: teacher educators' stories and experiences

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LIVING AND TEACHING FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE: TEACHER EDUCATORS’
STORIES AND EXPERIENCES

An Abstract of a Dissertation

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

Approved:

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Dr. Stephanie R. Logan, Committee Chair

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Courtney Kay Clausen
University of Northern Iowa

July 2017
ABSTRACT

In the United States, the population of students’ with diverse racial/ethnic, linguistic, and economic backgrounds is on the rise, while teachers entering the field of education continue to be White or of European decent, monolingual, and female. These experiential differences between students and teachers can result in a demographic gap, where teachers struggle to meet the needs of all learners due to misperceptions, stereotypical beliefs, and biases. Educational scholars have called for the integration of social justice education into teacher preparation programs in order to assist preservice teachers in challenging their perceptions of students, to challenge the existing inequitable educational practices, and to integrate methods of teaching and learning to meet the needs of all students. Additionally, educational scholars have also called for further research about teacher educators and teacher preparation programs that utilize social justice education as part of the teaching and learning process.

This study explored the life experiences that influenced four social justice teacher educators to teach for social justice and the ways in which these teacher educators integrate social justice into their classrooms. This qualitative research study was influenced by elements of narrative inquiry. The researcher collected three forms of data including audio recorded interviews, classroom observations, and participant reflective journals from the four participants. Data was analyzed borrowing from the narrative form of thematic analysis.

Data revealed that there are natural differences in teaching and learning for social justice in education, which are influenced by both the lived experiences and identities of
teacher educators and their preservice teachers. Based on these findings, implications for
teacher education include the need for clear communication and openness in the
communication of the definition of, and need for, social justice education, as well as
openness in defining and implementing social justice education strategies in teacher
preparation programs. A recommendation for future research includes a need for
additional qualitative and mixed methods research in order to assist with generalizability
and the normalization of the differences in social justice in education.
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University of Northern Iowa

July 2017
DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my parents, Jane and Philip Clausen, for their commitment and dedication to being life-long learners and educators. Without their love, support, guidance, and modeling, I would not be the life-long learner and educator that I am today.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

While I am acknowledged as the sole author on this dissertation, this project would not have been possible without the passion, support, and commitment of a community of people including my dissertation committee.

Dr. Stephanie Logan, the chair of my dissertation committee, has been instrumental in my journey as a doctoral student. Dr. Logan has been my colleague, mentor, advisor, professor, co-teacher, supervisor, and my friend. Without the passion and commitment Dr. Logan demonstrated in my journey I would not be the educator I am today.

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Dr. Susan Hill and Dr. Kyle Rudick for their strong opinions, guidance, and constructive feedback during meetings and for the notes they provided during the writing of my dissertation. Had they not raised so many critical questions during my dissertation proposal hearing and the writing process this dissertation would not exist.

Dr. Scott Ellison for his mentorship and commitment to making sure that I had both a strong foundation in education and a critical view of what I was learning throughout my doctoral program. Without his guidance through independent study courses I would not have been exposed to critical educational theory and the important role that a critical lens plays in the inequities in education.
I also want to thank the participants who so graciously agreed to share their stories and life experiences as social justice teacher educators for this research project. Without their passion for social justice and their openness and honesty during interviews, and their reflective journals, I would not have a dissertation. I thank them participants for all of the time that they committed to helping me complete this project.

I also acknowledge and thank my doctoral colleagues and friends for their support throughout my doctoral program and the dissertation process. Thank you for always allowing me to vent, commiserate, and bounce ideas off of you.

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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Setting the Stage

Schools today are more racially, ethnically, economically, and linguistically diverse than they have been since the early 1900s when immigrants entered the United States from Southern, Central, and Eastern Europe (Banks, 2015). For example, between the fall of 2002 and the fall of 2012, the percentage of Hispanic/Latino students enrolled in public elementary and secondary schools in the United States rose from 18% to 24%. During this same time the percentage of Asian/Pacific Islander grew from 4% to 5%. Both the enrollment of White students and Black students decreased from 59% to 51% and 17% to 16% respectively. Data on students identifying as two or more races was not collected prior to 2008, but in 2012 these students made up 3% of students enrolled in public elementary and secondary schools. Although the percentage of Hispanic/Latino and Asian/Pacific Islander students is projected to increase, the percentage of students of European ancestry and Black students enrolled in public schools is anticipated to decrease between 2013 and 2034 (Kena et al., 2015).

Additionally, the number of English language learners enrolled in public schools has grown from 8.7% in 2002-03 to 9.2% in 2012-13. Moreover, 21% of 5-17-year old children were living in poverty in 2013 as compared to 15% of students in 2000, equating to approximately 11 million school-age children living in families in poverty (Kena et al., 2015). As students in public schools in the United States continue to diversify, teacher
education programs must assist preservice and in-service teachers in meeting the needs of all students (Howard, 2003; McAllister & Irvine, 2000).

Problem Statement

Students who are assigned to teachers with similar racial, ethnic, or linguistic backgrounds often benefit from these teaching and learning experiences. For example, Egalite, Kisida, and Winters (2015) found that students assigned to teachers of the same race experienced positive impacts in reading and significant impacts in math achievement. Similarly, Dee (2004) found that students identifying as Black and White showed large and statistically significant achievement gains when taught by “own-race” teachers. However, as the racial, ethnic, linguistic, and economic diversity of the students in classrooms in the United States expands (Banks, 2015), most teachers entering the field of education identify as of European ancestry or White, female, middle-class, and monolingual (Gay & Kirkland, 2003; Milner, 2006; Ukpokodu, 2003, 2007). In 2011-12, 81.9% of public school teachers in the United States identified as White and 76.3% of teachers in elementary and secondary public schools were female (National Center of Education Statistics, 2013).

The student diversity teachers experience in the classroom now and into the future can create rich learning experiences (Banks, 2006), however problems can arise as White teachers encounter challenges in teaching students from diverse backgrounds (Sleeter, 2008). Challenges can arise because of the racial, ethnic, linguistic, and economic differences between White teachers and students of color (i.e., African American/Black, Hispanic/Latino, Asian, and Bi/multi-racial) and Native American students, a difference
that Sleeter (2008) has termed a demographic gap. Students of color, especially Black and Latino students, are more likely than White students to be taught by teachers who struggle to educate them because they are uncomfortable around them and/or question their academic ability (Sleeter, 2008). Ukpokodu (2003) describes how many preservice teachers may bring biases, misconceptions, and stereotypes into the classroom that need to be addressed throughout their teacher education coursework.

Educational research exploring preservice teachers’ attitudes and perceptions of diversity and multicultural education show that preservice teachers have a narrow definition of culture (Murdock & Hamel, 2016). This research also emphasizes that White preservice teachers have low expectations for their students; rely on deficit thinking; and have misconceptions about the students’ lives, families, language skills, and intelligence (Cho & DeCastro-Ambrosetti, 2005; Marx & Pennington, 2003; Picower, 2009). Furthermore, preservice teachers lack cross-cultural knowledge and/or cross-cultural and diversity experiences (Cho & DeCastro-Ambrosetti, 2005; Ford & Quinn, 2010; Picower, 2009; Wiggins, Follo, & Eberly, 2007) and feel better prepared to teach White American students and less prepared to teach African American, Latino/Hispanic, and students identified as English language learners (Siwatu, 2011).

Moreover, Picower (2009) found that the White preservice teachers feared people of color due to previous life experiences, family, and the media, and the preservice teachers saw themselves as victims of racism. Picower also discovered “that these privileges, ideologies and stereotypes reinforce institutional hierarchies and the larger system of White supremacy” (2009, p. 198). These research findings regarding preservice
teachers’ perceptions, attitudes, and beliefs illustrate why it is imperative that teacher preparation programs commit to and lead the way in equipping preservice teachers with the necessary knowledge, skills, and dispositions to meet the needs of all students while facing and addressing the triumphs and challenges in classrooms with racially/ethnically, linguistically, developmentally, and economically diverse students (Howard, 2003; McAllister & Irvine, 2000).

**Purpose of the Study**

To prepare preservice teachers to educate and meet the needs of diverse students, educational scholars call for the integration of social justice education pedagogy into teacher education preparation programs (e.g., Cochran-Smith, 2004; Cochran-Smith, Barnatt, Randall, Shakman, & Terrell, 2009; Grant, 2012; Nieto, 2000, 2002; Sleeter, 2013; Villegas, 2007). Specifically, Villegas (2007) calls for social justice in teacher education preparation programs to prepare preservice teachers to teach all students well and to prepare students to equitably contribute both economically and politically in the United States.

Sleeter (2008) asserts that professional coursework grounded in social justice education pedagogy, coupled with community-based learning can address the bias, attitudes, and stereotypes associated with the demographic gap between White teachers and the diverse students. Cochran-Smith (2010) further describes how integrating social justice education into teacher preparation coursework can assist preservice teachers in questioning the norms or default ideas in education. This would include examining explicit and implicit messages they have learned about race, class, culture, and language
in their course readings, assignments, and field placements. Furthermore, intentional focus on social justice education in teacher preparation programming benefits all preservice teachers regardless of race/ethnicity, class, language, and location and helps to shape them as participants in a democratic nation working for a more just society (Cochran-Smith, 2010).

This study was designed with the knowledge that there is a need for further research on the integration of social justice education pedagogy in teacher preparation programs (Grant & Agosto, 2008; Guyton, 2000) and teacher educators’ pedagogy, attitudes, and beliefs pertaining to teaching for social justice (Mills & Ballantyne, 2016). This study utilized qualitative methodology and was influenced by attributes of narrative inquiry to explore self-identified social justice teacher educators, those who teach teachers (Cochran-Smith, 2003), life experiences that have influenced their teaching for social justice and how they integrate principles and practices of social justice education into their teaching and learning practice. In the tradition of qualitative methodology, data including face-to-face semi-structured interviews, participant reflective journals, and classroom observations were collected and analyzed thematically keeping the participants’ stories intact (Riessman, 1993; 2008).

**Research Questions**

The research questions that guided this inquiry included:

- Research Question 1: What life experiences influence the lives of social justice teacher educators in relationship to teaching for social justice?
• Research Question 2: How do social justice teacher educators integrate social justice into the teaching and learning in their teacher preparation courses?

Significance of Study

This study is significant to research on social justice education in four main ways. First, this study assists in answering the call for further exploration on the use of social justice practices in teacher education (Grant & Agosto, 2008; Guyton, 2000; Kapustka, Howell, Clayton, & Thomas, 2009). More specifically, this research answers Mills and Ballantyne’s (2016) recommendation for further research into the beliefs, attitudes, and pedagogy of social justice teacher educators.

Second, while there have been several studies published since Grant and Agosto (2008) reviewed the literature pertaining to social justice in education, there is a dearth in the literature of qualitative research performed by a third-party researcher exploring social justice teacher educators’ life experiences that have led them to teach for social justice. Much of the existing literature pertaining to teacher educators and social justice education has been action research or self-studies (e.g., An, 2016; DeVore, Fox, Heimer, Winchell, 2015; Dowling, Fitzgerald, & Flintoff, 2015; Flory & Walton-Fisette, 2015; Kelly-Jackson, 2015). Attributes of narrative inquiry create a space where the teacher educators can move forward and backward through their life histories reflecting both inward and on their feelings, hopes, and dispositions and outward on the environments that impacted their decisions to teach for social justice (Clandinin & Connelly, 1994). Narrative inquiry also creates a three-dimensional space for both the participants and the researcher to explore social justice education (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).
Third, while some literature by third party researchers describes the personal experiences that impact educators’ decision to teach for social justice (e.g., Dana & Yendol-Hoppey, 2005; Good, 2010), many of the pieces are primarily narratives and reflections (e.g., Johnson Lachuk & Mosely, 2012; Pennington et al., 2012; Williams & Evans-Winters, 2005). Therefore, this qualitative research also assists in shedding light on the ways in which teacher educators’ backgrounds, histories, and life experiences influence their teaching for social justice. Finally, this research answers the call for additional research on teacher educators (Goodwin & Kosnik, 2013; Swennen & van der Klink, 2009; Zeichner, 2005) and more specifically on the backgrounds, pedagogy, attitudes, and beliefs of teacher educators (Mills & Ballantyne, 2016).

Social Justice in Education

Cochran-Smith (2004) calls for a fundamental change in teacher education and in the ways that teachers are educated in meeting the needs of students of diverse racial, cultural, social, and economic backgrounds. In similar fashion, Nieto (2000) calls for teacher education programs to “(a) take a stand on social justice and diversity, (b) make social justice ubiquitous in teacher education, and (c) promote teaching as a life-long journey of transformation” (pp. 182-183). Both Cochran-Smith and Nieto are calling for the integration of social justice into teacher education to prepare preservice teachers to meet the needs of all learners in today’s classrooms. In the subsequent sections, the guiding definition of social justice in education will be provided and a discussion of social justice education’s existence within a contested space will be presented.
Defining Social Justice in Education

There are many differing definitions and conceptualizations of what social justice in education is and how it is defined (Cochran-Smith, Barnatt, et al., 2009). In educational leadership, social justice is viewed as a social construction that has no fixed or predictable meaning, where “all social justice/educational reform efforts must be deliberately and continuously reinvented and critiqued” (Bogotch, 2002, p. 154). Social justice in educational leadership as described by Marshall and Oliva (2006) includes a multitude of words, concepts, and ideas that include equity or cultural diversity, tolerance and respect for human rights and identity, the achievement gap, democracy, a sense of community and belongingness, and an inclusion of groups that do not always come to mind when planning. Social justice is also sometimes connected to deep rooted injustices, competitive market forces, and economic policies that maintain privilege (Marshall & Oliva, 2006). Social justice is even considered “a philosophy, an approach, and actions that embody treating all people with fairness, respect, dignity, and generosity” (Nieto & Bode, 2012, p. 12). Due to the many differing definitions of social justice in education, Grant and Agosto (2008) cite the importance of defining the term within the context of its use in educational literature.

For this study, Bell’s (1997, 2007) definition will be used as the working definition for social justice education because Bell’s work has been widely cited in the literature (e.g., Grant & Agosto, 2008; Hackman, 2005) and the definition provides a definition for social justice, as well as a process for integrating social justice into education. Bell (2007) states:
We believe that social justice education is both a process and a goal. The goal of social justice education is full and equal participation of all groups in a society that is mutually shaped to meet their needs. Social justice includes a vision of society in which the distribution of resources is equitable and all members are physically and psychologically safe and secure. . . .

The process for attaining the goal of social justice, we believe, should also be democratic and participatory, inclusive and affirming of human agency and human capacities for working collaboratively to create change. (pp. 1-2)

Approaching social justice in education as both a process and a goal means that the needs of all students will be met and that students will have equitable access to the content, materials, and highly qualified educators needed for success in school. This definition also means that through social justice education teachers, students, administrators, communities, and stakeholders will work collaboratively in a democratic and participatory manner to create inclusive, equitable schools for all students. Social justice in education also challenges educators to critically reflect on teaching practices and respond to injustices, oppression, inequity, and inequality (Hackman, 2005). Social justice in education also compels both teachers and students to move towards social action both in the classroom and within the wider community outside of the school setting (Agarwal-Rangnath, 2013; Cochran-Smith, 2004; Hackman, 2005).

Social Justice as a Contested Space

Discussions of social justice exist in a contested space of differing meanings, conceptualizations, approaches, and policies in academia (Cochran-Smith, Barnatt, et al., 2009; North, 2006, 2008; Rizvi & Lingard, 2010; Sturman, 1997). Scholars within conservative organizations’ (e.g., Foundation of Individual Rights in Education [FIRE], National Association of Scholars [NAS]) critiques of social justice education call for education to be apolitical and for it to take place in a value-free teacher education setting,
however, these critiques, “are part of a larger political ideology based on a narrow view of learning, an individualist notion of freedom, and a market-based perspective on education that substitutes accountability for democracy” (Cochran-Smith, Barnatt, et al., 2009, p. 625). Furthermore, “What most of the critics want is not a value-free teacher education, but one that matches their values, not an apolitical teacher education, but one with a more hegemonic and therefore invisible politics” (Cochran-Smith, Barnatt, et al., 2009, p. 625).

NAS undermines social justice under the guise of such things as, “academic freedom. . . their freedom to question and to think for themselves; and their freedom from ideological imposition” (National Association of Scholars, n.d., Our Ideals section, para. 2). FIRE stands in defense of rights including “freedom of speech, legal equality, due process, religious liberty, and sanctity of conscience—the essential qualities of individual liberty and dignity” (Foundation for Individual Rights in Education, 2016, n.p.). These organizations espouse the importance of education for freedom and democracy, but only freedom and democracy as defined by the hegemonic ideology (Cochran-Smith, Barnatt, et al., 2009).

Cochran-Smith, Barnatt, et al. (2009) outlines four critiques of social justice in education including: the ambiguity critique, the knowledge critique, the ideology critique, and the free speech critique. The ambiguity critique addresses the many and differing definitions and conceptualizations of social justice in education. The knowledge critique asserts that social justice education ignores content knowledge and places too much of an emphasis on emotions and feelings. The ideology critique speaks to the admission or
barring of preservice teachers from teacher education programs based on the “ideals” of social justice. The free speech critique believes that students are being indoctrinated in teacher education programs and having their voices silenced if they disagree with the concepts and ideals of social justice education. Greater detail about these critiques is provided in Chapter 3.

Cochran-Smith, Shakman, et al. (2009) refute these critiques of social justice education by giving examples of teacher candidates’ and first year teachers’ experiences with social justice education that counter the critiques. One example from the study addresses the ambiguity critique. In 79 interviews, participants made 206 separate comments about teaching for social justice that could be categorized into four themes including pupil learning, relationships and respect, teacher as activist, and recognizing inequities (Cochran-Smith, Shakman, et al., 2009). While critics assert that teaching for social justice has too many meanings and conceptualizations (Cochran-Smith, Barnatt, et al., 2009; North, 2006) or social justice is not defined within the educational literature (Grant & Agosto, 2008), this study refutes this by showing the four commonalities found among the participants’ conceptualizations of teaching for social justice (Cochran-Smith, Shakman, et al., 2009).

Another example illustrating the differing conceptualizations, approaches, and policy actions relative to social justice in education involved the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE). In 2001 NCATE included social justice as an example of a desirable teaching disposition (Cochran-Smith, Barnatt, et al., 2009) and then in 2006 NCATE removed the term social justice from accrediting standards
(Wasley, 2006) because of its supposedly “controversial, ambiguous, and ideologically weighted nature” (Hytten & Bettez, 2011, p. 8). North (2006) calls attention to the fact that the term social justice “is appearing throughout the field [of education]—in teacher-education program discourses and policies, teacher—activist organization statements (e.g. New York Collective of Radical Educators), educational conference programs, and scholarly articles and books” (p. 507). Although many individuals and organizations (e.g., teacher education program discourses and teacher-activist organizations) utilize the term social justice, they often do so without explaining its “social, cultural, economic, and political significance” (North, 2006, p. 507).

In addition to clarifying the social, cultural, economic, and political significance of the term “social justice” there is also a need to look at the integration of social justice education in teacher preparation programs (Grant & Agosto, 2008; Guyton, 2000; Kapustka et al., 2009). Cochran-Smith, Barnett, et al., (2009) state that, “we need carefully worked-out theories of teacher education for social justice that take into account social, historical, and philosophical moorings of the term and carefully apply them to the education scene” (p. 638). Furthermore, in teacher preparation programs, Guyton (2000) promotes research regarding social justice in teacher training by stating, “There is a great need for focused attention on what can contribute to social justice in teacher education (p. 111). Research focusing on social justice in teacher education could help redefine teacher capacity and promote the changing expectations in teacher education by helping teacher educators develop ways in which they can integrate social justice theory and practices into the education of preservice teachers (Grant & Agosto, 2008).
Organization of the Study

As the student population in public schools in the United States continue to diversify racially/ethnically, economically, and linguistically (Kena et al., 2015) most of the teachers entering the field of education continue to identify as White, female, middle-class, and monolingual (Gay & Kirkland, 2003; Milner, 2006; Ukpokodu, 2003, 2007). In an educational climate where White preservice teachers have a narrow definition of culture (Murdock & Hamel, 2016), lack cross-cultural knowledge and diversity experiences (Cho & Decastro-Ambrosetti, 2005; Ford & Quinn, 2010; Picower, 2009; Wiggins et al., 2007), and rely on deficit thinking (Cho & DeCastro-Ambrosetti, 2005; Marx & Pennington, 2003; Picower, 2009), educational scholars are calling for the integration of social justice education into teacher preparation programs in order to assist teachers in meeting the needs of all learners (Cochran-Smith, 2004; Nieto, 2000; Villegas, 2007). The purpose of this study was to answer the call for further research into social justice pedagogy in teacher preparation programs (Grant & Agosto, 2008); further research social justice teacher educators’ beliefs, attitudes, and pedagogy (Mills & Ballantyne, 2016); and to explore the ways in which self-identified social justice teacher educators’ life experiences have impacted their teaching for social justice and the ways that they integrate social justice education into their teaching and learning.

In the second chapter I position myself as the researcher and construct a statement of my reflexivity as both the researcher and an individual that could be a participant in this study. In the third chapter, I explore the current research literature in teaching for social justice and further discuss the critiques of social justice in education. The fourth
chapter discusses the study’s research design, as well as an explanation of the data
collection and data analysis. The fifth chapter gives a detailed report of the research
findings and the sixth chapter discusses the research findings in the context of existing
literature in social justice teaching.
CHAPTER 2
THE RESEARCHER’S BACKGROUND

Personal Background

As the researcher and a person who could be a participant in this study on social justice teacher educators, it is necessary for me to explore my own positionality within this research project in order to shed light on my identity and my role as both a researcher and a social justice teacher educator (Merriam, 2009). I will be using personal memories and reflection to position myself as the researcher. Similarly, Williams and Evans-Winters (2005) described their personal and professional identities within their teaching for social justice and Johnson Lachuk and Mosely (2012) shared their personal histories within their narrative inquiry with White preservice teachers. In the sections that follow, I describe my personal background and the path I have taken in exploring my identity as an educator who teaches for social justice.

Identity and Intersectionality

I identify as a White, of European ancestry, female, heterosexual, middle-class, monolingual teacher educator. I fall within the demographics of the 81.9% of White teachers entering the field of education and within the 76.3% of female teachers entering the K-12 classroom (National Center of Education Statistics, 2013). I am part of the population that Sleeter (2008) would describe as part of the demographic gap, White teachers, struggling to meet the learning needs of students of color and Native Americans. However, not just one part of my whiteness describes who I am as an educator, but the intersectionality of my multiple identities that shape who I am.
Intersectionality is described by Carbado, Crenshaw, Mays, and Tomlinson (2013) as “a method and a disposition, a heuristic and analytic tool” (p. 1).

Intersectionality is rooted in Black feminism and Critical Race Theory, and it explores the ways in which different parts of one’s identity (e.g., social class and race) interact to create within group or intragroup differences (Carbado et al., 2013; Crenshaw, 1991).

While I was only recently introduced to the concept of intersectionality, I recognize that it is the interplay of my race, gender, and social class that have made me the educator that I am. Throughout my life, I have explored and examined my gender, sexuality, social class, and race in a compartmentalized manner at different times of my life, and it is this identity work that I will describe in the following sections. I will conclude this chapter with a synthesis of my identity work addressing the intersectionality of my race, gender, sexuality, and social class as it pertains to my role as a teacher educator.

Gender and sexuality. I grew up in the 1980s in a two parent household where the “traditional” gender roles of the mother cooking, cleaning, and taking care of the children and the father going off to work, doing the fix-it work around the house, and being the disciplinarian was turned on its head. My parents were a team that worked together to take care of my sister and me in our childhood. My mom often held jobs in business or education that were on twelve month contracts working from the early morning hours to the early evening. My dad was a high school teacher who was fortunate enough to have his summers off to continue his education, plan for the following school year, and take care of my sister and me during the summer months. Due to my parents’ work schedules my dad often took on the role of caregiver after school and during the summers. Because
my dad loved to cook and he got home earlier than my mom, he did 98% of the cooking and all of the grocery shopping, and my mom was in charge of fixing things around the house and doing the laundry. When home, both my parents shared the responsibility of taking care of my sister and me, helping us with our homework, and spending time with us. It was not until I was in middle school and after my dad’s passing that I realized that my friends’ households were arranged differently. Many of my friends’ moms took on much of the cooking, cleaning, and household jobs and my friends’ dads worked long hours and did not take on the household jobs of grocery shopping, cooking, and childcare that my dad had.

These experiences with non-traditional gender roles in my family were one of the main reasons that I decided to pursue a minor in Women’s Studies during my undergraduate years at the University of Northern Iowa (UNI). I became fascinated with society’s perception of gender roles and the role that traditional gender stereotypes played in society, education, theory, and practice. It was during a course entitled *Theories of Sex and Gender* that I learned about theories and ideas of gender and sexuality including ideas of compulsory heterosexuality and the different types of feminist thought such as radical feminist theory. While taking the theory course we talked about the role that being a woman plays in feminism, and although the word and theory was not used we also discussed the intersectionality of gender and sexuality as it pertained to one’s identity as a feminist.

It was during this course that I was introduced to idea of compulsory heterosexuality. More specifically, it was during the reading of *White Weddings*:
Romancing Heterosexuality in Popular Culture (Ingraham, 1999) and taking part in several class discussions about gender and sexuality in our society that I really began to look at heterosexuality with a critical lens. It was through these discussions that I began to understand that heterosexuals are able to be open about their sexuality and it is acceptable for them to hold hands and show affection in public and private spaces while gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT*) communities are singled out, harassed, ostracized, and oppressed by institutions and laws in our society because of their sexuality.

As the co-chair and later the chair of UNI’s Gender Equality Association, I was often lesbian baited, or mistaken for a lesbian, because I had a shaved head, identified as a feminist, and took part in many activist efforts such as standing up against sexual assault and protesting for women’s reproductive rights. At first when I would have discussions with people I would begin by saying, “I am not a lesbian, but. . . .,” undermining the very work I was trying to do. After discussions in classes and talks with friends and mentors I learned to respond differently challenging others in their assertions and assumptions while also trying to raise their consciousness about LGBT* issues in ways that would get them thinking differently about gender and sexuality. During my semester in Theories of Sex and Gender, I struggled with my identity as a heterosexual feminist wondering if I had a right to be doing this work even though I existed in the privileged space of being heterosexual. My final project in the course was entitled “The Divided Being.” In it I interrogated the idea of how I could be both a feminist and heterosexual and stand up for the rights of women existing in those two spaces.
I explored the ideas of gender and sexuality even more during a literature course focused on women’s literature. This is when I was first introduced to the term transgender through Leslie Feinberg’s book *Stone Butch Blues* (Feinberg, 1993). Through readings and class discussions I began to realize that people could define gender for themselves, and people’s gender identity could be different from their sex assigned at birth. However, it must be noted that it was many years later at an educational conference on UNI’s campus that I really learned that gender was socially constructed and could be looked at on a continuum. It was a presenter’s use of the “Genderbread Person” that helped me to understand gender as a socially constructed category that was used to identify and categorize people in society.

During my undergraduate years I was an activist for social justice although I did not describe the work that I was doing as social justice work. It was towards the end of my undergraduate education that I was cautioned by one of my education professors about being a feminist and an activist entering the field of education. I took this warning very seriously because I did not want to jeopardize my chances of being hired by a school district. At the same time that I was an activist that worked for social change, I was, and still am, someone that follows rules and does not like to incite conflict in my role as a professional. My role as a college student served as a type of protection from the “real world,” but at this time in my life, my role as an aspiring educator overshadowed my role as an activist. Upon graduation from UNI it was almost as if a switch was flipped and I began to compartmentalize my identity as feminist activist from my identity as an educator, as I began my teaching career my overt activism disappeared.
Social class. I grew up as a daughter of two educators in a middle-class household. My family was always able to eat every meal, and we never suffered from food insecurity. My family always had the money to buy gifts at every major holiday, and my parents took us on summer vacations. During middle school and high school, I chose to work at a local dance studio in order to have extra spending money, but I never had to use that money to assist my family in paying bills or buying groceries. In high school I was fortunate enough to go on a school trip to Europe, and as graduation gift my mom paid for my sister and me to backpack in Europe the summer of my junior year. My parents made education a priority and saved money to assist both my sister and me in paying for our education at the university of our choice. I was fortunate enough to receive a substantial scholarship that assisted in paying part of my tuition for four of the years I was at UNI working on my undergraduate degree. I also received assistance from my mom and federal financial aid. While in college I had a job at a local church as a youth director for a few hours a week to provide myself with spending money throughout the year and in the summers I worked at a church camp and saved that money for use throughout the school year.

It was not until my first full-time teaching job that I really realized the economic privilege I had growing up in a middle-class household. When I first began teaching I naively assumed that all of my students would graduate from high school and go on to college because that was part of my lived experience. I began to learn that I had students who went to school all day, held part-time jobs, used their earnings to help pay family bills, and cared for their siblings while their parents/guardians were at work. These
realizations forced me to reframe my thinking about the assumptions and bias I held regarding working-class, middle-class, and upper-class students that I worked with. I stopped assuming that the goal of all of my students was to go to college, and I began to reframe those conversations with students by asking about their future goals after high school. For those students that were interested in higher education, but did not have the needed funding, I volunteered my time and knowledge to assist them with finding and applying for scholarships; regretfully none of my students ever took me up on that offer.

During my first five years of teaching, my students taught me a lot about their lives and what it was like to grow up in families that were different from my own. By building community with my students and letting them know that I was there for them, I became part of their support system. Students in my classes knew that if they needed a pencil or a piece of paper that I would always have extra and if they had not had a meal that I had a drawer in my desk where I had random food just in case someone was hungry. When we discussed school supplies at the beginning of the year I always made a point to tell students to talk with me if they had any difficulty getting notebooks or paper and we would problem solve together. Had I not established open and trusting relationships with my students, where they educated me and prompted me to work through my misconceptions, bias, and assumptions, I fear that I would still be living in a place of privilege. I would still be looking through the lens of a middle-class educator and allowing my assumptions, bias, and misconceptions to dictate my teaching and learning with students different than me.
In addition to the identity work that I have done in relationship to social class because of my work with high school students, I also explored social class and poverty by reading Paul C. Gorski’s book *Reaching and Teaching Students in Poverty* during one of my doctoral courses in the spring of 2016. Gorski (2013) assisted me in gaining a better understanding of poverty and the fact that there is not a culture of poverty, rather people’s multiple identities and the intersectionality play a role in poverty. Gorski also discusses the need to examine the opportunity gap that exists in education rather than focusing on the achievement gap. In the text Gorski also introduces the 10 principles of Equity Literacy that can be used by educators in challenging their bias and misconceptions regarding poverty and the principles outline ways that teachers can better meet all students’ needs in the classroom, especially those students that live in poverty. Moving forward, I plan on using this new knowledge regarding poverty in my teacher education courses to assist the preservice teachers I work with in better understanding poverty.

**Race.** It was not until I returned to UNI as a tenure-track faculty member in the fall of 2011 that I began to interrogate my identity as a person who identifies as White and of European decent. In fact, it was not until I met my mentor, Dr. Logan, and later became a full-time doctoral student and graduate assistant for her that I really understood that race is socially constructed. In the fall of 2011, I attended the annual conference of the National Association of Multicultural Education, and it was that event and conversations with Dr. Logan following the conference that introduced me to white privilege and the role that race plays in society. When I began co-teaching and doing collaborative research with Dr. Logan in the fall of 2014, I really began to deconstruct
my whiteness and white privilege. While co-teaching an elementary social studies methods course with Dr. Logan, we deconstructed our identities and watched the video clip *The myth of race, debunked in 3 minutes* (Vox, 2015). It was during these activities that I reached a turning point in my understanding of race and whiteness.

Once my consciousness was raised to the privilege that came with being white I wanted to explore race and its educational implications even more. Reading works by Peggy McIntosh, Gloria Ladson-Billings, Geneva Gay, James Banks, Christine Sleeter, Beverly Daniel Tatum, Sonia Nieto, and others, as well as my continued work with Dr. Logan, helped me to see the role that race plays in our society and the privileges that white people have due to institutional racism and oppression. According to a self-exploratory activity in Helms (1993) which deals with the stages of White identity development, I most strongly identify with the behaviors and attitudes of the “Immersion/Emersion” stage of development. Helms describes that within this stage of White identity development a person is redefining what it means to be White in a positive light, they are searching out accurate facts and information regarding race and the meaning of being White in the United States. In this stage people seek out stories from others that have gone on the same journey of racial self-identity. Helms (1993) also explains that people within this stage ask the questions: “‘Who am I racially?’ and ‘Who do I want to be?’ and ‘Who are you really?’” (p. 62). Helms’ describes people in this stage as having positive feelings once they have gone through cognitive restructuring of what it means to be White, and they are ready to begin addressing issues of racism and oppression.
I believe that Tatum’s (1997) work really helped me to achieve this level on the White identity development because her work assisted me in deconstructing the ideas of racism, prejudice, and discrimination. Before reading Tatum’s work, I did not realize the exact role that power and systematic oppression played in racism. When posed with the question of whether people of color can be considered racist, Tatum (1997) explains, “if one defines racism as a system of advantage based on race, the answer is no. People of color are not racist because they do not systematically benefit from racism” (p. 10). This was the first time that I had thought of racism this way and realized the role institutions and systems and oppression play in racism. Furthermore, the role of racism and oppression of people of color became even clearer to me as I read about the injustices in the United States education system regarding race as I read and did research for this dissertation.

Reading the writing of both White authors and authors of color including Landsman (2011), Ladson-Billings (2011), and McIntosh (1992) also assisted me in exploring my White racial identity and learning about other White educators’ journeys, as well as meeting the needs of diverse students in the classroom (Helms, 1993). McIntosh’s (1992) list of 26 conditions that White people come in contact with daily such as, “1. I can if I wish arrange to be in the company of people of my race most of the time. . . . 15. I am never asked to speak for all the people of my racial group. . . . 26. I can choose blemish cover or bandages in ‘flesh’ color and have them more or less match my skin” (pp. 31-33), really made me aware of my white privilege. McIntosh’s work raised my consciousness to the benefits that I have as a White person as compared to people of
color in the United States. Like Tatum (1997), McIntosh helped in raising my awareness to my racial identity and assisted me in realizing the role I can play as a White person in addressing racism, oppression, and discrimination found in education.

Other influential experiences that I have had over the last five years that have assisted me in interrogating my whiteness and better understanding the role that race plays in society include being a member of the College of Education Diversity and Retention Committee, taking part in one of the annual White Privilege Conferences, being a participant in two National Coalition Building Institute workshops, being a participant in a professional learning community about the issues of cultural competence, attending several Educating Educators Conferences at UNI, and my own continued reading, research, and discussions with colleagues, friends, and family.

**Self-Identified Social Justice Teacher Educator**

When I was an undergraduate I wanted to become a teacher to save the world. While I was aware of the roles that gender and sexuality played in my life I had not yet done the identity work necessary to realize that I was entering the profession of teaching as a white knight or hero. A white knight is a White teacher teaching students who come from diverse racial, ethnic, linguistic, and economic backgrounds and abilities and believes they will save the students from their disadvantaged position in society (Michie, 2012; Nieto, 2012). I did not recognize my white privilege and the privilege that comes with growing up in a middle-class household. In fact, I thought I was doing the right thing when I chose to take classes for my undergraduate degree in sociology and psychology that supposedly prepared me to enter a diverse classroom and be successful,
classes such as *Minority Group Relations*, *Social Stratification*, and criminology courses that dealt with juvenile delinquency and criminological theory. Thinking about those classes and the content that was covered, I am reminded of the deficit mindset, bias, stereotypes, and misconceptions that I held and continue to work through as a White, female, monolingual, middle-class educator.

While teaching in the secondary social studies classroom even with my un-interrogated identities of race and social class and the stereotypes and bias I held, I believed and still believe today that all students could learn and be successful. Perhaps this belief stems from my activism work in college standing up for equality for all people. Or perhaps this belief in all students came from being raised in a household with parents that never gave up on their students and how I observed my mom and dad working hard every day in their classrooms to make sure their students were successful.

I did everything in my power as an educator to advocate for my students. In my first teaching position as one of two women in my department and one of the newest faculty, I was assigned to teach the sections of social studies that were cooperatively taught with the special education teacher and then later taught with the assistance of paraeducators. The rationale of putting the youngest and most inexperienced educator in this type of teaching situation still evades me to this day, but I tried to make the best of a challenging situation. In addition to having a high percentage of special education students in my classroom I also had a high percentage of English Language Learners (ELL) students enrolled in my courses. With little knowledge or experience in modifying assignments for special education and ELL students I worked closely with the special
education teacher, the translators, and paraeducators in my classroom to modify assignments so that all of the students would gain access to the social studies curriculum. By building strong relationships with my students I learned how best to meet their needs and worked both in and outside of the curriculum to make that happen (Agrawal-Rangnath, 2013). At the time I did not realize that the work I was doing was in line with the social justice teaching found in Hackman (2005), Agarwal-Rangnath (2013), and Cochran-Smith (2004), and that knowing your students, building community, and working both in and outside of the curriculum are all attributes of social justice teaching.

Something else that I worked hard at while in the social studies classroom was to integrate the students’ lived experience into the curriculum. I integrated students’ interests and lived experience into the curriculum through projects and student choice (Argwal-Rangnath, 2013; Cochran-Smith, 2004). While there was some curriculum that was mandatory to cover I also integrated activities that explored issues that the students were interested in through current events, hands-on learning, and differentiated assessments. Students declared their independence from everything including the school’s cell phone policy to racism. Students shared news stories from publications written in their native languages and through the integration of technology students were able to read at different reading levels to research historical figures of their choosing. Students were able to educate their classmates on psychological disorders and even create their own countries and colonies with governments and laws. Although I entered the secondary classroom believing that I would be the hero and save the world, my students taught me that no one needed saving; rather the students and I were teachers and students
creating knowledge together (Cochran-Smith, 2004). It was through these experiences in the secondary classroom that I learned the importance of student-centered teaching and using your students’ lived experience and interests to assist in navigating the mainstream or required curriculum (Argwal-Rangnath, 2013).

As I have been transitioning from the secondary classroom to the role of teacher educator with preservice teachers, I have and continue to do identity work that I wish I would have done while I was a secondary teacher. Through Dr. Logan’s mentorship, my coursework, participation in workshops and conference, and my research, I am able to say that I am a social justice teacher educator in progress, as the work of teaching for social justice is an on-going and never-ending process (Flory & Walton-Fisette, 2015; McDonald, 2007; Michie, 2003). My personal identity and my life experiences, as well as my education and teaching have played a role in my active decision to teach for social justice (Dana & Yendol-Hoppey, 2005; Williams & Evans-Winters, 2005). The former dean of the College of Education and Dr. Logan have helped me to learn that my identity as a White female teacher educator helps me to gain access and then work with White preservice teachers to challenge and interrogate white privilege and systematic oppression along with other issues. I can work within the space of my white privilege to educate, raise students’ consciousness, and challenge those students who have not yet explored their identities.

It has been through my learning experiences in my doctoral program, my mentoring relationship with Dr. Logan, and my research on social justice and multicultural education that has helped me to interrogate white privilege, examine and
challenge issues of power and institutional oppression, and learn about and work toward providing all learners with equitable learning opportunities. It is through these same avenues and my personal identity work that I have gained the confidence and ability to create learning experiences for preservice teachers to interrogate white privilege, challenge systematic oppression, and learn about meeting the needs of all learners.

As an educator, I believe that every student should have equitable access to a quality, student-centered, well-funded education provided by teachers, administrators, and staff that are highly qualified and hold the belief that all students can learn. At the same time, it has become clear to me that all students do not currently have access to equitable educational opportunities in well-funded schools, with highly qualified teachers, administrators, and staff that believe all students are capable of being academically successful. It is through this lens that I have constructed my personal definition of teaching for social justice, which is teaching in a student-centered manner, using your students’ lived experience and interests to assist them in navigating the mainstream curriculum, where issues of institutional oppression and privilege are critically examined, and equitable opportunities are provided for all students to be successful in gaining an education (Agarwal-Rangnath, 2013; Bell, 2007; Hackman, 2005). I have actively chosen to use Hackman’s (2005) and Agarwal-Rangnath’s (2013) social justice teaching models in my work with preservice teachers. Under the mentorship of Dr. Logan, I have learned to integrate transformational multicultural education, history from multiple perspectives (Banks, 2002), into the preservice teachers learning in elementary social studies methods. Together, the preservice teachers and I explore
history, geography, civics, and economics in hands-on activities, simulations, role plays, discussions, and readings that challenge mainstream and dominant curriculum and texts (Hackman, 2005). I actively work to build a democratic classroom community in which the preservice students have a voice in the decision making process throughout the semester by having frequent check-ins, community building activities, and a mid-term classroom meeting. Continuing to explore my own identity as a social justice teacher educator, building a stronger democratic classroom, and becoming more involved in social action and activism are three areas that I need to continue to work on and integrate in my teaching for social justice.

Chapter in Review

As the researcher who is the main tool of data collection and data analysis, and an individual that could be a participant in this study, it is through this statement of reflexivity and positionality that I have described the identity work that I have done over my life to bring me to where I am today as a social justice teacher educator. I have addressed my research questions as they pertain to my role as a self-identified social justice teacher educator including the experiences in my life that have led me to teach for social justice and what teaching for social justice looks like in my teaching and learning.

I have also shared my personal definition of teaching for social justice and provided the perspective I use when both teaching and talking about social justice in education. It is through this outline of my personal background that I share my positionality in this research project and provide the details of the lens through which I have constructed this study and analyzed the data. In the next chapter, I explore the
current social justice teaching literature, and provide a more in-depth look at the critiques of social justice in education that was discussed in Chapter 1.
CHAPTER 3
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Social Justice in Education

Social justice education as described by Bell (2007) is both a process and a goal. The goal of social justice education is for students to have equitable access to an education in which students are both psychologically and physically safe and secure. The process to achieve equitable educational experiences for all students is achieved through democratic and inclusive action that affirms human agency (Bell, 2007). Social justice education is needed as a pedagogical and methodological approach in education in the United States to combat the deep-rooted systematic oppression experienced by students based on their race and/or social class (i.e., tracking, educational redlining, inequitable funding, high stakes assessments). Although many people in the 21st century believe that those of us living in the United States live in a post-racial society and that access to a quality education is available to all students, this is not the reality in public education in America.

Structure of the Review of Literature

In the following sections, I examine the current social justice research in teaching and describe the common themes found in the educational literature. Following this review of the current social justice teaching literature I will elaborate on the critiques of social justice education addressed in Chapter 1.
Social Justice Research in Teaching

Since Guyton’s (2000) and Grant and Agosto’s (2008) call for research in social justice in education, a number of studies have been published detailing the ways in which social justice teaching has been integrated into teacher education and K-12 classrooms surrounding issues of social justice, multicultural, and equity education. A review of the literature revealed three distinct types of research including studies performed by third party researchers, self-study and action research, and reflections and essays. Research performed by third party researchers with K-12 educators and teacher educators as participants included, but was not limited to: case studies (e.g., Agarwal, Epstein, Oppenheim, Oyler, & Sonu, 2010; Atwater, Butler, Freeman, & Carlton Parsons, 2013; Assaf & Delaney, 2013), a qualitative survey (e.g., Vomvoridi-Ivanovic, & McLeman, 2015), a phenomenological interview (e.g., Dana & Yendol-Hoppey, 2005), and an ethnographic study (e.g., Helmer, 2014).

The self-study and action research included teacher educators and K-12 educators examining their teaching in their classrooms. Some of the self-studies detailed specific methodologies including autoethnography (e.g., Kelly-Jackson, 2015; Pennington et al., 2012), collective biography (e.g., Dowling et al., 2015), and narrative inquiry and life history (e.g., Johnson Lachuk, & Mosley, 2012). Other self-studies specified their methodology as only self-study (e.g., Cochran-Smith et al., 1999; Ross, 2008; Zollers, Albert, & Cochran-Smith, 2000). The action research included examples such as DeVore et al. (2015) and Hyland and Noffke (2005). The third type of study identified in the social justice teaching literature was reflections and essays (e.g., Lam, 2015; Sleeter,
Torres, & Laughlin, 2004; Williams & Evans-Winters, 2005). This type of literature did not include specifics on methodology or data collection rather they focused on sharing the researchers’ thoughts and experiences in teaching and learning for social justice in education.

**Major Themes in the Teaching for Social Justice Literature**

I identified 10 major themes from the social justice teaching literature (see Table 1). These 10 major themes in the social justice teaching literature will influence this research project in four ways. First, this research paints a clear picture of the types of teaching, learning, and research that is being discussed in the field of education that pertains to social justice. Through this review it is clear that common themes and findings exist within the third party research, self-study and action research, and reflective essays with participants including PK-12 educators and teacher educators.

Second, by reviewing the social justice teaching literature, I was able to conclude that there are a limited number of studies that have explored the experiences of social justice teacher educators from the lens of a third party researcher. While some literature does exist that utilizes narrative analysis (e.g., Good, 2010), there is a dearth in the literature of third party researchers exploring social justice teacher educators’ decisions for teaching for social justice, as well as the life experiences that have led the teacher educators to teach for social justice.
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<th>Theme</th>
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<td>Challenges, tensions, and/or resistance</td>
<td>(Agarwal et al., 2010; Assaf &amp; Delaney, 2013; Atwater et al., 2013; Dover, 2013; Dowling et al., 2015; Flory &amp; Walton-Fisette, 2015; Freedman, Bullock, &amp; Duque, 2005; Good, 2010; Kelly-Jackson, 2015; Le Roux &amp; Mdunge, 2012; Liu &amp; Milman, 2013; Matias, 2016; Michie, 2003; Pennington et al., 2012; Sleeter et al., 2004; Strom &amp; Martin, 2016; Vomvoridi-Ivanovic &amp; McLeman, 2015; Williams &amp; Evans-Winters, 2005)</td>
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<td>Support from colleagues and professional development or continued education</td>
<td>(Atwater et al., 2013; Cochran-Smith et al., 1999; Dover, 2013; McDonald, 2007; Kelly-Jackson, 2015; Lalvani, Broderick, Fine, Jacobwitz, &amp; Michelli, 2015; Strom &amp; Martin, 2016; Vomvoridi-Ivanovic &amp; McLeman, 2015; Whipp, 2013; Zarate, Reese, Flores, &amp; Villegas, 2016)</td>
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<td>Gaining self-awareness and understandings of multiple perspectives</td>
<td>(Assaf &amp; Delaney, 2013; Conklin &amp; Hughes, 2016; DeVore et al., 2015; Flory &amp; Walton-Fisette, 2015; Freedman et al., 2005; Hyland &amp; Noffke, 2005; Kelly-Jackson, 2015; Lalvani et al., 2015; McDonald, 2007; Pennington et al., 2012)</td>
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<td>Building relationships with students</td>
<td>(An, 2016; Conklin &amp; Hughes, 2016; Flory &amp; Walton-Fisette, 2015; Helmer, 2014; Kelly-Jackson, 2015; Strom &amp; Martin, 2016; Whipp, 2013; Zarate et al., 2016)</td>
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| Differing definitions and conceptualizations of social justice and equity | (Cochran-Smith et al., 1999; Good, 2010; McDonald, 2007; Vomvoridi-Ivanovic & McLeman, 2015; Sandretto et al., 2007; Whipp, 2013; Zollers et al., 2000) Strip the table continues
Enacting social justice is a continual process (Agarwal et al., 2010; Flory & Walton-Fisette, 2015; Hyland & Noffke, 2005; McDonald, 2007; Liu & Milman, 2013; Michie, 2003; Sandretto et al., 2007)

Challenging power dynamics and reciprocity of sharing (An, 2016; Conklin & Hughes, 2016; Flory & Walton-Fisette, 2015; Helmer, 2014; Johnson Lachuk & Mosley, 2012; Sleeter et al., 2004)

Lived experience can shape the path and frame the teaching of social justice educators (Cochran-Smith et al., 1999; Dana & Yendol-Hoppey, 2005; Good, 2010; Kelly-Jackson, 2015; Pennington et al., 2012; Williams & Evans-Winters, 2005)

Students’ lack of knowledge of social justice and issues of equity; lack of critical thinking (Dover, 2013; Dowling et al., 2015; Kelly-Jackson, 2015; Pennington et al., 2012; Vomvoridi-Ivanovic & McLeman, 2015)


Third, the research questions, methodologies, findings, and discussions from the literature have helped to inform the research questions and interview questions constructed for this study. Fourth, the findings from these research studies served as a guide and informed both the discussion and implications for further research sections of this dissertation. The information about how educators experience social justice in teaching and learning were used as a tool to compare and contrast this study’s participants’ teaching and learning experiences with other educators who teach for social justice in education.
Challenges, tensions, and/or resistance. The most common theme emerging from the literature was teacher educators and in-service teachers meeting challenges, tensions, and/or resistance when enacting social justice, multicultural, and/or equity in education. In a study of Black science teacher educators and issues of teaching social justice, equity, and multicultural education, Atwater et al. (2013) found that teacher educators who incorporate matters of social justice, equity, and/or multicultural education were met with student resistance and poor student evaluations that resulted in teacher educators removing this content from their courses. A second example of this theme regarding the discussion of challenges faced by educators was seen with secondary social studies teachers teaching for social justice, Good (2010) stated, “Participants described a number of challenges including fellow teachers, administrators, students, stereotypes, personal issues and community opposition” (p. 236). A final example of this themes of tension, challenges, and/or resistance was found in Assaf and Delaney (2013) in the description of one participant that struggled with her racial identity and questioned whether she as a White woman could teach a lesson on racism while being the only White person in the room.

Support from colleagues and professional development or continued education. Another major theme included references to support from colleagues and need for professional development or continued education. Atwater et al., (2013) described how one participant, with the support of colleagues, was able to create an alternative teacher education program that reflected the people of color in the city where the college was located. A second example of this theme was referenced in a self-study project which
explored the meaning and integration of social justice education into teacher education programming, Cochran-Smith et al. (1999) stated, “We suggest that our work together provides a ‘proof of possibility’ for faculty groups attempting to emphasize or infuse social justice into preservice teacher education despite profound differences in politics, disciplines and perspectives” (p. 230). A final example of this theme was identified in Whipp’s (2013) discussion of the role that supportive colleagues, mentors, and how beginning teachers’ continued education played in teaching for social justice. One teacher shared that she was able to reflect with other teachers that had the same passion she had for teaching in challenging situations. Another teacher cited the fact that her coworkers were interested in students’ lives and they were willing to collaborate with one another on lesson planning and team teaching.

**Gaining self-awareness and understanding of multiple perspectives.** The theme gaining self-awareness and understanding of personal perspectives, multiple perspectives, and cultural diversity was also cited in the literature in relationship to teacher educators, classroom teachers, as well as students. In a case study with teacher educators McDonald (2007) noted that faculty highlighted the role of teacher educators challenging prospective teachers’ self-awareness and awareness of cultural diversity plays in addressing equity in the classroom spaces. One participant emphasized the removing of labels in schools in order to create an equitable learning environment. This participant also discussed students’ roles in a democratic society (McDonald, 2007).

Another example of gaining self-awareness and understanding multiple perspectives was addressed in Conklin and Hughes (2016) where they studied their
critical and justice-oriented teacher education practice. Conklin and Hughes highlighted how they honored and showed compassion to preservice teachers’ attitudes and experiences while also assisting their students to seeing the world differently. They did this by presenting learning experiences that were both challenging and uncomfortable for the students (Conklin & Hughes, 2016). A third example of this theme of self-awareness and multiple perspectives was found in an action research study of teaching an elementary social studies methods course, Hyland and Noffke (2005) discuss the integration of an assignment in which preservice teachers learned about a marginalized population. While some of the students did not see themselves as prejudiced at the start of the semester and therefore did not have to examine themselves in relationship to marginalized populations, the preservice teachers remarked after the assignment how they had indeed gained a rich understanding of themselves in relationship to oppression and the marginalization of others.

Building relationships with students. The fourth theme is building relationships and community with students. In a self-study of teaching elementary social studies, An (2016) implemented elements of critical pedagogy and democratic education into the classroom including “student-centered teaching, critical self- and peer reflection, problem-posing education, and dialogic practice” (p. 23). An also worked to create a safe and democratic learning environment for preservice teachers where the teacher and students could teach and learn together. A second example of the importance of building relationships with students comes from a cross-institutional and qualitative case study, in which Conklin and Hughes (2016) explored their own courses and discovered that
building relationships with their students through learning about student backgrounds and lived experience paramount.

A third example of building relationships with students can be found in a self-study on teaching sociocultural issues in physical education courses (Flory & Walton-Fisette, 2015). In this study, Flory and Walton-Fisette described examples of building relationships with their students, such as approaching students as educational colleagues in the classroom, building relationships through integrating Spanish phrases into instruction for Spanish-speaking students, and creating a safe space for students to discuss sociocultural issues that they might find difficult to discuss.

Differing definitions and conceptualizations of social justice and equity. Within the theme of differing definitions and conceptualizations of social justice and equity, Zollers et al. (2000) discuss how participants’ definitions of social justice fell on continuums of beliefs of fairness, responsibility, and requirements of social justice in education. Zollers et al. (2000) asserts:

Analysis revealed that some participants located an individual and professional commitment to social justice within primarily religious or cultural traditions; some operated from analyses of justice and injustice that were largely political; and some saw the convergence of a number of sources-religious, political, personal, and professional-as the source of their commitments to work for a more just society. (p. 5)

Thus, it is clear that although all of the participants in the study were committed to social justice in education, their conceptions of social justice within education were influenced by different areas of their lives and experiences. A second example of the multiple definitions of social justice in education comes from a study focused on the life history interviews of 13 secondary social studies teachers, Good (2010) found that there was no
consensus among the participants’ definitions of social justice. Some of the participants saw social justice as equality or active citizenship, while others described social justice as empathy or critical pedagogy.

**Enacting social justice as a continual process.** The theme of enacting social justice as a continual process can be seen in Michie (2003) when it is asserted that, “There are other challenges in our work, of course. Unraveling one always seems to reveal several others, and so the process of rethinking and re-imagining our practice is never complete” (p.97). Michie then goes on to describe the negotiations of integrating social justice material into the curriculum when preservice teachers are being overwhelmed with practical classroom issues, being sure that certain students do not dominate conversations, and remembering to model creative teaching strategies to preservice teachers.

Another example of enacting social justice as a continual process can be seen in Flory and Walton-Fisette (2015) self-study of teaching within the physical education teacher education (PETE) program. Walton-Fisette explained her work as a continual process when she described how she needed to continue engaging students in deconstructing their socially constructed ideas through the integration of sociocultural issues (e.g., race, gender, social class). Walton-Fisette asserts, “This is a work in progress. I am a work in progress” (Flory & Walton-Fisette, 2015, p. 254).

**Challenging power dynamics and reciprocity of sharing.** Within this theme the social justice teaching literature discussed challenging the power dynamics between teacher and student, as well as reciprocity of sharing within the classroom. An (2016)
worked to create a classroom in which the students and teacher taught and learned together in a democratic public sphere that challenged oppressive social and educational norms. Learning in the class included “student-centered teaching, critical self- and peer reflection, problem-posing education and dialogic practice” (An, 2016, p. 23).

Another example of this theme of challenging power dynamics is seen in Sleeter et al. (2004) where the role of a teacher is described as one who is a change agent that creates an environment for learning through scaffolding and then gives the students the necessary power to be able to construct knowledge with one another. A third example comes from Flory providing an example of challenging power dynamics by treating her students like colleagues and using herself as an example when discussing sociocultural issues with her students (Flory & Walton-Fisette, 2015).

Lived experience can shape the path and frame the teaching of social justice educators. An example of how one’s life experience and path can shape their teaching for social justice was discussed by William and Evans-Winters (2005) when they described the impact that being Black women and being raised during the height of desegregation has had on their decisions to teach for social justice. “We are able to reflect on the burden of being black girls in predominantly black, and later white educational settings and discuss how those experiences began to set the stage for our eventual work of anti-oppressive education as Black women” (Williams & Evans-Winters, 2005, p. 202).

This theme was also seen within the self-study research conducted by Cochran-Smith et al. (1999). Using Beverly Tatum’s work as a guide, teacher educators involved in a self-study on social justice education spent time talking with one another about their
lived experiences of race, racism, and oppression. The teacher educators used the
discussions about their pasts to then discuss their current sociopolitical attitudes. These
discussions supported the social justice work they engaged in within their departments
and educator certification programs (Cochran-Smith et al., 1999).

Students’ lack of knowledge. The theme students’ lack of knowledge is
referencing students’ lack of knowledge of social justice issues, equity, and lack of
critical thinking found within the social justice teaching literature. Kelly-Jackson (2015)
cited research highlighting how preservice teachers have little experience and/or training
in teaching for social justice. She found this to be true with her students who were
identified as White and middle class. Kelly-Jackson found that when she addressed social
justice issues in her class she would receive little to no feedback from the preservice
teachers, the preservice teachers would say that the social justice issue did not pertain to
them because their assigned classrooms were not diverse, and that when discussing
sexual identity jokes and rude comments were made.

Another documented example of limited student knowledge comes from an online
survey of mathematics teacher educators who teach mathematics methods courses
through a lens of equity. One of the teacher educators shared that the students enrolled in
the methods course wished that they had learned about issues of equity in other classes
that they had taken (Vomvoridi-Ivanovic & McLeman, 2015). In another example, a
secondary English and language arts teachers who self-identified as social justice
educators shared that their high school students lacked knowledge regarding social justice
content (Dover, 2013). These examples illustrate the need to acknowledge students’ lack
of knowledge pertaining to issues of social justice and equity and explicitly address these issues with students both in K-12 and post-secondary education.

**Ideas for overcoming challenges.** The final theme found in the literature related to social justice teaching included several ideas for overcoming challenges. Kelly-Jackson (2015) resolved that in order to continue teaching for social justice in her teacher education courses she would participate in workshops focused on social justice topics and become active in local and national organizations advocating for social justice and equity as a means to create support networks for herself. Kelly-Jackson also shared that she would use these opportunities to build upon her own knowledge of social justice, as well as sharing the knowledge with the students in her classes. In similar fashion, Dover (2013) captures the important role professional development can play in teaching for social justice and developing the confidence level of social justice education advocates and activists. Furthermore, Le Roux and Mdunge (2012) discussed the need to constantly find innovative and different ways to include all voices within their teacher education program when disrupting what their students believe to be certain.

**Critiques of Social Justice in Education**

While research on teaching for social justice abounds, it is important to acknowledge and be aware of the critiques of social justice education. One of the main critiques of social justice in education is that it has different meanings and is often used ambiguously in the literature (Cochran-Smith, Barnatt et al., 2009; Grant & Agosto, 2008). While having multiple definitions of social justice in education creates multiple entry points in the field, Hackman (2005) asserts that this “does a disservice by diluting
the essence of social justice education and weakening the call for teachers, schools, and communities to be true vanguards for change” (p. 103). In addition to multiple definitions being seen as problematic, social justice educators and researchers often directly fail to offer a definition when discussing social justice in the educational literature (Grant & Agosto, 2008). Just as there is no singular meaning or definition, there is also no single approach to social justice education that will meet the needs of all students in all educational contexts (North, 2008). However, while there is no one right way to approach social justice in education, North (2008) asserts, “More dialogue and collaboration between policy makers, scholars, and practitioners seems necessary if the field of education is going to continue to claim that it is working for social justice” (p. 1201).

The second critique of social justice in education claims that social justice education is about teachers being nice and children feeling good while ignoring knowledge such as reading, math, and science in the classroom. From this perspective, social justice education in teacher preparation is thought to focus too much on learning how to respect students’ cultural identities and support students’ self-esteem while spending little time on the traditional knowledge of specific content matter (i.e. math, science, social studies, etc…) and basic skills (Cochran-Smith, Barnatt, et al., 2009).

A third critique of social justice in education “focuses on the criteria and standards according to which prospective teachers are admitted into or barred from entering the profession” (Cochran-Smith, Barnatt, et al., 2009, p. 630). The argument here is that teachers should not be admitted or denied admittance into teacher education programs based on what social justice proponents would label social justice ideals
including “moral values, political perspectives, and certain dispositions” (Cochran-Smith, Barnatt, et al., 2009, p. 630). This critique speaks to the issues that could arise if the professors and administrators granting admittance into teacher preparation programs hold different moral and/or political beliefs regarding issues of social justice than the students requesting admittance.

A fourth argument against or critique of social justice in teacher education claims that preservice teachers in teacher education programs are being indoctrinated with a liberal viewpoint that can stifle different perspectives held by preservice teachers within the program. This argument asserts that teacher education programs that promote social justice education limit the ability of preservice teachers to think freely and have personal views on morals and principles (Cochran-Smith, Barnatt, et al., 2009). This argument and critique of social justice education as indoctrination of a liberal viewpoint is echoed in Applebaum’s (2009) discussion of a liberal bias in social justice education. “The charge of bias, it is argued, is grounded in an assumption about teacher neutrality and is primarily concerned with teachers being evenhanded and fair” (Applebaum, 2009, p. 378).

Several educational scholars assert that there is no neutrality in education and that education is political and teaching is a political act, whether educators call themselves social justice educators or not (Apple, 2004; Nieto & Bode, 2012). The act of educating students does not take place in a vacuum, but takes place in a sociopolitical context which is linked to laws, policies, traditions, and ideologies (Nieto & Bode, 2012). These laws, policies, traditions, and ideologies that exist within the institution of education all exist
within a system of power and hegemony dictated by the dominate society which can be seen when questions such as whose knowledge is taught in schools, who selected the knowledge that is taught, and how is the knowledge organized and taught (Apple, 2004; Nieto, 1999).

Furthermore, Applebaum (2009) explains that students who claim indoctrination and liberal bias do so because their perspectives are no longer in the forefront of the discussion and they are being challenged to think critically about their personal views and beliefs. “The aims of social justice education can be biased in the sense that they are clearly taking a position on the existence and the meaning of social injustice. Yet social justice education does not necessarily involve indoctrination because such courses aim to enhance rather than arrest criticality” (Applebaum, 2009, p. 395). When students are claiming that their perspectives are being silenced, in actuality in social justice classrooms students are being asked to critically examine perspectives and ideas discussed within the course.

In order to counter the first critique of social justice in education, that it has no clear definition, this dissertation intentionally uses Bell’s (2007) definition of social justice education. The definition is as follows:

We believe that social justice education is both a process and a goal. The goal of social justice education is full and equal participation of all groups in a society that is mutually shaped to meet their needs. Social justice includes a vision of society in which the distribution of resources is equitable and all members are physically and psychologically safe and secure. . . . The process for attaining the goal of social justice, we believe, should also be democratic and participatory, inclusive and affirming of human agency and human capacities for working collaboratively to create change. (pp. 1-2)
This definition of social justice provides a clear and valuable conceptualization of what social justice in education means and what it might look like integrated into schools.

To counter the second critique regarding social justice education focusing on being nice and students feeling good while ignoring knowledge (Cochran-Smith, Barnatt, et al., 2009), this study intentionally sought to illustrate how both content knowledge within courses and social justice can be integrated into teacher preparation coursework. This integration of social justice teaching and learning, critical thinking, and teaching of knowledge can be seen within the findings within Chapter 5. The knowledge that I gained from the critiques of social justice in education helped me to actively think about and address these perspectives in both the planning and the writing of this dissertation.

**Chapter in Review**

In this chapter I have outlined the 10 major themes that I identified when reviewing the current research in teaching for social justice and described the ways in which this literature assisted in the construction of this study. I also elaborated on the critiques of teaching for social justice that were introduced in Chapter 1. Included in the next chapter are the rational for the use of qualitative research methodology and a description of the tradition of narrative inquiry that served as an influence within the research to answer the two guiding research questions including:

- Research Question 1: What life experiences influence the lives of social justice teacher educators in relationship to teaching for social justice?
- Research Question 2: How do social justice teacher educators integrate social justice into the teaching and learning in their teacher preparation courses?
The chapter also includes a detailed explanation of the selection of participants, an introduction to the study’s participants, and the procedures for both data collection and data analysis. In Chapter 5, the findings of this study will be presented. The final chapter, Chapter 6, includes a discussion of the research findings situated within the current teaching for social justice literature, implications for teacher education, and implications for future research.
CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to explore the life experiences that have influenced social justice teacher educators’ teaching for social justice and the ways in which these social justice teacher educators integrate social justice into their teaching and learning into teacher preparation courses. In this chapter an in-depth description of the research design for the study is discussed. This discussion includes the research methodology of qualitative research, the participant selection, data collection, data analysis, and the procedures utilized to ensure trustworthiness and credibility.

Research Design

Qualitative research methodology, influenced by the tradition of narrative inquiry, was the methodology utilized in this study because this method allows researchers in collaboration with participants to explore the participants’ experiences and identities in an in-depth manner from the perspective of the participants (Creswell, 2013). When teaching for social justice, educators and their students become generators of knowledge while also critically examining the dominant perspectives found in society (Cochran-Smith, 2004; Hackman, 2005). The influences of narrative inquiry within this research allowed me to learn about the participants’ multiple identities and experiences influencing their decision to become social justice teacher educators.

As described by Merriam (2009), qualitative methodology is interpretive research in which researchers believe that reality is socially constructed. It allows researchers to explore the social and cultural attributes of phenomenon through interactions with
participants in the field through interviews and observations. Qualitative research focuses on people’s experiences, the construction of their worlds, and how they interpret experiences within their worlds (Merriam, 2009).

Qualitative methodology was utilized for this study because this methodology allowed for the in-depth exploration of teacher educators’ experience teaching for social justice. Qualitative research also allows the researcher to obtain rich and varied experiences from participants rather than striving for the statistical generalizations of quantitative research (Polkinghorne, 1989). Furthermore, while quantitative research focuses on the questions of how much and how many and findings are reported in some numerical form, qualitative research allows for rich description and the use of participants’ stories and words in the sharing of findings (Merriam, 2009).

Qualitative methodology allows researchers to explore socially constructed phenomenon in an in-depth manner using participants’ experiences and understandings (Merriam, 2009). Bogotch (2002) describes social justice as a socially constructed concept and in teaching for social justice students and educators work together to generate and create knowledge (Cochran-Smith, 2004). Thus, these attributes of social justice education align with the qualitative foundation of exploring society as being socially constructed.

In addition to using qualitative methodology within this study, elements of narrative inquiry also influenced this research project. It was the participants’ experiences and stories of being social justice teacher educators that were intended to be explored through the research questions and specific attributes of narrative inquiry leant
themselves to exploring the research questions. More about the decision to use qualitative methodology with elements of narrative inquiry can be found in the analytic memos found in Appendix E.

Attributes of Narrative Inquiry

There are several traditions under the umbrella of qualitative methodology such as narrative inquiry, phenomenology, case study, and ethnography (Creswell, 2013). Narrative inquiry was the chosen tradition for this research study. Narratives are the stories that people tell (Creswell, 2013). Narrative inquiry includes the processes of collecting and interpreting those stories which are representations of the people telling the story (Riessman, 1993). “Human agency and imagination determines what gets included and excluded in narrativization, how events are plotted, and what they are supposed to mean. Individuals construct past events and actions in personal narratives to claim identities and construct lives” (Riessman, 1993, p. 2). The meaning of narratives is fluid, ever changing, and cannot be universal because talk and text only partially represent the reality that someone has experienced (Riessman, 1993). In narrative inquiry, the researcher collects stories of participants lived experiences in which the participants share details about their identities and how they view themselves (Creswell, 2013). The participants’ stories are shared through several types of data or field texts such as interviews, observations, documents, and pictures (Clandinin & Connelly, 1994; Creswell, 2013).

Narrative inquiry takes place within a three-dimensional space described as, “personal and social (interaction); past, present, and future (continuity); combined with
the notion of place (situation)” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 50, emphasis in original). Within these three-dimensional spaces Clandinin and Connelly (1994, 2000) describe how the researcher and the participants set out on an exploration of moving backward and forward through time, reflection of the inward (e.g., feelings) and outward (e.g., the environment), and the narrative is located within a specific place and situation. Through their stories participants reflect on the past, present, and future through a lens of their current experiences and ideas while interweaving memories and meanings with their present-day self (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Riessman, 1993).

Because narrative inquiry is fluid, a participant’s interpretation of the past, present, and future can change over time (Riessman, 1993). Narrative inquiry captures a snapshot of a participant’s lived experience. Thus, the story does not begin when the researcher enters the picture, and the story does not end when the researcher completes data collection. Just as participants have stories, researchers also bring their stories into narrative research which plays a role in the research process (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

Narrative inquiry allowed for the use of rich description and the participants’ stories, told through the participants’ words, to speak to both becoming social justice teacher educators and the participants’ teaching for social justice. Narrative inquiry created a three-dimensional space where some of the social justice teacher educators could reflect upon both their personal and professional experiences and identities that led them to teach for social justice. While all of the participants entered the three-dimensional space described by Clandinin and Connelly (1994, 2000), only one
participant, Dr. Stevenson, defined this fluid movement throughout time and place explicitly within his narrative. This explicit reference to moving through time and place can be found in Dr. Stevenson’s interview excerpts in Chapter 5.

**Participant Selection**

The sampling process of participants for this project included convenience and criterion sampling. Convenience sampling is a sampling procedure in which the researcher identifies participants based on elements of time, location, and availability (Merriam, 2009). Criterion sampling uses criterion or specific qualifications that participants must meet to be part of a research study (Patton, 2002). A criterion sample helps in choosing a few cases or participants that depict a range of experiences that can be compared (Kuzel, 1999). Participants chosen for this research project self-identified as social justice teacher educators and were willing to provide full and rich descriptions of their experiences of teaching for social justice.

The first criterion for selection of participants included professors or instructors who were current teacher educators in a teacher preparation program. This criterion addressed the need for further research in teacher education programs (Grant & Agosto, 2008) and the need for further research on teacher educators (Goodwin & Kosnik, 2013; Swennen & van de Klink, 2009; Zeichner, 2005). Second, the teacher educators had to self-identify as having a teaching philosophy grounded in social justice educational practice. This criterion was modeled after a study in which self-identified social justice educators’ teaching practice in standards-based English and language arts classrooms was explored (Dover, 2013).
The third criterion for participation in this research study was that the teacher educators needed to have taken part in at least one committee, conference, professional learning development experience, professional learning community, class, activism, and/or research project dealing with matters of diversity, multicultural education, and/or social justice education. This criterion addressed the issue raised by Bell, Love, Washington, and Weinstein (2007) that the professional training many higher education faculty members experience may not include content addressing the emotionally and socially charged issues related to teaching for social justice. Bell et al. (2007) further explain that teaching for social justice calls for a radical change in the process of traditional teaching, thus additional training and learning assists in the process of teaching for social justice. If the participants had actively been participating in committees, professional learning communities, and/or research surrounding diversity, multicultural education, and/or social justice education it was within these spaces that the participants would have had the opportunity to be involved in self-reflection and attributes of both self-knowledge and self-awareness (Bell et al., 2007).

Introduction to Participants

Four participants from a medium-sized university in the Midwestern United States, which will be identified as Midwestern University, agreed to take part in this project. Each participant self-identified as a social justice teacher educator; taught preservice and/or in-service teachers; and had taken part in activities surrounding matters of diversity, multicultural and/or social justice education such as attending conferences, taking and/or taught courses, completed scholarly research, published articles and/or
books, presented on the topics, taken part in professional learning communities, and had personal experiences. All the participants have had previous experience in prekindergarten-12th grade classrooms with students. Each participant chose their own pseudonym and these pseudonyms are used throughout this study to protect their anonymity.

Dr. Leon Love is an assistant professor at Midwestern University with a Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction. Dr. Love identifies as Latino, male, and gay. His preferred pronouns are he/him/his. Dr. Love and I met for the first time when he agreed to be a participant in this study.

Professor Alice Miller is an instructor at Midwestern University, pursuing her Ed.D. in Curriculum and Instruction. She has completed her coursework and is working on her dissertation. Professor Miller identifies as a White female and her preferred pronouns are she/her/hers. Professor Miller and I have known each other for five years. Professor Miller and I were colleagues within the same department both when I was an instructor at the laboratory school and when I became a student teaching coordinator. In addition to working in the same department, Professor Miller and I have served on a committee together since the fall of 2012 where we have organized book clubs, article reads, and events surrounding matters of diversity and multicultural education for the College of Education (COE) at Midwestern University. During the 2012-2013 academic year, Professor Miller and I both took part in a professional learning community focused on cultural competency. Professor Miller and I have also socialized together outside of the university.
Dr. Happy Flower is an associate professor at Midwestern University with a Ph.D. in Education. Dr. Flower identifies as African American and female. Her preferred pronouns are she/her/hers. Dr. Flower and I were colleagues in the COE, and I have taken part in conferences that she has organized. While I am familiar with Dr. Flower’s work on campus in the areas of diversity and multicultural education I have not had the opportunity to collaborate with her during my time at Midwestern University. During my time teaching at Midwestern University’s laboratory school I did have the opportunity to get to know Dr. Flower’s son because he was one of the students in my advisory/homeroom group during my time as a high school teacher at the laboratory school.

Dr. Neil Stevenson is an instructor at Midwestern University with a Ph.D. in Culture, Curriculum, and Change. Dr. Stevenson identifies as White, male, and cisgender. Dr. Stevenson’s preferred pronouns are he/him/his. Dr. Stevenson and I met when he began working at Midwestern University. I have attended research events on campus that he has been a part of, and I have heard him present on issues of education and immigration. I often see Dr. Stevenson at events on campus and have also run into him out in the community. However, this was the first opportunity for me to really get to know Dr. Stevenson as both a teacher educator and scholar.

Due to the nature of a convenience sample, I knew my participants on varying levels, and I was familiar with who they are as individuals and their work at Midwestern University. While some researchers may see this as a weakness and having less credibility (Merriam, 2009), I saw the familiarity that I had with my participants and the
relationships that I had already built with them as a strength of this research. Because of my existing relationships with most the participants, I had already begun to build both trust and rapport with them, which is an important component of qualitative research. These existing relationships helped the participants in feeling comfortable telling their stories during the interviews and sharing their thoughts and reflections in their journals. Had I been an outside researcher asking these participants questions about their lives and identities I do not believe that I would have gotten the same rich and in-depth responses to the questions that were asked. Since the participants knew me and knew that they could trust me, I was able to gain access to their personal stories and experiences as social justice teacher educators.

Data Collection

When conducting qualitative research, there are multiple data sources that researchers can gather to inform the research process. Some of these data sources include, but are not limited to interviews, observations, documents, video, photographs, and public records (Creswell, 2013; Merriam, 2009). Before gathering any data for this research project, permission to conduct this study was requested through the submission of a Standard Application for Human Participants Review document through the Institutional Review Board at my university. It was through the letter of consent that each participant signed that I was granted permission to collect and analyze approved data. The specific data sources utilized for this research study included a demographic questionnaire, interviews, observations, and participant journals (Creswell, 2013).
Demographic Questionnaire

To ensure that the participants met the required criterion for participation, invited individuals were asked to complete a short demographic questionnaire (see Appendix A). Sample questions and items from the questionnaire included:

- Do you identify as a teacher educator that teaches for social justice?
- Please list your experiences with diversity multicultural and/or social justice education.
- Position at the university.

Reflective Journals

During the research project, the participants were asked to journal a total of three times; once following the demographic questionnaire, another time following the completion of first interview and the classroom observation, and finally after the second. The participants choose whether they wanted to provide written, audio recorded, or video recorded responses to the journal questions. Samples of the questions for the reflective journals included questions such as:

- On the demographic questionnaire, you listed that you have participated in conferences, scholarly research, journal publications, presentations, professional learning communities, classes taken, and classes taught surrounding the issues of diversity, multicultural education, and/or social justice education, has your participation in these activities influenced who you are as a social justice teacher educator? If yes, what role do you think these activities have played in who you are as a social justice teacher educator, if no, why do you think that these
activities have not had an impact on who you are as a social justice teacher educator?

- Reflecting on your practices, pedagogy, and philosophy as a social justice teacher educator, what attributes and characteristics do you believe are important to your identity as a social justice teacher educator?

- Reflecting on the last few weeks/months, in what ways have you integrated social justice education into your teacher preparation courses? What are some examples of readings, assignments, discussions, and/or projects that you have integrated into your teaching that you would identify as being related to social justice education?

For a complete list of the reflective journal prompts see Appendix B.

The reflective journaling served as a space where the participants could elaborate on the interview discussion or add additional thoughts that they had regarding teaching for social justice. Teaching for social justice requires individuals to have both self-knowledge and self-awareness (Bell et al., 2007), thus asking participants to respond to reflective journal questions encouraged the process of self-knowledge and self-awareness.

Semi-Structured Interviews

This study included two semi-structured interviews lasting up to one hour in length, that were audio recorded, transcribed verbatim, and included field notes by the researcher of each participant’s interview. Semi-structured interviews were used because they allowed me to ask participants different questions related to participants’ individual
experiences in teaching for social justice. During the first interview (Interview 1) examples of the questions that guided the discussion included:

- How do you define social justice as it pertains to education and teacher preparation?
- What have been the experiences in your life that have led you to teach for social justice?
- How do you integrate social justice education into your teaching and learning with undergraduates and/or graduate students in teacher education?

A complete list of questions for Interview 1 is available in Appendix C. The first semi-structured interview took place following the participants’ completion of the demographic questionnaire and Reflective Journal 1.

A second interview (Interview 2) was scheduled with each participant to clarify information already shared and to gain further insight into discoveries that were made in Reflective Journal 1, Interview 1, the classroom observation, and Reflective Journal 2. While the questions for Interview 2 were participant specific, common questions amongst all the participants included asking participants’ to define terms (e.g., equality, sociohistoric, hegemony, systems) that were used within the interviews and journals and to further discuss the participants’ modes of instruction.

Observation

I conducted a single observation of each of the teacher educators where I observed from a distance without direct involvement in classroom (Creswell, 2013;
Merriam, 2009). During the observations, I took handwritten field notes using an observation protocol. The observation protocol can be found in Appendix D. During each participant’s observation, I paid close attention to the participant’s teaching methodology (e.g., direct instruction, student-led, group discussion), the topics discussed during the class, and the interactions between the teacher educator and the preservice teachers.

Details in Data Collection

To provide clarity in the data collection process, I describe the creation of the questions used for the interviews and reflective journals and then I provide a description of the data collection schedule. In order to provide transparency in the creation of the questions for the interviews and reflective journals, Appendix D includes an analytic memo written on February 22, 2017. This analytic memo provides the rationales, procedures, and descriptions of the construction of the questions for the interviews and reflective journals.

The first piece of data that was collected for this study was the demographic questionnaire. Both the letter of consent for participation in the study and the demographic questionnaire were completed during the first meeting with the participants. Following the participants’ completion of the demographic questionnaire, they were sent prompts for Reflective Journal 1. Next, Interview 1 was completed with all of the participants. Following Interview 1, I observed each participate teaching. After the completion of the classroom observation, I sent the participants’ the prompts for Reflective Journal 2. Interview 2 was conducted following the submission of Reflective
Journal 2. Reflective Journal 3, which was the final journal and the final piece of data that was collected, was sent to the participants following Interview 2.

Data Analysis

Data was analyzed using thematic analysis in order to examine each participants’ individual stories and writing and to keep the participant’s narratives intact (Riessman, 1993). Rather than coding line-by-line as is customary in some forms of thematic analysis, the data sources were coded holistically looking at each of the narratives (Riessman, 2008).

Coding

For the first round of coding, a combination of in vivo, structural, and descriptive codes were used. In vivo coding involves using the participants’ words as codes (Creswell, 2013). One example of an in vivo code from Professor Miller’s first interview was, “They don’t have to agree with me” (P2, I1, L 319). A second example of an in vivo code from the same interview was “I have to remain neutral” (P2, I1, L 551). These words from Professor Miller’s first interview were both quotes and codes from the interview transcript.

Structural coding associates the data to specific research questions and “generally results in the identification of large segments of text on broad topics; these segments can then form the basis for an in-depth analysis within or across topics” (MacQueen, McLellan-Lemal, Bartholow, & Milstein, 2008, p. 125). An example of a structural code from Professor Miller’s first interview was life experience—family. This structural code was used to code an excerpt of the interview that related directly to Research Question 1
regarding life experiences influencing Professor Miller’s teaching for social justice. In this excerpt from her first interview Professor Miller explains:

Um well, okay, so I have two kids with disabilities, right, and so I have seen, um, even from my own perspective how I’ve had to shift my expectations for them, my. I think at first when my daughter was first diagnosed I felt it was my role to protect her and like poor [Sophia] she has a disability, she can’t do this, she can’t do that, um, I just have to keep her safe. Well, that’s stupid, [chuckle] she gets the same, she should have the same rights as everyone to live life, right, and that comes with good and bad experiences. (P2, I1, L 110-115)

This structural code helps to explain both the part of Professor Miller’s life experience, as well as the excerpt’s association with Research Question 2.

The final type of code used for the first round of coding was what Saldaña (2013) calls descriptive codes, which are codes that summarize the data in a word or phrase. Specifically, these words or phrases “are identifications of the topic, not abbreviations of the content. The topic is what is talked or written about” (Tesch, 1990, p. 119, emphasis in original). In Professor Miller’s first interview she described the importance of knowing her students when she stated:

While I’m a firm believer in that they need to get to know their students, right. And so we do talk about, um, what does it mean, you know, if you have students who are Asian, Native American, and things like that, however, I always caveat that with they’re individuals first, right? Their ethnicity, their religion, can tell you a little about them, but not the whole story, right. So you have to do the hard work of getting to know who they are as people, right, and that so I try and model that, we try and do some activities where, okay, I ask all of them to bring an artifact that represents some of their culture to class and we share that and I say if you were teaching and this was your class how could you do this with your own students and then we talk about having like a culture wall in the classroom, right. Um, and then we talk about what are other ways, you know can students show you a little bit about who they are. (P2, I1, L 233-242)

I applied the code “knowing your students” to this excerpt of the interview because it described what Professor Miller was talking about in that excerpt. I went through the
process of applying in vivo, structural, and descriptive codes to each individual participants’ complete data set. Once each participants’ data was coded using descriptive, in vivo, and structural codes, the codes from the data set were compiled into a list. I sorted each participant’s codes into categories of like ideas and meaning in order to see what commonalities existed among the codes (Merriam, 2009).

After the coding of each participants’ interviews, journals, and observations, the themes from each participants’ data were compared to find the similarities and differences among the participants’ experiences of teaching for social justice (Riessman, 2008). See Appendix F, Table F1, for these commonalities. Holistically analyzing the participants’ interviews, journals, and observations before comparing and contrasting data amongst the participants was important to refrain from fracturing their stories and taking away from the meaning that was being made by each participant (Riessman, 1993).

Next, I set out to flesh out the details of the categories and themes from the previous round of coding. During this round of coding I used mostly in vivo and descriptive codes in conjunction with marking the codes as being related to categories (e.g., student-centered, challenging the system, or identity). It was during this point of in-depth analysis that I met with Dr. Etscheidt, the member of my dissertation committee who served as my methodologist to discuss my analysis process. As we talked, I realized two very important things. First, when I first began to identify significant words, phrases, and ideas within each participants’ data set and apply structural and descriptive codes to the words, phrases, and ideas, I was in actuality coding and categorizing the data at the
same time because I was applying my own thoughts and ideas to the participants’ words, ideas, and phrases. Second, although I was attempting to analyze each participants’ data sets individually and holistically as recommended by Riessman (1993), in actuality, I was attempting to find common themes (e.g., student-centeredness, challenging the system) amongst all four participants rather than identifying unique themes within each participants’ experiences, examples, and stories. I was forcing the data into compartmentalized themes. The compartmentalization of the participants’ data can be seen in Table F1 in Appendix F.

Equipped with the knowledge that I was trying to force my data into compartmentalized themes I reframed my thinking moving forward. Although I had already done an in-depth reading of Participant 1’s and Participant 2’s data to refine my categories, I revisited each participants’ codes and categories and re-conceptualized the codes and categories with the knowledge that I had gained from the meeting with my methodologist before moving on to Participant 3 and Participant 4. The reframing of my thinking was captured in an analytic memo written following my meeting with Dr. Etscheidt. This analytic memo can be found in Appendix F.

When completing the in-depth reading of Participant 3’s and Participant 4’s data sets I continued using in vivo and descriptive codes, but I refrained from categorizing the codes as I had done with Participant 1 and Participant 2 in an effort to stop myself from forcing the data into compartmentalized categories. Once I had reframed my thinking of the categorization of each participants’ data, I created tables for each participant mapping out the participants’ unique themes with supporting categories and codes found (see
Appendix F). I then utilized these tables (Tables F2, F3, F4, and F5) to assist with the presentation of the findings and discussion.

**Trustworthiness and Credibility**

Narrative inquiry is not meant to be an exact record of events or a mirror depicting what is going on in society. For these reasons, traditional forms of validity cannot be used to judge narrative inquiry (Riessman, 1993). As Riessman explains, “Our readings of data are themselves located in discourses (e.g., scientific, feminist, and therapeutic)” (p. 64). This research is located within the discourse and the field of social justice in education. Within these fields, scholars and educators recognize and actively work to name, challenge, and change oppressive and inequitable systems and existing structures that negatively impact the lives of students. These inequitable systems and existing structures are based on issues of race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, religion, language, class, and ability.

**Coherence**

Attention must be paid to coherence in narrative inquiry. Coherence includes global, local, and themal coherence (Riessman, 1993). Global coherence includes what the participant says and the goals that the participant is trying to attain. In this study, the participants described their understanding of social justice as it pertains to education. Furthermore, the participants described the life experiences that have contributed to their teaching for social justice, and they are described the ways in which they integrate social justice in the teaching and learning experience with the preservice teachers within their courses.
Local coherence deals with the structure of what the participant is saying (Riessman, 1993). Within this project, the structure that was constructed for the participants to speak to teaching for social justice included three items. First, the interviews allowed the participants to share their stories and thoughts. Second, written or recorded journals created a space for the participants to reflect on their own experiences. Third, the observation allowed me to observe the participants actively engaging and integrating social justice teaching and learning in their classrooms.

Thematic coherence includes the reoccurring themes that unite the text (Riessman, 1993). I worked to ensure thematic coherence through the in-depth reading and coding of the participants’ interviews, journals, and observations and analyzing the participants’ data individually and holistically. By analyzing the data holistically, I worked to ensure the coherence of the participants’ stories.

**Persuasiveness**

According to Riessman (1993), persuasiveness is also an important component of trustworthiness and validity in narrative inquiry. Persuasiveness deals with the idea that the interpretation of the data is reasonable and convincing. Within persuasiveness the researcher needs to situate theoretical claims within the words and ideas of the participants and take into consideration alternative interpretations of the data. Through the use of participants’ quotes, participant data, and the final member check in which the participants’ reviewed the themes I constructed and described within Chapter 5, I worked to address persuasiveness within this study. Furthermore, I also addressed persuasiveness by positioning my findings within the existing literature addressing teaching for social
justice in Chapter 6. It is important to note that narrative text is situated within historical context. Therefore, the interpretations found in Chapter 5 and Chapter 6 have an unstable meaning and these interpretations can change depending on place, time, and historical context (Riessman, 1993).

Ensuring Trustworthiness and Credibility

To assist with the trustworthiness and credibility of this qualitative study several methods and procedures were utilized to create transparency in the research process. These methods and procedures included triangulation, member checks, an audit trail, and my position and reflexivity as the researcher.

**Triangulation.** Several methods were used throughout this research project to address issues of trustworthiness and credibility, as well as persuasiveness and coherence. Triangulation of multiple data sources or the comparing and cross-checking of different data sources to see if similar things are found was used during this study (Merriam, 2009). Information learned in the interviews, observation, and participant journals was triangulated to confirm emerging findings throughout data analysis (Creswell, 2013; Merriam, 2009). The participants’ reflective journal responses were especially important for purposes of triangulation because the reflections assisted me in comparing the perceived interpretations of what teaching for social justice looked like in the observation and interviews, compared to the participants’ perceptions of teaching for social justice. Tables F2, F3, F4, and F5 in Appendix F provide evidence of triangulation within the dataset, as they provide the locations of the codes within the data set used to create the categories and themes.
Member checks. Several member checks, asking the participants to review transcripts and then the final themes, were used throughout the process of data collection and analysis (Creswell, 2013; Merriam, 2009). Member checks took place following the transcription of Interview 1 and Interview 2 for all of the participants. Participants were asked to review the transcripts for accuracy and to offer any comments or clarifications they had regarding the transcriptions. Additional member checks also took place following the transcription of audio recordings of the participants’ reflective journals, for those participants choosing to audio record rather than write their reflective journals. A final member check took place following the creation of a draft of the findings within Chapter 5. Each participant received a copy of their section of the chapter to review and offer comments.

Audit trail. In addition to triangulation and member checks, an audit trail was also created to assist with trustworthiness and credibility within this study (Creswell, 2013; Merriam, 2009). This study’s audit trail consisted of field notes, analytic memos, and data tables depicting codes, categories, and themes. Examples of analytic memos can be found in Appendix E and Appendix F. Excerpts from the field notes taken during the participants’ observations are presented in Chapter 5 and Chapter 6. Examples of the data tables created throughout data analysis can be found in Appendix F.

Researcher position and reflexivity. The final method to assist with trustworthiness in this research project was my research position or reflexivity found in Chapter 2. Merriam (2009) describes the researcher’s position or reflexivity as the researcher’s self-reflection on the assumptions, worldviews, biases, theoretical
orientation, and relationship to the study. Providing details about my background and position in relationship to social justice education assisted in positioning myself as an integral instrument of data collection and analysis in qualitative research (Merriam, 2009).

**Chapter in Review**

This chapter outlined the methodology for this research project including a description of qualitative research and the intention to use elements of narrative inquiry. The procedure for participant sampling, as well as an introduction to the study’s participants was also provided. The description of data collection included details about the demographic questionnaires, single participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and reflective journaling. The chapter concluded with the procedures and methods utilized to ensure the trustworthiness and credibility of this study.

In the next chapter, the research results will be outlined and accompanied by excerpts of the participants’ words and experiences from the interviews, observations, and reflective journaling. The participant data will assist in describing the participants’ stories and experiences teaching for social justice in relationship to the research questions:

- **Research Question 1**: What life experiences influence the lives of social justice teacher educators in relationship to teaching for social justice?
- **Research Question 2**: How do social justice teacher educators integrate social justice into the teaching and learning in their teacher preparation courses?
In the final chapter the research findings will be positioned within the current research in teaching for social justice. Both the implications for teacher education and the implications future research will also be discussed.
CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS

In this chapter, I share the findings from each individual participants’ interviews, journals, and observations in relationship to the research questions guiding this inquiry. The research questions included:

• Research Question 1: What life experiences influence the lives of social justice teacher educators in relationship to teaching for social justice?

• Research Question 2: How do social justice teacher educators integrate social justice into the teaching and learning in their teacher preparation courses?

First, a short introduction of the participant will be given. Next, details describing the participant’s definition and conceptualization of social justice as it pertains to education and teacher preparation will be presented. Then, the theme(s) identified in the participants’ interviews, journals, and observations related to Research Question 1 and Research Question 2 will be described. Following the description of themes, a brief conclusion of the participant’s themes will be presented.

Dr. Leon Love

Dr. Leon Love is a teacher educator at Midwestern University in the COE. He identifies as Latino, male, and gay. Dr. Love’s preferred pronouns are he/his/him. Throughout the interviews and journals Dr. Love described many of his multiple identities. Some of the identities he spoke about included being a feminist, an emerging de-colonial scholar, a recent United States citizen, and a student labeled with an auditory Learning Disability (LD) who was segregated into a resource room in middle school.
Some of the experiences that Dr. Love shared that contributed to his teaching for social justice included being raised in progressive towns in the western United States, the influence one of his high school social studies teachers had on his life, and his graduate programs in the western United States. These multiple identities and experiences are important because both Dr. Love’s personal identities and professional identities play a role in who he is as a social justice teacher educator. These multiple personal and professional identities are also an important part of Dr. Love’s integration of social justice into his teaching and learning within his teacher preparation courses.

**Dr. Love’s Conceptualization of Social Justice in Education**

When asked to define the term social justice as it pertains to teacher education and teacher preparation Dr. Love explained:

That’s a hard question, but okay so how I define social justice as it pertains to uh teacher education is really thinking about um the term praxis and how this term praxis is um the coupling, so it’s thinking about um practice….As not devoid of theory and so the theory that um sort of like the technical language or the technical skills that teachers get. . . . Traditionally within teacher education programs um stay at that level. . . . Really. However, um, there’s this other dimension which um some other folks have talked about in terms of technical dimensions and uh contextual dimensions and critical dimensions the ways in which I’m incorporating this framework thinking about social justice issues uh is broadly defined so it’s really thinking about the interrelationships about theories of critical theory. . . . And also uh learning theories and so uh my approach is is sounds a little theoretical, but it’s that lens through which that um because there’s not sort of like a cookie cutter answer per se. . . . About what social justice looks like because we need to take into account um context and the situatedness of the multiple identities for example that folks bring to the table and um the, the multiple sort of um constellations of who’s in the room. . . . Uh and being aware of, of that. So I would say, I would say in retrospect here thinking about it’s a more of a paradigm. . . . As opposed to um, because for example social justice can look so different given those um multiple constellations that human beings bring to the table, um, transitionally things such as distributive justice, um, uh
redistribution of wealth, uh those two sort of topics, um, can be part of the discourse. ... Um of what counts as um social justice, but I think all of, so embedding teacher educators with uh and exposing them to these different discourses about what counts as social just social justice is key. Uh, but I think stepping back and giving educators um critically reflexivity. ... On the ground is part of uh my sort of approach to social justice, if that makes any sense. (P1, I1, L 11-44)

In Dr. Love’s definition of social justice he incorporates the ideas of theory and practice through praxis and the interrelationship of theories including learning theories and critical theory. Dr. Love also emphasizes the fact that teaching for social justice is not “cookie cutter,” teaching for social justice takes into account the contextual nature and backgrounds of the people involved in the teaching and learning process. Finally, Dr. Love’s definition of social justice in education includes the importance of giving educators critical reflexivity. This conceptualization of social justice as it pertains to teacher education and teacher preparation creates a context in which to describe the themes found in Dr. Love’s experiences and examples of teaching and learning for social justice.

**Being Authentically Myself**

A personal factor that has influenced Dr. Love’s life in relationship to teaching for social justice is that he believes it is very important to be authentically himself in his teaching and learning for social justice. This theme is supported by the ideas that the personal is professional, the importance of being yourself, and the role that confidence plays in teaching and learning. In Reflective Journal 1 Dr. Love emphasized the importance authenticity plays in his identity as a social justice teacher educator:
The four attributes and characteristics that I believe are important to my identity as a social justice teacher educator are the following:

1. Love through actions and listening
2. Praxis toward equity and humanization
3. A love of learning and unlearning
4. Authenticity. (P1, J1, L 110-115)

In the closing of this same journal entry Dr. Love speaks to the integrated nature of his identities and his social justice work as being both personal and professional when he wrote:

These four attributes and characteristics which I see as both verbs and nouns of who I am as a feminist queer inclusive disability studies special education social justice scholar and educator undergird the epistemological, ontological and axiological praxis as I engage in the labor of love of social justice work personally and professionally and becoming who I am. (P1, J1, L 146-150)

These excerpts speak to the important roles that Dr. Love’s personal and professional identities, as well as authenticity play in his identity as a social justice teacher educator.

In our second interview, Dr. Love spoke further about the personal and the professional when he explained:

A little bit of unpacking that and then in terms of the personal and professional um in my own life my um my work is very personal and emotional um but at the same time, and so that is why I’m transparent and sort of just authentically myself which I see as um an important attribute which I’ve talked about before in terms of just being authentic and being yourself within quote unquote professional contexts at often times um yes there are legal um um you know federal laws in special education um there that mandate certain not only professional ethnics for example but um because of my training in terms of from a critical perspective or critical pedagogy approach um which you know that indexes as well social justice because um thee the ways in which um the ways in which that it has these um, from a critical theory perspective it’s not sort of benign or um we’re not neutral. . . . I’m cognizant of what on the one hand the discourses that are in place about being professional and being detached and um not showing emotion all those aspects there’s um [pause] I don’t want to fall prey to that. Does that make sense?
Then given that I’m, my dispositions as a social justice teacher educator is contrary. Um con, it’s the counter of all those messages that are in place um, but at the same time I think there’s a level of maybe balance or perhaps um that needs to be in place for one to stay healthy. (P1, I2, L48-67)

In this excerpt from Interview 2, Dr. Love speaks directly to the importance of authentically being himself even when the professional asserts that the personal emotions need to be removed from the tasks at hand. Dr. Love does concede that perhaps a balance is needed between being detached and integrating emotion into teaching and learning.

This idea of authenticity is also echoed when Dr. Love described big “D” and small “d” discourse and an experience he had co-teaching with a colleague in which he did not feel he could be his authentic self. Dr. Love asserted, “. . . I also speak the way I speak to my students because if I can’t then I’m not authentically myself. . . . So I, in this other course I wasn’t authentically myself and wasn’t, in the sense, I felt, I felt, depressed and I didn’t feel like I could just be myself” (P1, I1, L 172-177). Dr. Love elaborated on this idea of being authentic when he stated:

Um I think um it goes back to being myself because if I’m not myself um kids pick up on it. They might sense that somethings wrong or um I’m not being authentic. . . . Authentic they can be authentic. . . . And that’s part of the goals too because from a critical theory perspective and I think I talked about this last time it’s actually a theory of happiness, it’s, it’s a both ideational like ideas and material because it’s also about like economic justice. . . . Um and so be um if I’m myself and I’m centered and I’m authentic and experience the full range of emotions too, if I’m like upset you know, um of course um that goes back to that professional and personal and. . . . Discourses that are happening um that we all navigate in our cog, cognizant of or socialized to or reminded [chuckle] uh of, um and so and I think so that’s one, being myself. . . . Uh and then two, so being real and myself, two I would say being mindful of the participant structures we’re setting-up for them to engage in the in the learning process. So that indexes sort of like centering learning. (P1, I2, L 199-217)
Just as he had previously, Dr. Love, integrated the ideas of the personal and professional and being one’s authentic self. During the observation of Dr. Love’s class, the idea of the personal and the professional was brought up during a class discussion. Dr. Love followed this comment up with emphasizing the importance of being who you are in front of the classroom.

When asked about what advice he would give to aspiring social justice educators Dr. Love discussed both the role authenticity plays in aspiring to teach for social justice and the importance of being yourself:

I think that that goes back to that notion that I already, that I talked about in my, my I think my first um my first uh journal entry which was just be yourselves and that connects to that ontological aspect. . . . Right. In terms of like just being yourself and learning more about yourself and each other and the world around us can um influence um the ways in which you enact because it’s so different. Um, my lenses are very different from your lenses and everybody’s lenses because of our biographies and our histories and who we are and where we’ve came from and where we’re going um and then so just respecting self and others and um in our becoming within the roles that we play. . . . Uh is key to uh thinking about um and that being comfortable with being uncomfortable is a big kind of you know um practical thing I would say [chuckle]. . . . Even though it is like um it is um it’s kind of broad as well, but I would say so there are these, I guess we have to define what strategies are, you know, because um in a sense I’m providing strategies, but they might be more cognitive or emotional strategies like um nomenclature or language where you know it’s about love and let’s not forget that, you know. And it’s about [deep breath] um how do we, I even tell them I say how do we have our antennas up, um in the classroom and in the world as it relates to, so all of those are the advice I would give, you know authenticity, being yourself, having our antennas up, um not being afraid to take risks, not being afraid to love, um etc. So those are all aspects. (P1, J3, L 277-298)

Moving from the ideas of authenticity and being yourself, the final concept that plays into this theme is the role that confidence plays within Dr. Love’s ability to authentically be himself.
In his Reflective Journal 3, Dr. Love referenced confidence, self-confidence, and his multiple identities. Dr. Love explained, “On these other identities that I have like this Thursday, Thursday’s class I even said like I preface before I respond to a question, as a de-colonial emerging scholar or as, now I’m talking the feminist in me... Um, so I would say last semester not so much, but because perhaps that I was new to the institution um and I’m still building that confidence” (P1, J3, L 69-74). In this same journal Dr. Love said:

So I’m in this like um pendulum swing up there all the time because it’s not like I, it might come across to them as if I don’t know what I’m doing. So that’s what I’m afraid of. . . . And the teacher like teacher um creditability and um I’m, I’m afraid of that, um and that goes back to that confidence aspect, I just need to be confident, right, but we’ll see. (P1, J3, L 165-169)

Here, Dr. Love questioned his teaching of his students and he was afraid that his approach to teaching and learning was being perceived as though he did not know what he was doing. This speaks to confidence, but it also speaks to the important role of Dr. Love being authentically who he is with his students. These excerpts from Dr. Love’s interview and journals paint a clear picture of the important role that being authentically himself plays in his life in relationship to being a social justice teacher educator. This factor of being authentically himself weaves together Dr. Love’s personal identities and professional identities. This theme also illustrates the important factors of confidence and self-confidence in Dr. Love’s identity as a social justice teacher educator.

Co-Construction of Knowledge through Problem-Posing Education

In addressing the second research question, the first theme that describes the way that Dr. Love integrated social justice teaching and learning into his courses with students
is through co-constructing knowledge with students through the problem-posing model of education. Dr. Love’s Reflective Journal 2 played an important role in documenting this theme. In responding to a question about the class I observed he wrote:

My identity as a social justice teacher educator greatly impacted my teaching and learning during the class. First and foremost, I consider myself a student alongside my students. I purposefully disrupt the status quo of what it means to be a teacher—that say I have all the answers—but engage my students and myself in the process(es) of learning with them/together. Often, since they are not used to this type of teaching they just want all the answers and strategies to take with them—lately I’ve been calling these the prescriptive narrative verse the descriptive narrative that I tend to use as a social justice teacher educator since I teach through stories. The latter would be teaching for and from a social justice oriented paradigm. The prescriptive narrative would have me just tell them all the answers and provide them with strategies that they can take with them. Perhaps I live in the middle since while am up there I feel them getting uncomfortable and just wanting to know what they can do and for me to tell them. But this would be the “banking” model of education, as opposed to the problem posing model of education that I purposefully do given that according to Freire engaging in the latter honors people’s epistemologies that they bring to the table of education and positions the conversation as a dialogue for critical reflectivity about the topics at hand and therefore, we co-construct knowledge together. (P1, J2, L57-71)

Within this journal excerpt Dr. Love speaks to the idea that he is a student alongside his students and together they engage in the learning process where they co-construct knowledge in a problem-posing manner. During this problem-posing process the preservice teachers’ voices are honored while both Dr. Love and the students are critically reflecting on the material at hand.

Again, Dr. Love speaks to his role as both the teacher and student with his preservice teachers when he described his theory of learning in Interview 2. Dr. Love asserted:
So my theory of learning, Um my theories of change, my theories of social change, my, my theories of all those um um in a sense my conceptual frameworks that I’m enacting in the classroom, um and sort of um and in my own learning and how I position myself. Am I just a teacher or am I teacher and a student with them. . . . Um, that’s another social justice sort of way of being and doing. (P1, I2, L 219-224)

Dr. Love further elaborated on integrating the problem-posing method of teaching and learning within Interview 2. In this interview he emphasized that in this teaching and learning process the preservice teachers’ bring their own experiences and perspectives to the table and what transpires in the classroom is more about the process than the product.

Dr. Love described the problem-posing process:

I just keep questioning their, their next assumption that they come to or their next realization. Um, because in, in that what’s uh they come to their, they come to the truth, to their individual truths. And um you know, one of the assumptions within the Socratic method is that there’s not one truth per se, that they um that there could be these different truths um given our positionalities or like our world experiences, our biographies and things like that. Um, because we’re all gonna interpret and think about this situation very differently and that’s healthy. Um, [pause] and so the Socratic method would be in posing questions and, and all of us in the room being um exposed and influenced by the, the learning, it’s a more process than product. (P1, I2, L460-467)

Just as in his reflective journal, Dr. Love again places emphasis on the students’ construction of knowledge through the problem-posing method based on the students’ individual truths and positionality.

The second theme identified within Dr. Love’s integration of social justice teaching and learning in the courses that he teaches is closely related to this theme of co-construction of knowledge and problem-posing education. The second theme speaking to Research Question 2 deals with the preservice teachers’ voices and experiences, which
plays a key role in the problem-posing method. However, this is a separate theme because of the importance that was placed on it in Dr. Love’s interviews and journals.

Honoring Students’ Voices and Experiences

An important part of Dr. Love’s teaching for social justice is his focus on the preservice teachers’ voices and the experiences each student brings with them to the classroom. Within the previous theme Dr. Love briefly touched on the role that the preservice teachers’ experiences and identities play in the co-construction of knowledge through problem-posing education. He also discussed the important role that honoring students’ voices and experiences played in his teaching and work with students through the integration of funds of knowledge, and his planning for his course. Dr. Love described funds of knowledge as:

So it’s basically the accumulated um cultural practices that um we as human beings living communities engage in. An example would be my mom teaching me how to cook or um my mom teaching the work ethic, work ethic and uh contributing to, it doesn’t necessarily need to be tied to money. . . . Um but that’s an example sort of work ethic um and you know in my house it was like we all contribute. . . . Um, in terms of you know getting a job and going and helping with the rent, I don’t know, that’s another example because um it’s sort of a values system. . . . That is uh helping, helping us all develop and be like members of a community or a family in this case. And often times with students of color and um because of the achievement gap, achievement gap um and things like that the dominant institution of schooling thinks of kids like um Sonia Nieto talks about as walking sets of deficits, like they don’t contribute to society. (P1, I2, L 260-273)

Funds of knowledge specifically take into consideration students’ experiences and voices in teaching and learning in the classroom. Dr. Love also described how recognizing students’ funds of knowledge can challenge deficit orientations that teachers have of
students. Later in Interview 2, Dr. Love and I again talked about the role funds of knowledge played in his teaching and learning with his students, he stated:

And, and so but I also keep telling them because everyone’s so unique and that the way we operationalize social justice is so unique to our positionalities and our voices oh and that goes back to your question I think, that that’s why it’s important to activate their you know funds of knowledge and getting their voices and opinions because in a sense um my training and a lot of other folks who use culturally responsive pedagogy etc. social justice teaching um disrupt the status quo of schooling because those status quo are based on those matrix of oppression. (P1, I2, L 325-330)

In this quote, Dr. Love describes how funds of knowledge, culturally responsive pedagogy, and social justice teaching disrupt the traditional systems of education that feed into the matrix of oppression.

Later in Interview 2, I posed a question to Dr. Love in which I asked him whether he modeled the use of culturally responsive teaching and the integration of funds of knowledge in his class or whether he simply discussed these methods of teaching and learning with his students. What follows is the excerpt from our conversation:

I: I do have a question so with like funds of knowledge and culturally responsive teaching and this so you model it, but you also, you’re modeling it for your students, but you yourself as the professor are using your students’ knowledge, funds of knowledge, and you’re using culturally responsive teaching with your students while you’re modeling it, is that correct?
P: Yes, because it’s, it’s um, it’s important to activate their prior knowledge.
I: Mmm hmm.
P: And uh also share my prior knowledge and we all share each others’ prior knowledge. Um, and and so yes it’s kind of like a double…
I: Right.
P: . . .Yeah.
I: It’s inside, I feel like some of this because we’re talking about education and teacher education you’re teaching within teaching so we’re using the methods that we use while we’re teaching them the methods, but we’re using them on them. P: Exactly.
I: And asking them to use it with their students.
P: Yes.
I: So there’s this, this dynamic sense of teaching and learning because of how we have to go about it, right.
P: Yes, good. I’m glad you framed it that way. And it kind of makes me feel better, but and then I thought about it, no that is good because what I’ve read is then since um you know, it’s kind of like hands-on in a sense.
I: Mmm hmm.
P: Like where uh, I’m teaching them this concept and then what I was going to have them do and I will do it next week um and I don’t know if you’re coming next week or when you’re coming back, but I’m I printed out a um I have it over there, but I won’t go get it um a sheet that they were gonna do um let’s see if I can pull it up here, for funds of knowledge so because if they get to do it on themselves they will be able to um say okay, and then you know because part of social justice is finding that common humanity right. That we all have social, we all have um we all have um funds of knowledge and if we’re able to humanize cause because people of color are dehumanized in society and therefore that’s social justice to humanize a particular group is just. Um, as I’m finding this it’s funny because I’m having them think about thee the technical dimensions of teaching and learning that we often focus on as educators and then, and then the social justice aspects and then these more philosophical aspects. (P1, I2, L 335-367)

This exchange speaks to the dynamics in Dr. Love’s teaching. Here, he is integrating the students’ funds of knowledge into his teaching. In addition, Dr. Love is also helping his students understand the importance of integrating students’ funds of knowledge into their future teaching and learning with students.

Another way that Dr. Love integrates student voice and experience into his teaching and learning for social justice is through critical incidents questionnaires or exit tickets. These questionnaires serve as opportunities to gather student feedback for planning future teaching and learning experiences for the preservice teachers. In this excerpt from Interview 1 Dr. Love described learning about and implanting critical incident questionnaires into his teaching:
So a skillful teacher is aware of that and the ways in which this um author uh um, Brookfield, talks about is through this notion called a critical incidents questionnaire. Um he calls it a critical incidents questionnaire because it’s like an exit ticket at the end of class where you uh ask your students five questions about, you know, what did you like in today’s or this week’s uh class, what did you not like, I’m paraphrasing, um, what what was surprising to you that a classmate or teacher did, um in relation to that affirmed you or not affirmed you. . . . Things like that, um so in through these, in gathering this data I’ve learned that one of them is that I use too many big words, okay, and that, and they, they also because I also care about student voice. . . . Um, I’m also operationalizing the ways in which I studied student voice in my teacher education program by doing this. . . . By gathering their voices, the the, in a sense these are teacher educator’s voice student voice, um by understanding how their experiencing my classroom so I can be self-reflexive in my own praxis to shift my um practice or praxis when um when I’m teaching. An example of that is that every time I use a big word I define it right away. (P1, I1, L 228-244)

I was able to see Dr. Love integrate this practice of defining big words during the observation of his class and I also observed how Dr. Love incorporated student voice into his teaching and learning. Examples of words that he used and defined included “conceptual framework,” “critical ethnography,” and “positionality.” A final example of Dr. Love honoring his students’ opinions, experience, and voice was shared in Reflective Journal 3 when he reflected on feedback he received from a student survey. Even though Dr. Love believed that he was giving students strategies and examples in class the student survey conveyed that the students still wanted additional strategies and examples. Dr. said:

In real life, they want strategies and they want like real life um, um examples. Um, and some of the textbooks that I’m using do have that so I’m, even though there’s they might be still, how do I frame it, uh they might be still um uh, sensing that they want more of that, but I have evidence that I’m giving you that. Does that make sense? . . . So, so how do I, I think this, this um week, so this is perfect [chuckle] I’m gonna enter that conversation and kind of reminders that on the
themes that I got from their student surveys, because I do care about students’ voice. (P1, J3, L 113-121)

These examples illustrating the ways in which Dr. Love honors students’ voices and experiences in his teaching and learning for social justice are just a few of the ways that he takes into consideration the experiences, needs, and backgrounds of his students. The final theme that speaks to the way that Dr. Love integrates social justice into his teaching and learning with preservice teachers is through his critical reflection and questioning of systematic inequity in society through praxis.

**Praxis = Critical Reflection and Action**

References to the importance of praxis in Dr. Love’s teaching for social justice were apparent throughout his experiences and examples of teaching and learning including his Reflective Journal 1, Interview 1, and the observation of his teaching of preservice teachers. There was a glimpse of the importance of praxis in Dr. Love’s teaching and learning for social justice embedded within his definition of social justice discussed previously. Through this theme of praxis equaling critical reflection and action, Dr. Love both named systems of inequity and challenged these systems through his teaching and learning for social justice. This can be seen in Reflective Journal 1 when he wrote:

> Praxis for me as Artiles and Kozleski argue is about *the process of inclusivity*—through critical reflection and action (praxis)—in situated and historical contexts I am metacognitive and analytic through and to criticality in order to be catalytic, communicative and interactive within systems, in our case school systems that are connected to broader societal systems where human beings are at the center. Therefore, praxis is useful and generative to disrupt hegemonic forces that privilege some and not others that lead to social injustice: violence, oppression and dehumanization. The latter three processes and phenomena lead to inequity that undergirds the matrix of oppression (Collins, 2000). In other words, my
broad, scholarly and professional activities regarding social justice issues as it relates to teaching, research and service have been profoundly impactful to my identity as a social justice teacher educator since it is through my own personal and professional development as a human being and social justice teacher educator that I engage in praxis to grapple with social justice issues inform my teaching, research and service with my preservice and inservice teachers here at [Midwestern University]. (P1, J1, L 33-45, emphasis in original)

In this journal entry Dr. Love describes how through critical reflection and action or praxis, one can combat and disrupt hegemony and the social injustices in our society today. The ways that Dr. Love incorporates praxis into his teaching and learning with his students can be seen in Interview 1 when Dr. Love reflected on a conversation that he had with Dr. Stevenson. Dr. Love explained:

Yeah, [Neil] we got to talking about um this, the climate and he, he brought up the point of whiteness and how hegemony and how he embodies hegemony everyday and um but we all, we all have a relationship to hegemony but we all have we all also are within the system too and um we’re not um what’s the word, [pause] we’re not devoid of hegemony. I don’t know if that’s the right word, way I want to say it but we we’re all part of it as well. . . . Okay, um now there might be a spectrum in terms of like where you fall, you know, from the center to the end, um but we all have, you know, privileges that maybe others don’t have that cause social justice predicaments, right, that are ontological, epistemological, axiological. Um, and so these things we’re all part of it. . . .In terms of the hegemony, uh and then what was I going to say, but in terms of sort of like um it’s [deep breath], how it’s like effected, okay one thing that Neil said was that he needs to start talking more about whiteness in his class. And I was like oh I’m already talking about whiteness. . . . Right. Which on the one level it could show you the different positionalities that, that is spectrum. . . . Right, that we’re all situated to um hegemony towards and um during the last class I shared some quotes to my class about how teaching is not neutral, right, the, the aspect of, of um Paulo Freire that teaching, you know if I’m neutral um I’m an agent within, I’m perpetuating the ideological state apparatus right, um in terms of thee um norms the hegemonic norm that um benefits some and doesn’t benefit others, that’s a dichotomy in itself, um so, so how it’s sort of, even though interestingly I, I haven’t talked about fear yet, but that is sort of the opposite of love, right. . . . And how that sort of the you know the fear mongering of the president-elect Donald Trump um is toxic right. And um the ways in which um he’s building a
political and um political and a sort of um I don’t want to use the word intersectional context but he’s sort of um making thee he’s kind of like hegemony on steroids, right. A hegemonic uh, you know um ideological state embodiment on steroids, steroid, steroids. . . . I’m blaneking, um which is based on fear and it’s based on all the nativism, it’s based on all of these aspects that other historically marginalized groups. Um, now, like I tell my students though too and I can’t pronounce this word, but we have to be um ambidextrous. . . . Ambidextrous, I can’t pronounce it but anyways. In the ways we in which sort of also um are, are engaging in praxis in terms of because a lot of them, a lot of my students um come from white middle class ways of being, being and doing, so they embody hegemony. . . . Like Neil, on an everyday um by just being who they are, right, because of their socialization because of, of their schemas, um and so how we engage in these cognitive, some people, some folks call it, you know, cognitive sort of coaching, uh in terms of the cognitive coaching, in terms but it’s, but I don’t adhere to a sort of to the medical, psychological model. . . . Of just existing in their minds we’re also bodily beings and uh experience the world um viscerally, um and so this sort of, it’s, uh it’s not just about the cognition of that mediates reality or that mediates people’s sort of, meaning making, that’s where I’m going with that. Um, and so, I’m cog, it goes back to these this deep level of praxis if you will, um, being cognizant of what I say because in what I say, it’s creating a particular perception…. Or a particular way in which I know I’m influencing my students, um, and so, and I think, but then at the bottom of it I think is fear too [chuckle] I think so. And it’s couch because I don’t exist in a vacuum, exist in a vacuum and I think nobody does. (P1, I1, L 512-569)

In this excerpt Dr. Love talks about the role that hegemony and praxis plays in his classroom where he is teaching predominately White preservice teachers. He also draws attention to a deep level of praxis in which he has to be cognizant of what he says and does when teaching and learning with his students. This portion of our first interview illustrates the critical reflection of praxis that Dr. Love puts into his teaching and learning with his preservice teachers in helping them make meaning and understand the role of hegemony.

During my observation of Dr. Love’s classroom I was able to see the role that praxis actively played in his teaching and learning with his students. At the beginning of
class Dr. Love briefly mentioned praxis and discourse. Then, during one of the class discussions about reframing the master narrative, reflexivity and praxis were brought up during the discussion. At one point in the class Dr. Love posed a series of questions for his preservice teachers to use as a free write, the questions included: “1. What is transition?, 2. What is culturally relevant pedagogy or teaching? 3. What is social justice? 4. What is praxis?, and 5. What do they have in common? What differences do they have?” (P1, O, p. 5). Later in class, praxis, reflexivity, and criticality of the system was brought up during discussion. Another excerpt from my field notes described the integration of praxis during the class:

The students talked about culturally relevant pedagogy and all cultures were brought up. Homogenous White versions, historically marginalized which groups are benefiting and which groups are not benefiting—these statements came from an exchange discussing a student’s definition of social justice and Dr. Love. Dr. Love brought up being aware of social context, culture is dynamic often times we’re not aware of it vis a vie Praxis, be aware of what we are reproducing or disrupting. Dr. Love then commented on antennas up. (P1, O, pp. 5-6)

Throughout the classroom observation, the ideas of praxis and reflection were integrated and discussed by Dr. Love and the preservice teachers. These notes from the classroom observation illustrate the importance that Dr. Love places on praxis not only in his own scholarship and learning, but also the important role it plays in his teaching and learning with preservice teachers.

Action also plays a role in Dr. Love’s operationalization of praxis in his teaching and learning for social justice. This could be seen in the way he discussed reflexivity and criticality of outcomes in school systems in relationship to transition planning in special education. In Reflective Journal 3 Dr. Love explained:
And being aware that I want them to get that technical aspect of transition planning and programming for students with disabilities and being aware of my strengths that I bring, but also my limitations and that um and, and even this is indexed within this practicum component that I’m, that I’m doing this semester based on last semester’s reflecting on the course where I didn’t want to just stay at that technical level. . . . But that technical, those technical aspects are key, but we need uh a continuous sort of reflectivity and criticality on certain bodies, outcomes in the school system, um Black and Brown folks or Native American folks um that this notion of a culturally responsive pedagogy uh is key and this sociopolitical consciousness, right, um and I’ve said all of this to them. (P1, J3, L 95-104)

Later in the journal Dr. Love comes back to this idea of transition planning in special education and described how he was going to assist his students in understanding how to think about integrating culturally responsive pedagogy into the transition process of a hypothetical student from Hawaii and the loss of indigenous lands in the child’s home state. Integrating culturally responsive pedagogy is just one example of how the preservice teachers can take action against the inequitable systems within schools that Dr. Love talked about in his journal.

Dr. Love also operationalized both critical reflection and action within praxis with his students when he encouraged them to have their antennas up. In Interview 1 Dr. Love stated:

One interesting thing is that I’m cognizant and aware and I tell them I have my antennas up. . . . When um, in terms of I, I share that sort of metaphor to thinking about like this notion of, of um, having our antennas up around social justice issues in our environment is one aspect. Another aspect is I do have my antennas up when their, um their um discourse changes as well so when they start using, and I’ve noticed some of my students start re-voicing. . . . Um, the term praxis. First, the first day of class they couldn’t pronounce it. . . . Right, and then by the seventh week they were kind of thinking about it a little bit more and I would reintroduce it. (P1, I1, L 199-210)
Dr. Love also referenced the students having their antennas up during the classroom observation which I referenced previously when quoting my field notes.

A second example of both the criticality and social action encompassed within Dr. Love’s integration of praxis was described in his Reflective Journal 3. In this journal he responded to the question--what impact do you believe your teaching for social justice has had on your preservice teachers and what are your hopes for your preservice teachers once they have left your class. Dr. Love stated:

... so the impact that I hope to do in um these types of heuristics that I give them as well um is to be critically reflective as they’re agents within the system this um either the special ed. system or the general ed. system, but understanding that they’re prob, they’re within this larger system and how can they um be agents of change within it uh for social justice. Um, but at the same time that’s like my rhetoric or what not. . . . You know. And thou that’s the idealism talking, but I think um my hopes is that they take that with them and that I’m planting seeds now even though they might not make all the connections, but I am seeing uh them make connections um like we’re in our eighth week now and um it’s always nice to see them thinking and having them make those connections um so that’s good. (P1, J3, L 53-62)

Here, Dr. Love speaks directly to his hope that the preservice teachers can be agents of change within the educational system and take action to change systems of inequity whether they teach in special education or general education.

As shown through Dr. Love’s interviews, journals, and observation, he is a teacher educator committed to teaching for social justice. This can be seen through the four themes identified in his life experiences and teaching and learning for social justice. Experiences influencing Dr. Love’s life in relationship to his role as a social justice teacher educator are his intersecting personal and professional identities that contribute to the theme of him being authentically himself. As a social justice teacher educator, the
themes of co-construction of knowledge through problem-posing education, honoring students’ voices and experiences, and praxis equaling critical reflection and action speak directly to how Dr. Love integrates social justice into his teaching and learning with his preservice teachers.

Professor Alice Miller

Professor Alice Miller is a full-time instructor at Midwestern University and she is pursuing her Ed.D. in Curriculum and Instruction. Professor Miller identifies as a White, middle-class, female and her preferred pronouns are she/her/hers. Professor Miller has many intersecting identities that make her the social justice teacher educator she is. Some of these identities include being a former elementary educator, being an advocate for children with disabilities, being a feminist, and being a mother. Professor Miller’s multiple experiences ranging from childhood to her current position have played significant roles in her teaching and learning for social justice.

Professor Miller’s Conceptualization of Social Justice in Education

In Interview 1, I asked Professor Miller to define social justice as it pertains to education and teacher education. She described social justice as:

Okay, so for me, social justice, um, has to do with helping future teachers recognize, um, bias, institutional racism those things that impact kids that they’re not aware of right, so they’re like, but I’m a nice person. . . . So I should, I’m gonna be able to help all my kids, so it’s about helping them understand that there are systems exist, that exist that they’ve had nothing to do with, but they’ve been around for a very long time so we don’t recognize them, it’s just kind of how they’ve grown up. So hopefully, my idea of social justice is making them recognize that there are barriers, there’s oppression, there’s bias, um, out there and as an educator they have to recognize it and then hopefully try and breakdown those systems, work towards equity for their students and they don’t um and they
don’t get to go in and just teach their content and think “oh I did a good job today,” and walk out the door and be done. (P2, I1, L 12-23)

It is within this conceptualization of social justice that Professor Miller’s interviews, journals, and observation are situated.

Advocate

The first theme identified pertaining to the experiences that have influenced Professor Miller’s life as a social justice teacher educator in relationship to teaching for social justice is that of being an advocate. Professor Miller wears many hats in her role as advocate ranging from being an advocate for children with disabilities to being an advocate for Islam. Professor Miller’s role as an advocate for children with disabilities is a dual role that she shares with her role as a mother. In Interview 1 Professor Miller described these multiple roles when she explained:

Um well, okay, so I have two kids with disabilities, right, and so I have seen, um, even from my own perspective how I’ve had to shift my expectations for them, my. I think at first when my daughter was first diagnosed I felt it was my role to protect her and like poor [Sophia] she has a disability, she can’t do this, she can’t do that, um, I just have to keep her safe. Well, that’s stupid, [chuckle] she gets the same, she should have the same rights as everyone to live life, right, and that comes with good and bad experiences. . . . Right, I can’t, I shouldn’t put her in a bubble and think that oh that’s a nice life. So, that for me personally has been, and I’ve had to advocate for her along those lines with other people because they’ve wanted to put her in a bubble, keep her safe, keep her protected as opposed to letting her just experience life. So, I’ve had to really push back against the stigma of being disabled and that it is something sad and not something that’s just part of the human experience, right. So, so that has been eye opening for me, um, and it’s something that I had to learn myself, so now I have to teach that to other people, that’s definitely was part of my journey and recognizing the fact that I need to call out people when they, you know are very ablest or you know want to pity people who have disabilities or want to put them up on a pedestal and think “oh your so
inspiring,” [chuckle]. . . Oh okay, they’re just a person, right [laughter]. (P2, II, L 110-128)

When asked if there were any attributes that Professor Miller thought set her apart from her colleagues, Professor Miller responded, “I would say probably I’ve had life experiences that other people have not had, so I would say that. . . . Well, like having two kids that I have had to advocate for. . . . Relentlessly” (P2, II, L429-432).

Not only does Professor Miller’s role as an advocate for children with disabilities exist within her role as a mother, her advocacy role also extends to her professional work including her dissertation topic and the continuing education opportunities and conferences she has chosen to participate in. Professor Miller described these experiences in Reflective Journal 1:

And then um, probably let’s see, um, I have been to several conferences especially around disability advocacy and so that’s something personally I have had experiences with and so going to those conferences and seeing such strong advocates um and knowing that again, this is something that we need to teach our preservice teachers about their role as advocates and their gonna walk into school districts that think it’s okay to segregate kids and they need to be the ones to stand up and say “I’m not sure this is right, I think this kid could be in my class,” and the reasons behind that and why it’s important. (P2, J1, L 36-42)

This excerpt illustrates how Professor Miller’s role as an advocate for children with disabilities includes her intersectional identities as a mother and as a teacher educator and the importance she has placed on preparing preservice teachers to advocate for students with disabilities.

In addition to Professor Miller’s role as an advocate for children with disabilities, she also identifies as an advocate for Islam. This portion of her advocacy stems from her
experiences living and teaching in Middle Eastern countries during her career as an elementary teacher. She described this advocacy role for Islam in Interview 1:

So, um, so that for me was probably the biggest shift. Also after 9/11, I had lived in predominately Muslim countries for 11 years right and so we were actually living in [Middle Eastern country] when 9/11 happened and so I saw the other side of um grief. Obviously as Americans we were all grieving, but I also saw the Muslim community grieve because they knew that they were gonna be represented by those 19 terrible people um just because they had one thing in common with them, that was religion that a lot of Americans don’t understand and fear. So, I saw that side of it and then when we moved back to the states, um, having to be an advocate, um, for my Muslim friends, who would get stereotyped and would be, um, singled out because of their religion and knowing that that’s so not true [laughter]. . . . You know it’s like a religion of like a billion people and to call them all…thing is idiotic, so that has been another passion of mine, is just making sure that Islam is seen as what it is, it’s a religion that is as diverse as Christianity, so you’re going to have people of all different kind of, you know some that are really adherent and some that don’t go to mosque every Friday, just like [laughter]. . . . Who are Christian and don’t ever step foot in a church, right. So it’s just as varied as that and it’s just one type of religion it doesn’t make someone, um, want to go out and kill other people [laughter] it’s just that’s something to do with maybe some mental illness, maybe some other things going on in their life. . . . Beyond religion so yes. (P2, I1, L 130-151)

Professor Miller also referenced her Muslim friends when I asked her if there was anything that set her apart from her colleagues when she said, “Um, having some of my best friends be Muslim, so I see that daily” (P2, I1, L 434).

Professor Miller also believes that it is important to advocate for a great education for all kids. When responding to a question in Reflective Journal 3 regarding her decision to tell her preservice teachers that she was a social justice teacher educator she stated, “I’m not sure I even really made a decision, I just this is who I am this is what I believe in and we have to advocate and for all kids and that means being uncomfortable and asking tough questions and constantly reflecting on what we’re doing and why we’re doing it
and how can we do it better” (P2, J3, L 41-44). This idea of advocating for education for all kids was echoed in Reflective Journal 2 when she discussed an experience with a family she knew when teaching in the Middle East. The school she was working at was sold and the rules for students attending the school changed. This change meant some families that had multiple children at the school for years would no longer be able to attend due to the high cost. In her journal she stated:

. . . so that was really frustrating because I really believe, you know, everyone should have the opportunity for great education and at that time public schools and probably still to this day, public schools in [Middle Eastern country] are not fantastic. So, it just made me realize that like hit home again how important free education, quality education is. So that’s been frustrating in the current political climate when we hear about their nominee for you know Secretary of Education talking about, you know, private schools and charter schools and defunding public education it just gives me shivers. We need really, really good public education and that’s what a democracy should be based on. So that’s frustrating. Um, but other than that I can’t think of any really life experiences or things that I think it’s just part of who I am I have this weird compulsive [chuckle] um idea that everyone um deserves the opportunity, everyone um has not had equal opportunity in this country and so we need to rectify that as best we can. And I know it’s impossible you can’t take away life situations where parents die or pass away or get incarcerated, but how can we make sure that those kids get the best opportunity that they can despite life can be cruel sometimes and education seems like something we can control better than we do through funding, through access to, you know, excellent classes and great teachers and opportunities outside of school, opportunities to get into nature. Anyway, I feel that is something we could do so much better at, but the disparity is still pretty apparent. (P2, J2, L 27-45)

Again, Professor Miller voiced her belief that all students should have the opportunity for a great education. This idea of advocating for all students is mirrored in her choice to integrate social justice teaching into her teacher preparation coursework which will be discussed in more detail in following sections.
Teaching for Social Justice is a Continuous Journey

The second theme related to the experiences that have influenced Professor Miller’s life in relationship to being a social justice teacher educator is teaching for social justice is a continuous journey. Throughout her interviews and journaling, Professor Miller described many experiences ranging from her childhood to her current teaching and learning with preservice teachers that illustrate how teaching for social justice is a continuous journey for her.

In Interview 1 Professor Miller alluded to the fact that she grew up in a diverse city and community when she explained, “Growing up in [Midwestern city in Midwestern state] where we had an extremely diverse group of friends with my parents. You know, just, um, seeing those different experiences that once we moved to [local Midwestern community] it was like [laughter] where are all the people it's kind of White here” (P2, I1, L 434-437). In a follow-up question in Interview 2 I asked Professor Miller whether she believed being surrounded by diversity in her childhood had, had an impact on her teaching and learning for social justice. Professor Miller responded:

You know, I don’t know [laughter]. . . . Um, I feel like diversity was always just kind of the norm being around people who were different, being around people who went to different kinds of churches or not even churches just different faith. . . . You know so it didn’t seem weird that our dinner table often looked very different and my Mom, bless her heart, would try to make food from a lot of different places [chuckle]. So, we to this day never eat pumpkin pie at Thanksgiving we always eat sweet potato pie. . . . Because she was trying to be accommodating to our friends from the South who very much grew up eating sweet potato pie. So um, that was they did not want pumpkin pie when they came over for Thanksgiving [laughter] so she was happy to try and it’s actually tastes exactly the same if you ask me [laughter], but we still always make sweet potato pie. Um, so I don’t know, I just I don’t think I ever noticed it. . . . It’s just the way life was until moving here when I was 14 and then it was kind of like huh
Professor Miller’s experience living in a diverse community as a young child, moving to a White community at the age of 14, and always having diversity as part of her norm was part of her journey to teach for social justice.

Another experience in Professor Miller’s continuous journey towards being a social justice teacher educator was a class she took during her master’s program. She described this experience in Reflective Journal 1:

I also took a class when I was getting my masters on social justice um education and the professor in that class was fantastic and I can remember specifically our topic on, um, talking about gay and lesbian, um, challenges and issues with elementary students and before I took that class as an elementary education teacher I would have been like no I can’t, I can talk about people and being nice to everyone, but I could never, I never thought I could have specifically brought that topic up to second graders or fifth graders. And when we talk about it in class it really made me realize while kids are talking about it anyway, as the educator it’s my responsibility to make sure that they have correct information, um, and I’m sorry if parents are gonna get maybe bent out of shape, but it’s my job to make sure they understand, um, humanity and respecting everyone and she showed us a video that was so powerful and it really showed how you could have good conversations with kids, you can talk about stereotyping, um, and why it is important to recognize what stereotypes are and then you can talk to them about being a good advocate and how being a good person. And so that was kind of eye opening for me because I would have, before that class, I would have said oh no, as an elementary teacher I don’t think I can talk about that in class [chuckle] um so, um, now I know I can [chuckle]. (P1, J1, L 20-34)

The experiences within this class served as a moment of consciousness raising for Professor Miller and assisted her in discovering how talking about LGBT* issues could be done in the elementary classroom.

Many of the experiences that Professor Miller shared regarding her continuous journey towards social justice were related to her current teaching responsibilities, where
she teaches a course that covers different aspects of diversity. She described the course in

Interview 1:

So we are mandated by the state to cover age, religion, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, um, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and there’s eight, I can’t remember the eighth. Ableing is the eighth, I think so, anyway. Oh, and now it’s in the language of the state that we have to cover um political difference, talk about a challenge [laughter]. . . . Topic to cover so, um, so we have, that’s a lot right and a short amount of time. So I don’t feel like I can do adequate justice, um I feel like I could do an entire semester on poverty, you know instead of two weeks on poverty. (P2, I1, L 470-477)

In Reflective Journal 1 Professor Miller described how the experience of teaching this course covering matters of diversity has impacted her role as a social justice teacher educator she explained:

Specifically, probably teaching [required course in teacher preparation]. When I started teaching that class, um, there were two other people teaching it and so I got to kind of learn from them and it was interesting cause they had very different perspectives on that class and what should be covered. And so it was interesting to just kind of gather their syllabus, their resources and read. And I hadn’t spent much time reading about these topics before so that, um, being prepared to teach it required me to really dig in and learn more and so I had the experience of then gaining new information and new insight and understanding that I had a huge responsibility to make sure that um students who left my class understood the inequities and the oppression and the bias that exist in our society so that they could then work to um help students overcome some of the challenges that exist and I think if we just ignore those challenges they’re not going to be prepared to teach every child. And we need to prepare them to teach everyone [chuckle]. So that was a big um step for me, is just doing more reading, digging in. (P2, J1, L 10-22)

Even this semester, after having taught this course for several semesters, Professor Miller has modified it and integrated new teaching ideas through the integration of various discussion strategies. This process of continuously changing and looking for ways to
improve her course illustrates how for Professor Miller teaching for social justice is a continuous journey.

The final example of Professor Miller’s teaching for social justice as being a continuous journey comes from part of her demographic survey. When asked if she was a self-identified social justice teacher educator Professor Miller paused and then marked yes on the survey. I asked her about this pause in filling-out the survey in the Interview 1. Our discussion demonstrates Professor Miller’s continuous journey when teaching for social justice. Here is the excerpt from Interview 1:

I: So, something that you said when we were working on the demographic questionnaire.
P: Yeah.
I: When I asked the question are you a social justice teacher educator.
P: . . .
I: You wrote down yes, but what you said was.
P: I’m a wanna-be [laughter]
I: I’m a wanna-be. Tell me about that.
P: Okay, so like I said, I firmly believe it’s so, so important, I just don’t know if I’m yet, um, able to convey how important it is to all of my students effectively. I still feel like I have a lot to learn, um, and I feel like I need to do a better job of looking at some of the data, like in supporting, you know, so I can show the data to my students and all of this like important information. So, I certainly believe in it and I want to be it, but I don’t know if I’m effectively.
I: Okay.
P: Doing that for my students.
I: Okay.
P: Right, I still have a lot to learn [laughter].
I: As we all do.
P: Yeah. (P2, I1, L 209-226)

This exchange is an example of the humility that Professor Miller has for the social justice work she does both in her personal and professional life. This discussion also
shows the commitment that Professor Miller has to being a life-long learner and how her teaching for social justice is continuous journey.

Know Your Students

Another theme in Professor Miller’s interviews, journal, and observation in relationship to the integration of social justice into teaching and learning within her teacher preparation course was that it is imperative that educators know their students. In addition, Professor Miller also emphasized knowing about students’ communities and building a relationship with students’ in which teachers understand students’ histories and perspectives. Evidence of this theme was found throughout Professor Miller’s interviews, as well as her journaling. This idea of knowing students served a dual role within Professor Miller’s teaching for social justice. First, it was important to her to know her students in order to meet their needs within her classroom. This can be seen in our discussion during Interview 2 where I followed-up on the importance of Professor Miller knowing her preservice teachers:

I: So, in your first interview you stressed the importance of your preservice teachers getting to know their students.
P: Mmm hmm.
I: Getting to know students’ backgrounds.
P: Right.
I: You discussed modeling different ways to go about doing that in your classroom.
P: Mmm hmm.
I: Your culture wall, for example.
P: Right.
I: Um, let’s see and incorporating those things, students’ identities into the classroom the curriculum, creating a safe space, um does this play a role in your teaching of the preservice teachers?
P: Yes, because I do have to get to know them to teach them well, right?
I: Mmm hmm.
P: So, I have a unique class that covers all majors, all like people that are go into teach early childhood to people who are going to teach high school physics, so I think that context provides a unique opportunity to be like what do you need to take away from this, where are you at, what’s important to you, how does this apply, because I actually had a student that was going to be a science ed. teacher tell me that science didn’t need to be culturally relevant cause science was science. So I was like, okay, so this student needs me to go find some different articles [laughter] you know I need to find some different information for this student than I did for some other.
I: Mmm hmm.
P: Students though that was um you know important for me to know that, that is where their mindset was and I think creating that atmosphere of yeah we can have good conversations, we can talk about these things, um I would have never had known that if he didn’t feel comfortable saying that. (P2, I2, L 49-75)

The importance of Professor Miller knowing her preservice teachers can be seen in many different layers in this discussion. First, Professor Miller was able to create an atmosphere in her classroom where her preservice teachers felt comfortable asking questions and sharing their opinions. Second, through this relationship that Professor Miller builds with her preservice teachers she is able to meet their individual needs and help them to grow in their learning of their specific content areas. Third, building relationships with her preservice teachers also served as a model for how the preservice teachers can build relationships with their students in their future classrooms.

Another example of Professor Miller both learning about her students and modeling this process is described in Professor Miller’s response when asked how she integrates social justice education into her teaching and learning with her students. Professor Miller described this process as:

While I’m a firm believer in that they need to get to know their students, right. And so we do talk about, um, what does it mean, you know, if you have students who are Asian, Native American, and things like that, however, I always caveat that with they’re individuals first, right? Their ethnicity, their religion, can tell
you a little about them, but not the whole story, right. So you have to do the hard work of getting to know who they are as people, right, and that so I try and model that, we try and do some activities where, okay, I ask all of them to bring an artifact that represents some of their culture to class and we share that and I say if you were teaching and this was your class how could you do this with your own students and then we talk about having like a culture wall in the classroom, right. Um, and then we talk about what are other ways, you know can students show you a little bit about who they are. . . . So, then another day I have them all bring in a quote that is meaningful to them so they get to share that, and then another day we do um, they get with a partner and they have to tell a time in their life where something challenged them and what they learned from it, so they talk to each other [laughter]. . . . Right and they have to share something personal and so they see the power of that and that, that is half of their job as a teacher is getting to know their students. . . . And so that’s, I believe that strongly. (P2, II, L 233-252)

Another part of knowing one’s students that Professor Miller stressed was learning and knowing about students’ communities and the histories of students’ communities. The importance that Professor Miller places on this part of knowing one’s students was observed in her Reflective Journal 3. First Professor Miller asserted:

“And I try to get them to think about scenarios kind of like within the classroom, within the building and then within their communities so they recognize that they have a responsibility to think about the communities they’re in not just what they do within the four walls of their classroom” (P2, J3, L 35-38). Then later in Reflective Journal 3 when Professor Miller was responding to a question regarding the advice she would give educators aspiring to teach for social justice. Professor Miller stated:

Well, I would say first of all you better know your students, you better know their communities, you have to have that understanding of that historical context, and the current um climate in the community. I don’t think you can, like for example I don’t think you should be teaching in [adjacent community] if you don’t understand what the impact of the [company] Meat Packing plant closing had on the community. And you have to go back and understand cause the history impacts our future and our present, whether we like to think it does or not. I’ve
heard a lot of people say oh well that was you know that was a long time ago, no we’re still dealing with the implications with, I mean you look at the wealth gap, there’s a reason there’s a wealth gap, it has to go back to the history um of who had opportunities and who didn’t. So you need to know that as a teacher because it’s really easy to fall into the blame game like oh well you know get a job, earn your money, um if you don’t look at the historical um the history behind what happened and why these things exist, you can very easily start to put blame where blame doesn’t deserve to be put. (P2, J3, L 75-87)

Through these excerpts from Reflective Journal 3 it is clear the importance that Professor Miller places on knowing and understanding not only students, but also learning about the communities in which one’s students live.

The final examples of this theme comes from the importance that Professor Miller places on creating strong relationships and connections with her preservice teachers. In Interview 2 when asked how she creates a classroom where she is able to push her students outside of their comfort zone she described the following:

Well we talk about it first. About that these things are sometimes uncomfortable to talk about um and then that’s okay to be uncomfortable and that’s when we can learn, right. And so then I also try to get them to know each other well so I make sure they’re not just getting to know the people at their table, I make them move a lot and get with different . . . Groups of people. Um, I invite them to talk to the class and share their stories so it’s you know bringing something that represents their culture, something that is important to them, a quote that is a favorite of theirs, what’s something you know they aspire to be like the theme in their classroom. Um, and then one day I ask them to share either a story of a difficult time they had to go through or a story of when they made a mistake and wished they had done something differently, but I just have them do that with a partner and so it’s not, and if they want to share . . . Out to the whole class they can and they love that because they’re like I never knew this person like her brother died when she was in high school, you know how difficult that was to go through and it’s like they recognize how everyone has a story. . . . And nobody gets through this life [laughter] without stuff, right, everyone has a story, and so I think that, that creates that we need to care for each other, we need to nurture each other, and so we’re going to have to have these conversations where we got to ask those tough questions so down the line if you have a student maybe you’ll be better
prepared to have that conversation with the student, but sometimes I feel like certain classes we get that. (P2, I2, L 135-155)

The strong and nurturing relationships that Professor Miller talked about within Interview 2 were seen during my classroom observation. At the end of the class once everyone left, there were two students that stayed behind to talk with Professor Miller. This excerpt from my field notes describes the interaction between Professor Miller and the preservice teachers, “As the students left some students stayed back to talk with AM. One student hugged AM and tearfully commented on the class. A second student commented that she had heard the class was going to be really hard, but she learned a lot and she thought about things she hadn’t thought about before” (P2, O, p. 4). This exchange with the preservice teachers shows the deep connection that Professor Miller created with these students.

Nothing’s Gonna Change If We Don’t Get Uncomfortable

In addition to the importance that Professor Miller places on knowing your students, there was a second theme in her experiences and examples of teaching and learning that speaks to how she integrates social justice teaching and learning into her work with preservice teachers. This second theme builds upon the foundation that Professor Miller creates by knowing her students. Once she learns about her students through community building, Professor Miller begins the process of pushing the preservice teachers outside of their comfort zones.

Professor Miller’s interviews and journaling stresses the role that making the preservice teachers uncomfortable played in her teaching and learning for social justice. As discussed previously, Professor Miller teaches a required undergraduate course where
she is required to teach about diversity topics (e.g., race, ethnicity, sexual orientation).

Rather than simply teaching about race or socioeconomic status from a textbook, Professor Miller challenges her students to step outside their comfort zones and challenge existing systems and inequities in society including institutionalized racism, the opportunity gap, white privilege, bias, and issues of oppression. Professor Miller strives to empower her students to examine their own biases, ask questions, and challenge the status quo in order to challenge the educational inequities in the United States.

In her first interview when talking about her journey as a social justice teacher educator Professor Miller describes the idea of making her preservice teachers uncomfortable in her classroom. Professor Miller explained:

Yeah, I would have never thought that, that was my job to start with, so I think it’s definitely been something that I have come to understand better as I’ve gone along, um, teaching [required course in teacher preparation] and just working with preservice teachers and so I would say that I started out, um, very naively, thinking I just want everyone, you know if we’re all just nice to each other, um, I want to make everyone comfortable, um, especially being like a non-tenured teacher, um, you want, you do care what they say about you on those little reviews, right, when they evaluate you. . . . You care [chuckle] and someone else is gonna read that and so, I was very hesitant to make them uncomfortable to begin with, but then as I learned more and my eyes opened a bit more, um, I realized mmm, nothing’s gonna change if we don’t get uncomfortable [chuckle] so I have to, um, sometimes make them uncomfortable. And that’s okay, and but I talk about it with them that you know, there are going to be ideas and things that are gonna be like new to you that might make you feel defensive. . . . That might make you feel uncomfortable, but I said I think that that’s, that’s okay we’re gonna talk through it and we’re gonna work through it, um, and I talk about guilt and I said, it’s not about making anyone feel guilty that’s a wasted emotion, we don’t need guilt, um, so you should never feel guilty for who you are, where you come from, the opportunities you’ve had, that’s just the luck of the draw that’s just what you got. It’s just about recognizing other people have not had the same opportunities, the same, so you need to be like, instead of feeling guilty you should be angry about that. . . . And think about how we can change that. So I
think for me that was the biggest thing recognizing the fact that it was all right to make my students uncomfortable, um, and that was hard for me at first, I like everyone to get along. (P2, I1, L 38-63)

Here Professor Miller speaks directly to her journey of questioning whether she should make her preservice teachers uncomfortable and then coming to the realization that it was important to make her preservice teachers feel uncomfortable in order to create change.

In Reflective Journal 2 when Professor Miller was asked how this study might impact her teaching and planning for the spring semester. Here Professor Miller wrote about making people feel uncomfortable and creating change when she stated:

Um, so I do think the study will make me reflect more, make sure I’m very clear with my students, um, about what I hope they’re future as an educator looks like and that it is very easy as an educator to get comfortable and not rock the boat, but occasionally we need to make people uncomfortable if we’re gonna impact um education, and make positive changes. I think our education system has a lot of things that are right, we just still have work to do and we can’t be complacent about that. (P2, J2, L 78-84)

In her final journal reflection, Professor Miller described making students uncomfortable and asking hard questions in order to create change. Professor Miller asserted:

Um, I still have a lot to learn, I am certainly not perfect at it. I think every semester I learn a little bit more. I used to be very much wanting all of my students to be comfortable and happy and now I tell them there are times I’m going to make you uncomfortable, we’re going to be uncomfortable together because we’re not gonna know what the perfect answer is or what the easy solution is and that’s part of life, um but if we don’t talk about those things that make us uncomfortable or ask the hard questions, nothing’s gonna change. So it’s not about being nice and comfortable all of the time, it’s about figuring out what is making us uncomfortable, why, how can we talk about it better, what questions can I better ask or understand so that hopefully uh we can make changes. Um, I think that what they have to remember that having those conversations and I have a guest speaker that comes sometimes and I love one thing he always says is as soon as it becomes about you, you’ve lost. And it can’t be because you’re gonna be uncomfortable or because you’re worried about what’s gonna happen. It’s
always got to be the heart of what matters is your students and if that’s what’s best for them or if that’s what needs to happen then that’s what needs to happen, it’s not about what makes you uncomfortable. Um, hmm, [pause] and I don’t know there’s not a guide book to being a great social justice teacher, I’m workin’ on it. (P2, J3, L 106-121)

This statement speaks to Professor Miller challenging her students to embrace being uncomfortable in order to ask hard questions and create change.

I want to offer a few examples from one of Professor Miller’s interviews and her journaling that describes how she challenges her students outside of their comfort zones while empowering them to think critically, ask questions and create change. In Interview 1 Professor Miller discussed some of the issues of inequity that she integrates into her classroom. Here Professor Miller described teaching and learning with her students:

The other part of it is I think just trying to bring in um like some of the bigger ideas around inequity, um looking at you know the wealth gap, looking at hiring policies, looking at the social, a big one we have to talk about is like incarceration rates, what does that mean for schools. . . . How are we disciplining our students, who are we disciplining, are we questioning who we’re disciplining and why is that so we have to look at bias. Um, there’s um an article that we read called “Where Bias Begins the Truth About Stereotypes,” and I love this article because it really explains well how we all have bias even those of us who, like I tell them myself, I have bias. . . . I can’t help it, it’s there so what do I do about it, I don’t want it, but I have it so that step to just recognizing it and then looking at our actions are we reacting that way because of an implicit bias we have. And we talk about, um, like the Black Lives Matter Movement what is it, I bet most of us say most police officers are good people they think they’re good people right? Do they possibly have implicit bias when it comes to young Black men? Most likely they do [chuckle] right, so is it important that they recognize that, right, and who is helping them recognize it, so, that’s a touchy [deep sigh] topic, um, but it’s a good one to have and it was really nice that they had that panel Black Lives Matter on campus, like the, talked about that this semester, so I had a few students go and then they were able to come back and report. So it’s another thing I ask them to do, is they have to find some speaker that’s coming to campus, something on the community and they have to go to it and then report back to the class what they learned. Um, so I think that talk about that bias and that stereotypes and just
recognizing that we all have it. So, that’s kind of where we start in class we have to start there and then we talk about world views, how do we come to them, what is your culture, why do you have it. A lot of times we think because everyone around us has a similar culture that we don’t have culture, we don’t recognize it when you live in it everyday [laughter]. . . . So. (P2, I1, L 252-277)

This description of Professor Miller’s teaching and learning deals directly with sensitive issues and current events in society, along with implicit and explicit bias. In Reflective Journal 3 Professor Miller stressed the importance of questioning and creating change and when asked about what impact she believed her teaching for social justice has had on her preservice teachers she responded:

Um, well I hope that they um their eyes have been open a little bit to the fact that um inequity is everywhere, um opportunities do not, are not equal for everyone across the board. Um, we don’t live in a meritocracy, something I like to hit on a little bit um and they just start to question why. Um, and not accepting things as that’s the way they’ve always been or that’s the way we do things I just want them to be willing to question things and say hmm I’m not sure this is the best for kids what could we change, how could we do things differently? Um, and hopefully they don’t just think about their own kids they’re teaching, but look around you um what about the town next to you? How are you making sure that your students recognize that there’s definitely an opportunity gap in our world and who has opportunities and who doesn’t so hopefully it’s not something that they shy away from and they recognize and are willing to ask questions. What are your hopes for your preservice teachers once they have left your class? I think I just kind of what I just said really just make sure that you don’t accept things as this is the way they’ve always been cause that is probably the one thing in education that frustrates me the most this is the way we’ve always done things. Um so ask questions, change, I used to feel very comfortable about telling them that they needed to be change agents and that we weren’t educating them to go out and accept the status quo and that they had to be really good at what they did so that they could advocate for change with more power because if you are really good at what you do then you have more weight and people listen to what you say. So the first thing they have to do is be a really good teacher um and then they can really have power and advocate for change. (P2, J3, L 9-28)

Later in Reflective Journal 3 Professor Miller described how she encouraged her preservice teachers to ask questions:
I mean through our class discussions we talk about what is important, what they should consider, why I think it’s important, and we practice a lot like questioning things, um so hopefully, like I tell them you’re supposed to question your teachers, ask them why, but that’s really hard for them and I, and we talk about don’t you want your students to question you and not just accept everything you say at face value? I think that’s really important to create critical thinkers that means you have to dig deep, not just get those surface level answers that are the easy answers to find, you’ve got to dig a little deeper. (P2, J3, L 48-55)

This example of Professor Miller’s teaching also shows how she uses herself as an example, sharing that she too has bias and challenges her own bias by asking what she can do about it. Professor Miller also emphasized the importance of critical thinking in this reflection. These final examples from Professor Miller’s data helped describe the fact “nothing’s gonna change if we don’t get uncomfortable” (P2, I1, L 48) and the ways in which Professor Miller empowers preservice teacher to think critically, ask questions, and create change even when it makes them uncomfortable.

Professor Miller’s interviews, journaling, and observation were rich with information about her multiple identities and experiences that influence her teaching for social justice. The personal experiences that have influenced Professor Miller’s life as a social justice teacher educator included her multiple roles as an advocate and the fact that for her teaching for social justice is a continuous journey. When looking at the ways Professor Miller integrated teaching and learning for social justice with her preservice teachers, the themes of knowing your students and challenging her students’ thinking spoke to her teaching and learning for social justice.

Dr. Happy Flower

Dr. Happy Flower is a professor in the COE at Midwestern University. Dr. Flower identifies as an African American female. Her preferred pronouns are she/her/hers.
Throughout her interviews and journaling Dr. Flower described many of her life experiences that contributed to her teaching for social justice. Throughout Dr. Flower’s interviews and journals she described the many ways that social justice is integrated into her life and her work at the university.

Dr. Flower’s Conceptualization of Social Justice in Education

In our first interview and then several times throughout her narrative Dr. Flower described how social justice as a natural part of her teaching. In Interview 1 Dr. Flower both defined what social justice meant to her in relationship to teaching, teacher education, and teacher preparation and described the natural role social justice plays in her teaching when she stated, “Um, social justice is a natural part of teaching uh because daily um things are going to occur inside the classroom, as well as outside the classroom involving um students, student behaviors, um student content, and there’s no way to teach without social justice. And so social justice is uh providing for the fair, equal, and just experiences and opportunities for all” (P3, I1, L 14-18). I wanted a clearer understanding of her conceptualization of social justice so I followed-up this first question by asking her to define the term “equal.” Dr. Flower responded, “Equal is um making a provision that everyone regardless of their status, background, and other unforeseeable um situations and conditions that they all have an equal or fair or balanced opportunity to be a part of the same type of experience. . . . Without um bias, prejudice, uh segregation, separation, or a teacher’s personal uh decision about um her or his individual judgment of people” (P3, I1, L 20-25).
Something that was prominent in Dr. Flower’s interviews, journals, and observation was the work she does surrounding matters of social justice at Midwestern University. In addition to teaching courses in which she integrates social justice, Dr. Flower is also active in researching and educating others on Black children and families both locally and nationally. Dr. Flower has written several books that incorporate social justice into them and her current research surrounds Black girls in the United States. Dr. Flower believes that, “Social justice means that you are for what is right and what is equal um and fair for everyone. Now sometimes that’s difficult to um implement when you’re dealing with various issues, but that is what I hope my students will um leave the university and do” (P3, J3, L 23-26). Dr. Flower also believes that social justice is something that one stands up for even when one faces opposition. She asserted:

Um, I would like to say that if you, if you decide to become a social justice teacher educator you have got to stand up because people are gonna approach you with this attitude of oh-oh here you go again, um okay why are you always bringing up these issues. Um, why is it that you can see the social justice perspective on everything, we ain’t got time for that. Or, not um not becoming discouraged because there’s some um issues that come up and people don’t agree with you. (P3, J3, L 204-209)

In her closing thoughts regarding this project Dr. Flower also said, “And so, that the one final thing that if you decide to become a social justice teacher educator you can’t be one today and then not one tomorrow then come back a month later” (P3, J3, L 219-220).

Thus, Dr. Flower believes that standing up for social justice issues is an important part of every day when one is a social justice teacher educator.

With a clear picture of Dr. Flower’s conceptualization of social justice and her commitment to social justice as a teacher educator it is important to understand the life
experiences that have influenced her teaching for social justice. Dr. Flower’s narrative
shed light on the many complexities that accompanied her life as an African American in
the southern United States and it is this story that is told through the theme of living
through historic times.

Living Through Historic Times

This theme of Dr. Flower’s life experiences that had influenced her teaching for
social justice is called living through historic times. The reasons for this label is asserted
by Dr. Flower in Reflective Journal 1, “I also want everyone to know that my philosophy
of equality and justice all stem from many years growing up in segregated South Carolina
and not really understanding the impact of what had experienced until I was a college
adult” (P3, J1, L 75-79). Here Dr. Flower eludes to two of the four supporting categories
of this theme including childhood and college. Dr. Flower grew up in Charleston, South
Carolina during segregation. Her experiences in childhood, her undergraduate studies,
and her graduate studies have had a lasting impact on her and all contribute to her identity
as a social justice teacher educator.

To illustrate this theme, here is the first story that Dr. Flower shared with me in
Interview 1 when I asked her about her journey towards becoming a social justice teacher
educator. She prefaced the story by saying:

I would say ever since I was a little girl and some of my experiences I didn’t
realize the impact of social justice until I was in college as an adult. I just, you
know we grew up, I grew up in Charleston, South Carolina in a segregated
neighborhood, all Black, my elementary school my high school were both all
Black, my undergrad school was a Historically Black College and University. (P3,
I1, L 30-34).

Then Dr. Flower described her experience as a young girl:
So, my first um experience that I can personally recall is when I, I was about seven years old and one of my friends and I um our mom let us go downtown was about um four long blocks from our house and our mom would tell us to walk carefully, do not stop on the way and to you know keep going you know….Back then you know they didn’t have like cell phones and things like that and but she would always tell us to be careful, be safe, and be kind to everybody, but we didn’t always understand that other than that should be the way of life for everybody. . . . So we went downtown Charleston, downtown Charleston, and downtown Charleston um was like a lot of other cities that had a downtown area that now, you know the malls are taking over and all that. So we would go window-shopping because we didn’t have that much money. So I remember my mom gave us enough money and we went to a Woolworth’s store. . . . And the Woolworth’s store for anybody who, was back during the Civil Rights Movement, knew that they didn’t allow Blacks to eat at the counter. [Clearing throat] Excuse me. Being a child we didn’t know anything about that, you know. Our parents probably knew, but didn’t tell us. So, the little girl and I, we walk in the store and went straight up to the [chuckle] Woolworth’s counter. . . . You know they had the little stools there and people could buy food and sit there. . . . And I went up to the counter and the little girl and I and I told the lady I want a hotdog, I said I’d like a hotdog. And she made a statement. I didn’t know what it meant. She said “niggers,” she said we don’t serve niggers, but I didn’t know, I said “no no that’s not what I want, I want a hotdog.” And I thought she was trying to tell me some other food. . . . And the lady, so I repeated it again and I said, “No no no I want a hotdog.” And she gave me this mean look that was like if you don’t get away from here and so being a child and your sensitive to people’s reaction to certain things, so I told the little girl, I said come on let’s go. Well, by that time we walked to the back of the store and I can remember when we first went school we learned how to read the words um White and Color. . . . You know, and so when I got to the back of the store there was an elderly Black man, and you know this image has never left my mind from my childhood days to now and I find myself telling this story to people because it never left my mind. And so we walk to the back of the store and there was an elderly man and he was drinking out of a water fountain and I still probably wouldn’t have paid much attention except in the store they had um what they called, I think they called them security guards, but they were like police officers’ station. . . . In the back of the stores which we thought maybe for people who stole or something. . . . This Black man was drinking out of this water fountain and this law enforcement person came up and started hittin him, beating him with a club thing, and so I’m standing there lookin because I didn’t understand. And the man said to him “You niggers don’t drink out of White people’s water fountain.” And so I looked and
then I saw the water fountain and one had White and one had Colored and the White water fountain had like oh cool cold, ice cold water coming out of it, you could see the little um molecules on the side and everything and so I’m still standin there lookin and I think I was frozen or stunned or whatever. And by this time the man was bleedin and I just naturally went and ran in the bathroom and got some paper towels and started wipin this man up and so as I got to be an adult I kept thinkin about how dangerous that was for me. . . . They could have beat me too you know, but I didn’t know and I started wipin the blood off the man and everything and um and I said, “Oh come on,” I said, “you probably have to drink out of this other fountain.” And then the man you know by that time he didn’t want any water and so that image, so that was probably I would say one of the first social justice experiences I learned about that you can be injured or hurt if you did the wrong thing related to whether was race, but I did see that segregation and the separation was done intentional and if you disobeyed the rules you could be hurt. (P3, II, L 34-97)

This story mirrors the many horrors that African Americans in the United States faced in the segregated South before the Civil Rights Movement, during the Civil Rights Movement, and after the Civil Rights Movement. I have only read about and seen these horrific experiences on television and in the movies, and yet, Dr. Flower lived this experience. Dr. Flower also described how most the homes in the Black community had big pictures of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in them. Later in Interview 1 Dr. Flower told another story about going to an all-Black segregated school. She explained:

And then um when we were in school we always got the hand-me-down books and so our teachers would tell us, you know, when we were gettin the new books, new books to us were like old used books that the White schools had, but we were so happy to get a book because you know low income, you know parents didn’t buy you books because they couldn’t afford that they. So when we got to school and we got a book and the teacher said, “Now we have some new books” and so we kids were so happy and then they taught us how to, we wrapped the books with um brown paper sacks. . . . We were like so serious about our books you know, and taking care of them. Anyway, I remember us getting the hand-me-down books, but it didn’t faze me during that time because we were just glad to get books, okay. . . .So, either those books or no books. And so, at the time it wasn’t necessarily a social justice issue to me, but um we would have questions in
the back of our minds why we had to get hand-me-down books from the White schools and we never all throughout our school career never had a new book or what we would call a new book today. . . . But you know most of the books were very well taken care of they weren’t like torn up or anything. . . . Yeah, so those were some of my early experiences and the fact that our parents taught us about social justice but they did it in a real protective way. (P3, I1, L 107-128)

Again, Dr. Flower gives a detailed description of what it was like to grow up in Charleston, South Carolina during segregation. Dr. Flower also explained how her parents approached social justice in her childhood:

Yeah, so those were some of my early experiences and the fact that our parents taught us about social justice but they did it in a real protective way. . . . They were afraid that just like my mom probably would have told me, when I went to help the man that would have been a no-no. . . . Because they would have been afraid for my safety and so they taught us the things that they could and most of the things that they taught us were protective things and so a lot of stuff they hid so that we didn’t know it, um, but we did not know why. (P3, I1, L 130-138)

Moving forward in Dr. Flower’s story the next time in her life that speaks to the theme of living through historic times is her attendance at a historically Black university during the Civil Rights Movement.

Dr. Flower described her experience in undergrad:

Um, once I got to college being, going to a historically Black college you learned so much about social justice, you learned so much about Black history, you learned about the people who made a difference, you learned about the fighters and the people who were in the struggle, um the people who opened the, by the time I went to college, undergrad um the Civil Rights Movement um that was the time when these students all over the United States these college campuses burning. And so the school where I went [name historically Black university], when I got there in the early ‘70s they had just gone through that stage of burning buildings and things like that. So being a young person you knew about some of the burnings on the different campuses and that it was for the Civil Rights Movement even if you didn’t understand it all of it. So then being on the campus all of our classes our instructors talked about justice in every curricular area. Therefore they had all the research, all the data, and so you, you automatically began to learn about things you didn’t know because you were younger, and you
might have experienced some, but you didn’t know understand it then. So then every week we had different speakers, I mean that was the highlight of going to a historically Black school. People who were, you know, they brought different Civil Rights leaders, different historians, to the campus every week. So we could go hear these people speak, they were inspirational, and as you listen you learned about some things that you experienced in your hometown, you didn’t know what it meant then. (P3, II, L 222-239)

Dr. Flower was able to live and experience the Civil Rights Movement as it was unfolding in the United States during college. This is another historical experience that Dr. Flower lived through that has contributed to her teaching for social justice.

Following her undergraduate program, Dr. Flower pursued a graduate degree at Indiana State University. This was the first time that Dr. Flower went to school with Whites. When she began her graduate studies, Dr. Flower was scared for her safety because someone told her a story about a Black man being hung outside of town. While she did have positive interactions with White professors at the university, Dr. Flower shared a negative experience she had with one of her White early childhood professors.

In Reflective Journal 2 she wrote:

But there was one experience that I was not prepared for. One of my early childhood professors appeared to be a racist. Now I am not sure about trying to pre-examine people, so could only base my opinions on what I saw, heard and felt. So he started out with copies of at least three articles from professional journals. All three of the articles cited the fact that 'African Americans were inferior to Whites. I sat there quietly as he went through the different articles he had found with the different theories about why African Americans were inferior-genetics or environmental. Well this was rather disturbing for me coming from a Historically Black College/University (HBCU) where we were supported and encouraged by our study of the strengths of an afrocentric experience-educationally and culturally. The class was an evening class so I had to suffer through this three hours at a time. So when I left to go back to my residence, I found my head hurting so bad- but wow, I never got headaches. This went on for five weeks and I just kept wondering when he was going to run out of these ridiculous articles. So that finally ended, but my journey of dealing with what I perceived to be a racist, did not. So next I had to make myself go up to him
because I was the only Black student on the doctoral program in my field. I had been accepted into Phi Delta Kappa and had to be installed the following week, which meant I would miss one hour of our three hour class. So when I asked him if I would be able to attend the installation/initiation, he looked at me strangely and I said, "I will be giving an exam next week." So I asked him if I would be able to take the exam when I got back. He hesitatingly said "yes." So lucky for me, walking across campus and making it back to my class, I still made it in time to take my exam. To my amazement, when I arrived, the professor was not in the room or nowhere where I could see him. But he had left a copy of the exam for me and told the students that he would be back. So even though they were all graduate students, they were all copying off each other's paper. I did not indulge. So I found a seat near the back away from them, because I couldn't want to be accused of cheating when he walked back in. So when we came back to class the next week, he began to orally read off the scores from lowest to highest, Well, I had the highest score, and everyone in the class appeared to be shocked when they discovered I had the top score, because they knew I sat in the back and took the exam with no help. Well when i went back to my residence, I felt so much better because now I KNEW for sure that there was no real evidence that Blacks were NOT inferior. So my headache was milder now- I had to make it through that class, without suffering through too much pain, I made it and realized that I heard some other Blacks say, if you want an A, you are going to have to work double harder than the White students. I accepted this as my motto and set out to finish my program through extra hard work, after all I had been smart all of my life- so I set out to finish my master's degree and I did so very successfully with ease after I got out of that awful, head-hurting class. Later on I heard some other professors had been talking about his attitude. So it made me think about what kind of person was he really underneath? (P3, J2, L23-60)

This experience describes the ways in which Dr. Flower believed that she needed to work harder than her White classmates in order to prove herself to a professor that explicitly believed that African Americans were inferior to Whites.

A final example which illustrates how Dr. Flower has lived through historic times is captured in her discussion of moving from a time of segregation to integration in Charleston. In Interview 1 Dr. Flower discussed the role integration played in the history of Charleston:

You know like, we were growing up in an all-Black school and all of our teachers were Black and everybody we knew were Black [chuckle]. We did not think of it
as segregation and so the integration um process did not really start until when I left, I graduated and then um Charleston didn’t know what to do for integration, they were terrible and so well the first thing they did is try to see if they could send some of the Black students from the Black side of town to the White area. Now, they didn’t do the reverse, okay, they did not send the White students into the areas where the Black schools were, but they, integration meant Black students you will be bused out of your area. And it wasn’t like the, the . . voluntary did it, it was like this is our plan. And I think today it’s, it hasn’t changed much when they look at integration and you know they look at the whole voting process and what they do move the voting line from here to here to keep control by race and ethnicity. And so by the time I got to college I started realizing a lot of the experiences I had were part of social justice and um whether it was right or wrong. But, the thing was, like some of the experiences that the students have today in our schools, and uh elementary had the, we didn’t have, we didn’t go through all that because our teachers, our teachers knew our background, they knew our lifestyle, many of them lived in our community. (P3, I1, L 241-256)

Not only have experiences in Dr. Flower’s past influenced her life as a social justice teacher educator, but there are also current experiences that continue to impact Dr. Flower’s life as a social justice teacher educator.

Contemporary events and issues on matters of race that impact Dr. Flower’s work as a social justice teacher educator were seen in Reflective Journal 1. Dr. Flower wrote:

Being the organizer and dreamer of a Conference on African American Children and Families, the disparities among ethnicities and races are so prevalent, that one must think of the rationale and some of the reasons for why this has been an ongoing condition? One also must wonder why Blacks continue to become the victims of police brutalities, profiling and why African Americans from the youngest students are suspended and expelled at disproportionately higher numbers. One of my areas of expertise is programming and doing research on Black girls. The issue today is why are Black girls being pushed out of schools? Why can’t educators see that they have different needs, interests and approaches for dealing with the system? When you become a promoter of social justice education, you find it urgently important to stand up for justice. It is very difficult for a true social justice educator to stand idly by and know that things are not right and not speak up. So in the name of justice, you speak up even when others do not want to hear you. (P3, J1, L 47-65)
In Interview 1 Dr. Flower also discussed race when asked about challenges she faces as a social justice teacher educator. Dr. Flower explained:

Yes, um I think the race issue um social justice I think whether you want to or not there comes a time when there are race issues that come up. For example um the shootings of Black males, like especially during the summer. . . . And so okay nobody is saying that all law enforcement officers are killing Black men, okay, that’s a generalize wrong statement to make, but once you find, you find yourself, if you were discussin issues like um thee um unnecessary or overzealous force used on Black males, situations where it doesn’t seem to have been necessary. When those issues come up you can almost be guaranteed out of your group that there will be somebody who says “Well I think police are always right,” or “I don’t think we should be.” So you’ve got to be prepared to say, but as we’re discussing this we’re not saying that law enforcement is wrong. Those people have a very dangerous and difficult job to do so that’s not the issue here. The issue here is when we’re lookin at disparities, okay, and the issue here in [Midwest state] for example not just that when they’re lookin at the marijuana arrests and even Obama and nationwide their lookin at this stuff. Okay, a Black male can be arrested for a marijuana or drug charge and a White male can have the same or more, but when it comes to the sentencing then there’s where that disparity comes in and those are issues that, and with me being an African American when some issues that are Black focused and you’ve got to speak up on that you don’t want to come off as if you are a racist or you’re only promoting things for Black people or that you’re just directing social justice to African Americans. . . . And I think that is an issue that I try to be conscientious about and fair about and also showing that there are situations where there are people who are not um African American decent who are also mistreated. So those are the kinds of things you have to be . . . and be conscious about because those are, those pose challenges and they can also pose um situations where the work you are doing can be ineffective if you don’t do it the right way and if you don’t come, I try to have facts when I talk about a certain thing. (P3, I1, L 545-572)

Throughout Dr. Flower’s life, race in both her past and present has been an important factor that influenced her identification as a social justice teacher educator. These multiple examples offered in Dr. Flower’s interviews and journals spanning from childhood to the present support the theme living through historic times. All throughout Dr. Flower’s life it is apparent that these lived experiences have played a significant role in becoming a social justice teacher educator.
Teaching Through Multiple Perspectives

Looking at the ways in which Dr. Flower integrates teaching for social justice into her teacher preparation course work, the theme of teaching through multiple perspectives was identified. As mentioned earlier, Dr. Flower believes that social justice is a natural part of her teaching and she integrates it into all of the courses that she teaches. The ways in which Dr. Flower integrates social justice into her teaching and learning in her teacher preparation courses (i.e., undergraduate and graduate courses) is by integrating multiple perspectives into the classroom. Throughout Dr. Flower’s interviews, journals, and observation she gave many rich examples of integrating multiple perspectives into her teaching. One example she often referred to involved navigating parent conferences. In both Interview 1 and Reflective Journal 3, Dr. Flower described the multiple perspectives to consider when discussing parent conferences with preservice teachers. Dr. Flower explained:

Um, for example suppose we were discussing parent conferences, okay because one of the classes I teach is called [name of course]. So let’s take a simple issue that somebody would call simple parent conferences. Okay and you’d say well school schedule parent conferences with teachers to come and find out about how they’re child is doing. So then from a social justice perspective there will be some parents who will not come to parent conferences. Okay, so the issue is do we know why certain people may not come? One is transportation, we, you know, we can’t just assume that if a parent does not go to parent conferences does not show up, will not come, that they are not interested in their children which is the concept that you hear when a parent does not go to parent conferences because everybody has to go, but everybody want, might want to go to parent conferences, but do we understand the challenges of some parents even getting there and the transportation issue is big. . . . And the more families that I work with now I realize that it is critical and we do not have a good plan for transportation. You know you can ask somebody to take you some place, most people will not take you anywhere free, you know you might have a buddy or friend once in a while, but they’re not going to do it consistently. So, that’s one part of a parent conference, second parent conference social justice issue if your child has been
labeled as a troublemaker, discipline problem, not doing well with learning will you be the same parent who would feel that happy and that comfortable by going to a parent conference versus a parent whose child is doing exceptionally well. Then the issue becomes is it a requirement, is everybody required to go to a parent conference so that would be an issue I would have them discuss that from both perspectives. . . . And how an issue like that would help open our thoughts and our minds about um this from a social justice perspective or with an alternative to me comin to the school. Okay, I might not feel comfortable comin to your school so let’s see can we do it a different way? I may not have the Internet or I may not, but can we Skype, can we face, can we do something else. . . . Okay, so somebody would have that, no everybody needs to come, everybody must be there or your child will not um succeed in school because you would not attend a conference. I mean something as simple as that. And I was trying to think of one that was a little bit easier. (P3, I1, L 349-382)

In this example Dr. Flower references the multiple perspectives of transportation, students being labeled, parents feeling comfortable entering the school setting, and alternative methods for holding parent conferences. Another example of Dr. Flower integrating multiple perspectives into her teaching involves the topic of religion in school. Dr. Flower described the situation in Interview 1:

Um, okay I’ll give you one that we just talked about. I gave the student, this was a real situation in the news, that uh one of the first grade teachers at [local elementary school] she had posted a sign up over her door and the sign said I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me, okay. So here comes the news, and uh the teacher happened to be African American and so this White parent went to [local news station] and he protested and he said he was very offended that this teacher had that hanging up in the hallway over her room and he said I don’t want my daughter, she’s just startin to read, “I don’t want her reading crap like that.” . . . Okay. So from the teacher’s perspective the teacher said, “I put that up, I was hoping I was encouraging the children and everybody that they can do well in my class.” That was her interpretation of what she did. But it was the parent’s interpretation that you’re tryin to impose religious views on my child. . . . And so, you know, um when it gets around to issues like religion, those issues social justice issues are very, very powerful there. (P3, I1, L 382-397)

In this example Dr. Flower emphasized the different perspectives held by both the parent and the teacher related to the religious sign being hung in the classroom.
During my classroom observation, I was also able to see how Dr. Flower integrated multiple perspectives into her teaching for social justice with the preservice teachers. The class activity the students were engaged in that day involved choosing a social issue and discussing both the pros and the cons of the issue. Through this activity, Dr. Flower was modeling a way that the preservice teachers could engage their students in debating issues. I described the activity in my observation field notes as follows:

The majority of the class today was surrounded a discussion panel activity that HF planned to model how students could have their students research current events and then have discussion panels covering both the pros and the cons of issues occurring in current events. Some of the topics that HF had students think about working with included:

- Walter Scott killing mistrial
- Iowa governor being a possible ambassador to China
- The shooting of 9 people in a church, shooter’s first name was Dylan
- Standing Rock
- The University President Search
- Iowa teacher felon
- Mother putting her child out for voting for Donald Trump during a school’s mock election (P3, O, p. 2)

After giving the students several minutes to research the current events of their choosing the class came back together to share-out what they learned. Dr. Flower facilitated the student-led conversations by asking probing questions and giving examples from her personal experiences, which served to integrate even more multiple perspectives into the class discussion.

Another teaching method that Dr. Flower integrates into her teaching that supports the role multiple perspectives plays in her teaching for social justice is weekly
social justice assignments. In Reflective Journal 1 Dr. Flower briefly described the assignments and an example of the assignment that she has used with her students:

In each of my undergrad courses, I use the book with a weekly social justice assignment. It really offers an opportunity for students to think about some matters in a way that perhaps they have never thought of before. For example, I asked the question, “Do you think that everyone should have the right to vote, including women, African Americans and felons? (P3, J1, L 36-42)

In Reflective Journal 3, Dr. Flower further described the purpose of the social justice assignments she integrates into her teaching of preservice teachers:

Each week, I give the students a social justice assignment related to the social studies topics of the week and provides an open outlet for them to think about issues that perhaps they had not thought of and how they would deal with them directly or indirectly. Again it opens up the mind to dealing with new and different experiences. These social justice activities can help the students become better citizens, better teachers and help them begin to self-assess, evaluate biases, prejudices, and feelings that may cause pain the lives of others. But learning how to be more sensitive causes one to begin to find ways to deal with issues that one may not continue to use as an excuse of never experiencing it or the fact that it never crossed one's mind. (P3, J2, L 114-122)

In both of these excerpts from Dr. Flower’s journals she emphasized the role of helping her students think about things in a way that they had not thought about before. In Reflective Journal 3 she explicitly described how she hoped the assignments helped students to self-assess and evaluate their biases and prejudice. In regard to her students becoming more open to issues of social justice, Dr. Flower shared, “I . . . all my students over the semester become more and more open minded and willing to deal with social justice from a lot of different perspectives rather than when they first started” (P3, I1, L 817-818).

This theme of teaching with multiple perspectives was also supported by the ways in which the students’ perspectives and questions were incorporated into Dr. Flower’s
teaching and learning for social justice. In the example from my field notes regarding the current events pro/con activity, the preservice teachers’ perspectives on the current events that they chose to discuss played a large role in the activity. During class conversations and in students’ journals Dr. Flower is also able to discuss topics and issues that the preservice teachers want to discuss. This was discussed during Interview 1:

P: Yeah, you know, I can even remember they all at first they all one of their memories about school when their teacher did the Indian Pilgrim thing.
I: The what?
P: You know the Indian Pilgrim thing.
I: Oh, yes.
P: Yes and so they were like we dressed up like the Indians and the Pilgrims so that gave me the opportunity to begin to move into that discussion okay let’s talk about this about accurate information and you know things like that. Well then one of the other students brought up Christopher Columbus and like okay [laughter].
I: So you’re students are bringing these issues up.
P: Yes.
I: And then you can address them.
P: Yes, yes and so yeah right, when they bring it up that opens the door for me to say and then I can see what they know and where they are. So like for example for um I sang the song one little, two little, three little Indians, four, I said do you think there’s anything wrong with that song.
I: Mmm hmm.
P: And they didn’t get it. And I said think about it and I said I sang it one more time and then I switched and I said how bout if I did it this way, one little, two little, three little White people, four little five little, so they started laughing you know. And I said, but people don’t think about when were singin this song all these years about how that could impact people and especially if we reverse it and put other groups in there and they’re like oh. (P3, I1, L 820-841)

In this example the students discussed their prior experiences dressing up as Pilgrims and Indians. This led to the topic of Christopher Columbus, which allowed Dr. Flower to discuss accurate information surrounding Columbus with the students.
The final way that Dr. Flower integrates multiple perspectives into her teaching for social justice is through sharing stories and examples from her previous teaching and learning experiences. I observed Dr. Flower integrating some of her personal experiences in the classroom observation when she commented about her daughter and another example regarding her work with Black girls. Following the observation, and during Interview 2, I asked Dr. Flower about integrating her own experiences into her teaching and she responded with the following thoughts and story:

Yes, being an experienced teacher um having taught at preschool, you know, kindergarten and working with children in different types of programs of different backgrounds I have so many different types of experiences that I feel that it is very important for me to share with the students and not doing it from a um such a personal perspective that I want to gain any attention or glory or fame from it. . . . But that the fact that I can say to these students I can tell you this because I have experiences. I even have talked to my students um and I’ve been very honest with them about mistakes I’ve made. Like one mistake I shared I said don’t you all do this, but I did it and I said it was not professional okay [chuckle]. So I shared about my first day at the lab school and at that time they were busing the African American children from [adjacent community] and what happened was, I, we can’t get the religious backgrounds of children, right. So when we meet the parents of the children and we getting the in-take information, one of the questions we cannot ask is you can you tell us about your religious background. And although social studies kind of shows you know, you can go different angles with that, but we were told that we legally were not supposed to ask children, parents, you know can you tell me, you know your beliefs about your religion, we just couldn’t. Okay, so the only way I’d know the child is of a particular religious background would be if something happened. . . . And I did not feel comfortable with that, but that was the only way that we um so this little boy was four years old and he was of the Jehovah Witness background, I had no clue, no knowledge. All they told me was this little boy cried a whole year before I got there [chuckle] and so they put him in my classroom and so I’m gettin’ prepared you know my, but he did not cry, I was so glad that he didn’t cry. And so the first day which would have been about the third day of school we had a birthday. And the little girl brought cupcakes and I didn’t think nothin’ of it, we sung happy birthday, I made a little birthday hat and everything and the little boy must have been so excited he went home and told his dad that he had cupcakes for somebody’s
birthday. So the dad calls me on the phone after school and he says to me my little boy is not have, ever have birthday cake, cupcakes, we don’t celebrate birthdays. Well here I am this young teacher, I really didn’t know yet. . . . And I apologized right away I said oh I am so sorry, I said I really didn’t know, I said um so you won’t you don’t celebrate any birthdays or anything like that and he said he cannot have any cake or anything he said no he can’t. So then okay I bowed to kind of deal with that. Well, it was like two weeks later before we had another birthday and so I told the little boy I said well you are going to probably to have to have some crackers and some fruit. Well you can imagine other kids having cake you know and he started screaming to the top of his lungs and I, oh no I’ve been lucky so far he hasn’t cried. And I had, I made this judgement I did and so I had two choices, one I could take him out in the hallway or let him you know go with one of the university students and not be in the room at all. I never did feel comfortable with that, although that’s one of the approaches that they recommend. And I said a four year old child does not understand why the teachers kicking me out, what did I do wrong. . . . Okay, so then still although this child four years old is of this background this child does not understand why the teacher is not allowing him to have birthday treat or cupcake or any other words you want to call it. So I gave him a cupcake and I said, I said, don’t you go home and tell your dad [laughter] I gave you this cupcake. It was not professional but did it and I tell the students that I said, I did that and I told him not to go home and tell his dad that I gave him that cupcake. I said I could not stand to look at him screaming and crying because I had to give him some crackers you know and fruit, [chuckle]. So anyway, but I told them I said I did that that one time, but I said, I don’t recommend it, but that was an unprofessional decision I had made. (P3, I2, L 93-143)

This story serves as an example of how Dr. Flower shares her teaching experiences with her students as another form of integrating multiple perspectives into her teaching and learning for social justice.

Rich stories and examples of Dr. Flower’s life experiences and teaching and learning for social justice were observed in Dr. Flower’s interviews, journals, and observation. As she described teaching for social justice as a natural part of her teaching and learning, this commitment to social justice was also seen in her service and research at Midwestern University. When looking to the research questions guiding this project,
one of the personal experiences influencing Dr. Flower’s teaching for social justice are her multiple experiences spanning from childhood to the present, which was identified as theme living through historic times. Looking to the second research question regarding how Dr. Flower integrates social justice into her teacher preparation courses, her stories and examples paint a picture of the role that integrating multiple perspectives through her social justice assignments, students’ perspectives, and sharing experiences from her life and her previous teaching experience contributes to her teaching for social justice.

**Dr. Neil Stevenson**

Dr. Neil Stevenson is an instructor at Midwestern University and he identifies as White, male, and cisgender. Dr. Stevenson’s preferred pronouns are he/him/his. Dr. Stevenson has had many experiences in his life that have led him to being a social justice teacher educator ranging from his experiences in K-12 education through graduate school. Since agreeing to be a participant in this study, Dr. Stevenson and I have also begun to work on another research project looking at the intersectional identities of three professors teaching different sections of the same course.

**Dr. Stevenson’s Conceptualization of Social Justice in Education**

In Interview 1 I asked Dr. Stevenson how he would define social justice as it pertains to education and teacher preparation. Dr. Stevenson responded:

So, I, my orientation towards social justice probably revolves around the sort of definition of what democracy is. . . . And democracy is sort of meaning people’s full ability to participate and engage in associations and arrangements in society. . . . Social, structural, economic, political, cultural, religious, sort of multi-spherical um sort of an ecological framework to use some different terms, um, and I guess my orientation towards social justice arises from when there are power imbalances um among groups of people um and that can be identified
through historically marginalized. . . . Um groups of people which have often been identified through academic literature and research and those groups are sort of continuing to emerge, continuing to um be identified in the different ways that marginalization and power proliferates social spheres and social spaces continue to emerge and we get to and we are able to understand them better. So the way that I approach social justice in teacher education, um, is both the recognition and identification of sociohistoric contexts. . . . Of how are, is power being wheeled within social spheres um how does that relate to democracy, how does that relate to people’s ability um to act and interact and fully participate that concept of agency which comes from sociology, um sort of people’s ability to sort of self-determine um so both that sociohistorical, but also how have educational spaces and structures been constructed. . . . Historically. So you have this overarching structure um that’s larger um then an individual and then I also look at this social justice practices as um in teacher education as how can we, how does that manifest itself on a individual classroom, individual teacher, individual student. . . .

. . . . Basis. What are some of the mechanisms and some of the pedagogical practices that make that function whether it’s through curriculum, uh whether it’s through actual pedagogy, whether it’s through schooling institutions and structures um education policy, um and one key I guess metric that I often use to examine this with students in the way that I approach it is through um a Civil Rights concept called disparate impact. . . . Which it looks at um assuming that um, it looks at outcomes versus opportunity. A lot of people talk about equality of opportunity. Disparate outcome looks at outcomes and it says that um things can be legally determined discriminatory even if they don’t have a discriminatory intent, they have a discriminatory outcome. And this was used in uh housing, fair housing um case law very often. So, when I look at students and I say okay if we assume a system is equal, if we assume teaching is equal why do we not see equal outcomes? . . . Um, and then use that as a lens to talk about how we can change pedagogy to achieve equity, how can we change schooling structures, um how, what are some of the underlying mechanisms. Um, thinking about social justice education specifically um and education specifically there’s a large foundation of um knowledge that has been accumulated over time that justifies the system. Um, and it validates it. So, part of how I see my definition and my role in social justice education is one to train teachers to question that knowledge base, question that system. Um also to produce research and work in a research area, conference presentations, which provides counter-narratives to that knowledge system and um that alternative way of knowing and then allowing students to see how that can provide students [tapped on desk] um for me specifically it’s elementary education, students um with agency. . . . So that pedagogical practice that democratic practice, um, you know the very basic tenant that I think social justice strives for is providing agency. Agency to actors within a social system, um, in
pushing against um sort of structures of power and inequality and power um so I think defining social justice is both broad societally, but then also sort of specific to schools in a very sociohistoric way in that um it’s not just everything, um it’s not just everything, for me I kind of bind it by um social theory, critical social theory, what do we see in literature, um and that’s always changing. . . . Which is important to keep up with and understand and try to understand, um but that’s sort of where I kind of ground my definition um to keep it from being sort of any more fis diaspora. (P4, I1, L 13-78)

Dr. Stevenson’s conceptualization of social justice provides a summary his views and teaching as a social justice teacher educator. Some of the ideas that he shared in this conceptualization that helped to form Dr. Stevenson’s themes from his interviews, journaling, and observation include democracy, questioning, pushing against power structures, and agency.

Dr. Stevenson believes that there is no one way to do social justice work. In Interview 1 I asked Dr. Stevenson if he considered the work that he did prior to having the language to describe his teaching as social justice work to in fact be social justice work. He responded:

Um, I would say yes. Um and I would say yes in the sense that um a key component of social justice is that, it’s not just, there’s not just one way to do it. People um interact, and I want to use the word push back against status quo and norms um in many different ways. . . . I don’t remember reading something or talking to somebody I forget where I see this, but it’s like um everybody, everybody fights in their own way. . . . Um, and so don’t let somebody else dictate the way that you choose to fight for equity er whatever. Um, mean there are plenty of people who write social justice education literature who have never stepped in a classroom a day in their lives. Um, people talk about Peter MacLaren all the time, Henry Giroux, huge critical pedagogy icons they have been in universities for 30 years. . . . Um, they write very much on a social knowledge theoretical base of how do we come to understand the world, how do we critique knowledge bases, um and they can critique educational practices um some people are like they don’t actually get on the ground and do the work. . . . Um, and so this
why I say I do consider parts of it social justice I’m sure parts of it weren’t. (P4, I1, L 379-398)

Another important part about Dr. Stevenson’s understanding and conceptualization of social justice is that his personal and professional lives are interwoven within one another. When asked about his successes related to his teaching for social justice he described his interconnected personal and professional identities:

Um, I mean, so [pause] yeah, I think part of this comes from what we were just talking about my social position of privilege, like for me I am able to limit in sort of box my success into my academic profession, academic um writings, teaching where it doesn’t have to be a personal part of my life, it’s a professional part of my life. . . . I can feel personal success or personal gratification from that professional part of my life. Um, but I’m not sure, I don’t know how I would answer that thinking outside the context of schooling, education, classrooms I’ve been a part of, training teachers, um I’m trying to think about it and [pause] I don’t know I think it’s um it’s something where I se, I see such a it might just be that I see my professional um [pause] professional self as so intrinsically tied to my personal self and that the way that I view the world is through this lens, I don’t turn it off that I view any action towards bettering education as part of that professional self. Um, so yeah, so I’m not really sure like if I’m thinking about like successes I think about the same things, I don’t think about, and then when I think about what would be different I think about personal life what would that mean to have success outside of classroom outside of profession, outside of institution um I don’t know if that means like the conversations I have with friends, peers, family members um, I don’t know if that means sort of advoca, advocacy and activist work outside of this area, but I see that as sort of an intertwined identity. . . . Um, an intertwined self in that um I see pretty much my entire life and everything that happens through the same lens I see education through. Um, I was having a conversation with a colleague and a friend from grad school um we probably have it like, I mean once a month, but it’s ongoing we talk a couple times a week and it’s just like you know the thing is he was like I finally know what you mean when you say you can’t turn it off, um because grad school for me and the way that I view education um from a critical or social justice perspective um those same critiques, theories, concepts are applied across society not just education they didn’t originate in education they originated as critiques of social structure, critiques of economic structure um so asking successes is, I’m not I’m not sure, again. . . . I’ll think about it some more. . . . Um but and I think part
of it is also I’m, I’m wary of the term success cause I see my work as a work in progress um and that’s why for me the students being able to travel and take stuff with them, I identify that as a success, like they went over here and they took that and they were able to use it um because I have limited time with them. Like that has a end point and their ability to uh harness their knowledge, use it in a different scenario, apply it is one reason that I would lend myself towards that. . . . Where myself, my career, personal life things in society I see as still a work in progress and so thinking about successes it’s like yes maybe something changes or gets better, but there’s all this other stuff so. (P4, I2, L 383-423)

In addition to the idea of social justice spanning both Dr. Stevenson’s personal and professional life, he also mentioned that he sees himself, his career, his personal life, and things in society as still a work in progress. After the recorder was shut off following Interview 2, Dr. Stevenson had more to say after thinking for a moment, these thoughts were captured in an analytic memo that was written after the interview:

For this memo I’m starting at the end, because after I shut the recorder off Dr. Stevenson had more to say about successes. He said that success is a part of the stratification in society and it contributes to inequality which is problematic when talking about successes does that mean that you are reproducing the systems that are unjust. I hadn’t thought about successes like that and no other participant pointed this out when I asked them a similar question. He then said I should ask his Mom the question because she would be able to speak to his successes. (AM, 2-1-17)

This memo illustrates how Dr. Stevenson’s lens of social justice is a constant in his life and even when reflecting on his own successes he is critical of the structures and systems of inequality he may be reproducing.

With an understanding of Dr. Stevenson’s conceptualization of social justice in education we move to the ways in which Dr. Stevenson’s interviews, journaling, and observation speaks to the guiding research questions of this dissertation. Looking to the life experiences that have influenced Dr. Stevenson as a social justice teacher educator it
was made evident that his life, past and present, have had a large impact on his teaching for social justice.

Circular Experience

The title for this theme comes from Dr. Stevenson’s first interview and speaks to the complex journey that unfolded throughout his life. Dr. Stevenson stated:

Um, so to talk about how did I become a social justice educator um I think it was this sort of circular um experience, but it all started from my school, my K-12 schooling experience. . . . Um and then constantly having things happen that continually make me look, I guess grad school made me look back on it um I think I probably, even though I didn’t know the words was even after in under grad like social justice educator um because I always questioned the status quo. Um, always questioned why are we doing things, why do we have to do it this way, why, why is this this. Um, so I think I don’t know where that mentality came from um other than I mean, other than I was bored in school a lot um and so I was just like. . . . This can be done differently. Um, I loved learning school just bored me sometimes. Um, so yes, going, grad school provided me with language to articulate all of the things that I had already experienced. It gave me a way to describe the phenomenon that I saw and knew existed um it gave me a way to talk about it and teach it to other people because language is very powerful in that way it gives us a way to communicate phenomenon, communicate situations, describe things, um that we may see, or we may not know that we’re seeing or we may know exist, but we don’t know how to say it or describe it um or to understand the system. And it gives us a way to understand the system. (P4, I1, L 326-345)

When Dr. Stevenson began to talk about his journey as a social justice teacher educator he said, “Um, so I’m gonna start in the middle, go forward, then go back, and then go forward again” (P4, I1, L 134-135). In order to capture both the circular nature of Dr. Stevenson’s narrative and the essence of his story, I am refraining from putting his narrative in chronological order. Dr. Stevenson’s story will be shared how he shared it with me.
Upon graduation from college, Following his undergraduate program, Dr. Stevenson began looking for a teaching job. Since he knew he did not want to teach “cookie cutter kids” he looked at teaching in North Carolina in a Black community, enlisting in the Peace Corp and teaching English in a school in Macedonia, or teaching internationally in the Middle East. Dr. Stevenson chose to teach in the Middle East. In Interview 1 he explained:

This was, I mean four years into the Iraq and Afghanistan Wars, um so yeah 2006 was when this was. Um, so my mother was freaking out….Um, because you know I was going to [Middle Eastern country] which is right next to [another Middle Eastern country] which is right next to [Middle Eastern city] or is [Middle Eastern city] is in [Middle Eastern country], [third Middle Eastern country] is right there, you know all this stuff. Um, but I was like this is a part of the world that I would probably never go to, um, as a tourist and it’s very um current, in modern conversations, in U.S. conversations because of these wars, because of 9/11, um because of these events. I was like this is an opportunity to go and learn. Go learn, be a teacher, experience this. Um, so I ended up going to the American International School of [Middle Eastern country] for two years. Um, so on this trajectory is um there’s always been this sort of desire for me I look at education differently um and I often approached it differently. Um, for better or worse um and so this was like another opportunity to do something different, do something unique. Um, when I was there I got to see firsthand um I guess what could be called um how culture and structures of schooling and knowledge can come and sort of rub up against each other. So, what I mean by this is our school was an IB school, um it was K-12 and so the primary years program is based on inquiry-based learning. . . . Um and this is, inquiry-based learning is all about students questioning, discovering, investigating. Um, sort of constructionist like basis of knowledge. Um, historically in [Middle Eastern country] this is a, it’s a very sort of top down, wrote memorization society. You don’t question things. Um, you don’t come home and question your parents about why you do something or this or that. Um, so for me it was my first time seeing like okay there’s a distinct um difference um and question my own self about whether I thought this type of learning, which I thought was a really great style of learning was being imposed um from a position of power whether this was like a Western Euro-American sort of paradigm of thought. Um, and really made me sort of confront those things. Um, it also made me start to look at how we sort of build on students’ funds of knowledge. How do we build on the knowledge the students bring to the
classroom because I was interacting with students who had completely different backgrounds and lives than myself. . . . Um, this being said, all of these students, it was a private school and they were all fairly affluent or of the professional class whether they were [Middle Eastern country-American], Lebanese, um anything. Um, so it was interesting just to go and be in a place and learn a lot about sort of similarities and differences across space, time, region, context, um culture, and um sort of just add those sort of to repertoire of practice. Um, to use a term from Chris Gutierrez, which I don’t know if you’re familiar with. Um, but just being able to sort of see how difference can function in a classroom, how adaptations need to function, um and this was in my first two years of teaching ever. (P4, I1, L 171-214)

Teaching in the Middle East helped to shape the direction that Dr. Stevenson went in regarding social justice and his graduate studies. He described the experience as follows:

Um, but I think that experience partially shapes um my interest um interest in sort of the intersection of culture and teaching, um the intersection of culture, society, and schools. Um, having experiences with administrators who I didn’t necessarily agree with. . . . And having to navigate that and decide when to push back, how to do my own thing, how to create um a structure that was more open ended, um versus closed in, um, within this context was, was sort of a learning experience to me that sort of got me on this trajectory. (P4, I1, L 217-224)

Following his time teaching in the Middle East, Dr. Stevenson began graduate school. It was during graduate school that his multiple educational experiences began making sense.

Graduate school. When Dr. Stevenson began his graduate degree he began reading and engaging in material that made him reflect on his educational experiences. Dr. Stevenson described his time in graduate school as:

Um, when I got to grad school I then started layering on top of all this experience academic knowledge, knowledge and readings about sort of power and pedagogy, um sort of soci, cultural studies, um you know just various different books, um and articles and everything and I was like oh this is a lot of stuff that I’ve seen, oh this makes total sense, oh this is you know completely right about how education goes about um creating very rigid structure that structures success and failure and
His studies in graduate school caused him to reflect on his experiences within his K-12 education.

**K-12 educational experiences.** As was referenced previously Dr. Stevenson had always questioned the status quo even in his K-12 education when he asserted that learning could be done differently. Dr. Stevenson grew up in a large city in North Carolina. He described his K-12 experience in the following excerpt from Interview 1:

So, I went, so I, I tell my students I am a product of um school segregation and desegregation in the South. Not that I went through the time period of segregation, but the schools that I went to growing up were in a school system that by court order had to come up with a desegregation plan that was in place when I attended school. . . . Um, it was a 30 year old plan that was implemented, um 30 years before, well maybe 20 years before I started going to school and my school assignment was based on this desegregation plan. Um, where I lived was a neighborhood um where students were bused um during the time of desegregation the neighborhood I grew up in um was, I mean it still is an affluent neighborhood, upper um class, White and it was full of business leaders and sort of community leaders, the counsels, mayors, bank banking leaders, um of [Southeastern major city], find another pseudonym there for ya. Um, and once they got this court order to desegregate and [court case] which is the [year], [year] court case that applied nationally that allowed you to legally bus students to achieve desegregation um they had to come up with a plan. Well the biggest complaint was that parents didn’t want their White students bused into Black neighborhoods so the leaders in this neighborhood said we’re going to send our students to the Black schools and this are the historically Black schools. So [Southeastern city] historically had four Black high schools and other sort of elementary and middle schools. Um, when desegregation happened they close three of them and they left one open [high school name]. That was the high school I went to. Um, it’s the only historically Black high school left in [Southeastern major city]. . . . So it’s still around today. Um, but so my schooling experience I went to [elementary school name], which was a very diverse, it had, it was part of a magnet program which also during desegregation magnet programs were used to attract people um to neighborhood schools so it was about 50% neighborhood students, 50% magnet students and that’s how they achieved desegregation. It was in the center, uptown city center of
Dr. Stevenson’s K-12 education was impacted by the shift from segregation to desegregation in North Carolina. Dr. Stevenson also pointed out his own privilege as a student, due to the role that his mother’s advocacy played in his being placed into AP classes throughout high school.

**Graduate school to the present.** The circular nature of Dr. Stevenson’s experiences impacting his life as a social justice educator brings the story back to graduate school and his reflection on his K-12 experience:

Um, one of the things that I started, as I read more in graduate school I started to think back and realize is that um while I’ve had these experiences I’ve also had the experience of being a person that’s been privileged going through all of these schools. Um, specifically if we think about Roslyn Mickelson’s work about subverting swan and about how tracking and even Jennie Oaks work about tracking I was always on the highest track. (P4, I1, L 273-278)

He might not have realized it or had the language to describe his experiences in his K-12 education, but through his graduate work he was able to articulate the position of privilege he held in the highest track in high school. Dr. Stevenson also came to the
realization in graduate school that although schools had integrated, desegregation did not occur. Through further reflection on his K-12 experience Dr. Stevenson explained:

So graduate school and reading these experiences, specifically Roslyn Mickelson was about [Southeastern major city] where I grew up. And how um schools and how the desegregation plan you could desegregate schools, but schools were still not integrated you had students in different tracks um but I never realized it because in a school that was 85% Black all of our AP classes were about 50-50. We thought that was what diversity looked like but then thinking back it was like well all the White students were in class together um they weren’t in the regulars or just honors classes they were always in the AP classes. (P4, I1, L 285-292)

Dr. Stevenson then described how graduate school laid the foundation for his current role as a social justice teacher educator:

Um, so yeah, so sort of academic graduate school coursework made me look back at my own schooling experience um and see um I actually lived through this process of schooling um in a very unique time and place um to grow up exactly where I grew up and grew up where historical cases and research was being done um adding on to that all sorts of different, um sort of integrating my experiences as teachers and my experience sort of reflecting on my experience as a student going through the schooling system, um recognizing my own privilege in that sense, um and sort of trying to work towards this goal of um, it started out as more of trying to figure out and try to understand how social and schooling interests, society and schools intersect, um all the various terrains that they intersect on and then more and more that I read my graduate program was very focused its title was Culture, Curriculum, and Change, but it was very much focused on sort of social theory, understanding social justice and issues of power focused around democracy. So that’s probably why I frame this. . . . In the way that I do um so going through grad school gave me a new lens to look at all my prior experiences for which were already pretty diverse to begin with that a lot of people don’t have those experiences, nor do they seek out those experiences um I don’t now what exactly other than all of those experiences growing up that has made me constantly seek out new and diverse experiences I think moving to [Midwestern state] might be part of that also. . . . Um and that as I’ve gotten here I’ve learned as a social justice educator, I need to learn more um about issues of power and structure um especially currently here at Midwestern University with students from, White students from rural places, who are first generation college students. (P4, I1, L 292-317)
The life experiences that have influenced Dr. Stevenson in relationship to teaching for social justice include his experiences involving his K-12 education, post-secondary education, and teaching. Dr. Stevenson is the social justice educator that he is today because of these experiences. Dr. Stevenson stated:

So, so grad school is kind of like the formalization of a lot of different things. So back before when I talked about what is social justice in the institutions it provided a validated body of knowledge to justify these experiences or justify this outlook. Um, versus some other body of knowledge, talking about what being a social justice educator is it’s providing both actions, structures, and bodies of knowledge that provide counter-narratives and graduate school kind of gave me the language and the body of knowledge to articulate and to be able to describe um schooling in a counter-narrative way or to describe it in a critique, in a critical way and so that sort of the trajectory and how I became quote unquote a social justice educator um was partially my drive, and desire, and thought that education should be equity focused um that it has, it’s tremendously powerful um for providing students opportunity and agency um even though I didn’t have the word agency before I went to grad school. Um, but it was kind of the, it gave me the structure to be, to be able to engage all of these schooling systems. Talk about pedagogy with students and talk about pedagogy in a very specific and academic way that academically valid, research based. Um, so that when they want to talk about something, okay let’s talk about this here’s the research on it, here’s the evidence to back it up, here’s how this works. Um, so I think that was sort of my trajectory it’s partially all these experiences I had as a child that I don’t know if I would be in the same place if I had different experience. . . . Um going through under grad, being trained in elementary ed, and, and psychology I’ve I felt like my teacher training was kind of bland and never got into these critical questions of inequality and power um teaching overseas, coming back to grad school and reading more and engaging in more knowledge um in diverse settings and across diverse issues, um you know that kind of gave me the focus to understand my research and teaching interests. . . . But it also gave me those sort of broad sociological and cultural research interests and allowed me to take it back to my interest and experiences as an elementary school teacher specifically so yeah there’s the round-about explanation. (P4, I1, L 345-374)
This statement summarizes the experiences in Dr. Stevenson’s life that have led him to be a social justice teacher educator.

With an understanding of the life experiences that contributed to Dr. Stevenson’s teaching for social justice, the focus shifts to the ways in which he integrates social justice into his teaching and learning in teacher preparation. Two themes were identified in Dr. Stevenson’s interviews, journaling, and observation involving the ideas of democracy, challenging structures, questioning the status quo, and empowering student voice.

Making the Invisible Visible

Dr. Stevenson integrates social justice teaching and learning into his work in teacher preparation by making the invisible visible. Dr. Stevenson accomplishes this process of making the invisible visible by working with his students to construct a strong knowledge base around the ideas of democracy, challenging societal structures, questioning the status quo, and countering the dominant norms. This process in Dr. Stevenson’s teaching and learning with preservice teachers can be seen in this excerpt from Interview 1 in response to a question about how he creates a consciousness and awareness of power structures with his students through his pedagogy and methodology.

Dr. Stevenson explained:

So probably the one thing that I talk to my preservice teachers about most is um [pause] probably equity in schooling, as I try to frame things as equity, I try to first show them how traditional teaching methods or traditional educational settings or situations creates inequality or inequity. Um and then provide them with an alternative lens um that comes from research for example culturally sustaining pedagogy, culturally responsive or relevant pedagogy, um one that I used this semester was something called complex instruction which was based originally in math um and cognitively guided instruction in math. Um, but it has
applications to other, other areas. Um, and show them these pedagogical practices these actual methods of teaching that work against these examples of inequality that we’ve talked about. Um some of it is just, for my students to be able to, be able to identify were inequality exists, a lot of them don’t see it. . . . A lot of them don’t see how it’s constructed um because they’ve been the benefactors by being a college student you are a success story, you know even if you are a college student at thee regional Midwestern university, um instead of research one flagship university. . . . Um, you know especially for a lot of students who come parents come from blue collar backgrounds. Um, stepping into teaching is a step into a white collar job, it’s a professional job, it’s job security, it’s got benefits um it’s a different class, it has a college degree attached to it. Um, so part of this is pointing out that making the invisible visible. . . . Um, making the structures that we’ve taken for granted and very often students want to reproduce um problematizing them. Lot of that goes into making students sort of question things, um students often come in seeing things as a binary um instead of seeing that there’s this big grey area in the middle, it’s not some bright line where things fall on either side it’s like we have a big grey area where we’re not sure where things fall and then very rarely we see things on a binary. Um, so making students examine what do every day practices in schools um mean in terms of equity. (P4, I1, L 413-440).

This idea of making the invisible visible also came up during my classroom observation in Dr. Stevenson’s classroom. The day I observed Dr. Stevenson, he was answering questions that his students had asked him during a previous activity. One of the questions focused on how teachers were supposed to include diversity and politics in the classroom. Rather than answering the question, Dr. Stevenson turned the question back on the students and had the students discuss in pairs how they address diversity and politics in their everyday lives. Following the brief pair-share, Dr. Stevenson discussed dominant norms with the students which was captured in my field notes as, “It is about taking dominant norms that are invisible and making them visible in the classroom” (P4, O, p. 2).
Another way Dr. Stevenson helps assist his students in making the invisible visible is with the concept of democracy. As discussed previously in Dr. Stevenson’s conceptualization of social justice, he explained, “So, I, my orientation towards social justice probably revolves around thee um sort of definition of what democracy is. . . . And democracy um sort of meaning people’s full ability to participant and engage in associations and arrangements in society” (P4, I1, L 13-15). Democracy was also identified when I asked Dr. Stevenson about attributes of a social justice educator. In Reflective Journal 1 he wrote:

To answer the question more specifically, a social justice teacher must address issues of power and look at social situations from a perspective of providing agency to individuals in the construction of a democratic society – which involves a definition of democracy that revolves around people’s ability to fully participate in society – culturally, socially, politically, economically, etc – not just vote. Doing this in teacher education means provide students with a critical perspective of schooling, society, and how people construct inequality, marginalization and oppression socially and pedagogically in classrooms. Further it means challenging students previously held notions and correcting misconceptions with counter-narratives. Lastly, I think that a social justice educator always challenges the status quo looking for new and inventive ways to push critical social theory and . . . [journal cuts off]. (P4, J1, L 42-51)

Within this journal entry Dr. Stevenson not only speaks to the role of democracy in teaching for social justice, but he also speaks to a social justice educator’s role to challenge the status quo and further critical social theory.

In Interview 1 Dr. Stevenson connected the ideas of stratification, democracy, and social justice:

So a key mechanism of U.S. education, and much of the education worldwide, I shouldn’t say education I should say schooling system is stratification of individuals, stratification into a hierarchy of achievement, stratification into a hierarchy which then creates economic hierarchy and social hierarchy in society. Some people think that’s necessary, um equity, democracy, social justice works
against that. . . . In attempt to provide agency because once you’re stratified you have limited agency as an actor in a democracy. (P4, II, L 117-124)

Here Dr. Stevenson discussed how democracy and social justice work against structures and stratification in education, thus combining both the ideals of democracy and challenging structures within the education system.

During my observation of Dr. Stevenson’s teaching the idea of democracy was discussed in relationship to a preservice teacher’s question about lack of diverse experiences before coming to Midwestern University. Dr. Stevenson responded to this question by talking about education in relationship to democracy. This was captured in my field notes:

NS responded that it is important to know your audience and how you frame things. Focus was placed on presenting questions. NS then went on to talk about education related to democracy. People’s full ability to participate fully in society and human rights are a part of the democracy of education. NS explained education being a practice of freedom, and that it is liberatory, it gives you power. NS then went on to talk about the fact that there are grey areas in teaching that complicate binaries and knowing when to stop pushing an issue. NS then mentioned taking part in a discussion on campus that dealt with getting past partisan politics. (P4, O, p. 3)

Later during the observation when one of the preservice teachers asked if there were topics too controversial to discuss, Dr. Stevenson explained that the controversy line shifts. Again, Dr. Stevenson discussed education in relationship to democracy. This idea was captured in my field notes: “Education is a democratic ideal and part of that is to push against the grain and push against power. A student then stated that any topic can be talked about to a certain extent and NS followed up with mentioning the course text and how one teaches against the grain” (P4, O, p. 4).
In addition to providing his students with tools to teach against the grain, Dr. Stevenson also assists the preservice teachers he works with in countering the dominant norm, which is another way in which the invisible is made visible. This can be seen in his integration of complex instruction and culturally sustaining pedagogy into his teaching.

Dr. Stevenson described countering the dominant norms with his students in Interview 1:

Um, so when I’m talking with my undergraduate students we, we, we try to talk about that, we try to sort of, I try to give them a perspective that is counter to the dominant norm and I try to make them question the dominant norm um versus a, a, an approach which is sort of a, how do I describe this, um, I’m gonna, it’s kind of like a band aid approach of you have your low achieving readers over here what do you do for those low achieving readers to make them better, you have your English language learners over here what do you do for those students to make that better. You know you have your academically talented and gifted students over here, what do you do to make that situation better, um I look at it as an approach of sort of dismantling and disrupting the system so that you’re not addressing these groups in isolation, but you’re addressing the structure of your lessons, you’re addressing the structure of the tasks you’re giving them, the opportunities they have to show their learning, um what counts as learning, what counts is achievement, um all within sort of rectifying that within standards and talking about standards are not specific learning targets, they’re standards you can meet them in multiple different ways. . . . Um, so sort of using that and making them think in sort of, sort of a more muddled way about all the things, sort of their apprenticeship of observation, all the past educational experiences that they’ve had, which might be that, that’s how I sort of reflected on my own experiences and that might be what I want students to do. Um, but I also think of it as you have to address the dominant norm. Um, and the way I approach social justice education in sort of with preservice teachers especially is um there’s an aspect of whiteness and white supremacy and white hierarchy that proliferates education um that needs to be addressed and that’s something that’s very easy to address or at least I think it’s the starting point, especially when you’re dealing with a population that is majority White, um who’s had more than likely a certain set of experiences um where they’ve been successful at them. (P4, I1, L 494-520)
In addition to discussing countering dominant norms in a general sense, Dr. Stevenson also spoke to the idea of addressing more specific structures in education including whiteness, white supremacy, and white hierarchy.

These examples from Dr. Stevenson’s first interview, journaling, and observation show the ways in which he works with his student to make the invisible visible. Through his work with preservice teachers, Dr. Stevenson uses the ideals of democracy to call into question the status quo while challenging preservice teachers to critically examine traditional structures in education that reproduce educational inequities. The second theme that emerged from Dr. Stevenson’s integration of social justice teaching and learning was empowering students.

Empowering Students

In Dr. Stevenson’s teaching and learning with students he strives to build a community of learners, challenge the students’ thinking, and empower students. This theme interconnects with making the invisible visible because it is through Dr. Stevenson’s efforts to empower students that they are then able to enter the field and challenge structures, question the status quo, and enact change.

In reviewing Interview 1, my field notes from the observation, and Dr. Stevenson’s reflective journals I began to see the importance that he placed on meeting students where they are and students’ voice including their perspectives, opinions, and experiences. I began Interview 2 by asking Dr. Stevenson how he goes about meeting students where they are. He explained how he gets to know his students by asking them questions about themselves and their experiences. In this process he also gets the students
talking to one another and switches around groups during low stake conversations where there is no one correct answer. Here he describes another strategy he uses in his teaching:

Um, another strategy that I’ve try to get students to embrace is that very often there is not one answer, one way, one specific thing, um that they could do or should know when we’re talking about education in a broad sense and we’re having a discussions. . . . Um, it’s very much multifaceted, nuanced and there can be a wide range of perspectives and approaches that a single right answer does not fit, there can be multiple answers. Um, and so creating questions and discussions around that um is really important. And then also asking follow-up questions and probing deeper to problematize students’ own thinking. Um, last semester I think across the board my students said you know the first half of this class I absolutely hated it because you wouldn’t give us a straight answer and you always ask follow-up question that made the question we ask like completely irrelevant. Um, and so those are some of the, I guess, tactics one to break down the barriers of how they’re used to interacting in class. . . . Um, the way they see interaction, um and then giving them a chance early on to have expressive voices and ownership of knowledge ownership of knowledge is a big part of this in that in the early classes students own the knowledge um they’re the only, they’re the producer. Um, so I purposefully tip the scales in their favor even though I mean I ask questions I know they know the answer to, I know they know the things, but I do it just to purposefully point out you have the knowledge, you have the power, you are able to, everybody’s able to contribute. Um, and that sort of sets the ground work for, at least me interacting with college students to get them engaged and get them um sort of providing them agency and voice and empowerment. (P4, I2, L 39-60)

In this excerpt of Interview 2 Dr. Stevenson is emphasizing the importance of the ownership of knowledge and the power students have to contribute their existing knowledge and understanding to what is being learned in the classroom

Dr. Stevenson also emphasized the importance of student voice in empowering students, as well as the transfer of empowerment from teacher to students:

So for me um I think, especially with preservice teachers, student voice is important because they need to be able and be prepared for when they go out in schools to be advocates for themselves. Um, very often the reasons that there are pedagogies or curriculums or different things being implemented in the classroom is because somebody says to implement them and there’s not a challenge. One
thing that I want students, preservice teacher students to understand is that both have the knowledge to implement good pedagogy, but then also have the capacity to think critically and have the knowledge to back-up why that is good pedagogy. . . . And all, that is entirely student voice the justification of why you’re doing certain things, it’s good practice especially not just talking to other teachers and principals, but also talking to parents, as well or talking to even students when students say why are we doing this, here’s exactly why. . . . Um, parents say well what’s going with this and students can talk about how uh their instructional strategies the assignments can relate to the [Midwest state] Core Standards relate to these different differentiation tasks, relate to these accommodations, relate to these different content and curricular materials. Um, that act is a huge act of ownership in when you’re teaching. Um, and so getting preservice teachers to understand that they have voice and that teaching is not prescriptive um is pretty important for me. Uh, another reason that I do that is cause I think stressing that empowerment transfers to students, um students in their classroom is another aspect of this is empowering student voice in um elementary classrooms and how can you engage students in similar ways so that students learning at the elementary level is not prescriptive, but it’s empowering. 

(P4, I2, L 71-93)

By providing preservice teachers with voice, they are able to enter the field and provide rationales and reasoning for choices in pedagogy, methodology, and curriculum.

Part of Dr. Stevenson’s process of empowering students is through agency and praxis. Here he defined agency and praxis, as well as elaborated on empowerment in relationship to preservice teachers:

So I define agency as um thee capacity of a person to um be both self-determined, but engage in praxis, another big word. Um, which is being able to put your thoughts into action, um it’s pretty much your, your ability to freely um act in the world um without barriers or oppression. Um so agency is your capacity to do that. So if you have agency um you can have a lot of agency or you can have a little bit of agency. A little bit of agency means you don’t really have much capacity to um act freely or equally, um to participate. Having a lot of agency means you have full equal participation. Um, so agency is important um on a couple of scales. For starting preservice teachers it’s important because it’s part of that empowerment piece. Empowering them to be able to take action as teachers, empowering them to understand how uh there are barriers in the structures of
After talking about the agency of elementary students Dr. Stevenson described how agency ties in to social justice:

Um, the reason that I wrap agency in to, to social justice is that agency and praxis are also part of changing the structures changing the social systems, changing the pedagogical systems, changing the classroom environment, changing the curriculum, um changing all of these things to improve students ability to have agencies, er agency and be agents of change. Like we hear that word a lot in social justice also. . . . Agents of change. Um, because it’s an incredibly empowering thing to be able to affect whatever structure whatever system there is that’s an act of agency. Um, very often people can’t change structures and systems that would be a barrier. Um, so that’s how I, why I feel it’s important why I relate it to teachers, teacher education, um and also talk about it with, in regards to their students. (P4, I2, L 186-196)

This excerpt from Interview 2 ties in to the previous theme of making the invisible visible through its discussion of changing systems and empowerment.

A final example to assist in illustrating how important the role that empowering student voice plays in Dr. Stevenson’s teaching for social justice comes from his final journal, where he response to a question about his hopes for his students once they have left his class. Dr. Stevenson wrote, “My overall hope is that they emerge as knowledgeable change agents who see themselves as capable of enacting change and empowering students” (P4, J3, L 9-10).

Dr. Stevenson’s interviews, journals, and observation provided rich themes to address the research questions guiding this project. Dr. Stevenson’s experiences in K-12 education, graduate school, and his first years teaching provide support for the first theme of circular experience. Within this theme Dr. Stevenson describes the life experiences
that have led him to his current role as a social justice teacher educator teaching for social justice. Dr. Stevenson’s teaching and learning also provided examples to support the themes of making the invisible visible and empowering students, which illustrate the ways in which he integrates social justice into his teaching and learning within his teacher preparation courses.

Chapter in Review

In this chapter I provided individual definitions and conceptualizations of social justice pertaining to education and teacher preparation for each participant involved in this study. I have also identified, described, and provided detailed evidence for each of the themes found within the participants’ interviews, journals, and observations as they related to both Research Question 1 and Research Question 2. In the next chapter I will discuss the research findings in relationship to the teaching for social justice research literature. I will also provide implications for teacher education, as well as implications for future research. The chapter will conclude with a summary and final thoughts regarding the study.
CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION

Organization of the Chapter

This chapter will begin with a discussion about the multiple natural differences I found within the participants’ social justice teaching and learning and the participants’ differing definitions of social justice as it pertains to education and teacher preparation. Next, I will highlight the similarities and differences among the participants’ interviews, journals, and observations and the social justice teaching literature. Throughout this discussion, there will be connections drawn between my research findings and the themes that I identified in the social justice teaching literature described in Chapter 3 and summarized in Table 1. Then, I will describe both the research implications for teacher education, as well as suggestions for future research in the field of social justice in education. I will conclude the chapter with a brief overview of the study, my final reflections on the research project, and a review of the chapter.

Defining Social Justice in Education

The definition that guided this research project defined social justice in education as both a goal and a process. The goal of social justice education is that all people have equitable access to resources in order to be physically and psychologically safe in order to be able to equally participate in society. This goal is achieved through the process of democratic and inclusive means in order to enable human agency to collaboratively create change (Bell, 2007). There were three similarities in the language used by the participants to define social justice education and Bell’s definition of social justice in
education. First, both Dr. Flower and Dr. Stevenson mentioned equality within their definitions of social justice. Within Dr. Flower’s definition of social justice, equality was foundational. Dr. Flower defined equality as, “Equal is um making a provision that everyone regardless of their status, background, and other unforeseeable um situations and conditions that they all have an equal or fair or balanced opportunity to be a part of the same type of experience. . . . Without um bias, prejudice, uh segregation, separation, or a teacher’s personal uh decision about um her or his individual judgment of people” (P3, I1, L 20-25). In Dr. Stevenson’s definition of social justice equality was used in relationship to his description of disparate outcomes. Dr. Stevenson explained:

A lot of people talk about equality of opportunity. Disparate outcome looks at outcomes and it says that um things can be legally determined discriminatory even if they don’t have a discriminatory intent, they have a discriminatory outcome. And this was used in uh housing, fair housing um case law very often. So, when I look at students and I say okay if we assume a system is equal, if we assume teaching is equal why do we not see equal outcomes? (P4, I1, L 49-54).

When I asked Dr. Stevenson exactly how he defined equality he stated:

Um, so equality um I is kind of a I see it as a classical, so like going back to classical philosophy, classical liberalism um equal treatment um for everybody regardless of who you are, what you are, anything. Um, it’s equal treatment, um, one of the critiques of that is does not take into account the sociohistoric, it does not take into account how people arrive to where they are socially [tapped on desk 3 times], um because we don’t exist in a vacuum. Um, people don’t exist in a vacuum, um social status and social hierarchies and social systems and social practices have been constructed over a long period of time and they’ve been constructed on certain knowledge bases um and certain institutions that use these knowledge bases. Um, equality is sort of this, for me it’s this broad classical liberalism which is probably very different than people think of liberal today. . . . Which is an important distinction um, and it’s also an academic distinction, it’s not necessarily a distinction that teachers or everyday people make, it’s a distinction in the literature of academics. Um, is this broad liberalism of equal treatment um the critique of that is where equity comes into play. (P4, I1, L 85-100)
Bell (2007) also used the term equal within the definition of social justice in education, but equal was used in terms of equal participation of people rather than equality among groups.

Second, both Professor Miller and Dr. Stevenson used the term “equity” when defining social justice. Both participants used the term in similar ways. Professor Miller used the term when speaking about breaking down systems in order to work towards equity. Professor Miller explains:

Um, so, um, equity is about the fact, equality is nice, but that’s not gonna help your students. . . . If you treat them all the same cause they’re all gonna need something different from you. So when I talk about equity with my students, it’s about recognizing that their students have different needs and they’re gonna need different things from them, as educators, and they’re gonna need different things from the school and they do need different, um, they need society to change a little bit to create equity. (P2, I1, L 27-33)

Dr. Stevenson described equity as:

Equity for me in defining it is how do we take into account um sociohistoric context of certain marginalized populations um and then equity is the striving towards that equal outcomes instead of equal opportunity. Um, even though equal opportunity and equality don’t necessarily go hand-and-hand, we see there’s plenty sort of unequal opportunity in education, um, but equity, equity is specifically focused on recognizing how sociohistoric context plays into where populations largely, macro-logically, like macro-socially um have been positioned um experiences of these populations, education outcomes of these populations. It’s more institutional. . . . Um, and but I think it does have specific pedagogical practices of how you can achieve equity in a classroom, um so but, that’s how I distinguish those two, but the common phrase is like it’s not giving everybody the same thing, it’s giving people what they need to succeed. Um, equity is also sort of, [pause] how do I phrase this? It goes against a understanding of education as competition. . . And stratification. (P4, I1, L 100-115)
Both Professor Miller and Dr. Stevenson speak about equity in terms of meeting students’ individual and differing needs within education. Bell (2007) uses the term “equitable” more broadly regarding the distribution of resources within society in order to meet the psychological and physical needs within society. While Professor Miller, Dr. Stevenson, and Bell all use the terms “equity” or “equitable,” Professor Miller’s and Dr. Stevenson’s definitions are specific to individual students within education while Bell’s definition is used in a more broad sense within society as a whole.

The third and final way that the participants’ definitions used similar language to Bell (2007) was in Dr. Stevenson’s use of democracy in his definition of social justice. Dr. Stevenson stated, “So, I, my orientation towards social justice probably revolves around thee um sort of definition of what democracy is. . . . And democracy um sort of meaning people’s full ability to participant and engage in associations and arrangements in society” (P4, I1, L 13-18). This idea of democracy and people’s full participation in society shared by Dr. Stevenson is echoed in Bell (2007), “the goal of social justice, we believe, should also be democratic and participatory” (p. 2).

As illustrated in the examples above, the participants in this study used similar language to Bell (2007) in their definitions of social justice. However, the participants’ definitions did differ from this guiding definition because the meanings and the contexts of the words and definitions used by the participants (e.g., equality and equity) were different. Another difference between social justice described by Bell (2007) and the participants was found in both Dr. Love’s and Dr. Stevenson’s mention of critical theory and critical social theories respectively. Dr. Love spoke about the interrelationship of
social theories and specifically named critical theory when defining social justice. Dr. Stevenson spoke of critical social theory when he was talking about schools, social theory, and the literature. Even when discussing the similar language the participants used in defining social justice in education, the examples from their first interviews show the different ways that the participants use terms such as equity and equality in their specific contexts of social justice teaching and learning. These differences in the participants’ definitions and conceptualizations of social justice in education illustrate how there are natural differences found within teaching for social justice.

**Difference as a Natural Part of Social Justice in Education**

As discussed in Chapter 1 and Chapter 3, one of the critiques of the integration of social justice in education is the multiple and ambiguous definitions used to describe social justice as it pertains to education and teacher preparation (e.g., Cochran-Smith, Barnatt, et al., 2009; Grant & Agosto, 2008; Hackman, 2005). The idea that the participants in this study all defined social justice in relationship to education and teacher preparation differently is similar to the findings in the social justice teaching literature (e.g., Cochran-Smith et al., 1999; McDonald, 2007; Whipp, 2013). As described in Chapter 3, Zollers et al. (2000) found that participants multiple definitions of social justice could be placed on continuums, and Good (2010) found no consensus among participants’ definitions. Thus my findings are in line with what other researchers have found when asking participants to define social justice in education. Reflecting on the ambiguity critique and the differing definitions found in the participants’ definitions of social justice it caused me to ask the question why do these differences exist.
Looking back to the participants’ interviews, journals, and observations, and the differences in their multiple identities, experiences, and approaches to teaching for social justice I began to realize that for these social justice teacher educators, difference is a natural part of their social justice teaching and learning. This idea sent me back into the participants’ interviews and journals to something that three of the four participants said about teaching for social justice.

In Dr. Love’s definition of social justice, he mentioned that his approach was not cookie cutter because one needs to take into account the context and situation of the multiple identities involved in social justice work. Professor Miller eluded to the fact that there was no guidebook to being a great social justice teacher. Dr. Stevenson described that there was not just one way to go about doing social justice and that a person should not let somebody else dictate the way that they fight for equity.

Dr. Love’s description of the need to take into account the multiple contexts and identities involved in social justice work (North, 2008), coupled with the participants’ themes, really made me think about the differences in social justice teaching and learning. Specifically, I thought about the role that the participants’ multiple and differing identities, experiences, and approaches to social justice teaching played into their social construction of social justice in education (Bogotch, 2002). While some scholars critique the differences found within social justice education and see these differences as a weakness, the participants’ interviews and journals indicated that these differences within social justice education are a natural part of their teaching and learning. These differences, reflected in the participants’ themes and definitions of social justice, enabled
the participants to take into account their experiences and identities (e.g., Being Authentically Myself, Advocate, Circular Experience, Living Through Historic Times), as well as the diverse contexts, experiences, and perspectives of their students (e.g., Honoring Students’ Voices, Know Your Students, Teaching Through Multiple Perspectives) in teaching and learning for social justice.

Next, I will move to addressing my research findings in relationship to the educational research surrounding social justice teaching and learning. In the sections that follow I will discuss my findings in relationship to the two research questions guiding this project:

- Research Question 1: What life experiences influence the lives of social justice teacher educators in relationship to teaching for social justice?
- Research Question 2: How do social justice teacher educators integrate social justice into the teaching and learning in their teacher preparation courses?

This discussion of the participants’ themes and the literature will further paint the picture of the natural differences found within the participants’ life experiences and their social justice teaching and learning.

Social Justice Teacher Educators’ Life Experiences

Looking first at Research Question 1 and the life experiences that have impacted teacher educators to teach for social justice, I found that all four of the participants described significant life experiences that contributed to their teaching for social justice. All four participants shared experiences from their childhoods, graduate school, and their current teaching that in some way impacted their decision to teach for social justice. This
finding is similar to literature on social justice teaching that has discussed how lived experience can shape the path and frame the teaching of social justice educators (e.g., Good, 2010; Kelly-Jackson, 2015; Pennington et al., 2012; Williams & Evans-Winters).

**Life Experiences: Different, Yet Similar**

Dr. Flower and Dr. Stevenson have different social identities (i.e., race and gender) yet, their stories paralleled one another when talking about their experiences in childhood and post-secondary education. Dr. Flower is an African American female who grew up during segregation in South Carolina. Dr. Stevenson is a White male who grew up during the implementation of a desegregation plan in North Carolina. While Dr. Flower and Dr. Stevenson have different social identities, both the theme of Living Through Historic Times and the theme of Circular Experience speak to how Dr. Flower’s and Dr. Stevenson’s race, as well as how their respective locations impacted their role as social justice teacher educators. More specifically, they both grew up in the South and described in detail the roles that segregation and desegregation played in their lives as an African American woman and White man. Furthermore, both Dr. Flower and Dr. Stevenson described in detail the important role that their post-secondary education played in their exploration, synthesis, interpretation, and understanding of their childhood experiences growing up in South within systems of segregation and integration.

Speaking specifically to the matter of race in relationship to teacher educators teaching for social justice, Williams and Evans-Winters (2005) described the role that race, desegregation and the Civil Rights Movement played in their roles as social justice educators. While Williams and Evans-Winters did not live in the South as young Black
women they still encountered the impacts of integration in school at the height of the integration movement. They explain, “As individuals, we remember verbal abuse and often embarrassment, in the classroom, physical punishment, overt and covert racism, as well as gender bias.” (Williams & Evans-Winters, 2005, p. 202). Similar to Dr. Flower they also shared that they felt like they needed to prove themselves to White teachers throughout their education. Similar to Dr. Stevenson’s mother advocating for him to take AP courses, Williams & Evans-Winters also discusses the advocacy role that one of their mothers had to play so that they were placed in the higher track within the White school. A final comparison in Williams and Evans-Winters’ story echoes Dr. Flower’s story and how her experiences attending all Black schools and then in graduate school going to school with White students and having White professors impacted her teaching for social justice. Williams and Evans-Winters (2005) explain:

We are able to reflect on the burden of being black girls in predominantly black, and later, white educational settings and discuss how those experiences began to set the stage for our eventual work of anti-oppressive education as Black women. Collectively, our private identities prepared us for a very public role. (p. 202)

This last line from Williams and Evans-Winters speaks directly to a commonality among the participants within this study, the intersectionality of their personal and professional identities.

The Intersectionality of the Personal and the Professional

Within all of the participants’ interviews and journals there was an interconnectedness or intersectionality of their personal and professional identities and experiences. Professor Miller’s themes of Advocate and Teaching for Social Justice is a Continuous Journey, focused on her interconnected personal and professional identities
and experiences. For example, the interconnectedness of Professor Miller’s social identities of mother and advocate and her experiences as an elementary teacher and teacher educator, went into constructing the two themes identified in her interviews, journaling, and observation. Furthermore, Professor Miller’s advocacy work for children with disabilities, as a mother of children with disabilities and a doctoral student writing a dissertation focused on special education, and a teacher educator showed the intersectionality of the personal and the professional.

Dr. Flower’s theme of Living Through Historic Times also spoke to intersectionality of her personal and professional identities. Dr. Flower’s experiences as an African American woman living in South Carolina during segregation greatly impacts her role as a professional and a social justice teacher educator which can be seen in her research and service pertaining to Black girls and African American children and families. What is interesting, is nowhere within Professor Miller’s or Dr. Flower’s interviews or journals do they explicitly talk about the intersectionality of their personal and professional identities. Perhaps neither of them make this connection because their personal and professional identities are so intertwined that they do not make a distinction between them.

In comparison, both Dr. Love and Dr. Stevenson explicitly reference the intersectionality of their personal and professional identities in their descriptions of being social justice teacher educators. Within Dr. Love’s theme of Being Authentically Myself, multiple personal and professional identities and experiences created the foundation for the importance he placed on being authentically himself as a social justice teacher
educator and openly sharing his multiple identities (e.g., feminist, emerging de-colonial scholar) with his students. In addition, in Interview 2, Dr. Love and I spent a lot of time discussing the interconnectivity of the personal and professional. In Interview 2 Dr. Love explained:

A little bit of unpacking that and then in terms of the personal and professional um in my own life my um my work is very personal and emotional um but at the same time, and so that is why I’m transparent and sort of just authentically myself which I see as um an important attribute which I’ve talked about before in terms of just being authentic and being yourself within quote unquote professional contexts . . . (P1, I2, L48-52)

Within this quote, Dr. Love addresses the personal, the professional, and authentically being oneself.

Looking to Dr. Stevenson, it was not until the end of Interview 2 when he was discussing his successes and/or describing why he could not think of his successes that he explicitly described the intersectionality of his personal and professional identities in relationship to social justice. Dr. Stevenson stated:

Um, so yeah, so I’m not really sure like if I’m thinking about like successes I think about the same things, I don’t think about, and then when I think about what would be different I think about personal life what would that mean to have success outside of classroom outside of profession, outside of institution um I don’t know if that means like the conversations I have with friends, peers, family members um, I don’t know if that means sort of advoca, advocacy and activist work outside of this area, but I see that as sort of an intertwined identity. . . . Um, an intertwined self in that um I see pretty much my entire life and everything that happens through the same lens I see education through. (P4, I2, L 394-403)

In this excerpt, Dr. Stevenson speaks to his intertwined identities and the lens he uses throughout the different facets of his life.

The discussion here illustrates the integral role that life experiences play in these social justice teacher educators choosing to teach for social justice. I assert that it is the
intersectionality of the social justice teacher educators’ multiple personal and professional identities and life experiences that contribute to the natural differences found within the teaching and learning in social justice in education. As described in the participants’ interviews, it was both their personal and professional identities and experiences that led them to teach for social justice.

Similar Life Experiences

The final idea that I would like to connect to Research Question 1 is a similarity found in three of the four participants’ insights regarding their multiple experiences and identities impacting their teaching for social justice. Professor Miller, Dr. Stevenson, and Dr. Love all discussed the ideas of continued learning and doing more in relationship to social justice teaching and learning. The role of social justice being a continuous process played a large role in the construction of Professor Miller’s theme of Teaching for Social Justice is a Continuous Journey. As she described herself, Professor Miller saw herself as a “wanna be,” who has a lot to learn and continuously strives to do better in teaching and learning for social justice. Both Dr. Stevenson and Dr. Love only briefly mentioned their social justice work being a continuous process. Dr. Stevenson discussed his efforts as “a work in progress” at the end of Interview 2 when talking about his successes. He stated:

Um but and I think part of it is also I’m, I’m wary of the term success cause I see my work as a work in progress um and that’s why for me the students being able to travel and take stuff with them, I identify that as a success, like they went over here and they took that and they were able to use it um because I have limited time with them. Like that has a end point and their ability to uh harness their knowledge, use it in a different scenario, apply it is one reason that I would lend myself towards that. . . Where myself, my career, personal life things in society I see as still a work in progress and so thinking about successes it’s like yes maybe something changes or gets better, but there’s all this other stuff so. (P4, I2, L 414-423)
When discussing some of the challenges he faces Dr. Love explained:

And how uh, and I do talk a lot about whiteness and I debunk neoliberal policies and practices um in terms of uh individualism and meritocracy and um what that means for sort of like learning and assumptions. So going back to that hegemony or that paradigm um that um in order to have our antennas up you need to engage in those processes to getting to know these, this type of nomenclature um in terms of the ways in which, how to identify them what do they mean. I think I still have so much growing to do and one of the things how I kind of begin to get over these challenges of scaffolding and sort of like ramping up students um to what I’m saying [chuckle] is um that I am honest and authentic with them that I am still struggling with these ideas and uh these concepts myself, um and so in a sense the, to as opposed to because I’m trying to move away from an analysis or a conceptual framework um a conceptual framework that stays at the level of silos of things. (P1, I1, L 419-429)

This idea of social justice teaching as being a continual process is echoed in the social justice literature (e.g., Agarwal et al., 2010; Flory & Walton-Fisette, 2015; Liu & Millman, 2013). Just as Dr. Stevenson used the words “a work in progress,” so too did Flory and Walton-Fisette (2015) when describing social justice work with physical education preservice teachers. This idea of social justice teaching and learning being a continuous process is an ideal topic to conclude with regarding research Question 1, because it shows the role that life-long and continuous learning plays in teaching for social justice. With a clear picture of how my research findings addressed Research Question 1 in relationship to the social justice teaching literature, the discussion now moves to describing my findings in relationship to Research Question 2.

**Teaching for Social Justice**

Having discussed the research findings in relationship to Research Question 1, which explored the life experiences that impacted social justice teacher educators’
teaching for social justice, I will now move to describing my research findings in relationship to Research Question 2. Research Question 2 posed the question: How do social justice teacher educators integrate social justice into the teaching and learning in their teacher preparation courses? Many similarities and differences were identified as I analyzed the participants’ interviews, reflective journals, and observation field notes. These themes can be found in Appendix F in Table F6.

**Teaching and Learning: Similar, Yet Different**

One similarity amongst all the participants was their orientation to place students at the center of their teaching and learning for social justice. This student-centeredness was illustrated by the themes Co-Construction of Knowledge Through Problem-Posing Education, Honoring Students’ Voices and Experiences, Knowing Your Students, Utilizing Multiple Perspectives, and Empowering Students. Just as Dr. Love co-constructed knowledge as both the teacher and student alongside his students so too did An (2016). Similarly, Dr. Flower’s integrates her students’ experiences and perspectives into class activities such as the current event debate that I observed during her class. She allowed her students to pick issues that were important to them and then share their ideas and thoughts with their classmates. Kelley-Jackson (2015) also emphasizes the important role that learning about students’ perspectives and backgrounds play in social justice teaching and learning.

A final example of the emphasis that the participants put on building relationships with their students is in Professor Miller’s emphasis of getting to know her students while also modeling community building activities for her students. Conklin and Hughes (2016)
also stressed the importance of building relationships with their students while also modeling these strategies for their preservice teachers. The participants emphasized knowing one’s students so that one could utilize this knowledge of students’ backgrounds and experiences in order to integrate social justice teaching and learning into the classroom.

Discussing difficult issues of equity and equality. Another similarity among the four participants is that all four participants incorporated curriculum and content within their teaching for social justice that included difficult and controversial issues related to equity and equality. As seen in the observation of Dr. Love’s class he discussed issues of power, marginalized groups, culture, praxis, awareness of reproduction or disrupting, and reminded his preservice teachers to have their antennas up. As described in Professor Miller’s interviews and journals she openly discussed concepts like bias, white privilege, and meritocracy to open her preservice teachers’ eyes to inequity in education. Through integration multiple perspectives in the classroom, Dr. Flower worked to open students’ minds to inequity through discussions on parent conferences, religion in schools, and issues that arise when assigning students to bring treats when parents/guardians may not be able to afford them. Dr. Stevenson encouraged his students to question structures within education, discuss dominant norms (e.g., heteronormative discourse) during the classroom observation, and dismantling and disrupting the system.

Just as all four participants addressed difficult issues of equity and equality in their social justice teaching, the teachers and the teacher educators within the social justice teaching literature also addressed similar issues. Similar to Dr. Flower’s
integration of social justice assignments into her class to get her preservice teachers to address their bias and prejudice, Le Roux and Mdunge (2012) set out to assist students in understanding oppression and challenging their prejudices by introducing their students to the Cycle of socialization and assisting their students in making connections to their lived experience. It was their hope that the students would help to disrupt the cycle of oppression. Other topics of equity and equality discussed in the social justice and multicultural teaching literature included race, class, gender, sexuality, sexism, and sexual identity (Flory & Walton-Fisette, 2015; Kelly-Jackson, 2015; Lam, 2015). These are all similar to the topics covered explicitly by Professor Miller in the diversity course she teaches and more generally by the other participants.

Teaching and Learning: Differences

Differences in the participants’ teaching for social justice included the ways in which social justice was integrated and enacted in the classroom, as well as the topics addressed with the preservice teachers. Dr. Flower integrated multiple perspectives in her courses through social justice assignments addressing topics such as parent conferences, religion in the classroom, and GPS monitoring. As she explained, the purpose of these assignments was to open up the preservice teachers’ minds and help them self-assess and evaluate their bias and prejudice. Sarah Flory spoke about these same issues of integrating different sociocultural issues in class. Similar to Dr. Flower, Flory explains, “I hope that the points I bring up and challenge them to think about might lead to a spark that causes a slight shift in their philosophies” (Flory & Walton-Fisett, 2015).
Self as an example. One of the ways that Dr. Flower integrated multiple perspectives into her teaching and learning with preservice teachers was through using herself as an example. This was illustrated in the story that Dr. Flower told regarding the preschool student and birthday treats. Both Professor Miller and Dr. Stevenson also talked about using themselves as examples within their teaching and learning for social justice. Professor Miller shared an experience in Interview 2 in which she used herself as an example, she explained:

There are reasons behind it so, that’s I think important for them to understand and we can talk about that’s where perspective comes in and trying to understand even and then I bring in a great story because when I was teaching in [Middle Eastern country] my teaching partner was from India and her daughter was had gone through our American school the whole time and she was getting ready to go to college next year and we were having a conversation I was like [name] what are you going to do after college? She was like, I’m gonna move, mom and dad you know are thinking about moving back to India pretty soon so I’ll probably go there and I’ll by then I hope they’ll have picked out the man I’m going to marry so then I’ll be getting married. I was like what [laughter] what do you mean they’re going to pick out the man you’re going to marry and that was totally normal to her. Her parents. . . .That was an arranged marriage she was like I trust them, they know me well, they’ll pick out a nice guy, if I don’t like him of course I can say no, but and that totally goes against my worldview of where you meet someone, you go on some dates, you fall in love, and then you, that’s my worldview, the romantic notion. So not her worldview of marriage, right. So I had to be like okay, interesting, and not be like, you’re crazy [laughter] what are you thinking, you can’t let them do that. It’s hard, but it’s reality. (P2, I1, L 290-308)

Here Professor Miller shows how one’s notion of romance and marriage can be challenged through cultural differences and how these ideals need to be challenged. Dr. Stevenson also talked about using himself as an example. He explained:

So, one, I think it allows um content issues and examples and real life examples of this it provides a bridge for students. Um, being a white male uh I’m very similar, from similar, I’m very similar in my demographics to a lot of students. There are some ways that I’m not similar. . . .Um, come from a upper-middle class family where at least the university I’m at now um there are a lot of first
generation college students, my family has like five generations of college students. Um, but I think that providing examples from my life illuminates ways that content and concepts um function within our lives that students may or may not think about. It also makes real that I’ve experienced many of the same things that they have or will experience. Um, so to use a different social justice term like you know it’s not necessarily an ally or an ally building, but it is a ability to recognize okay like I’m not the only one. . . .Um, or to make it a little bit more personal to them. The other reason that I do that is because I have had a long time now to sort of critically analyze my life and understand social structures around my life um and so it’s not, it’s a way to address issues of inequity, inequality um power, oppression, hegemony and address it not by putting the students on the spot as defensive, but by making me. . . .The person that I am able to articulate these things that very often we say that these are like oppression is a very bad thing um and talk about how I, I’m a part of that, um, it puts me as the bad guy instead of students feeling like oh crap I don’t want to be a horrible person um you know um so yeah, so that’s one of the reasons that I use myself because I do embody and have experienced many of the schooling structures that cause inequality. I’ve benefited from them. . . .Uh so I think recognition of that is important part of that, important part of social justice education um, so yeah. (P4, I2, L 322-346)

Dr. Flower, Professor Miller, and Dr. Stevenson all integrate self as an example in their social justice teaching and learning in different ways, in order to let their students know that they have experienced the challenges they discuss in their classrooms. They also use self as an example to show the human element to the issues, while creating a bridge between theory and lived experience.

This integration of self as an example is also discussed within the social justice teaching literature. Flory and Walton-Fisette (2015) describe using self as an example in order to “create a context that provided students opportunities to feel more comfortable and to make such ideologies and issues more personal and closer to home” (p. 249). Flory uses self as an example by having her students observe her integrating sociocultural issues in middle and high school classrooms and then discusses the preservice teachers’
observations in a follow-up discussion (Flory & Walton-Fissete, 2015). Elza Major describes using self as an example in the stories that are shared with preservice teachers about her changes in her ideas and attitudes about issues such as racism and language (Pennington et al., 2012).

Co-construction of knowledge and problem-posing education. As is seen in the theme Co-Construction of Knowledge Through Problem-Posing Education, Dr. Love sees himself as both the teacher and a student alongside his preservice teachers in the classroom placing emphasis on disrupting the status quo. “First and foremost, I consider myself a student along slide my students. I purposefully disrupt the status quo of what it means to be a teacher—that say I have all the answers—but engage my students and myself in the process(es) of learning with them/together” (P1, J2, L 58-60). Like Dr. Love, An (2016) challenged hierarchies of professor and student explaining, “I hoped my classroom to become a democratic public sphere in which my students and I teach and learn together to challenge oppressive social and educational norms (p. 23).

Dr. Love also integrated problem-posing education into his social justice teaching, emphasizing the dialectical nature of continuously questioning the preservice teachers’ assumptions until they came to their individual truths. Sleeter et al. (2004) discussed Paulo Freire’s problem-posing pedagogy in relationship to using multicultural critical pedagogy to prepare preservice teachers to teach students with culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Through this process they also encouraged the preservice teachers to integrate multicultural critical pedagogy into their future classrooms. An (2016) also integrated problem posing education into the elementary
social studies methods classroom as one approach to integrating transformative, democratic, and critical pedagogy practices with preservice teachers. An (2016) explained, “I engaged them to dissect the edTPA rubrics with their eyes on what was missing, what was valued and what was not, and how to make the rubrics more relevant for social justice-oriented social studies instruction” (p. 23).

Making students uncomfortable. Dr. Love also discussed making his preservice teachers uncomfortable during class and being comfortable with being uncomfortable, as well as creating spaces of tension in the teaching and learning environment. Similarly, Professor Miller stressed the importance of making students uncomfortable, and it was the importance that she placed on this idea that helped to construct the theme Nothing’s Gonna Change If We Don’t Get Uncomfortable. Professor Miller stressed the important role that making preservice teachers uncomfortable and pushing them outside of their comfort zones played in her integration of social justice in teaching and learning experiences in the classroom.

Like Professor Miller, Conklin and Hughes (2016) described how they challenged their students outside their comfort zones by having them talk about their strengths, writing poetry, working with pedagogies and ideas that the preservice teachers might not be familiar with. Conklin and Hughes also made students uncomfortable by working with the preservice teachers to further the preservice teachers’ understandings of inequitable social structures and show them equitable teaching in order to reinforce the need to meet all students’ needs. Le Roux and Mdunge (2012) discuss how they did not prepare their students’ to be pushed outside of their comfort zones when challenging the students to
examine oppression and challenge their own assumptions and prejudice. Rather than doing this difficult work the students wanted classroom strategies for teaching.

**Lack of knowledge of social justice and issues of equity.** In three of the four participants’ descriptions of teaching for social justice, there were examples of the lack of students’ knowledge of social justice and issue of equity. In the observation of Dr. Love’s class, he presented a list of questions to his students including what is social justice. While the preservice teachers were writing, they began to pose questions about social justice and several of the students were unsure of what to write. This excerpt from my observation field notes describes what transpired:

> Several students were unsure of what to write for social justice and wanted to discuss it as a class. Dr. Love prompted the students by saying things about being metacognitive and thinking about the readings throughout the semester and he challenged the students to: recall, critiquing, synthesizing, creating new knowledge/connections. (P1, O, p. 5)

Professor Miller shared her experiences talking about white privilege with the preservice teachers and how during some semesters many of them were not familiar with the idea. Professor Miller also described how in more recent semesters, the preservice teachers are coming to her class with more knowledge about white privilege because other professors are addressing it in their classes. Dr. Stevenson shared that many of his students were not familiar with the idea of social justice, which was different from his previous teaching experiences where the term social justice was polarizing.

The social justice teaching literature also discussed this issue of lack of knowledge of social justice and equity. Dover (2013) described the lack of knowledge that high school students had regarding social justice by citing participant comments.
“Although Participant 11 found this an exciting part of the teaching process as ‘kids don’t know or realize that the things are wrong until we dissect the issue—it motivates me to do more with them,’” (Dover, 2013, p. 96). Vomvordidi-Ivanovic and McLeman (2015) cited mathematics teacher educators’ statements regarding their preservice students sharing that they wished they had learned content regarding equity in other classes. Another participant shared that inequities in schools should be addressed in every class. A final example of students’ lack of knowledge of social justice and equity also addresses issues of student resistance to social justice education. Pennington et al. (2012) cited preservice students’ lack of knowledge and then went on to describe student resistance and the ways in which their preservice teachers responded to content by rolling their eyes, remaining silent, and using stereotypes to describe students’ parents. This example of lack of knowledge and resistance, leads to the next area section about the theme in the social justice teaching literature that was absent from the participants’ interviews, journals, and observations.

Absent from the Findings

When reviewing the social justice teaching literature for this project the ideas that were most commonly discussed in the research were challenges, tensions, and/or resistance in relationship to teaching for social justice, multicultural, and/or equity education (e.g., Agarwal et al., 2010; Assaf & Delaney, 2013; Atwater et al., 2013; Dover 2013; Dowling et al., 2015). With this knowledge in mind I specifically created a question in Interview 1 asking each participant the challenges they faced as social justice teacher educators. It was my assumption that the participants would respond with
comments regarding preservice teachers’ resistance to social justice teaching (Atwater et al., 2015); student resistance and defensiveness to racism (Freedman et al., 2005); student resistance to discussions of race (Michie, 2003; Pennington et al., 2012); and resistance to questioning student beliefs that may be racist or prejudice (Dover, 2013).

What I discovered in reviewing the individual descriptions of teaching and learning for social justice was different than what I expected. While Dr. Love did speak of creating a tension within his classroom he did not state that this tension was a challenge within his teaching for social justice. Professor Miller described an exchange with some of her colleagues when they were discussing the integration of the words social justice into the COE mission statement. She shared that some of her colleagues’ peers would not like the idea of the integration of the term social justice into the mission statement. However, Professor Miller did not cite this as a challenge to her teaching for social justice. Perhaps this absence of resistance is related to the limited knowledge the preservice teachers had about social justice and equity. The lack of resistance could be a result of the preservice teachers’ lack of exposure to the term social justice and the polarizing and controversial sentiment surrounding the term found in other places in the United States.

Challenges. Some of the challenges that the participants did discuss in Interview 1 included Professor Miller’s fear that the preservice teachers were just telling her what she wanted to hear. Rather than the preservice teachers saying things that they believed she wanted to hear, Professor Miller hoped that she was assisting the preservice teachers with opening their minds to the ideas discussed in the class. Another challenge Professor
Miller described was when she had students in class that believe they know everything because of volunteer opportunities that they have had such as mission trips. Dr. Flower referenced challenges such as discussing 9/11, the 2016 election, and the killing of Black men. Dr. Love shared a challenge he faced regarding his students wanting tools and methods for teaching, without wanting the understanding behind why the tools work. Dr. Love also shared:

I think the other challenge would be, well first being a first semester um [professor rank], being a minority in terms of um of being gay, being having a learning disability and still figuring what that means about who I am….Um, and uh being Latino um at the sort um national level in terms of the anti-immigrant um rhetoric and perhaps to come hopefully not policies um from the Trump administration, um for the incoming Trump administration, and uh thinking about sort of um my own, so another aspect would be color blindness from my students so um and uh whiteness and thinking about what those mean. (P1, I1, L 409-417)

Dr. Stevenson shared that the challenges he encounters as a social justice teacher educator included being new to the Midwest and having to adjust his understanding of students’ experiences, but he believes that to be just part of the work of education. He also shared:

So I think that’s one challenge that I have faced uh a second challenge that I have faced is um [pause] not knowing if these pedagogical practices actually resonate with students whether they actually get it. There are sometimes when I read work and I like and I build in all these assessment tools like journals and papers and make them write units and make them do projects and what not. Um, and I can see sometimes um that they are able to regurgitate some of the things, um, but then it’s a question of whether that lasts and whether that becomes internalized as sort of providing them a critical perspective because what my goal is, partially, is to ensure that going forward they take this critical perspective to their other courses, to their other situations. . . . So they’re constantly able to look at pedagogy, classrooms, curriculum, and say oh this needs to be this, this should be this, oh I can create, I can take this and I can turn it into something that’s really powerful this way. Um, I can take this boring lesson that’s kind of standard and we can you know use complex instruction to turn it into group work and we can
do all these different things in this way. Um, so that’s a challenge for me professionally, um, is sort of knowing or not knowing to a certain degree whether dispositions and knowledge carry on. Um, something I’ve tried to stress more this semester is how do students use academic language to describe things um because this is an important part of this is that the language we use to describe our pedagogy, our practices um is important for how we enact pedagogical practices….How we enact social justice practices um so trying get students to build their knowledge and their sort of repertoire of vocabulary to describe these things, so then hopes that they are able to articulate them later and say oh yeah, I’m you know use culturally sustaining or culturally responsive pedagogy because I want to bring students funds of knowledge into the classroom and building that bridge um sort of incorporates diversity on an equity based, in an equity-based way. Um, you know that’s a very different statement than oh yes I think diversity is great. (P4, I1, L 607-634)

This challenge that Dr. Stevenson shared runs parallel to the theme of empowering students which was identified in his interviews and journaling. In his work, Dr. Stevenson strives to provide students with the skills of questioning, pedagogy, methodology, knowledge, and language needed to change existing inequities in education.

These examples of the different ways the participants integrated social justice teaching and learning into their teacher preparation courses, like the differences in their experiences and identities, also contribute to the natural differences and their social construction (Bogotch, 2002) of social just education. As Dr. Love, Professor Miller, and Dr. Stevenson highlighted there is no one way to integrate social justice teaching and learning in the classroom (North, 2008).

**Implications for Teacher Education**

Differences found in the teaching and learning practices of social justice teacher educators are a natural part of social justice in education because each individual has had unique lived experiences that impact their work. Along with this, it is imperative for social justice teacher educators to recognize the histories, perspectives, and experiences
of the students that they are teaching. Again, social justice teaching and learning is socially constructed practice that is dependent upon the educator and students involved in the teaching and learning experience resulting in no single approach to meeting the needs of students (Bogotch, 2002; North, 2008). These findings guide both the implications for teacher preparation programs and teacher educators.

Implications for Teacher Preparation

The natural differences found in teaching and learning for social justice in education means that teacher preparation programs integrating social justice education into teacher preparation coursework need to be open and honest in how they define social justice in education. If a teacher preparation program is committed to addressing social justice in education integrating this into the programs mission, vision, and/or goals would assist in this openness and provide clarity in what social justice means for the program. It is recommended that the definition of social justice be grounded in both the life experiences, as well as the teaching and learning experiences of the teacher educators and students in order to capture the individual nature and natural differences of the teacher educators, students, and contexts of the teacher preparation program. Doing this will embrace the socially constructed nature of social justice rather than forcing it into the norms and expectations of the dominant institutions.

Once a teacher preparation program as clearly defined its vision, mission, and goals for social justice pedagogy and practice, it can support its faculty with the development of professional learning communities (PLCs) for social justice teacher educators. Within these PLCs, teacher educators can share their experiences teaching and
learning for social justice, discuss challenges they face, and continue the important work of self-reflection required for social justice engagement (Bell et al., 2007). Implementing PLCs for social justice educators would also allow a space for continuous professional development (Dover, 2013); collaboration and dialogue (North, 2008), and the creation a supportive network in which to teach for social justice (Atwater et al., 2013).

Implications for Teacher Educators

The openness and honesty set forth by the teacher preparation program should also extend to the ways that social justice is enacted in teacher educators’ pedagogy and practice. Openness and honesty in teacher education pertaining to pedagogy and methodology could take the form of the teacher educators sharing stories about oneself or using self as an example (Flory & Walton-Fisette, 2015; Pennington et al., 2012) during teaching to illustrate how their experiences have impacted their teaching for social justice.

Teacher educators might also employ metacognition strategies and modeling (Conklin & Hughes, 2016) when integrating social justice teaching pedagogy and methodology with preservice teachers in the classroom. Metacognition and modeling would first require the teacher educator to describe the process that they followed when finding the resources and planning the lesson. Next, the teacher educator would then model the lesson for the students having the students actively participate and experience the lesson. To conclude the lesson, the teacher educator and the preservice teachers would then talk through the methodological decisions that assisted with teaching outside of the curriculum and how the lesson might be modified to meet the needs of diverse
learners, grades, and/or age levels within the PreK-12 classroom curriculum (Agarwal-Rangnath, 2013; Hackman, 2005).

Using self as an example, metacognition, and modeling within teacher preparation coursework could create a bridge between social justice theory and lived experience. Social justice teacher educators might also choose to share the life experiences that led to teaching for social justice with their preservice teachers during the community building process within the teacher preparation classroom. Thus, strategies including using self as an example, sharing about one’s own experiences and understandings of social justice in education, and utilizing metacognition and modeling would assist in providing openness and honesty in social justice teaching and learning.

Overall, through the process of defining social justice in relationship to teacher preparation programming and teacher educators being open and honest with preservice teachers regarding their conceptualization and commitment to teaching and learning for social justice, teacher education programs can begin addressing the ambiguity critique of social justice in education. This process of openness from teacher preparation programs and social justice teacher educators will also help to make the differences found within the social construction of social justice in education (Bogotch, 2002) a customary part of social justice teaching and learning.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

Just as the implications for teacher education emphasize openness that will assist in making the natural differences in teaching and learning for social justice a normal part of the process, the recommendations for future research also address the importance of
openness and the normalization of both the social construction of social justice in education (Bogotch, 2002) and the natural differences within teaching for social justice.

One of the main purposes of this study was to add to the limited literature that addressed the lived experiences of social justice teacher educators, while illustrating how each participant integrated social justice into the teaching and learning process in their courses. While many self-studies and reflective essays exist that speak to the lived experiences of social justice teacher educators (e.g., Cochran-Smith et al., 1999; Kelly-Jackson, 2015; Williams & Evans-Winters, 2005), there is a dearth in the literature concerning the lived experiences of social justice teacher educators. Good (2010) explored the lived experiences of social justice secondary social studies educators and Dana and Yendol-Hoppy (2005) explored the life experiences of an early childhood teacher leader. While this study contributes to the dearth in third party research exploring the lives and experiences of social justice teacher educators, this study’s small number of participants is non-generalizable to the larger social justice teacher educator population.

It is my recommendation that more third party research exploring the lived experiences of social justice teacher educators and their approaches to teaching and learning are needed to normalize the natural differences in teaching and learning for social justice. This third party research coupled with the existing self-study and action research, as well as the reflective essays would provide the needed evidence to combat the ambiguity critique of social justice in education (Cochran-Smith, Barnatt, et al., 2009) and serve to normalize the natural differences found within social justice education.
While continued qualitative methodology such as the elements of narrative inquiry that influenced this study would help in filling the dearth in the social justice teaching literature pertaining to social justice teacher educators, a mixed methods study may assist with the generalizability of the natural differences in teaching for social justice. Conducting survey research regarding teacher educators’ social justice teaching and learning with follow-up focus groups or in-depth interviews exploring participants’ lived experiences would assist with normalizing the natural differences in teaching for social justice. This additional third party research exploring the lives and teaching of social justice teacher educators would also answer the call for additional research on teacher educators (Goodwin & Kosnik, 2013; Swennen & van der Kink, 2009, Zeichner, 2005), as well as the call for further research into the beliefs, attitudes, and pedagogy of social justice teacher educators (Mills & Ballantyne, 2016).

**Conclusion: The Study in Review**

The student population in prekindergarten to 12th grade in the United States is quickly becoming more racially, ethnically, economically, and linguistically diverse (Banks, 2015). With this growth in student diversity, a demographic gap (Sleeter, 2008) between these diverse students and their predominately White, female, middle-class, and monolingual teachers (Gay & Kirkland, 2003; Milner, 2006; Ukpokodu, 2003, 2007) entering the field of education is an issue that needs to be addressed. To address this demographic gap, there is a call to action to integrate social justice education into teacher preparation in order to meet the needs of all students (Grant, 2012; Villegas, 2007). Along with this need for integrating social justice education into teacher preparation
comes a need for research exploring the use of social justice practices in teacher education (Grant & Agosto, 2008, Kapustka et al., 2009) and research on the beliefs, attitudes, and pedagogy of social justice teacher educators (Mills & Ballantyne, 2016).

This research project sought to answer the call for further research on social justice teacher educators. This qualitative research study, influenced by elements of narrative inquiry, explored the life experiences that impacted social justice teacher educators’ teaching and learning for social justice and the ways in which social justice teacher educators integrated social justice teaching and learning into teacher preparation courses. The findings illustrated that the participants’ multiple social identities and lived experiences played a large role in their teaching for social justice. The findings also showed that each participant approached teaching for social justice in similar yet different ways due to their social identities and different lived experiences, along with the experiences, histories, and perspectives of their students.

I asserted that difference is a natural part of teaching for social justice because of both the teacher educators’ and students’ multiple social identities and lived experiences shape the construction of teaching for social justice. These natural occurring differences found within the social construction of social justice in education (Bogotch, 2002) call for teacher preparation programs to approach social justice teaching with transparency and openness in order to normalize the natural differences found in teaching for social justice. Openness may look different for each teacher preparation program. This openness could take the form of the teacher preparation programs defining social justice as it pertains to their teaching and learning context, encouraging teacher educators to share stories of their
lived experiences pertaining to teaching for social justice, using self as an example (Flory & Walton-Fisette, 2015; Pennington et al., 2012), and employing metacognition of social justice pedagogy and methodology to help the preservice teachers learn that social justice teaching and learning can take many forms.

This qualitative study assisted in adding to the existing social justice teaching literature concerning social justice teacher educators, but due to the nature of qualitative research this study’s small sample size only captures the experiences of just four social justice teacher educators. There is a need to learn more about how social justice teacher educators’ lived experiences impact their social justice teaching and learning. Due to the nature of qualitative research and small sample size these findings are non-generalizable to other populations of social justice teacher educators, thus, future research, utilizing mixed methods to capture both how teacher educators integrate social justice teaching into teacher preparation courses and the importance of teacher educators lived experience is needed.

Reflection of the Researcher

As I conclude this research project and reflect on the process of completing my dissertation, I am in awe of the outcomes of the project. As an emerging qualitative scholar, I knew that I needed to separate my own preconceived notions of what I knew about teaching for social justice in education from the literature and my own practice as a beginning social justice teacher educator. Knowing you need to do something and doing it are two different things. Heading into my dissertation proposal I heard from my dissertation committee members that they sensed I had strong convictions about my
research questions, literature review, and methodology. Little did I know that my committee members’ years of teaching and research experience and commitment to my project would reroute the emphasis of my research questions and my proposed methodology. At the time my committee told me that I would have a stronger dissertation with these changes. It was not until I began writing about my findings and sharing the voices and stories of my participants that I realized the changes the committee strongly suggested at my dissertation colloquium would shift the whole paradigm of the project, resulting in rich and vibrant findings based on my participants’ lived experiences.

Had it not been for the constant mentorship of my committee members often on a weekly, if not daily basis, where I was able to share exciting breakthroughs, a-ha moments, and vent about my frustrations I would not have been able to get through the processes of writing, data collection, and data analysis. Often times, in these short “mentoring moments,” I found my thinking challenged or I would be rerouted on a new path of thinking.

As an emerging scholar, this dissertation has served as a huge learning experience in qualitative research. This was made even more apparent to me when meeting with my committee member designated as my methodologist. I knew going into data analysis that I needed to holistically analyze the participants’ interviews and journals for themes. Unbeknownst to me, because I was so deeply entrenched in analysis, I was compartmentalizing and forcing my data into common themes between the participants rather than allowing the participants’ words, stories, and examples to shape the analysis. When sitting down to discuss my data analysis I had another moment that I would
describe as a paradigm shift very similar to the one that occurred at my dissertation proposal hearing, I learned that I needed to stop overanalyzing and compartmentalizing my data across participants’ and focus on the unique themes that each participant’s interviews, journals, and observations presented. Had I not had this meeting with my methodologist I fear that the richness of my participants’ experiences would have been lost due to my drive to do qualitative research “the right way.”

As I reflect on the research process, data analysis, and the writing, rewriting, and, yes, rewriting again and again of my chapters, it has been the passion and belief that I have in the importance of this project and the contribution I am making to the field of social justice education that has kept me going. My passion and commitment for this project coupled with the passion and commitment my dissertation chair and committee members helped me to begin my journey studying social justice in education. Although this dissertation marks the end of my doctoral program, it marks the beginning of my journey as an educational researcher committed to social justice education.
REFERENCES


APPENDIX A

DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE

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<th>Participant Number</th>
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<tr>
<td>Pseudonym</td>
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<td>Do you self-identify as a teacher educator that teach for social justice?</td>
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<td>Please list your experiences with diversity, multicultural, and/or social justice education.</td>
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<td>(e.g., committee experience, conferences, scholarly research, journal publications, presentations, professional learning communities, classes taken, classes taught)</td>
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<td>Position at the university</td>
<td>(e.g., adjunct instructor, instructor, tenure-track, tenured)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelors Degree, Institution, and Year</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master’s Degree, Institution, and Year</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctoral Degree, Institution, and Year</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PK-12 Teaching/Work Experience(s) (if applicable)</td>
<td>(e.g., grade/subject)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Secondary Teaching/Work Experience(s)</td>
<td>(e.g., institution(s)/year(s))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classes Currently Teaching, Days, and Times</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX B

PARITICANT REFLECTIVE JOURNAL QUESTIONS

Reflective Journal 1 Questions

1. On the demographic questionnaire you listed that you have (activities listed on the demographic questionnaire) surrounding the issues of diversity, multicultural education, and/or social justice education, has your participation in these activities influenced who you are as a social justice teacher educator? If yes, what role do you think these activities have played in who you are as a social justice teacher educator, if no, why do you think that these activities have not had an impact on who you are as a social justice teacher educator?

2. Reflecting on your practices, pedagogy, and philosophy as a social justice teacher educator, what attributes and characteristics do you believe are important to your identity as a social justice teacher educator?

Reflective Journal 2 Questions

1. Now that you have had some time to reflect following our first interview, have you thought of any additional life experiences and/or factors in your life that have played a role in your choice to be a social justice teacher educator? If there are no additional memories or experiences that you would like to discuss, are there experiences that you mentioned in your interview that you would like to elaborate upon?

2. Reflecting on the class that I observed you teaching on ______________, in what ways did your identity as social justice teacher educator impact or shape the
teaching and learning during the class? Were there certain activities, content, pedagogy, and/or methodologies that you would identify as being related to teaching for social justice?

3. As you reflect both on the conclusion of this semester and the planning for next semester, has being involved in this study, which focuses on teaching for social justice, had an impact on your teaching and planning for your courses? If yes, in what ways has the study influenced your teaching and planning? If no, why do you think that study has not had an impact on your teaching and planning?

Reflective Journal 3 Questions

1. Reflecting on your experiences in teaching and learning for social justice, what impact do you believe your teaching for social justice has had on your preservice teachers? What are your hopes for your preservice teachers once they have left your class?

2. Looking back to last semester (Fall 2016), were your students aware that you self-identify as a social justice teacher educator? Why did you make the decision to tell them or not tell them that you approach teaching and learning in the classroom from a social justice perspective? Looking at this semester (Spring 2017), are your students aware that you self-identify as a social justice teacher educator? Why did you make the decision to tell them or not tell them that you approach teaching and learning from a social justice perspective?
3. Reflecting on your journey and experiences as a social justice teacher educator, do you believe that you chose to be a social justice teacher educator or did being a social justice teacher educator choose you? Why do you hold this view?

4. What advice would you give educators (e.g., preservice teachers, in-service teachers, teacher educators) that are aspiring to teach for social justice in their classrooms?

5. Are there any final thoughts, feelings, or ideas that you would like to share in regards to being a social justice teacher educator or teaching and learning for social justice?
APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Interview 1 Protocol

The interviews will be semi-structured with questions to get the conversation started with follow-up questions to explore participants’ responses more deeply. Examples of the types of questions that will be asked during the first interview and any subsequent interview(s) include, but are not limited to:

- How do you define the term “social justice” as it pertains to education and teacher preparation?
  - What do you mean when you say ________?

- What motivates you to teach for social justice?

- Have there been experiences or factors in your life that have influenced your teaching for social justice?

- How do you integrate social justice education into your teaching and learning with undergraduates and/or graduates in teacher education?
  - Are their certain theories, pedagogies, and/or methodologies that influence your teaching and learning in the courses that you teach?

- What are some of the greatest successes that you have had as a social justice teacher educator?

- What are some of the greatest challenges that you have faced as a social justice teacher educator?
# APPENDIX D

## OBSERVATIONAL PROTOCOL

### Observation Environment

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>General Information</th>
<th>Participant:</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Date:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Start Time:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Stop Time:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Course Code:</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Number of Students:</td>
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<td>Males/Females:</td>
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<td>Race/Ethnicity:</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Artifacts Collected</th>
<th>What’s on the walls:</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Classroom Configuration (chairs, tables, desks, etc.):</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Technology:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sketch of Classroom</td>
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<td>---------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Additional Description of Space</td>
<td>What’s going on in the space? Student, professor interactions, etc.</td>
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**Continued Field Notes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Observation Notes</th>
<th>Observer Comments, Initial Thoughts, and Synthesis</th>
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(Note: Additional Continued Field Notes Tables will be added as needed)
APPENDIX E

ANALYTIC MEMOS

Construction of Questions

Appendix E presents three analytic memos pertaining to the construction of the study and the methodology. The first analytic memo presented was written on February 22, 2017, it describes the construction of the questions for the interviews and reflective journals used for the purposes of data collection within this study. It must be noted that while this memo references three research questions, since the writing of this memo, one research question was removed from the study which resulted in the second research question becoming Research Question 1 and the third research question becoming Research Question 2. These research questions include:

- Research Question 1: What life experiences influence the lives of social justice teacher educators in relationship to teaching for social justice?
- Research Question 2: How do social justice teacher educators integrate social justice into the teaching and learning in their teacher preparation courses?

The memo stated:

Analytic Memo 2-22-17

Procedure for creation of reflective journal prompts and follow-up interview questions for the second interview.

This memo outlines the process that was followed in order to create the reflective journal prompts, as well as the follow-up interview for each participant.

The first journal was sent to participants following our first meeting and the completion of the demographic questionnaire.
The questions for the first reflective journal followed-up with each participants’ responses regarding the activities that they had participated in regarding surrounding issues of diversity, multicultural education, and/or social justice education. Each participant was asked to reflect how these experiences have or have not had an impact on who they are as a social justice teacher educator. The second question in this first journal asked the participants to reflect on their practices, pedagogy, and philosophy as a social justice teacher educator and identify attributes and characteristics that they believe are important to their identity. While this second question did not directly speak to the second research question [Research Question 1] regarding the personal facts that influence the participant’s choice to teach for social justice it encouraged to the participants to become self-reflective and begin to explore who they are as social justice teacher educators and what this means in terms of their personal identity.

This journal was submitted to me prior to Interview 1. While I had a semi-structured interview protocol going into Interview 1 the participants’ journals helped to inform additional questions during the first face-to-face interview.

Following the first interview I observed each participant teaching a course involving preservice teachers.

The questions for Reflective Journal 2 were generated following the first interview and the observation in each participants’ classroom. The first journal prompt served as a follow-up to the interview and asked participants if they had that of any additional life experiences that had influenced their teaching for social justice. This question was directly linked to the second research question [Research Question 1].

The second journal question was a follow-up to the classroom observation. This question had two purposes. First, this question addressed the third research question [Research Question 2] in this study regarding the participants’ integration of social justice into the teaching and learning in their courses. This prompt also served to assist with triangulation of data with the field notes that were taken during the classroom observation.

The third question in Reflective Journal 2 was created to ask the participants if they felt that this study has influenced their teaching and/or their planning for the new semester. This question set out to see what impact the study might be having, as well as to see what, if any, reflection was taking place with the participants in regards to teaching for social justice.
Reflective Journal 2 was submitted to me prior to the follow-up interview.

Before creating each participants’ questions for the follow-up interview, I reviewed each participants’ existing data including the transcript from the first interview, Reflective Journal 1, and the classroom observation. While reviewing these pieces of data I began a first round of coding using in vivo codes, descriptive codes, and structural codes. I identified information that the participant discussed that I wanted more information about and information that I needed clarification on. It was through this process of reviewing and coding the data that I created the semi-structured interview protocol for each individual participant. Although the participants submitted their second journal prior to the follow-up interview, there was no time to code that piece of data before the second interview. In most cases I also used the Reflective Journal 2 to also inform the follow-up interview protocol for each participant.

One question was consistent for all participants in the follow-up interview. I asked each participant what modes of instruction they used in their classrooms. This question served two purposes. The first was to help better answer the third research question [Research Question 2] regarding each participants’ teaching and learning in their courses. The second purpose for the question was to assist with triangulation between information gained in the first interview and during the classroom observation.

The third and final journal, Reflective Journal 3, included prompts that were created after sharing some of the emerging ideas from the first round of coding the existing data sets with my dissertation committee. The final journaling prompts assisted with gathering the participants’ final thoughts regarding the impact teaching for social justice has on preservice teachers, further exploring each participants’ journey towards teaching for social justice, and collecting any concluding thoughts or ideas that the participants wanted to share regarding being social justice teacher educators. This journal served as a space for participants to share concluding thoughts or ideas regarding teaching for social justice.

As is reflected in this memo, the questions used throughout the interviews and journals were carefully constructed and built upon one another to learn more about the participants’ life experiences and teaching and learning for social justice.
Discussion of Methodology

This second analytic memo was written on April 14, 2017, it describes my decision to use qualitative methodology, with influences from the tradition of narrative inquiry for this study. The memo stated:

**Analytic Memo 4-14-17**  
*Discussions on dissertation methodology*

Since my committee meeting with Drs. Logan, Ellison, and Ruddick and my independent meetings with Dr. Hill and Dr. Etscheidt, I have revisited the methodology that I used for this project. A question was raised regarding whether what I had done was a narrative inquiry or a qualitative study influenced by narrative inquiry. When this question was raised I was sent back into the literature to see how other researchers have approached narrative inquiry, especially how they approached writing the findings sections of the research. What I found was interesting because some of the researchers (e.g., Tsui, 2007; Xu & Liu, 2009) created stories with beginning, middles, and ends with limited direct quotes from the participants embedded within the stories. In another study that I found, DeMik (2008) stated the findings and integrated several block quotes from the participants. This study was similar to how I approached the writing of my findings for this study.

Reflecting on the narrative inquiries discussed above, I found myself frustrated with the studies that created a story or re-storied the data with limited quotations from the participants. It was almost as if the participants’ stories were being told in third person with limited voice given to the participants. I feel as though if I were to write my findings in this way I would be taking away from the powerful words, experiences, and/or stories that my participants shared. When reviewing DeMik (2008) I felt that the participants were given a voice because several block quotes were used to support the researcher’s findings. This dive back into the literature and a discussion with the member of my committee serving as the methodologist showed me was that narrative inquiries do not just follow one template. Specifically, how researchers write the findings of narrative inquiries tend to fall on a continuum of stories with beginnings, middles, and ends and findings using the participants’ quotes to tell the participants’ stories.

This then leads me back to the question of whether what I did for this dissertation was in fact a narrative inquiry or whether it was a qualitative study influenced by
narrative inquiry. My intention was to approach this study as a narrative inquiry. While some of my interview and journaling questions leant themselves to soliciting stories from the participants, other questions could have probably been worded differently. However, with two of the participants the questions did warrant stories and with two of the participants I really am not able to describe the information that they shared as stories. To reconcile the comments from the committee members and the methods used for this study I would say that my methodology falls under the category of a qualitative research study influenced by my intention to create narratives. The writing of my findings were driven by the belief that my participants’ words, not my words telling the participants’ stories, were the most important elements of this research that needed to be shared. I chose to share the participants’ words, as they were shared with me in order to empower my participants and be true to the meaning of social justice that this research describes.

References


This second analytic memo further describes my return to the literature and my rational for the use of qualitative methodology with influences from narrative inquiry. The analytic memo written on April 17, 2017 stated:

**Analytic Memo 4-17-17**

*Further discussion of elements of narrative inquiry*

After seeing the multiple ways findings for narrative inquiries can be written I was sent back into one of the guiding narrative inquiry texts in order to gain additional perspective on my methodology. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) explain that:
Parts of our research text can be composed of rich descriptions of people, places, and things; other parts can be composed of carefully constructed arguments that argue for a certain understanding of the relations among people, places, and things; and still others can be richly textured narrative of the people situated in place, time, scene, and plot. For us, all of these can be narrative texts. Working with Chatman’s three text types, all of the types—argument, description, and narrative—are there. However, depending on the field experience being represented and depending on the inquirer, they are there in differing proportions. We cannot, for example, call a text narrative inquiry if it leaves out description and narrative and gives only argument. Nor can we call a text narrative inquiry if it is pure narrative without description and argument” (p. 155)

Reviewing my study, I found that the questions asked during the research project were answered so differently by all four of the participants that it was difficult to create a narrative with all of the elements discussed by Clandinin and Connelly. While all four participants’ interviews, journals, and observations allowed for writing descriptions of their lived experiences and teaching and learning, not all of the participants’ experiences, insights, and explanations allowed for the writing of narratives. Furthermore, due to the socially constructed nature of teaching for social justice the interviews, journaling, and observations were really not conducive to constructing arguments within the findings. Thus, rather than constructing a “true” narrative inquiry text as described by Clandinin and Connelly, elements of narrative inquiry played a role in data collection and the use of the participants’ words and experiences to illustrate the unique themes identified within each participants’ findings. These ideas further confirm that this study was a qualitative research study influenced by narrative inquiry rather than a traditional narrative inquiry.

Reference


These two analytic memos assisted in provided transparency in the reasoning and rationale for my choice to call this a qualitative research study influenced by elements of narrative inquiry.
Like the previous analytic memos, this analytic memo has been shared in order to provide transparency and clarity for the overall trustworthiness of this study.
Appendix F serves two purposes. First, this appendix assists with illustrating the data analysis process by providing examples of codes, categories, and themes discussed in Chapter 4. Second, Appendix F also serves to assist with the trustworthiness and credibility of this study by providing transparency in the data analysis process. Table F1 demonstrates how I tried to compartmentalize the participants’ individual data rather than identifying themes from individual participant’s narratives. Rather than paying attention to the rich categories that I had identified for each participant, I tried to force the unique categories into restricting themes.

Table F1

Comparing and Contrasting Participants’ Categories and Emerging Themes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme: Students are at the center of teaching and learning</th>
<th>Dr. Love’s Categories</th>
<th>Professor Miller’s Categories</th>
<th>Dr. Flowers’ Categories</th>
<th>Dr. Stevenson’s Categories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student-centered teaching and learning</td>
<td>Student-centered</td>
<td>Student-centered</td>
<td>Student-centered</td>
<td>Student-centered</td>
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<td>Funds of knowledge</td>
<td>teaching and learning</td>
<td>teaching and learning</td>
<td>teaching and learning</td>
<td>teaching and learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowing students and students’ communities</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Funds of Knowledge</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

(table continues)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dr. Love’s Categories</th>
<th>Professor Miller’s Categories</th>
<th>Dr. Flowers’ Categories</th>
<th>Dr. Stevenson’s Categories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students’ worldviews and histories</td>
<td>Naming part of the system including hegemony, colorblindness/color-evasiveness, and matrix of oppression</td>
<td>Naming part of the system including institutionalized racism, white privilege, and the opportunity gap</td>
<td>Naming parts of the system including dominate norms, privilege, hierarchies/stratification, and power</td>
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<tr>
<td>Theme: Actively challenging the system</td>
<td>Challenging the system through praxis, critical thinking and reflection, multicultural education, and Critical Theory</td>
<td>Challenging the system through education on bias, oppression, equity, inequity, questioning, empowerment, and reflection</td>
<td>Challenging the system through democracy, sociohistoric context, agency, praxis, making the invisible visible, criticality, and questioning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme: Multiple identities and life experiences contribute to teaching for social justice</td>
<td>Multiple identities: teacher educator, Latino, gay, emerging de-colonial scholar, feminist, student, teacher educator</td>
<td>Multiple identities: mother, friend, colleague, feminist, student, elementary educator, teacher educator</td>
<td>Multiple identities: student, White male, elementary educator, and teacher educator</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(table continues)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dr. Love’s Categories</th>
<th>Professor Miller’s Categories</th>
<th>Dr. Flowers’ Categories</th>
<th>Dr. Stevenson’s Categories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Multiple experiences: Childhood, education, and current teaching</td>
<td>Multiple experiences: teaching and learning, education, elementary teacher, family, friends, religion, and current teaching</td>
<td>Multiple experiences: childhood, graduate school, recent past, and present</td>
<td>Multiple experiences: elementary and secondary education, graduate school, elementary teaching, and current teaching</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Theme:** Sharing personal information and examples of self in teaching and learning

- Sharing personal information
- Using self as an example in teaching and learning
- Teaching and learning connection to self

**Theme:** Modeling teaching and learning

- Modeling teaching and learning in the classroom
- Model teaching and learning in the classroom
- Modeling empowerment

**Reframing Data Analysis**

Following the meeting with the dissertation committee member who served as my methodologist, I wrote the following analytic memo to describe the reframing of my thinking moving forward in the data analysis process. I wrote the following in the analytic memo:
Since meeting with my dissertation methodologist and realizing that I was over analyzing the data of Participant 1 and Participant 2, I have slightly changed approaches moving forward through Participant 3 and Participant 4. With Participant 1 and Participant 2, I was trying to categorize their narratives into common boxes for all four participants by reading through all of the transcripts, reflective journals, and the field notes tightly categorizing the participants’ commonalities. For Participant 3 and Participant 4 I still did an in-depth reading of their data sets, but this time I focused on specific ideas and categories for each individual participant. For example, in the initial coding/categorization of Participant 3’s narrative I found that she shared multiple experiences from childhood, graduate school, the recent past, and the present. During the next round of reading the data set I looked for the themes among these experiences that could help me understand what personal factor(s) influenced Participant 3’s life in relationship to teaching for social justice. The same process of analysis was then done with Participant 4 focusing only on the identities and experiences that I gleaned from the previous coding/categorization of his data set.

As I am re-reading Participant 3’s data set I have come up with some ideas which re-categorize the codes and previous categories that I think are of note. First, speaking to Participant 3’s teaching and learning for social justice, the theme that is emerging is the integration of multiple perspectives. There are countless examples within the data set to help confirm this theme. Some of the supporting categories within teaching with multiple perspectives include examples and stories encouraging and showing the preservice teachers how to view things from multiple perspectives, the incorporation of students’ perspectives and with this comes the opening of the preservice teachers’ minds, and finally Participant 3 using examples of herself to enrich the classroom and assist the preservice teachers in learning from her personal experiences.

A theme that is emerging that speaks to the first research question is the fact that Participant 3 lived through segregation and the Civil Rights Movement and was in the heart of the Civil Rights movement in college. These experiences both living within segregation and going to a HBCU really influenced her in her life as a social justice teacher educator. (AM, 3-11-17)

What this memo does not capture is that I also went back and revisited the codes and categories for Participant 1 and Participant 2 identifying unique categories and themes for each narrative.
Codes to Themes

To assist in illustrating the data analysis process for each participant Table F2, Table F3, Table F4, and Table F5 show examples of some of the codes, from varying data sources (e.g., Interview 1, Reflective Journal 1), used to support the categories and themes. While not all of the codes for each participants’ categories and themes are shown within the tables, I have included codes that illustrate triangulation among the participants’ dataset for each theme by including each code’s location within the dataset (i.e., I1 = Interview 1, I2 = Interview 2, O = field notes taken during the observation, J1 = Journal 1, J2 = Journal 2, and J3 = Journal 3). The codes are organized by the timeline of data collection in the following order—Journal 1, Interview 1, Observation, Journal 2, Interview 2, and Journal 3.

Table F2

**Dr. Love’s Codes, Categories, and Themes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Codes</th>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Themes</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Authentic identity (P1, O, p. 4) The personal and the professional (P1, I2, L 15-16) Private versus the public (P, 1, I2, L 43) Personal and professional—personal and emotional (P1, I2, L48-49) Personal is political (P1, I2, L 100-102) Professional and personal (P1, I2, L 208-210)</td>
<td>Personal is the professional Being authentically myself</td>
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<tr>
<th>Codes</th>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Themes</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Transparent and authentically myself (P1, I2, L 50)</td>
<td>Importance of being yourself</td>
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<td>Teaching and learning—being myself (P1, I2, L 199)</td>
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<td>Being real and myself (P1, I2, L 215)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Just being who I am (P1, J3, L 83-91)</td>
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<td>Be yourself (P1, J3, L 294-298)</td>
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<td>Being able to be one’s self, identity (P1, I1, L 175-177)</td>
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<td>Relationship with students (O, p. 2)</td>
<td>Funds of knowledge</td>
<td>Honoring students’ voice and experiences</td>
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<tr>
<td>Share each others’ prior knowledge (I2, L 341-342)</td>
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<td>Hands-on (I2, L 353-355)</td>
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<td>Get to know students (I2, L 377-378)</td>
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<td>Bridge cannon to lived cannon (I2, L 423-425)</td>
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<td>Funds of knowledge (I2, L 255)</td>
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<td>Funds of knowledge (I2, L 275-283)</td>
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<td>Advocating fund of knowledge (I2, L 417-418)</td>
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<td>Student voice and self-reflexive in praxis (P1, I1, L 241-244)</td>
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<td>Honor what students bring (P1, J2, L 69-71)</td>
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<td>Activate funds of knowledge—getting their voices and opinions (P1, I2, 327-328)</td>
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<td>They come to their own truth (P1, I2, L 460-462)</td>
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<td>student voice (P1, J3, L 119-121)</td>
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<td>Co-constructing knowledge through problem posing education</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teaching method—Socratic method (P1, I2, L 447)</td>
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<tr>
<td>More process than product (P1, I2, L 466-467)</td>
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<tr>
<td>problem posing Freirean type of pedagogy or um teaching instead of just banking knowledge (P1, J3, L 48-49)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student alongside students (P1, J2, L 58)</td>
<td>Co-construction of knowledge</td>
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<tr>
<td>Co-construct knowledge together (P1, J2, L 71)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teacher and student (P1, I2, L 221-222)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teaching and learning with my students (J3, L 316-324)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Codes</td>
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<td>Themes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Praxis = critical reflection and action (P1, J1, L21)</td>
<td>Praxis</td>
<td>Praxis = Critical Reflection and Action</td>
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<tr>
<td>Praxis aids in disrupting hegemonic forces privileging some and not others—violence, oppression and dehumanization (P1, J1, L 37-39)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Praxis (P1, I1, L 582-583)</td>
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<td>Praxis (P1, O, p. 3)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Praxis, reflexivity, and critical of the system (P1, O, p. 5)</td>
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<tr>
<td>praxis (P1, J3, L 148-153)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Critically reflexivity (P1, I1, L 42)</td>
<td>Critical thinking and critical reflection</td>
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<tr>
<td>critical thinking and questioning the status quo (P1, J2, L 48-49)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Critically reflect (P1, J2, L79)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cognizant and critical consciousness about inherited assumptions (P1, I2, L32-34)</td>
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<tr>
<td>critically reflecting (P1, J3, L 33-34)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Speaks directly to Critical Multiculturalism (P1, J1, L118-126)</td>
<td>Critical of the system and working against the system</td>
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<tr>
<td>Critical theory (P1, J1, L69)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cognizant and aware—I have my antennas up (P1, I1, L 199-200)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Power and privilege (P1, I1, L 360-361)</td>
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<tr>
<td>power, marginalized groups, culture, praxis, awareness of reproduction</td>
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<td>Codes/Categories</td>
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<tr>
<td>Experience—disability advocacy conferences (P2, J1, L 34-40)</td>
<td>Advocate for children with disabilities</td>
<td>Advocate</td>
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<tr>
<td>Experience—when Sophia was first diagnosed with a disability (P2, J1, L 110-115)</td>
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Table F3

*Professor Miller’s Codes, Categories, and Themes*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Codes/Categories</th>
<th>Categories</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>advocate for Islam (P2, I1, L 140-150)</td>
<td>Advocate for Islam</td>
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<tr>
<td>Experience—living in predominately Muslim country, 9/11 (P2, I1, L 130-138)</td>
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<tr>
<td>advocate for her children (P2, I1, L 432)</td>
<td>Advocate for education for children</td>
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<tr>
<td>Identity/CS—advocate for all kids, being uncomfortable asking the tough questions, constant reflecting (P2, J3, L 41-44)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Experience—I’ve had life experiences that other people have not had so I would say that (P2, I1, L 429-430)</td>
<td>General life experiences</td>
<td>Teaching for social justice is a continuous journey</td>
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<tr>
<td>Life experience—Thanksgiving with family and friends (P2, I2, L 27-35)</td>
<td>Student, educator, teacher educator and colleague</td>
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<tr>
<td>Experience—starting out as a teacher educator (P2, I1, L 38-44)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Experience—teaching in the elementary classroom in a Middle Eastern country (P2, J2, L 7-29)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Experience—reading Kozol, Ladson-Billings, White Teacher Talks About Race (P2, J3, L 66-68)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Knowing your students (P2, I1, L 233-242)</td>
<td>Knowing your students and your students’ communities</td>
<td>Know your students</td>
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<tr>
<td>Getting to know students’ backgrounds (P2, I2, L 52)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Knowing your students (P2, J1, L 63-66)</td>
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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Getting to know students (P2, J2, L 71-72)</td>
<td>Build relationships with students</td>
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<tr>
<td>Think about communities (P2, J3, L 36-38)</td>
<td>Build relationships with students</td>
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<tr>
<td>Personal connection with student P2, O, p. 4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Care for students (P2, I2, L 184-185)</td>
<td>Making preservice teachers uncomfortable</td>
<td>Nothing’s gonna change if we don’t get uncomfortable</td>
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<tr>
<td>Open communication with students (P2, I2, L 185-187)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Care and nurture one another (P2, I2, 151-155)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nothing’s gonna change if we don’t get uncomfortable</td>
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<tr>
<td>Make people uncomfortable (P2, J2, L 81-82)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Guilt (P2, I2, L55)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Creating an atmosphere—feeling comfortable (P2, I2, L 73-75)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Being uncomfortable (P2, J3, L 42)</td>
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<tr>
<td>I’m going to make you uncomfortable (P2, J3, L 109)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bias (P2, I1, L 257-260)</td>
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<td>Challenge the system to create change</td>
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<tr>
<td>White privilege (P2, I1, L 331)</td>
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<tr>
<td>White privilege or bias (P2, J2, L 58)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discussing bias in class (P2, I2, L 261-266)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unconscious bias (P2, I2, L 279-283)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Preservice teachers eyes open to inequity (P2, J3, L 9-11)</td>
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<tr>
<th>Codes/Categories</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meritocracy (P2, J3, L 11-12)</td>
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Table F4

**Dr. Flower’s Codes, Categories, and Themes**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Codes/Categories</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Growing up in segregated South Carolina (P3, J1, L 75-77)</td>
<td>Childhood</td>
<td>Living through historic times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Segregation in Charleston, South Carolina (P3, I1, L 32-34)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Experiencing the effects of segregation as a child (P2, I1, L 57-66)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Experiencing segregation as a child (P3, I1, L 80-89)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Segregation hand-me-down books (P3, I1, L 107-128)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Our parents taught us about social justice but they did it in a real protective way (P3, I1, L 130-131)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Childhood experience teaching the neighborhood children (P3, J3, L 113-141)</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding the impact of growing up in segregated South Carolina until I was a college adult (P3, J1, L 78-79)</td>
<td>College</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience-- I didn’t realize impact of social justice until I was in college as an adult (P3, I1, L 30-31)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Black history, Civil Rights Movement, justice in the</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Codes/Categories</th>
<th>Categories</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>curriculum (P3, I1, L 222-239)</td>
<td>Integration in Charleston (P3, I1, L 241-249)</td>
<td>Present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racist early childhood professor (P3, J2, L 23-26)</td>
<td>Continuing experience with the racist early childhood professor (P3, J2, L 35-51)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Positive experience with Whites (P3, J2, L 77-80)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Current issues facing Blacks (P3, J1, L 51-55)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Present day questioning preservice teachers’ behaviors in communicating</td>
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<tr>
<td>Forced removal of Blacks through gentrification (P3, I1, L 326-334)</td>
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<tr>
<td>I think the race issue um social justice I think whether you want to or not there comes a time when there are race issues that come up. (P3, I1, L 545-546)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Black men and law enforcement (P3, I1, L 546-562)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Present day society—divided (P3, I2, L 358-368)</td>
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<tr>
<td>So again, I was able to maintain my calmness as I communicated with them, while in the back of my mind, I still wondered did race play any part in their behaviors or was this normal for some of them (P3, J2, L 100-102)</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Codes/Categories</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Multiple perspectives—early childhood education (P3, J1, L 27-31)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Teaching with multiple perspectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social justice assignments--I use the book with a weekly social justice assignment. It really offers an opportunity for students to think about some matters in a way that perhaps they have never thought of before. (P3, J1, L 37-40)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Teaching with multiple perspectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple perspectives—parent conferences example (P3, I 1, L 347-377)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Multiple perspectives—religion in school (P3, I1, L 382-397)</td>
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<tr>
<td>CS—asking for student to reflect on religious observances for Muslims (P3, O, p. 3)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Multiple perspectives—mom and treats (P3, I2, L 53-64)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Multiple perspectives—parent conference (P3, I2, L 73-74)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Naturally incorporate race, ethnicity, and culture (P3, I2, L 344)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social justice assignments defined—Each week, I give the students a social justice assignment related to the social studies topics of the week and provides an open outlet for them to think about issues that perhaps they had not thought of and how they would deal with them directly or indirectly. (P3, J2, L 114-117)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Codes/Categories</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social justice assignments defined (P3, J2, L 117-122)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social justice assignment--Curriculum integrates social justice (P3, J3, L 31-32)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Multiple perspectives—parent conferences (P3, J3, L 40-50)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Learn the whole story (P3, J3, L 158-160)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anti-bias curriculum in early childhood (P3, J3, L 166-171)</td>
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<tr>
<td>And how an issue like that would help open our thoughts and our minds about um this from a social justice perspective or with an alternative to me comin to the school. (P3, I1, L 373-377)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Student perspectives and opening students’ minds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students openly responding through social justice assignments (P3, I1, L 440-446)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Students bringing up issues of Columbus (P3, I1, L 823-828)</td>
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<tr>
<td>SC—facilitated discussion by incorporating preservice students’ perspectives on the Praxis II (P3, O, p. 4)</td>
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<tr>
<td>CS—raised preservice teachers’ consciousness to issues of families and children on the borders (P3, O, p. 4)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student to think more objectively and openly about some issues that will</td>
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</table>
Throughout the semester, I felt that they were a well-rounded group of students and felt that their diverse backgrounds caused them to bring various viewpoints into all of our discussions and group activities. (P3, J2, L 104-106)

Opening students’ minds—journaling (P3, I2, L 153-157)

Seeing growth in students (P3, I2, L 174-184)

Controversial reading (P3, I2, L 210-219)

You will not be shut down (P3, J3, L 102-108)

Table F5

**Dr. Stevenson’s Codes, Categories, and Themes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Codes</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Circular experience (P4, I1, L 326-328)</td>
<td>I am a product of school segregation and</td>
<td>Circular Experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Always questioned the status quo (P4, I1, L 330-338)</td>
<td>desegregation in the South</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Um, so I’m gonna start in the middle, go forward, then go back, and then go forward again. (P4, I1, L 134-135)</td>
<td>So, I went, so I, I tell my students I am a product of um school segregation and</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Codes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>desegregation in the South (P4, I1, L 233-237)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Living within a desegregation plan (P4, I1, L 239-256)</td>
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<tr>
<td>I’ve also had the experience of being a person that’s been privileged going through all of these schools (P4, I1, L 260-276)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teaching in a Middle Eastern country (P4, I1, L 180-205)</td>
<td>Teaching in the Middle East</td>
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<tr>
<td>Add to repertoire of practice (P4, I1, L 209-214)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Decide when to push back (P4, I1, L 217-224)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Impact of grad school (P4, I1, L 129-134)</td>
<td>Grad School</td>
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<tr>
<td>Connecting academic reading and learning to experience (P4, I1, L 225-230)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Connecting graduate school to lived experience (P4, I1, L 285-290)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Connecting graduate school to lived experience (P4, I1, L 292-305)</td>
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<tr>
<td>going through grad school gave me a new lens to look at all my prior experiences (P4, I1, L 307-312)</td>
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<tr>
<td>I certainly might have had a social justice approach to equity in education, but I didn’t fully have the capacity to engage with that identity or approach until I was provided with more skills and tools to do so,</td>
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<tr>
<td>these skills and tools are also constantly expanding and I am still growing in my ability to work towards social justice. (P4, J3, L 37-39) Democracy (P4, J1, L 42-46)</td>
<td>Democracy</td>
<td>Making the Invisible Visible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And democracy um sort of meaning people’s full ability to participant and engage in associations and arrangements in society. (P4, I1, L 17-18) Democracy works against stratification (P4, I1, L 118-121)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>In attempt to provide agency because once you’re stratified you have limited agency as an actor in a democracy. (P4, I1, L 123-124) Democracy (P4, I1, L 773-785) Part of the democracy of education (P4, O, p. 3) Full participation of students was related to freedom (P4, O, p. 3) Education is a democratic ideal and part of that is to push against power (P4, O, p. 4) Democracy in detail (P4, I2, L 238-266) Democracy within an assignment (P4, I2, L 304-307) counter-narratives (P4, J1, L 46-51)</td>
<td>Challenging structures and questioning the status quo</td>
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<td>Codes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Push students Social justice works against stratification</td>
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<tr>
<td>(P4, I1, L 118-121)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Structures within education</td>
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<tr>
<td>(P4, I1, L 229-230)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Making students question things</td>
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<td>(P4, I1, L 434-440)</td>
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<td>Status hierarchies</td>
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<tr>
<td>(P4, I1, L 461-470)</td>
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<td>Question the dominant norm</td>
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<tr>
<td>(P4, I1, L 494-497)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dismantling and disrupting the system</td>
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<tr>
<td>(P4, I1, L 502-508)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Address the dominant norms</td>
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<tr>
<td>(P4, I1, L 513-514)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Um, so part of this is pointing out that making the invisible visible.</td>
<td>(P4, I1, L 432)</td>
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<tr>
<td>It is about taking dominant norms that are invisible and making</td>
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<tr>
<td>them visible in the classroom</td>
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<tr>
<td>(P4, O, p. 2)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Critically aware</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>(P4, O, p. 3)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Heteronormative discourse</td>
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<tr>
<td>(P4, O, p. 3)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Positive praising of culture</td>
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<tr>
<td>(P4, O, p. 4)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Critical perspective of schooling, oppression, beyond simple answers to complex social problems/ issues</td>
<td>(P4, J2, L 40-43)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Having power</td>
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<tr>
<td>(P4, O., p. 4)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Critical thinking</td>
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<tr>
<td>(P4, I2, L 309-312)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Knowing the students</td>
<td>Empowering students</td>
<td>Empowering students</td>
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<tr>
<td>(P4, I1, L 644-648)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Codes</td>
<td>Categories</td>
<td>Themes</td>
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<td>Learning moment for me (P4, I1, L 666-672)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Students share about themselves (P4, I2, L 20-23)</td>
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<td>Build community get to know students (P4, I2, L 25-42)</td>
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<td>Empowering student voice (P4, I2, L 53-60)</td>
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<td>Student voice and empowerment (P4, I2, L 79-93)</td>
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<td>Empowering preservice teachers (P4, I2, L 139-143)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Agency, praxis, and change (P4, I2, L 165-169)</td>
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<td>Agents of change and empowerment (P4, I2, L 192-196)</td>
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<tr>
<td>My overall hope is that they emerge as knowledgeable change agents who see themselves as capable of enacting change and empowering students (P4, J3, L 9-10)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Finalized Themes

Following the in-depth analysis of the participants’ datasets a varying number of themes related to Research Question 1 and 2 were identified. Each participants’ themes associated with the corresponding research questions can be found in Table F6.
### Table F6

**Overview of Participants’ Themes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Research Question 1: What life experiences influence the lives of social justice teacher educators in relationship to teaching for social justice?</th>
<th>Research Question 2: How do social justice teacher educators integrate social justice into the teaching and learning in their teacher preparation courses?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dr. Love’s Themes</strong></td>
<td>Being Authentically Myself</td>
<td>Co-Construction of Knowledge Through Problem-Posing Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Honoring Students’ Voices and Experiences</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Praxis = Critical Reflection and Action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Professor Miller’s Themes</strong></td>
<td>Advocate</td>
<td>Know Your Students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Nothing’s Gonna Change If We Don’t Get Uncomfortable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dr. Flower’s Themes</strong></td>
<td>Living Through Historic Times</td>
<td>Teaching Through Multiple Perspectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dr. Stevenson’s Themes</strong></td>
<td>Circular Experience</td>
<td>Making the Invisible Visible</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Empowering Students</td>
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