

Professional Development Schools (PDSs) and Social Justice Education: Alternative Notions of “Quality” for Future City Teachers

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ABSTRACT: Whether explicitly or implicitly, questioning and reformulating the purposes of public schools continues to be both a popular public and policy maker past time. Yet, few current definitions and assessments of school or teacher “quality” consider the social justice-oriented characteristics the authors of this article recognize as most important in their work with future city teachers. The authors believe that Professional Development School (PDS) programs may be the primary sites for future and veteran teachers to consider these social justice issues. This article describes the masters licensure program with which the authors have been involved, the portfolio assessment system this program utilizes to determine future urban teachers’ integration of social justice concepts, and examples of the evidence pre-service teachers in this program have shared to demonstrate their proficiency with this social justice-oriented notion of “quality.”

NAPDS Essentials Addressed: #1/A comprehensive mission that is broader in its outreach and scope than the mission of any partner and that furthers the education profession and its responsibility to advance equity within schools and, by potential extension, the broader community; #2/A school–university culture committed to the preparation of future educators that embraces their active engagement in the school community; #4/A shared commitment to innovative and reflective practice by all participants.

Introduction

In the early 21st century, it is reasonable to argue that schools, university teacher education programs, and any organizations or individuals that impact P-12 students and schools are increasingly challenged to focus on

justice issues. The beginning of this new century has seen a narrowing of the curricular objectives of classroom teachers, the assessment methods used to determine students’ achievement of these aims, and the criteria and means through which P-12 educators are evaluated. While such standards might name

as guiding rationales efforts to more clearly identify instructional objectives and thus improve student learning and teachers' practices, few criteria or assessment methods exist for these social justice values.

In this context it is more important than ever that pre-service teachers, in-service teachers, and university-based teacher educators both name these justice purposes and craft learning tasks oriented toward these grander goals and assessments of efforts that reveal they are meeting these objectives. The authors of this article believe that if teachers and university teacher education programs are to remain relevant to today's contexts—where alternative forms of teacher preparation and strict versions of teacher evaluation are proliferating—it is vital that they make explicit their social justice ideals, articulate why such goals are important, and detail the evidence that they are achieving these. We propose that today's urban teacher educators might shift their own profession so that it is focused on preparing city teachers who are equipped to promote students' academic achievement, will remain in urban locales, and will endeavor to improve the conditions of youths' lives and their communities.

Reporting on the efforts of our urban and social justice-oriented professional development school (PDS) program, we offer a set of principles and a related rubric as examples of context-specific justice-oriented concepts, evidence that PDS partnerships can develop their own sets of justice-focused criteria, and a starting point that readers might use to create program-specific principles. Our study of this partnership exemplifies the evidence-based social justice-focused efforts that are needed across PDS contexts, suggesting that urban school districts and institutions committed to preparing teachers for diverse and challenging settings should consider a concept of "quality" beyond what current policies recommend—one that includes social justice criteria and might be evaluated via holistic portfolio assessment systems. The results of

this study illustrate how a responsive notion of teacher quality rooted in these high ideals might have a place in this nation's ongoing discussions of who should be teaching our increasingly diverse and disenfranchised city students.

Contexts and Literature Review

The visionaries behind the very notion of public education in the United States undoubtedly considered the question of schools' effect on the promotion of democracy and social justice in our society. As we enter the second decade of this new millennium, this question of the goals of public schools in the US is still very much alive, and debates about the primacy and methods of achieving these objectives are part of ongoing public, policy-maker, and theoretical discussions. Critics of public schools frequently focus on this institution's failure to honor the basic principles of our democracy, requiring children and youth—especially our most diverse, impoverished, and typically urban students—to attend inadequately funded and poorly staffed schools, some of which are even cruelly ineffective. Fortunately, numerous educators and scholars have also explored how our schools might better serve young people, promoting both their academic achievement and their engagement as citizens in a democratic society (Adams, Bell, & Griffin, 2007; Ayers, Hunt, & Quinn, 1998; Nieto & Bode, 2012).

The founders of the university education system and, in particular, the mothers and fathers of university-based teacher education programs, have also long considered similar questions about schools' purposes and their efforts to promote a democracy. Teacher educators have perhaps encountered fewer debates about the importance of social justice objectives in their own and their students' (i.e., future teachers') work (Cochran-Smith, 2004; Hammond, French, & Garcia-Lopez, 2002; Michelli & Keiser, 2005; Villegas &

Lucas, 2002). But the relative clarity teacher education programs have around the centrality of democratic education to their professional activities is not synonymous with future teachers, veteran teachers, or school districts agreeing to pay similar attention to these principles. In fact, discussions of the impact of teacher education programs on the quality of their graduates' instruction—including their focus on social justice issues—have long challenged the quantity and quality of these effects.

The PDS movement is perhaps one of the primary places where these issues—the impact of teacher education programs on classroom teachers' practices and the explicit focus on social justice issues across school and university settings—intersect (Basile, 2009; Darling-Hammond, 2005; Wong & Glass, 2009). PDSs likely offer the most effective, comprehensive, and longest-standing approach to helping both teachers and teacher educators address social justice challenges (Grisham, Berg, Jacobs, & Mathison, 2002). The Holmes Partnership is the primary body associated with establishing the PDS movement and for advocating for these social justice principles. In its early policy statements, the Holmes Partnership articulated four distinct objectives of professional development schools, with emphases on the training of pre-service teachers, the achievement of P-12 students, research on and by school and university educators on effective P-12 and teacher education practices, and the professional development of all of the constituents of these partnerships (Holmes Group, 1990).

More importantly, all of the descriptions of the purposes of professional development schools proffered by Holmes and the National Network for Educational Renewal (NNER)—and, to a lesser extent, by the National Association for Professional Development Schools (NAPDS) and the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE)—articulate social justice, democratic

education, or equity principles as foundational elements of the PDS mission (Goodlad, Soder, & McDaniel, 2009). The Holmes Partnership identified as a primary focus of these partnerships the promotion of “equity, diversity and cultural competence in the programs of K-12 schools, higher education, and the education professional.” NNER intends to provide students and teachers with the “knowledge, skills, and dispositions to become fully engaged participants in our democratic society.” NCATE calls on PDS partners to “implement curricula in the university and school programs that reflect issues of equity and access to knowledge by diverse learners.” Additionally, NAPDS (2008) names as one of its “essentials” for PDS partnerships a “comprehensive mission that is broader in its outreach and scope than the mission of any partner and that furthers the education profession and its responsibility to advance equity within schools and, by potential extension, the broader community.”

Perhaps by design, what precisely is *meant* by “social justice,” “equity,” and “democracy” or “democratic education” in any of these statements is rarely articulated. Justice appears to be a concept or quality that requires constant re-definition and a particular sensitivity to the contexts in which it is implemented. Social justice, though, is not an entirely flexible notion, and its application in education settings almost uniformly includes a focus on serving the needs of diverse learners, access for all students to quality educational experiences, and the orientation of both school- and university-based educators toward the improvement of all students' educational and life experiences and opportunities.

As well, while seminal studies have confirmed what common sense has long suggested—that the classroom teacher is the most easily influenced and important factor in any classroom—insufficient attention has been given to the characteristics of teachers beyond their subject area knowledge. While

other factors—including dispositions, ongoing professional development activities, and “value-added” assessments—are increasingly considered, teacher “quality” too often still relies on restrictive concepts of subject area competence and a burgeoning bank of standards, objectives, and goals from legislative, professional, and content area constituents (Griffin, 2002; Meadmore, 2001; Wise & Leibbrand, 2001). National subject area organizations (e.g., the National Council of Teachers of English) and professional associations (e.g., the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education, NCATE, 2006) have developed standards to guide the preparation of future teachers. Already susceptible to the P-12 testing and accountability pressures imposed by the Bush administration of the early 21st century, under-resourced and understaffed urban districts (which more frequently hire under-qualified and inexperienced teachers) have been further burdened by these licensure requirements for new and veteran teachers (Oakes, Franke, Quartz, & Rogers, 2002).

Recent discussions of “cultural competence” have called upon teachers, teacher education programs, and school districts to consider ways in which knowledge of students’ and communities’ historical perspectives and conditions might influence teaching practices (Irvine, 2003; Villegas & Lucas, 2003). Still, few of these definitions and assessments of teacher quality have considered the goals that we consider most important: the specific activist-oriented qualities that *urban* teachers must possess, and the holistic ways in which urban teachers and students should be evaluated (Ladson-Billings, 2000; Oakes & Lipton, 2007; Zeichner, 2003). In city settings, teachers require not only subject area proficiencies, but also abilities to bear in mind how their practices impact the oppressive historical conditions of political, economic, social, and educational institutions (Chizhik, 2003; Leland & Harste, 2004; Picower, 2011). Urban districts and students

need teachers who consider both how their practices can promote academic achievement and how these practices can successfully influence city communities’ engagement with school, democratic processes, and the highest ideals of equity. The notion of “quality” to which we appeal suggests that urban education professionals must work to make a difference outside of the classroom, reflect on the social and political structures in which classrooms are embedded, and take into account forms of achievement that demonstrate consideration of evidence beyond classroom-level assignments and assessments (English & Keshavarz, 2002).

Research literature makes—and thoroughly supports—a variety of claims about PDSs, including their effectiveness at addressing social justice concerns. A number of reports reveal how involvement with PDSs has supported educators in becoming successful social justice educators (Abdul-Haqq, 1999; Breault & Breault, 2010; Cantor, 2002). These research reports illustrate how PDSs support collaboration within and across schools and universities and help future teachers to integrate the theories they encounter in their university teacher education courses into their developing school-based pedagogies (Buzza, Kotsopoulos, Mueller, & Johnston, 2010; Cozza, 2010; Shroyer, Yahnke, & Heller, 2007). Several studies document how PDS-based teacher preparation is superior to teacher training that occurs in non-PDS settings (Castle, Fox, & Souder, 2006; Castle, Rockwood, & Tortorra, 2008; Catellia, 2006; Fisher, Frey, & Farnan, 2004), particularly in terms of new teacher induction and teacher hiring and retention in traditionally hard-to-staff schools (Fleener & Dahm, 2007; Klinger, Leftwich, Van Garderen, & Hernandez, 2004; Latham & Vogt, 2007).

Today’s PDS partners might not only promote P-12 students’ academic achievement, but also help teachers remain in the teaching profession and improve the conditions of students’ lives and communities

(Cochran-Smith, 2006; Goodlad, Soder, & McDaniel, 2009; Teitel, 2001, 2003). Few definitions of teacher quality consider the goals the authors of this article consider most important: the activist-oriented qualities that teachers, teacher educators, and education researchers working in increasingly diverse contexts must possess (Chin & Barber, 2010; Duncan-Andrade, 2005; Murrell, 2006; Wong & Glass, 2005). We are united by our commitment to long-term efforts in PDS partnerships and the belief that PDS structures are most effective for addressing and researching a range of social justice-oriented concerns faced by P-12 students, teachers, university faculty members, and communities (Davis, London, & Beverbach, 2009; Liu & Meyer, 2005; Reynolds, Ross, & Rakow, 2002; Tracthman, 2007; Zeichner, 2007).

Methods

In response to these narrow notions of teacher “quality” and the assessment methods used to evaluate these characteristics, we first briefly describe the concept of social justice our PDS masters licensure program has used to guide its assessment of future city teachers over the past fourteen years. We believe that this description will be useful for other teacher educators and teachers committed to considering a broader concept of teacher quality. We also used qualitative methods to study four cohorts ($N = 96$) of future urban teachers and their consideration of “social justice” across community, school, and classroom settings. Approximately 300 pairs of artifacts and related reflective essays from these pre-service teachers’ portfolios were gathered longitudinally over their three semesters of participation in this licensure program.

Using qualitative analysis methods, we separately analyzed the content of these artifact/essay pairs, noting key types of artifacts and topics related to future teachers’ reflections (Creswell, 1998; Silverman, 1993). We each examined all of the portfolio

artifact/reflection combinations, tracking the topics addressed in the writings, and beginning to identify themes that appeared. We eventually looked across our individual analyses to generate a typology of these prevailing artifact categories and themes. The pre-service teachers in our program were not involved in this stage of our analyses.

We then conducted a framed content analysis of the entire set of approximately 300 artifacts (Patton, 2002; Strauss, 1987) and accompanying reflections. While we had noted a number of potential themes during our general content analysis, we had not drawn conclusions about the topics that had appeared most consistently. Thus, we each first reconsidered our general content analysis notes and these data through the lens of what these suggested about the broad topic of social justice education. We each then emailed tables of these themes—aligned with the portfolio artifacts titles, the subjects and topics depicted and described in the teacher candidates’ reflections, and our general content analysis notes—to the other authors of this article. Through this series of email exchanges, coordinated by Kristien, we came to a consensus about the themes that appeared consistently across our individual analyses. From these emergent themes, we identified two broad sets of findings:

- evidence of future city teachers’ understanding of “social justice” as they *began* their journey in urban schools during the program’s first summer semester
- the evolution of future teachers’ understandings of social justice as represented by their own definitions of this criteria across their program year

Finally, because many of these pre-service teachers were either current students in our graduate classes or were now teaching in area schools, we were able to meet with a number of them to conduct informal member checks (Kirk & Miller, 1986; Lincoln & Guba, 1985;

Morse, Barrett, Mayan, Olson, & Spiers, 2002), often sharing the themes we had identified with the program participants whose portfolio artifact we thought best illustrated this topic. All of the themes we discuss in this article were ones these pre-service—and, later, in-service—teachers agreed were accurate representations of the ideas they either explicitly or unintentionally depicted in their portfolio artifacts and/or related reflections. To illustrate these themes, we have included descriptions of example artifacts pre-service teachers selected as evidence of their proficiency with this notion of quality, across the settings of their city schools and neighborhoods.

Our PDS Program

Developed in the late 1990s to train teachers who would be prepared for and ultimately remain in urban settings, our program at Midwestern State University (a pseudonym) is a selective, field-based, master's licensure option, focusing on the training of secondary teachers in English, social studies, math, science, Spanish, and art. The program's explicit goal is to prepare thoughtful teacher-activists who consciously address the effects of race, class, gender, and other differences on student achievement and communities' well-being. The program is oriented around a critical theory framework (Kincheloe, 2004) and a "professional development school" model (Grisham, Berg, Jacobs, & Mathison, 2002; Johnson, 2000), with two full-time university-based faculty collaborating with school-based site coordinators and mentor teachers at five area high schools to license approximately twenty-five new teachers per year. Students enter as a cohort, take most classes together over a rigid four-semester sequence, and work exclusively with one mentor teacher at a partner high school during a 9-month, unpaid internship. Graduates earn a Master of Education degree based

on culminating teacher research projects and professional portfolios.

Our program has made responding to challenges such as the intensified and under-resourced conditions of our urban classrooms, schools, and university explicit in its definition of urban teaching and teacher education. Its founders recognized that any successful urban licensure option must continually modify the professions of both urban teacher educators *and* teachers so that they include responsibility for addressing these difficult circumstances. The program founders fashioned a unique set of urban and social justice-oriented teacher licensure outcomes upon which its "interns" are evaluated through both individual portfolio reviews and public exhibitions of portfolio artifacts. These outcomes have evolved across the program's fourteen-year existence into the following standards:

- **Social Justice:** The intern is a reflective, responsive teacher-leader who successfully addresses the effects of race, class, gender, linguistic difference, ability, and sexual orientation on student achievement.
- **Urban Teaching:** The intern promotes students' learning by utilizing culturally responsive pedagogy.
- **Urban Schooling and Communities:** The intern demonstrates a strong commitment to urban schooling and community activism.
- **Resilience, Resistance, and Persistence:** The intern addresses the complexities and demands of urban settings by responding appropriately with resilience, resistance, and persistence.

While many sets of standards in education are perceived as static criteria—exaggerating their status as non-negotiable and potentially irrelevant laws—the program standards have been revised through ongoing informal and formal discussions amongst program faculty, interns, and mentor teachers. Their continued evolution has enhanced the

extent to which these objectives are responsive to the needs and conditions of the program's urban community. A rubric (see Appendix A) clearly defines what each program outcome requires as demonstrated by school and classroom practices. In this study, we focus on the program outcome of "social justice," which calls upon program interns to demonstrate that they are:

- willing and able to reflect on and address the effects of race, class, gender, linguistic difference, ability, and sexual orientation on their own and students' achievement;
- actively learning from and about their students;
- considering their own and their students' experiences with issues of race, class, gender, linguistic difference, ability, and sexual orientation in their classroom practices;
- addressing a range of personal, community, and school literacies;
- engaging in and encouraging their students to take personal and professional risks.

This outcome's rubric is rooted in concepts of cultural "responsiveness" (Ladson-Billings, 1994), "congruence," and "competence" (Lucas & Villegas, 2003), and "literacies" (Ben-Yosef, 2003), while appealing to studies of "critical pedagogy" and socially responsible teaching (Cook-Sather & Youens, 2007; Kumashiro, 2004; Oakes & Lipton, 2007). It relies on research into urban teachers' abilities to engage in personal and professional risk-taking (Murrell, 2006) and has foundations in broader concepts of "literacy" (Alvermann, 2004; Samuelson, 2004). This rubric was largely developed during the third year of the program's existence, with considerable input from that year's cohort of interns, who recognized they needed—and wanted—more specific expectations against which they might measure their efforts to address these outcomes. The rubric

has been revised each year since, with two significant changes: one, at the conclusion of that third year of the program, we added the "intern-selected" criteria, in an effort to promote candidates' ownership of these outcomes; two, we specified for interns that addressing just one element of each rubric point was sufficient to demonstrate mastery of that outcome.

We believe that in order to achieve the measures of quality that urban schools and communities require, city teachers must be consciously assessed against these higher principles and evaluated using holistic, performance-based instruments. A performance-based portfolio assessment system may be the only authentic assessment model consistent with the brevity of such a program (Orland-Barak, 2005; Reis & Villaume, 2002). Our ongoing performance assessment system culminates in a professional teaching portfolio (Harland, 2005; Peterman, 2005; Zeichner & Wray, 2001), and while interns complete a variety of traditional and non-traditional assessments throughout their program coursework, it is expected that they will collect portfolio artifacts from all classes and field experiences.

Construction of the portfolio begins in introductory summer courses including "Content Area Literacy," "Teaching and Assessment in the Secondary School" (a general methods course), and "Educational Research." Portfolio development continues in the fall semester's "Practicum in the Secondary School" (which includes half-day mentored teaching experiences in urban classrooms for 15 weeks), and concludes during the spring semester's "Student Teaching in the Secondary School" (which includes full-day mentored teaching experiences in the same city classroom). During every semester, interns gather artifacts representative of their experiences and present these artifacts as evidence of their proficiency with the program outcomes. For example, while interns are completing community fieldwork and explor-

ing their schools' neighborhoods through "community mapping" projects during the first summer semester, they are required to gather artifacts that focus on their definitional understandings of the program outcomes. During the fall semester, while interns are observing in school settings and veteran teachers' classrooms, they collect artifacts from their mentor teachers' and other teachers' implementation of these outcomes. Finally, during the spring semester, when interns complete full-time student teaching experiences in their mentor teachers' classrooms, they extract artifacts from their own classroom contexts and highlight the implementation of these outcomes in their teaching.

Interns engage each semester in a formative assessment process around the artifacts they have chosen to address the program outcomes. This process includes completion of an "Artifact Conference Review" for each item an intern chooses as evidence of her/his proficiency with an outcome. This review is conducted by a constituent of an intern's choosing, and the goal of these reviews is to ensure that the evidence chosen is relevant to other members of their school communities. While we do not require that mentor teachers serve as reviewers of these artifacts, we encourage interns to look to these veteran teachers for input. As well, through seminars and class sessions each semester, interns participate in multiple conversations with their cohort about the artifacts they have selected as evidence of their proficiency.

These formative assessment activities prepare interns for the final, 45-minute summative assessment conference with a program university coordinator at the end of each semester—the coordinator review. At the conclusion of each of these three summative coordinator reviews, each intern must be assessed as "proficient" with each of the four program outcomes. If an intern is assessed as not proficient with any of the program outcomes, she or he has one opportunity to

revise the relevant artifact, followed by one formal appeal of this assessment. After this revision and appeal, if an intern is not successful in addressing all four outcomes, she or he is not allowed to finish the program.

Artifact Analysis and Findings

As noted in the methods section above, we identified two primary themes in the nearly 300 sets of artifacts and essays from the four recent cohorts of pre-service teachers that we analyzed for this article. The first category of findings (initial evidence of interns' understandings of social justice) suggests that while this program's mission clearly states its orientation toward social justice, interns do not arrive with either their own clearly articulated concepts of social justice or with commitments to this ideal. The second category (evolution of future teachers' understandings of social justice as represented by their own definitions of these criteria across their program year) depicts the ways that pre-service teachers' concepts of social justice developed across their three semesters in the program; this suggests that many of these future teachers are successfully learning to understand and integrate this ideal into their teaching and professional lives.

Initial evidence of interns' understanding of social justice. Perhaps not surprisingly, these pre-service teachers began with, and for the most part continued to rely on, the strict definition of social justice provided by the program outcome and rubric. Most interns did not appear to have considered this concept prior to their entry into the program or as an element of their future work as city teachers. While the high stakes nature of the program's portfolio assessment system required that they focus *first* on the notion of social justice we introduced, the system also made the development of their own criteria a formal activity each semester by requiring them to choose and demonstrate proficiency with what we call an "intern-selected" criteria.

Amongst the primary artifacts that students selected during the summer semester to demonstrate their proficiency with the program's social justice outcome were numerous examples of music, media, and literature that were foreign to many of these future teachers, but which were the daily texts of their students' lives. For example, one social studies intern, Regina¹, looked to BET (Black Entertainment Television) and VIBE magazine as representative of this media, and she counted her new awareness of these as evidence of her proficiency with this social justice outcome. While these texts often presented limited, popular, and inaccurate representations of youths' lives, it seems important to recognize that such media might be counted as a first stage of evidence toward which future teachers should be directed if they are to learn about the particulars of their students' lives and communities.

Interns gained an awareness of these daily texts through their work with individual students, with most pre-service teachers relying on summer course assignments that required them to begin inquiries into their students' lives. Amy, a future math teacher, looked to the survey of students' interests she developed in her content literacy course as evidence of her proficiency with this social justice outcome, while Julia, a science intern, considered a "photovoice" project she had completed to learn about students' and their families' relationships to school as verification that she had understood this program principle.

Conversely, other interns needed to develop the practice of inquiring into their *own* personal histories in order to appreciate the process and value of studying their students' lives. Interns recognized their students' personal challenges and the nature of the difficulties in students' lives by viewing these through the lenses of their own experiences and privileges. Janice, a future English teacher, appealed to the photographs she had taken of her own family and compared these to the ones she took of one student's neighborhood in order to appreciate the stark contrasts between her own life and her student's world. For some interns, this revealed a set of

cultural characteristics focused on a dominant White perspective. This awareness led to the acknowledgement that interns had a great deal more to learn about their students' cultures than they might have originally thought and certainly more than these middle and high school students needed to learn about their future teachers' lives. John, a science intern, used a wedding photograph of a diverse group of his college friends in order to demonstrate how he was becoming aware of the details of the differences between himself and his future students and what these differences might mean for his teaching.

Open-ended activities such as the "photovoice" project and the community mapping activity (through which groups of interns interviewed and created a video introduction to their school's community and resources) were ones these future teachers often initially resisted when they were introduced as summer university course requirements. We recognized that they found these projects too amorphous to understand how to complete in the "right" way, but we remained committed to using these in part because they forced these future city teachers to struggle to "do" school in ways that they had not previously, but that their future students often would. Interestingly, these projects represented some of these interns' richest and most complex perspectives on the program's social justice outcome, and these pre-service teachers most frequently appealed to these when they were asked to find evidence of their understanding of this principle during the summer semester. Drew, a language arts intern, focused on a literacy timeline assignment from his summer coursework in which he was asked to recall how he acquired proficiency in concepts of traditional literacy and another type of non-traditional literacy throughout his own life. He referred to this assignment in his portfolio review as a way to reflect on his own process of learning, as well as how he might utilize it to highlight the uniqueness of his future students' abilities to learn. Relying on such a broadly conceived assignment, interns might have made sense of it in any number of ways, but Drew made a deep connection

between his own educational path and the schooling and learning avenues of urban youth.

These summer artifacts revealed interns' awareness that teachers committed to social justice must model the openness suggested by this ideal on a daily basis, and that the everyday interactions they have with students might be the most important evidence of their proficiency with this program goal. Linda, a science intern, revealed in her summer artifact reflection that teaching for social justice is not merely about curricula and activities that address the oppression of minority populations in our nation's history, but may be primarily about having and expressing high academic and behavioral expectations for students, making space for all young people to participate in class each day, and building that nebulous sense of "community" in the classroom. She used her review of research literature on student motivation (completed as a part of her master's teacher research paper) to explain that motivating youth to achieve in the classroom was equivalent to challenging the injustices of schools where diverse urban students have not been encouraged even to attend. She explained that she intended to increase motivation by asking youth about the conditions of their lives, rather than assuming that they were willfully rejecting school by not engaging in class, completing homework, or even showing up for school.

Finally, a number of interns selected artifacts that revealed the formal ways in which they had learned to inquire into students' and community members' lives, and the lessons they expected to integrate into their teaching philosophies and orientations based on these explorations. Several future teachers described some of the best examples of these formal inquiry processes. John, a pre-service science teacher, identified comments gathered via his community mapping activity that exposed community members' desire to involve themselves in their local schools and local students' education, and to improve the neighborhood as a result. John recognized that as disconnected from their schools as urban constituents might have seemed to him before he began our program,

he understood they possessed a constructive passion to improve student achievement not expressed in a manner through which it could be appreciated.

Crystal—another future science teacher—described a similar awareness in her students, who while they frequently failed to engage with or even show up for school, were still aware of ways in which this institution could be improved to serve them. In Crystal's interviews of young people during the summer semester, one student athlete suggested that teachers might reframe school content in terms of game situations in order to provide youth with more authentic "ways in" to lessons. Crystal also used a paper she wrote as a part of her course on serving youth with special needs as key evidence of her newfound ability and commitment to "finding ways to help students."

While most of these future teachers focused strictly on the concept of social justice to which the program introduced them—evidence that even with this holistic assessment system they were capable of altering their practices in order to continue to "do" school in this foreign manner—we consider this adherence to the rubric and assessment system as rudimentary proof that there can exist a science of social justice in teacher education. Portfolio assessment systems, and in particular those focused on such a principled notion of "quality," need not function as inexact and unreliable schemes. By keeping these future teachers oriented toward an explicit definition of social justice and by expanding the range of artifacts to which they were required to appeal to demonstrate their proficiency with this outcome, this first summer assessment process provided them with a foundation for this ideal and a holistic evaluation method to assess it.

Evolution of interns' understandings of social justice. One of the most important elements of the program's portfolio assessment system was its concentration on future teachers' understandings of social justice and their ability to operate with an awareness of this concept across the settings of their professional lives. Some of the evidence drawn from our initial analyses of

interns' self-selected "social justice" criteria—gathered across interns' three semesters of portfolio construction—revealed several themes in these future teachers' definitions of this criteria. For some of these pre-service teachers, this social justice standard of teacher quality, the criteria they developed, and the assessment system we fashioned, were merely elaborate hoops to jump through to complete an abbreviated master's licensure program. But based on our first efforts at considering these "intern-selected" criteria as data for this study, we also found significant reasons for hoping—for anticipating—that our students and this system were supporting young teachers' development of the ability to *own* and *operate* with social justice in their classrooms, schools, and communities. To illustrate this second analysis category we looked to interns' self-selected criteria across their three semesters of portfolio assessment.

Interns' first attempts at choosing their own criteria revealed that considering social justice involved teachers encouraging students to view cultural differences as opportunities rather than challenges. Amy, a future English teacher, suggested that she needed to "find ways for students to understand other cultures, races, and religions" so that they could "appreciate uniqueness [and] not determine judgments." Ethan, a pre-service Spanish teacher, also hoped to help students to "recognize differences and similarities" amongst their peers. And Wendy—who was a future science teacher—defined social justice as her ability to help students "recognize the existence of . . . multiple points of view of a topic."

During their first summer semester in our program, these future teachers also described the integration of social justice into their teaching practices as concentrating on the *social* nature of schooling. Stephen, a future social studies teacher, hoped to have his students "celebrate differences" so that he could "promote achievement." Victoria, another pre-service English teacher, articulated her definition of social justice as simply encouraging students to "learn from one another." And Erik expressed how he would hope to have students

learn from each other by having them—rather than just him—"bring culturally relevant material into the classroom."

As well, during their introductory semester the pre-service teachers expanded our program's definition of social justice to include an explicit concentration on both teachers and students having higher and better articulated expectations for these youths' achievement. Adam, a future science teacher, defined social justice as simply setting "high expectations for students of all backgrounds." Drew—that novice English teacher—recognized that he would have to "exhaust all possibilities when consciously making an effort to teach those who are deemed 'unteachable.'" And a future math teacher—Tim—articulated his notion of social justice as having a "sense of personal responsibility." In summary, during their first attempts at articulating their own concepts of social justice these future teachers expressed many aspirations that they and their future charges would have the abilities to challenge the limited expectations for urban youths' school achievement and engagement that too many teachers—and students themselves—have accepted as reasonable.

The interns' notions of social justice diverged during their second semester in the program, which was also when they began to spend significantly more time in schools, teaching lessons, and encountering the realities of city schools, classrooms, and their mentors' expectations and practices. Perhaps not surprisingly—but clearly a promising sign—these future teachers' concepts of social justice began to include more specific teaching practices. Many of their definitions of social justice also articulated an awareness of the roles they would have to play in nudging their more veteran colleagues to remain open to such justice-oriented pedagogies and to challenge school traditions and structures that failed to constructively serve their high school students.

Christina, a future English teacher, defined social justice as "expecting only what you explicitly ask for from your students." Several of these pre-service teachers—including Caroline (a novice social studies teacher) and Amanda

(another pre-service English teacher)—recognized that, for teachers, social justice in action involved both them and their students knowing more about these youths' particular abilities. While she did not identify a specific teaching strategy, Crystal, a pre-service science teacher, was already beginning to focus on students with special needs and their abilities to "succeed in school and life after school."

Many of these future teachers increasingly began to concentrate on their roles as teacher activists. Jamie, a future social studies teacher, made numerous references to his efforts to engage his students in social activism. And Ilka, a pre-service science teacher, was amongst the most articulate about her developing political awareness and the activist-oriented efforts in which she, her students, her colleagues, and all school constituents would need to engage; she recommended that the "government" use "dollars to make schools physically better. . . All parties who have a vested interest in education need to make the [school] environment more feasible for learning."

Finally, for their third and culminating portfolio review—which occurred at the end of their full-time student teaching semester—we again asked these future teachers to articulate their own notions of social justice. In the criteria on which we have focused for the data of this paper, we noticed that many of these novice urban educators defined social justice as their abilities to continue to reflect on their teaching practices and to consider very specific challenges their students were facing. Again, it was not surprising many of these pre-service teachers were increasingly oriented toward particular pedagogical practices that would promote their students' achievement, but it was intriguing to us that many of these strategies involved a return to the cultural considerations to which we had initially introduced students with the program's notion of social justice.

Tony, a future math teacher, defined social justice at this stage of his development as his commitment to "assessing the effectiveness of groups from individual group members' and total group perspectives." Crystal—the pre-ser-

vice science teacher mentioned above—was still focused on students with special needs, but now she concentrated on "modifying [my] instruction to meet [their] needs." Hillary, a novice English teacher that many of her peers had initially recognized as struggling to understand and utilize such a culturally relevant approach, now defined her own ability to teach in a socially just way as her effort to "create assignments that include students' cultures" and that "recognized the uniqueness of the students." Finally, Jamie, the pre-service social studies teacher mentioned earlier, articulated his concept of social justice as teachers "taking action"—a cryptic but hopeful expectation that urban teachers devoted to making a difference in the classroom would explicitly attempt to connect their pedagogies to events beyond the school walls.

Conclusions

In the analyses above, we have concentrated on exploring interns' understandings of and their abilities to operate with the social justice concept which orients our PDS master's licensure program. In addition to the themes we have introduced, we also have become aware of some important implications for and challenges to both high school and teacher education curricula and instructional practices if these are to be oriented toward this social justice notion of quality. We offer these implications and challenges as part of this article's conclusions.

The P-12 domain and teacher education practices that appeal to notions of social justice require not only that future teachers begin with inquiries into their students' lives, but also that they formally study their students, examine these youths' communities, and use this information in their teaching practices on a regular basis. Interest in urban students' lives is more than an attractive "extra" for social justice-focused teachers; it is a required element of their curricula and pedagogies. Of course, this focus on social

justice poses a significant and imposing challenge for many pre-service teachers that may, in fact, require behaviors and skills outside the realm of their abilities at this stage of their teaching careers. If this notion of social justice is to become relevant to our urban teaching and teacher education practices, then we must have specific structures and curricula through which pre-service and in-service teachers can implement their social justice-driven practices in their classrooms. These alternate structures and curricula invariably will challenge the content and nature of the curricular canon.

One of the greatest impediments to the introduction of this social justice-oriented concept into the training of future teachers may be the simple reality that our definition of teacher quality is just that—*our* definition. At best we are uncertain about the extent to which this definition is shared by mentor teachers who work with our program's students and we are generally not involved with our graduates beyond their program year. If most pre-service teachers enter their licensure programs with a limited awareness of and commitment to such an ideal, why would we presume that veteran teachers are any different, particularly when very little in their professional lives suggests that they should consider this notion? Without the integration of this science of social justice across the professional lifespan of teachers, it seems improbable that future teachers will ever be supported by like-minded mentors. More than ever we are conscious of the significant limitation of our social justice education efforts, given that the development and implementation of this system has generally involved limited input from the mentor teachers who we count as the primary guides for these future teachers. Clearly, given the collaborative nature of PDSs and our social justice mission, we have work to do to make these social justice education efforts more of a collaborative activity that involves all of the constituents of our program.

One of the most obvious implications of this study is that any model of teacher education that explicitly challenges future teachers to engage in practices that are not commonplace in their sites of learning must be supported by school- and university-based teacher educators and mentors across, at the very least, the early career lifespan of these new teachers. We are fortunate to work with a professional development school model that allows for greater collaboration amongst school-based teacher educators, university-based teacher educators, pre-service teachers, and school and community constituents, but we are aware that even our network does not wholly support a focus on this social justice principle. Until a social justice concept of teacher quality for all pre-service teachers, in-service teachers, and teacher educators is as foundational as the standards-driven licensure system emphasized in current educational legislation, it is likely unreasonable that the potential of such a notion or assessment systems oriented around it will be realized.

Interestingly, as we reviewed the portfolio artifacts from our program's recent years, it became evident to us that the *quality* of the artifacts interns have presented for their portfolios have been generally consistent with the overall quality of interns' teaching. For example, a recent cohort of interns struggled to find artifacts from outside the classroom settings, shared very abbreviated reflections on their artifacts, and focused only on the precise language of the social justice rubric, rather than on the more holistic concept on which we concentrate. As program coordinators and portfolio reviewers, we have recently conducted more secondary portfolio reviews and appeals than in many of the previous years combined. At the same time, the average overall scores on these interns' teaching observations (completed by both mentor teachers and university supervisors) have been substantially lower for this most recent group. While we do not generally lose any candidates

in the course of the year as a result of failed portfolio reviews, we do encounter resistance to these ideals. Anecdotally, some of the least flexible teacher candidates—as evidenced by their portfolio reviews or their interactions with students, mentor teachers, and supervisors—ultimately struggle most in our program and are likely to be among that approximately five percent of interns who are counseled out of our program. We anticipate considering this alignment in future analyses of portfolio assessment data.

The teacher assessment and performance data shared in this study provide an introductory perspective on how holistic assessment methods guided by explicit social justice ideals might prepare teachers for urban PDS settings. More importantly, this study illustrates how pre-service teachers might teach to such ideals and address this concept of “quality” with PDS structures as a primary support. In the context of narrowing notions of teacher performance and P-12 students’ academic achievement, our nation needs such assessment method models and examples of the impact of these ideals on teacher and student accomplishment. The findings of this study provide an overview of one example of a social justice-oriented portfolio assessment system for pre-service urban teachers, and also illustrate how students in our PDS program are demonstrating proficiency with this social justice outcome. This assessment system requires future teachers to consider this concept across community, school, and classroom settings, and through artifacts that demonstrate their definitional understandings, their recognition of the implementation of social justice in others’ lessons, and, finally, the integration of social justice into their own teaching.

While the findings of this study reveal much about future teachers’ consideration of this social justice ideal, we have little evidence that this principle will matter to these new educators’ practices beyond their PDS program year. We are conducting a large-scale follow-up study of program graduates that will provide

data on the continued relevance of this ideal to their teaching practices. In addition, while we do not report on other investigations of our program and its graduates here, we have conducted a comparative study of candidates in this program and our more traditional post-baccalaureate option, which does not require a focus on these unique social justice-focused program outcomes. The results of both these other explorations and the study on which we report here suggest that any wholesale change in the definition of teacher quality must be integrated not only into teachers’ pre-service training, but also into their induction years, ongoing professional development, and tenure and promotion criteria. ^{SUP}

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Appendix A.

		Program Outcomes:			
		Social Justice	Urban Teaching	Urban Schooling & Communities	Resilience, Resistance, and Persistence
Assessment:	The intern is a reflective, responsive teacher-leader who successfully addresses the effects of race, class, gender, and linguistic difference on student achievement.	The intern promotes students' learning by utilizing culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy.	The intern demonstrates a strong commitment to urban schooling and community activism.	The intern addresses the complexities and demands of urban settings by responding appropriately with resilience, resistance, and persistence.	
Proficient: As demonstrated by artifacts and reflections, the intern:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Recognizes and respects their own and their students' personal, social, and cultural uniqueness and understands how these attributes affect teaching and learning •Reflects on and addresses effects of race, class, gender, linguistic difference, ability, and sexual orientation on their own and their students' achievement •Uses this information to engage their students, to promote intrinsic motivation, and to encourage personal, professional risk-taking •Promotes their own and their students' development of personal, school, and community literacies by using effective, culturally relevant classroom practices •Intern selected criteria: 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Encourages their students to actively participate in creating and governing their own learning experiences and environments, including assessment procedures •Relates achievement to teaching strategies by reflecting on strategies and adjusting teaching and assessment practices to meet students' individual and group needs •Develops range of relevant, holistic, learner-centered curricula that utilize available resources and produce authentic results •Intern selected criteria: 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Demonstrates an understanding of the relationship between schools and the community, and of the community factors that influence students' learning processes and academic achievement •Promotes their own and their students' abilities to make informed, socially-conscious, democratic decisions within the classroom, the local community, and in a wider forum •Develops and teaches lessons that are explicitly relevant to the conditions and needs of students' lives and communities (e.g., family concerns, transience, violent events, poverty) •Incorporates artifacts from students' lives and communities into their teaching and utilizes authentic activities and assessments •Intern selected criteria: 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Uses personal and professional reflection to transform challenges related to student achievement into positive learning experiences •Devises creative, relevant solutions to planning, classroom management, school, and community challenges •Uses personal resources to respond to a lack of school resources. •Intern selected criteria: 	

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