



## Review

Equity and social justice in teaching and teacher education<sup>☆</sup>

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## A B S T R A C T

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This essay presents a review on the theme of equity and social justice in teaching and teacher education based on articles published in TATE since its inception. It is a part of an initiative started by the current editors of TATE to “encourage us all to look backward to deepen our understandings of how earlier research has shaped our current research and the ways we can see the reverberations across the temporal span” (Clandinin & Hamilton, 2011, P. 2).

The selected articles (1) represent the work of researchers from several countries and different backgrounds across the years; (2) reflect the range of “differences” that constitute the “minorities, margins and misfits” in the educational “mainstream”(Currie, 2006); and (3) extend the inquiry beyond the extant work along some dimension, and grapple with the complexity of issues related to in/equity and social justice. The main themes that the authors have focused on include: understanding the nature and significance of educational inequities and the systemic practices and individual beliefs that, historically and currently, sustain these within and across different contexts. Their overarching concern is with preparing teachers and creating contexts to effect real change towards attaining a vision of a more just education and society.

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One of the many difficulties with ensuring educational equity in the creation of ‘schools for all’ relates to the preparation of teachers to meet the challenges of teaching in schools that are increasingly diverse.

Florian, 2009, P. 533

Becoming an effective teacher requires more than developing socio-political awareness and teaching skills, and understanding how children learn and develop. Moving from theory to practice also requires the courage to create schools that look very different from those we have now.

Kugelmass, 2000, P. 193

Much is being written about arguably the biggest challenge facing today’s teachers and teacher educators: how could schools be made to work effectively and equitably for *all* learners in ever more diverse classrooms. The long cherished promise of a better, more free and more just society through increasingly inclusive public education, albeit largely elusive, engaged educational imagination through much of the twentieth century. This vision, however, has

been eroded of late with the rise of neo-liberal ideologies that now dominate the educational discourse the world over (Apple, 2001; Freeman-Moir & Scott, 2007). The attendant ascendancy of standardized performance measures in schools, increased surveillance, control of curricula, and emphasis on efficiency, outcomes and skills in teacher education has profound effects on defining what counts as responsive or effective teaching, seriously undermining the educational responses to issues of equity and social justice (Sleeter, 2008; Zeichner, 2010).

These concerns are discernible in the articles published in *Teaching and Teacher Education* (TATE). The number of articles that explicitly deal with issues of equity and/or social justice has been on the increase in the last five to ten years. Thus a Scopus search yields over 300 articles relevant to these themes. However, meanings and categories are historically and contextually constructed. The terminology often undergoes nominal change with time even when the substantive content might be relatively stable. Therefore I decided to ‘leaf through’ the content pages of all the issues of TATE. Online access allowed me to browse through the abstracts at the same time. For days and weeks, I engaged in this wondrous task, imagining myself stationed in a library’s well-stocked journal section with light streaming through tall windows, not unlike the fantastic library at Northwestern University overlooking Lake Michigan where I spent innumerable joyous hours several decades ago.

<sup>☆</sup> This review also serves as the Editorial for the Teaching and Teacher Education Virtual Special Issue on Equity and Social Justice, available online at: <http://www.journals.elsevier.com/teaching-and-teacher-education/virtual-special-issues/virtual-special-issue-on-equity-and-social-justice/>.

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The result was, first, a reassurance to myself that I had searched as carefully as possible for all related articles before beginning the rather arduous task of selection. I started by making a long list of over 130 articles that seemed relevant. The list was then parsed into seven partially overlapping categories: Culturally responsive pedagogy, multicultural education in practice, anti-racist education/differential treatment, inclusive education, teacher beliefs/attitudes/conceptions, overarching/macro perspectives, and articles with explicit emphasis on social justice and/or equity in their titles and/or key terms. The number was whittled down through reading and re-reading of the articles to twenty, with additional 8 that could provide the broader context. This 'short list' was almost triple the size of the expected list. Further reading and re-reading, highlighting of main points, and attending to the location and time of the research undertaken helped in curtailing it to a manageable size. Still, many of the articles from the short list not included in the review below will get mentioned where appropriate.

Second, this exercise reminded me that TATE has a wealth of information, significant lacunas notwithstanding, on the pressing issues that bedevil teaching and teacher education currently, and that there is much to learn from its contents from years gone by, well beyond the review that I have crafted below. I hope that this review will entice the readers to explore further the treasure-trove of provocative ideas that is TATE.

The articles that I have decided to include in this review (1) represent the work of researchers from several countries and different backgrounds across the years (although the bulk of content for TATE continues to emanate from the USA); (2) reflect the range of "differences" that constitute the "minorities, margins and misfits" in the educational "mainstream" (Currie, 2006); (3) extend the inquiry beyond the extant work along some dimension, and grapple with the complexity of issues related to inequity and social justice.

Teaching and teacher education for social justice and equity is a moral and political undertaking. In addition to a fundamental concern for creating rich learning opportunities for all children, it entails engaging learners in critical thinking, caring about them and fostering relationships with them and their families and communities, getting to know their lives inside and outside the classroom, valuing and building on the experiences they bring with them into the classroom by making learning meaningful to their lives, noticing and challenging inequities and injustices that prevail in education and society, understanding and interrogating teachers' own positioning, beliefs and attitudes and their role in sustaining the status quo, and at individual and/or collective levels working with and for diverse learners to advocate for a more just and more equitable life chances for all students, to imagine and work for a more just society. This is not an exhaustive list by any count, but for me it captures the essence of what it means to teach for social justice and equity. It also signifies that all attempts at 'meeting the needs of diverse learners' are not necessarily informed by similar ideological positions, and further, that it is not an easy or simple task to effect the far-reaching changes at individual or systemic levels that are needed for such a transformative agenda of teacher education.

The articles in TATE mirror the on-going struggles for a better understanding of why and how does the extant situation vis-à-vis diverse learner populations prevail and sustain at various levels in teaching and teacher education, and what, if anything, can be done about it? The articles are arranged in a chronological order, without any claim to a linear progression, to indicate the subtly changing nature of the language used and the concerns that have occupied researchers across time. Often a review is followed by additional comments about other article/s that might be substantively related to the reviewed article. These comments are not chronological. I hope that the logic of such an arrangement will aid the reading of the review instead of detracting from it. The following questions

exemplify the kinds of issues addressed in this review, though it may be noted that most articles are usually concerned with more than one set of questions.

- *What is the nature of the problem and why is it significant? What systemic factors, historically and currently, sustain the inequities within and across different contexts?*
- *What beliefs/attitudes/perceptions do experienced and prospective teachers (teacher educators and supervision mentors, as well) bring to their work? How do these reflect and shape their own identities and working lives? How can teacher beliefs be assessed/ accessed? How stable are such beliefs?*
- *How can teacher educators go about preparing teachers who might be able and confident to effect real change towards attaining a vision of a more just education, and eventually, society?*

### **1. Cazden, C. B. Differential treatment in New Zealand: reflections on research in minority education, 1990, 6(4), 291–303**

"Differential treatment" refers to unequal opportunities for participation in schools, of Māori children in this case, due to structural issues such as tracking or subtle differences in responses to children's participation by teachers.<sup>1</sup> For Cazden, it is not a neutral term, since it "suggests the special responsibility of educators - teachers, and those above them who shape the contexts within which children and teachers work" (P. 292). She makes the case that classroom talk or teacher student interactions is an "important site of inequalities". Cazden, draws on observational studies done by Marie Clay, a Pākehā researcher and one of her Māori students, Alice Kerin, in New Entrant classrooms to document the subtle differences in teacher-student interactions.<sup>2</sup> Teachers, particularly Pākehā teachers, invited non-Māori children more frequently to elaborate their thoughts or answers than Māori children. The finding was confirmed in different classrooms and different semesters, despite within teacher and among teacher variation.

In the wake of this research, Cazden undertook short-term in-service work with teachers in collaboration with a Māori colleague, Marie-Anne Selkirk and in consultation with local Māori, despite concerns about her 'outsider status' among many Māori. This seems to have coloured how she worked and reported her work with teachers. The largely Pākehā teachers were encouraged to become aware of their own responses to some topics that might be more familiar to or have different meanings for Māori children, and to bear in mind that Māori valued collaboration more than individualization and respectful silence more than fast paced replies to adult questioning. Further, in line with what I consider the 'cautious tone' of her work and the article, they were to be mindful of "the additional influences – at a higher level of nested contexts – of the composition of the school staff" (P. 299). This last point was meant to reflect the vociferous Māori concern about the necessity of acknowledging the significance of the historic injustices suffered by Māori for over a century at the hands of the Pākehā settlers. The caution is also apparent in her statement that although the "default position" for differential treatment is "institutional or structural racism", these terms were not used while working with the teachers.

However, there was little uptake of her suggestions among teachers or Māori educators as noticed by her on a subsequent visit

<sup>1</sup> Māori are the indigenous peoples of New Zealand/Aotearoa.

<sup>2</sup> Pākehā is the Māori term for New Zealanders of European descent. They came to New Zealand as immigrants, mostly from the UK, and now constitute the majority and the economically and politically dominant group in New Zealand. New Entrants refers to five year olds beginning school, on or immediately after their fifth birthdays.

to New Zealand a couple of years later. Cazden reflects on the reasons for this situation. First, the ‘problem’ of differential treatment in classroom talk had been identified by ‘outsiders’, not by the teachers. Further, the larger political scene in New Zealand vis-à-vis Māori and ‘Crown’ relationship was charged over Treaty settlements for land, calls for Māori self-determination, and Māori language and culture revitalization that occupied the Māori leadership in education and elsewhere in the late 1980s and early 1990s leaving little space for what would have seemed like an insignificant issue in comparison from their perspective.<sup>3</sup> Second, the idea that teachers would do well to focus on ethnic differences in new ways could increase the unwelcome risk of strengthening the racial/ethnic stereotypes. Third, there was the problem of teachers not knowing how best to make use of the information that they might have about children’s home cultures.

All these issues are relevant today and continue to engage researchers in the field of education for indigenous peoples within New Zealand and elsewhere. TATE has several articles that update us about the current lay of the land, for instance, see *Te Kotahitanga: Addressing educational disparities facing Māori students in New Zealand* (Bishop, Berryman, Cavanagh, & Teddy, 2009).

While the tone might partly be a response to the somewhat precarious position of a ‘cultural outsider’ in which Cazden, a US scholar, found herself faced with criticism from some Māori, it is also reflective of the hesitant tone and the obscure manner in which issues such as institutional racism or systemic injustices were often written about in other articles of that time.

## 2. Gomez, M. L. Teacher education reform and prospective teachers’ perspectives on teaching “other people’s” children, 1994, 10(3), 319–334

Gomez is concerned with highlighting “how the race, social class, sexual preferences, and language backgrounds of prospective teachers affects their attitudes towards “Others,” their willingness to live near and be part of communities with “Others,” to teach “Others,” and to expect that “Others” can learn” (P. 320–321). She summarizes findings from a number of surveys and large-scale studies undertaken in the USA on the prospective and novice teachers’ perspectives towards diverse learners to make the point that the existing mismatch, between the homogenous teacher population – White, middle-class, English speaking, mostly female, and their students – “Other people’s children”, is highly problematic. Most prospective teachers were neither expecting to teach children from different backgrounds than their own, nor were they being prepared to do so in their teacher education programs, although they agreed that equity in education was important. For instance, in one of the studies, “the teachers voiced concerns about equity and justice, but they were uncertain about how to operationalize these concerns in the classroom. They often saw diversity as a problem for schools and teachers” (P. 322). Thus, the extant situation strongly pointed to the possibility that teachers’ beliefs and perspectives, informed by their own backgrounds, could re-inscribe stereotypes and perpetuate the social and historical inequities.

After outlining the problem that establishes the need for a radical re-think of teacher education, Gomez turns to review the then current calls for teacher reform in the USA. She argues that most of them began with the importance of placing equity and

social justice in education at the core of teacher reforms. However, they fell short on “substantive discourse on and specific proposals for reforming teacher education with regard to effective schooling for diverse student populations” (P. 323). She continues, “Other than calling for the recruitment and education of more “minority” teachers, neither *The Holmes group* (1986) report nor that of the *Carnegie Task Force on Teaching* (1986) give more than lip service to the challenges of preparing teachers to meet the needs of the diverse populations of children enrolled in U.S. schools” (P. 324). The later reports from *The Holmes group* (1990, 1991), she contends, did a better job of challenging teachers to “work against the fundamental grain of unequal society” and “to build on learners’ existing cultural capital”. Yet, there was no discussion of “teachers working for change of an unjust social and economic system *with* students or of teachers *assisting* students in becoming change agents themselves” (P. 324, *Emphasis in original*). She laments the lack of a vision or a coordinated approach to the issues of equity and justice in these reports.

While the education policy agenda vis-à-vis equity and justice at best made ambiguous recommendations for practice, Gomez goes on to discuss research on several initiatives in teacher education programs that aimed “to interrupt, challenge and change the way teachers think about themselves and ‘Others’” (P. 325). The studies attempted to document and understand the changing perspectives of students enrolled in a set of coordinated courses, single courses and/or fieldwork experiences specifically designed to prepare teachers for diverse learners, with mixed results. A significant finding from the studies taken together was that “changing teachers’ perspectives on diverse “Others” is a long and labor-intensive process” (P. 326). A lot depends on the attitudes and understandings and the existing moral commitments the prospective teachers bring into their teacher education programs. Some field experiences were reportedly more effective. “Among the most promising practices for challenging and changing preservice teachers’ perspectives was their placement in situations where they became the “Other” and were simultaneously engaged in seminars or other ongoing conversations guiding their self-inquiry and reflection” (P.329). Gomez concludes with a comment on the complexities of such work. “No single activity – whether it be reading case studies; conducting community service; living with, tutoring, or practice teaching with people unlike oneself; telling stories of one’s teaching; reading about and listening to “Others” stories; participating in seminars accompanying practica or student teaching; or being an “Other” oneself – is adequate for preparation for teaching “Other” people’s children” (P. 331). Further, “To date, no reform report on teacher education nor any teacher education program has adequately addressed the complexity and the urgency of the challenges that lie before us in educating all of our children” (P. 332).

Gomez outlines the diversity related challenges facing teachers and teacher education, takes a critical look at the reports and papers purported to find a way forward and finds them lacking, and presents a candid account of the difficulties of preparing teachers who can think and act afresh about “difference” than what they might have grown up with. She does so in the spirit of looking for alternatives and exploring options, taking “the traveler’s inquiry stance” and acknowledging the inherent uncertainties in a complicated task like teacher education for diversity (Phillion & Connelly, 2004).

Smolkin and Suina (1999) extended the idea of placing the prospective teachers into a situation where they became the “Other” and found it to be an effective strategy for teacher education for culturally diverse students. They employed Martin Buber’s notion of ‘I–You’ to conceptualize a relationship of ‘complete mutuality’ an *equal other* between the mainstream and the minority pre-service students. They paired two pre-service

<sup>3</sup> Treaty of Waitangi, signed in 1840 between various Māori iwi (tribes) and the British Crown, was meant to signify an equal partnership between Māori and the Crown. However, it was seldom upheld by the Crown and has been a site of constant struggle, conflict and tension. In recent decades it has been used effectively by Māori to seek redress of some of the historic injustices.

students, one each from American Indian and non-Indian backgrounds, who completed dual field placements as a pair – one term in a school under the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and the second in an urban setting. Each placement put the insider member of the pair into a position of an expert or authority to assist the “Other”.

### 3. Horenczyk, G., & Tatar, M. Teachers' attitudes towards multiculturalism and their perceptions of the school organizational culture, 2002, 18(4), 435–445

Horenczyk and Tatar broaden the investigation of teacher attitudes towards multiculturalism by looking into how these might reflect and be shaped by the norms and values of larger societal and institutional settings such as “the organizational culture” of a school. “An organizational culture is the characteristic spirit and belief of an organization, reflected in the norms and values that regulate the ways according to which people treat one another and the nature of the working relationships” (P. 436). Their basic premise is that the “organizational culture of a school should be a central focus in our quest to understand teachers' attitudes and behaviors vis-à-vis diverse student populations” (P. 436).

The authors outline the history of policies towards immigrants in the context of Israel's commitment to the “in-gathering of exiles” whereby initially the immigrants were “expected to leave behind much of their cultural baggage, and to adopt the “Israeli way of life”, rhetorically portrayed as the new blend just produced in the cultural ‘melting pot’ ” (P. 437). Thus, historically the policy was one of assimilation. The newcomers, by the late twentieth century, came largely from the former Soviet Union. The policy by then had moved from strong assimilation to include “ethnic addition”. Education was expected to allow for some ethnic expression while “absorbing” the new immigrants into the Israeli ways of being. However, the educational practice, in the absence of clear guidance on how to achieve such a balance, often fell to its default position of assimilation. As a consequence, the authors contend, that the Israeli society was more pluralistic than its schools. They set out to investigate whether teachers would “endorse more favorable attitudes towards multiculturalism when relating to immigrants' immersion in society in general as compared to the integration of newcomers into the educational system” (P. 438), and how these attitudes might be related to their institution's organizational culture.

A questionnaire to assess “Pluralistic” and “Assimilationist” attitudes for society and for school was constructed based on adaptations of “the Multicultural Ideology Scale and the Tolerance Scale, both developed by Berry and Kalin (1998)”. In addition, teachers' “perceptions of multiculturalism at three levels of organizational school culture: perspectives, values and basic assumptions” were assessed using “school scenarios, school multiculturalist values, and school basic assumptions regarding immigrants, respectively” (P. 439). In all 442 secondary and primary school teachers from 34 schools participated in the study. A  $2 \times 2 \times 2$  mixed design MANOVA was employed to find that context did indeed matter. “When asked about the integration of immigrants in school, the attitudes emerge as highly assimilationist, whereas attitudes dealing with the insertion of the newcomers in the wider society are predominantly pluralistic” (P. 441). The authors interpret this finding as reflecting the disparity between the multicultural rhetoric or an acceptance of non-discriminatory policies in general, and the difficulties of their translation into practice in concrete settings like schools. Although teachers in this study seemed to espouse pluralistic attitudes to some extent, many “still appear to view education as the primary means for transforming the immigrant into an “Israeli”, and the school as the most appropriate setting to attain this goal” (P. 442).

In terms of the relationships between various aspects of school organizational culture and teachers' attitudes towards multiculturalism, the study yielded mixed results. Citing Cockrell, Placier, Cockrell, and Middleton (1999), they recommend that interventions purporting to change teacher beliefs about diversity might be more effective if they “aimed at changing the school's approach from one of cultural transmitter to one of a cultural mediator and ultimately to one of a cultural transformer” (P. 443). A limitation of the study, as noted by the authors, is the lack of an independent measure of the school culture. All the data were drawn from teachers' self-reports. Further, they point out that some of their measures, particularly School Scenarios, might have been somewhat ambiguous in terms of their meanings for pluralistic versus assimilationist attitudes. The authors seem to use “perspectives” and “concrete aspects” interchangeably, which I found confusing.

A recent article from Germany makes a useful distinction between two positive beliefs towards immigration: *Multicultural* beliefs, that “stress accommodating and respecting students' backgrounds”, and *Egalitarian* beliefs, that “emphasize similarities and equal treatment of all students” (Hachfeld, Hahn, Schroeder, Anders, Stanat, & Kunter, 2011). Although both these beliefs are favourable, they are likely to have different implications for *how* teachers with multicultural or egalitarian beliefs might respond to cultural diversity. The Teacher Cultural Beliefs Scale, developed by these researchers, indicated that teachers holding both these beliefs “shared a motivation to control prejudiced reactions, but they differed in their views on acculturation, prejudices, and authoritarianism” (P. 986). As noted by them, their work does not focus on how different beliefs are formed and how these can get translated into useful practice. Thus, they recommend qualitative studies to compliment their effort.

Another recent article reports on a qualitative study of six teachers from Singapore, who seemed to evince self-awareness and openness to diversity without challenging unfair practices and assumptions of meritocracy prevalent in Singapore schools and society (Alviar-Martin & Ho, 2011). It seems to me that the distinction the German researchers make between the two favourable attitudes, along with a tool to assess these, might help clarify the reasons for why a teacher with a ‘positive’ attitude towards diverse learners might not act to alleviate the injustices that s/he may notice particularly in a societal context where assumptions of meritocracy are taken-for-granted.

### 4. Athanases, S. Z., & Martin, K. Learning to advocate for educational equity in a teacher credential program, 2006, 22(6), 627–646

Athanases and Martin draw on a 5-year study of a pre-service program in the USA that explicitly aimed to prepare teachers to advocate for educational equity. “The program claims to develop four teacher roles. The primary role is to advocate for educational equity; documents boast a focus on addressing inequities of schooling and society, especially in culturally and linguistically diverse communities. Three other roles support the advocate role: reflective practitioner, collaborator, and researcher on one's practice.” (P. 630). The authors, who were not directly involved with the program at the time, conducted five focus groups, each with 5–10 former graduates ( $N = 38$ ) and lasting about 3 h. Focused and open-ended questions based on previously conducted survey and other data from the larger project guided the focus group discussions. “Supported by program artifacts as prompts and with careful moderation, the focus group stimulated thought and recall of events” (P. 642). The researchers sought information on the specific strengths and problems of the program in preparing teachers for their work of advocacy.

The two-year teacher education program for equity took student learning as its starting point through a focus on equity pedagogy. It aimed to develop in prospective teachers a disposition to oppose inequity, to question the taken-for-granted ways of doing and knowing, to understand “how social, economic, and political forces shape access and achievement patterns for students as well as how school structures can reinforce and reduce inequities” (P. 628). It meant that teachers must monitor their interactions with students for “fairness and cultural sensitivity”, and know “how to examine what is in schools and how to determine or imagine what *could* be” (P. 628, emphasis in original), and how to move from imagination to action with commitment and appropriate knowledge and skills. The basic assumptions were enacted through a program that deliberately ensured “coherence and integration across course work, fieldwork placements and ideology”. These were reinforced through every aspect of the experience by faculty, tutors and supervisors who modelled and lived the ways of caring teaching that they expected prospective teachers to adopt in their work. The students also benefitted from on-going cohort-based discussions in the first year, and extended and carefully mentored placements in culturally and linguistically diverse settings in the second.

The findings were encouraging, with majority of the teachers feeling well prepared for their role as teachers of culturally and linguistically diverse learners who in most cases were willing to advocate for their students in and beyond the classroom. They made explicit links between various aspects of their training and their work, giving specific examples of *how* the program had influenced their practice. However, as one of the teachers reported, a program expecting teachers to work within the framework of advocacy for equity puts extraordinary demands on the new teachers. Further, comments from one of the teachers pointed to the need for a closer monitoring of the potential for continued marginalization of historically disenfranchised groups within the teacher education program itself. It is unclear from the article as to how and how much emphasis was placed on student teachers confronting their own prejudices and beliefs.

In another article, Lynn and Smith-Maddox (2007), two African American researchers working with largely White teachers, report on one aspect of a teacher education program that utilized Dewey’s notion of Inquiry “as an approach to engage pre-service teachers in critical reflection about their practice” (P. 96). The participating student teachers were asked to engage in “a dialogical process of reflection where they would identify and name the problems most pressing to them (P. 99)” such as, defining socially just and unjust teaching, and ability grouping and tracking. The authors argue for the importance of such a learning space in teacher education to facilitate honest and open discussion about difficult issues. However, they also concede that, “inquiry is not a panacea”. They cite Gay (2000) that, “social justice teachers need to be able to more than just “talk” about social justice.” Further, they regret that they shied away from exploring the “messiness of racial and ethnic identity and its relationship to the development of a social justice practice” (P. 104).

##### **5. Milner IV, H. R. Disrupting deficit notions of difference: counter-narratives of teachers and community in urban education, 2008, 24(6), 1573–1598**

Milner presents “counter-narratives” of three successful teachers in an urban school in the southeastern region of the USA. He argues that the common portrayal of urban schools inheres in a deficit discourse – often describing their students, families and communities “as ‘disadvantaged’, ‘marginalized’, ‘oppressed’ and ‘at risk’” while paying little attention to the structural, institutional

and systemic features that perpetuate inequalities and help maintain the status quo. Milner’s concern, without romanticizing or sanitizing the realities, is with successful teachers working within these much maligned educational spaces. He argues that, “successful teachers in urban schools envision life beyond their present situations; come to know themselves culturally, linguistically, gendered, racially, economically, and socially in relation to others; speak possibility and not destruction both inside and outside of the classroom regarding their students; care and demonstrate that care; and change their negative, deficit, counterproductive thinking in order to change their actions in the classroom with students” (P. 1574).

He uses as analytical tools the notion of narrative in teaching and research (Clandinin & Connelly, 1996), “as the study of the stories that people come to experience, live, represent, and tell in the world and in the classroom” (P. 1576) and the notion of counter-narrative informed by critical race theory, that “provides a space for researchers to share teachers’ experiences in ways that have not necessarily been told” (P. 1576), and “to *disrupt* or to *interrupt* pervasive discourses that may paint communities and people of color in grim, dismal ways” (P. 1577, emphasis in original).

The article draws on a larger project carried out over two academic years in one school, “known in the district as one of the “better” middle schools in the urban area”. Bridge Middle school catered to a large number of students from lower socio-economic background. About 60% of the students and 45% of the teachers were African American. The three teachers whose counter-narratives he presents were two African Americans (one female with 35 years of experience, one male with 7 years as a teacher in that school) and one relatively new White male (3 years). Milner, himself an African American and an experienced secondary school teacher, speaks of his own position, “I was telling my own story as much as I was telling the stories of the participants” (P. 1577). The three teachers used very different approaches to make connections with their students and to provide students with what they needed to succeed. The counter-narratives create vivid images of their pedagogical and curricular decisions as well as their approaches to understanding and negotiating power within and beyond the classroom in order to enter the worlds of their students.

Milner’s own counter-narrative is summed up in his conclusion. “Urban education and the people who occupy urban schools often fight against structural and systemic forces that can make it difficult to succeed. Yet, they persist, persevere, succeed, and remain both hopeful and optimistic in spite of difficulty beyond their control. They remain, as do I, critical of current social, historic, economic, and political ills and also optimistic and hopeful about the transformational change that can emerge when we refuse to be defeated” (P. 1597).

André Grace (2006) takes an autobiographical approach to link the personal and the pedagogical “to engender deliberations about queer positionality, presence, representation and place in education” (P. 826). His stance is similar to that adopted by Milner, though he is interested in sexuality instead of ‘race’ class or culture as a site of discrimination and struggle. He has initiated a focus group, Agape, at his university in Canada to grapple with the question, “How do I as a teacher educator bring issues of queer visibility, recognition, respect, access and accommodation to the fore in my everyday work?” (P. 830). He frames his autobiographical writing as cultural and political work aimed at transformation of education. “I argue that any story of the queer self ought to motivate critical questioning of experience as part of an engagement in which deliberators consider how queer subjects are constituted and why heteronormativity remains entrenched as the unquestioned centre against which all sex, sexual and gender differences are judged” (P. 833).

**6. Florian, L., & Rouse, M. The inclusive practice project in Scotland: teacher education for inclusive education, 2009, 25(4), 594–601**

Florian and Rouse focus on yet another dimension of difference that often gets constructed as deficiency. In Scotland, the preferred term for 'children with special needs' or 'children with disabilities' is 'children with additional support needs'. All of these terms construe some children as different and therefore in need of additional or special supports or interventions, provided in the name of educational equity. They argue that, "the emphasis on studying human differences has perpetuated a belief that human differences are predictive of difficulties in learning" (P. 595), instead of being seen and accepted as a normal variation in human condition. After presenting a critique of 'diagnostic-prescriptive' notions that underpin common practices in intervention and ability grouping, the authors argue that educational as well as social inclusion is necessary for achieving success and equity for all. Their argument is not confined to those children usually seen to have disabilities or special needs based on assessed or presumed ability. Instead, they are concerned with inclusive education that is cognizant, as well, of "the exclusionary pressures associated with migration, mobility, language, ethnicity and intergenerational poverty" (P. 595). Hence their plea is to raise awareness of the intersectionalities of various kinds of 'differences' as well as their contextualized manifestations.

Florian and Rouse are of the view that inflexible pedagogies, irrelevant curricula, inappropriate assessment regimes, insensitivity to the situated realities of students' lives, and inadequate teacher education, all collude to act as barriers to learning and participation. After outlining recent reform efforts in Scottish education, they turn to sketch the salient features and basic premises of the Inclusive Practice Project (IPP) at the University of Aberdeen. The IPP concept, they argue, is "similar to the architectural concept of 'universal design' that focuses on not creating physical and other environmental barriers in the first place, but rather anticipating solutions that will improve access for everyone" (P. 598). The task of educators is not to deny or ignore human differences, but to "challenge complacency about what is 'generally available'. It is argued that extending what is 'generally available' reduces the need to provide support that is 'different from' or 'additional to' that which is otherwise available." (P. 598).

Thus the IPP takes individual differences as a central concept of human development, a part of the human condition rather than a marker of deficiency and it rejects the deterministic notions of fixed ability. The program espouses a socio-cultural view on learning, which affords an interactive and dynamic conceptualization of learning and learners. Teacher takes responsibility for teaching *all* children. Specialist interventions are called upon to assist the teacher to teach effectively instead of teacher relinquishing his/her responsibility for 'hard to teach' children. Further, recognizing that it might be a tall order to expect novice teachers to individually take on the task of challenging entrenched school practices, the IPP focuses "on collaborative ways of working with and through others". In view of the Scottish practice of government allotted practice settings for prospective teachers, and the contested meanings of inclusive practice, the IPP undertakes to prepare the students to "acquire a critical view of practice without criticizing the practice they experience" (P. 599). Thus, students are helped to think pedagogically about what is good practice, how to include rather than exclude a child having difficulties, and why a student might not benefit from a particular strategy instead of concluding that the problem lies with the student. The IPP was too new at the time of the writing for the authors to report on its implementation or outcomes, but in the words of the authors, it

outlines a "project that is beginning to engage directly with the relationship between the content of teacher education courses and educational equity. The reform of initial teacher education is a first step in this direction." (P. 600–601).

**7. Garii, B., & Rule, A. C. Integrating social justice with mathematics and science: an analysis of student teacher lessons, 2009, 25(3), 490–499**

Garii and Rule are concerned with a topic that has not caught the attention of many researchers published in TATE. They argue that the issue of effectively integrating social justice pedagogy with science and mathematics content can seem like an overwhelming task for new or student teachers. These teachers, especially at elementary level, may not be confident in their ability to teach science or mathematics and they may not be very familiar with social justice strategies. The traditional purpose of school as transmitter of knowledge is also at odds with transformative agenda of social justice education, as are the conventional ways of teaching of mathematics and science or of conceptualizing their content. Thus, despite student teachers' awareness of the importance of social justice in education and the enormous potential of viewing issues of marginalization and oppression through mathematical or scientific lenses, "inclusion of social justice within primary and secondary mathematics curriculum is in its infancy" (P. 491).

The authors undertook a content analysis of lessons prepared by student teachers in their final semester and presented as posters at a "Social Justice Conference", a twice-yearly event in their teacher education program at a rural state college in the USA. All students submitted their posters and additional documentation describing and reflecting on the preparation of the lesson. Of the total of 197 posters, 26 were in the areas of science and mathematics, 10 from teachers for elementary, and 16 from those for secondary grades. These formed the database for the present article. The analysis suggested that most student teachers struggled to fully and effectively integrate social justice and academic content. Often one or the other got neglected even at secondary level though those teachers, unlike their counterparts at the elementary level, were content area specialists. Garii and Rule conclude by recommending a need for deeper knowledge of content, modelling of the expected integration by teacher educators in methods courses, and opportunities for practice under more support and guidance. The conceptualization of the difficulties of integrating social justice with science and mathematics remain simplistic, as do the solutions suggested by Garii and Rule. However, the topic of their research is worth persevering.

**8. Farnsworth, V. Conceptualizing identity, learning and social justice in community-based learning, 2010, 26(7), 1481–1489**

Farnsworth's main concern is to understand ways in which community-based learning (CBL) and the interface between identity and ideology contribute to the development of a social justice teacher identity. She puts to work Gee's (1999) notion of identity as enacted through Discourses and Bakhtin's (1981) idea of dialogue as a negotiation of "voices" to make them "internally persuasive" in order to understand how "pre-service teachers shape their identities through participating in community events". Two research questions are addressed: 1) "What identities are implied in the stories they tell about their teaching and community-based learning experiences?" and 2) "What do their narratives of experience and expressed identities tell us about ways of learning to become a social justice teacher?" (P. 1482).

“The study entailed a thematic analysis of multiple data sources which aimed to capture three dimensions: personal accounts of schooling, local context (i.e., school, community and university), and teacher training practices (with a particular focus on CBL)” (P. 1483). Four student teachers participated in the study undertaken in the UK. Interview data on three of them, one male and two female, all White, were used for discourse analysis presented in this article. Farnsworth discerned two dominant Discourses of teacher identity that the student teachers drew on: the “academic” and the “community” Discourses. “Sam’s [a female participant] expressed commitment to disadvantaged schools was framed in terms of providing students with quality *academic experiences* whereas Patrick framed his social justice teacher identity in relation to what I associate with notions of social and *community activism*” (P. 1484, emphasis added). Ways of approaching CBL would differ for teachers favouring different Discourses. However, as the author cautions, each runs the risk of potentially working against the intended goals of CBL. The “academic” Discourse could set up expectations of expert status, thus, constraining opportunities for critical reflection or for learning from the community. The “community” Discourse could readily slip “into “helperism” that perpetuates structurally defined power relations and hinders social justice” (P. 1485). The challenge for teacher education is to find ways to support students to negotiate such pitfalls through critical reflection and inner dialogue.

Farnsworth then goes on to utilize Gee’s four ways of viewing identity to analyze student teachers’ engagement in CBL through the notion of “identity-in-practice, or ways of thinking about the self when engaged in an activity” (P. 1485). Her main point is that D-Identity or Discourse Identity mediates learning in CBL in particular ways. D-Identity is an identity performance that draws on an individual characteristic, like one of the teachers being a careful listener, or that “emphasizes how one acts and interacts with others”. However, engaging with D-Identity in CBL does not automatically translate one’s learning to one’s social justice practice. In order to understand under what conditions translation from an identity view to a social justice practice might eventuate, she uses Fraser’s (1997) matrix of social justice. Two kinds of approaches to social justice are articulated – affirmative and transformative. Farnsworth contends that it is the latter that is needed to address systemic inequities. “In terms of social justice teacher identities, approaches which affirm diversity and cultural responsiveness need to be reformulated to be more deconstructive and address the deep structure of ‘relations of recognition’” (P. 1487). D-Identity, in her analysis, has the potential to support dialogic negotiations of Discourses. As she argues, this “dialogic approach means engaging with and confronting inner contradictions rather than privileging one or the other... This conceptualization of identity development as dialogic parallels a possible way of conceptualizing transformative practices in social justice education. That is, rather than privileging a particular Discourse (or group of students), a teacher would encourage his/her students to negotiate Discourses, which would sometimes mean reflecting on tensions between conflicting Discourses” (P. 1487).

Farnsworth’s article is a fine example of theoretically grounded investigations that can exponentially deepen our understandings. More such studies will be a welcome addition to the knowledge base in social justice and equity.

## 9. Concluding reflections

I begin by acknowledging that another reviewer or I, at another time, would construct a different review since this exercise reflects the limits of my current understandings in the areas of equity and social justice in teaching and teacher education as much as it mirrors the contents of the TATE articles. My attempt here has been to indicate the diversity of topics and concerns, modes of inquiry,

dimensions of ‘difference’ and locations and time periods of the studies as well as the affiliations of research participants including the group affinity affiliations of the researchers, wherever the latter were apparent.

Cultural/racial difference as a site of discrimination and inequities was the most common theme, and thus, more thoroughly investigated and theorized, relatively speaking. Researchers concerned with inclusive practices have begun to use social justice and equity framework more frequently to interrogate the discourses that construct difference and disadvantage as disability and deficiency. Similar trend was discernible in the investigation of sexuality and sexual orientation in education. Attention towards the significance of investigating the inter-sectionality of differences, a promising direction to pursue, is beginning to emerge. However, it is important to note that since most of the studies emanate from North America or Europe, the concerns of equity and social justice that are raised in TATE articles and the meanings or salience that these ideas might have in this part of the world do not represent adequately the issues that the rest of the world might be struggling with. For instance, there was only one article in my long list that engaged with gender inequities (from Turkey), yet this continues to be a major concern in much of Southeast Asia and the Middle East.

A majority of researchers used a qualitative approach to investigate the issues of interest to them, with most of them drawing on the notion of narrative explicitly or implicitly. This approach continues to yield rich insights, though at times I felt that researchers could benefit from fuller engagement and a deeper understanding of the framework. A few researchers, more often from regions other than North America, handled their subject matter quantitatively. The openness to diversity fundamental in social justice and equity teacher education, when applied to modes of inquiry in this area, can help advance our understandings and provide conceptual clarifications through a considered and complimentary use of the two approaches.

In sum, I think that despite critiques from different ideological positions and ambiguities in our understandings about equity and social justice, there seems to be a move towards creating more comprehensive teacher education programs with explicit focus on equity and social justice, presence of more diverse critical voices in research and teaching, and increased interest in the inter-sectionality of differences and their contextualized manifestations. If my reading is correct, then we can hope that through our enhanced critical understandings we might gather enough “courage to create schools that look very different from those we have now” (Kugelmass, 2000), so that social justice does not remain a mere slogan in teacher education (Zeichner, 2010).

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