The Voice of One— The Power of Many

"Nothing ever changes," exclaimed my mentor after I took a seat by him in the hotel bar.

Puzzled by his response I asked, "What do you mean?" After all, hadn't we just come from a successful workshop on educating Latino students that he had planned and at which I presented.

"I've done this work for over 30 years and no matter what we do things seem to stay the same," he replied, reflecting on the deficit thinking expressed by several of the superintendents who had attended the workshop.

"No, they don't!" I vehemently responded. "Look at the students you've impacted like Ann, Phyllis, Shernaz, and me. We are all doing this work. More importantly, consider how many individuals we've impacted over the years through the diversity training we provided to educators in the field and to students at the university. If each one of us has impacted only one individual during a professional development program or university course, and these people in turn impacted one person and so on… think about the exponential effects of your efforts. So, yes, some things appear to stay the same but a lot has changed!"

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Social Justice Preparation: What the Literature Tells Us

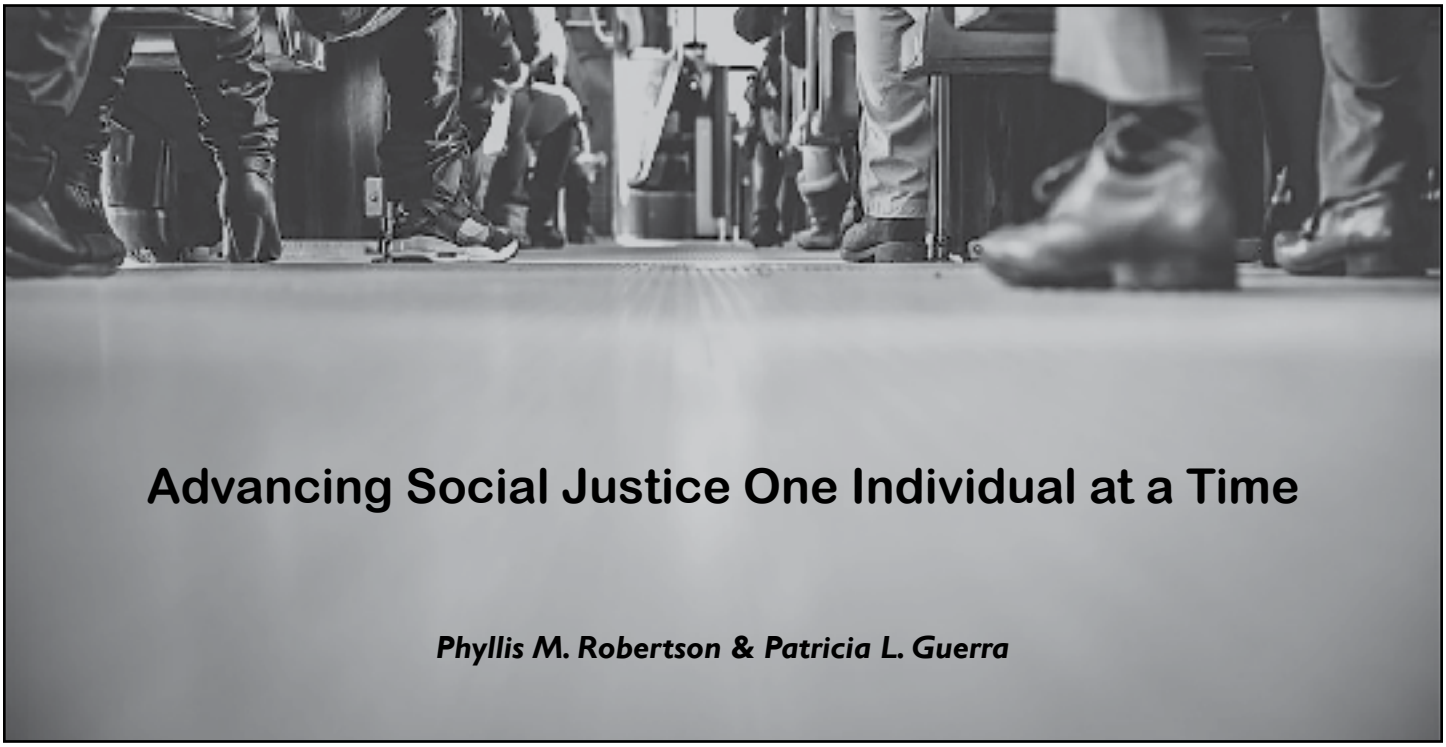
In the United States (U.S.) of America, the number of racially/ethnically and linguistically diverse students is increasing as the percentage of Whites decreases (Ortman & Guarneri, 2009). In 1995, U.S. public school enrollment included 64.7% White, 16.8% Black, 13.6 % Hispanic, 3.7% Asian and 1.1% American Indian/Alaska Native students; by 2010, White students represented 52.4% of public school students while Black, Hispanic, Asian, and American Indian/Alaska Native students represented 16.0%, 23.1%, 5.0%, and 1.1% of students respectively (National Center for Educational Statistics [NCES], 2013a).

Simultaneously, other indicators of diversity are also increasing. The number of children living in poverty increased from 17% in 1990 to 21% in 2012 and children of color are far more likely to live in poverty than Whites; 13% of White children lived in poverty compared to 39% of African American, 36% of American Indian/Alaskan Native, and 33% of Hispanic children (NCES, 2014). There have also been increases in the number of students who receive services as English Learners (ELs), from 4.1 million in 2002-2013 to 4.7 million in 2010-2011 (NCES, 2013b).

Achievement gaps among diverse learners have been well documented (Agarwal, 2011; Cochran-Smith, 2004; Dover, 2009; Sleeter, 2012) and highlight the inadequate preparation of educators to address issues of diversity (Banks et al., 2007; Esposito, Davis & Swain, 2012; Young, 2010). In response, many teacher and far fewer leadership preparation programs have increased efforts to prepare future practitioners to improve student achievement using culturally and linguistically responsive pedagogies (Gay, 2010; Hollins, 2008; Villegas & Lucas, 2002) as a means for advancing social justice (Ayers, 2001; Cochran Smith, 2004; Kohl, 2004; Darling-Hammond, French & Garcia-Lopez, 2002; Hawley & James, 2010; Lyman & Villani, 2002; Zeichner, 2010).

Social justice actively addresses educational inequities through an exploration of race/ethnicity, culture, language background, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, disability, power, and privilege (Guerra, Nelson, Jacobs, & Yamamura, 2013). Despite these preservice efforts, educators often face considerable barriers as they move into actual practice (Baker & Martinez, 2012; Chubbuck, 2008; Flores, 2007; Theoharis, 2009) and risk being normed back into the culture of schooling that maintains the very inequities they seek to address or leave the profession dissatisfied and disillusioned (Ensign, 2009; Guerra, Nelson, Jacobs, & Yamamura, 2013; Miller, Beliveau, DeStigter, Kirkland & Rice, 2008; Picower, 2011).

In contemplating the reality many new practitioners (i.e., teachers and principals) for social justice (PfSJ) face, the authors of this article, two university faculty members, came together to reflect on the lessons learned from their combined



Advancing Social Justice One Individual at a Time

Phyllis M. Robertson & Patricia L. Guerra

45-plus years of experience in providing preservice and inservice education in diversity and social justice to students at the university and practitioners in the field. Throughout these discussions, it became increasingly obvious that faculty should not only concentrate energies on the provision of quality preservice social justice preparation but should additionally prepare new practitioners to realistically and reflectively embrace a social justice agenda in resistant environments focused on accountability.

In this article, the authors explore the question: How should faculty prepare educators to advocate for equity, value their own contributions, and avoid the disillusionment and despair that is only natural when those moments of feeling that, "nothing ever changes?" occur.

Teaching for Social Justice

Numerous definitions of social justice abound in the teacher education literature. It has been argued that the meaning of "social justice" is far from settled (North, 2006) and according to Agarwal, Epstein, Oppenheim, Oyler, and Sonu (2009) it represents an "umbrella term encompassing a large range of practices and perspectives" (p. 238).

Cochran-Smith (2004) identified six principles of social justice pedagogy often cited in the social justice literature (Baran, 2014; Dover, 2013; North, 2006). The first principle, "enabling significant work within communities of learners," assumes that teachers recognize the capability of all students to explore complex ideas in the construction of meaning, maintain high expectations for their students and themselves, and promote a "shared responsibility for learning within collaborative groupings" (Cochran-Smith, 2004, p. 66).

In applying the second principle, teachers value what students bring to the learning process including their prior knowledge, their interests, and their cultural and linguistic resources.

The third principle stresses the need for teachers to understand students' strengths and needs, while increasing their levels of knowledge and skill in order to bridge gaps in achievement.

Principles four through six compel teachers to value students, their families, and their communities while building reciprocal partnerships for learning; diversify the tools and techniques used for both formative and summative assessment; and engage their students in critical thinking about issues of inequity, power and activism.

Social justice agendas may incorporate some or all of these principles and, according to Chubbuck (2008), social justice teaching can be "taken to mean those pedagogies, policies, and personal activism that improve the learning and life opportunities of typically underserved, marginalized children" (p. 310).

Teacher preparation. Many teacher preparation programs purport a social justice orientation and virtually all national and state level teacher education standards include an emphasis on preparing teachers to appropriately serve diverse student populations, including the Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (2013), the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium Standards (2014), The National Association for the Education of Young Children (2010), and the Council for Exceptional Children (2012), to name just a few.

Despite this emphasis, considerable controversy exists regarding how to prepare teachers to educate diverse student populations and the efficacy of those efforts (Cochran-Smith et al., 2009; Ensign, 2009). Even among programs purporting to prepare teachers to meet diversity standards, there appear to be wide variations in approaches with more focusing on cultural sensitivity and tolerance than transformative pedagogy (Cooper, 2013; Gorski, 2009; Hollins, 2008). Frequently programs offer only one course (Baran, 2014) and limited attention to social justice goals is evidenced during field supervision (Coleman, 2012).

Challenges in conceptual models and program goals aside, evidence indicates that few beginning teachers seemingly committed to social justice are successful in maintaining a multicultural/social-justice orientation past the "initiation phase" (Cooper, 2013, p. 9). Plaguing new social justice teachers are a myriad of obstacles including difficulties in the practical (translating theory to practice,

locating appropriate resources), the personal (isolation, administrative pressures and self-doubt) and political/pedagogical domains (standardized instruction and high-stakes assessment). As a result, they are at great risk for becoming acculturated into compliance with traditional pedagogies (Baran, 2014, Agarwal et al., 2009; Dover, 2013; Oakes & Lipton, 2007; Richie, 2012,) or leaving the profession disenchanted and unfulfilled (Baran, 2014; Chubbock, 2008; Cooper 2013; Picower, 2011). This certainly precludes the likelihood that beginning teachers will become transformative educators, described by Hollins (2008) as Type III teachers, who deliver culturally-mediated instruction in ways that affirm students and their families, challenge traditional pedagogies and promote social justice.

Professional practice. Teaching has been described as a highly complex practice (Darling-Hammond, 2006) and new teachers are often "overwhelmed" which results in a focus on "basic survival and classroom management rather than student learning" (p. 42). Most would agree that new teachers face significant challenges as they adjust to the daily demands of the classroom (e.g., lesson planning, classroom organization, paperwork, and time management).

For those committed to social justice, additional challenges are associated with translating theory-based preservice preparation into actual classroom practice (Agarwal et al., 2009). They are often in the position of having to spend considerable time and personal resources to access the materials needed to supplement the traditional curriculum.

Esposito and Swain (2009) interviewed seven social justice educators working in urban schools; the teachers reported struggling to locate materials making statements such as "I always go to the [school] library or the local library on the weekends [to check out] particular books that the kids . . . can relate to" and "it is a financial stress . . . a mental stress too because sometimes you just don't know where to find the stuff" (p. 45).

While there is evidence to indicate that some new teachers are successful in incorporating aspects of social justice teaching into their practice (Chubbock, 2008; Cooper, 2013; Dover, 2013; Sleeter, 2012) it is not an easy task and Tellez (2008) reports that the effects of direct work in schools often negates the results of preservice preparation.

On a personal level, social justice teachers may experience silencing and isolation within their school communities as they face resistance from their students (Bender-Slack, 2010) and families (Dover, 2013), colleagues and supervisors. Schoorman and Bogtoch (2010) describe a process through which new social justice teachers are silenced by more senior faculty and Ritchie (2012) speaks to the isolation experienced by critical educators who may be challenged to avoid the role of the "lone ranger" on their campuses (Bigelow, 2002).

Dover (2013) studied 24 self-identified teachers for social justice who reported that a "lack of support for teaching for social justice limited their ability to collaborate effectively" with their colleagues and administrators (p. 95). Social justice teachers cite being fearful and unlikely to question institutional limitations to social justice and experience challenges from school administrators who often describe social justice work as unnecessary or irrelevant; in some cases, teachers report having risked dismissal or having been dismissed for openly sharing their views (Bender-Slack, 2010; Dover, 2013; Esposito & Swain, 2009).

Of particular concern is the fact that social justice educators, in much the same vein as our mentor, may also come to doubt themselves and fail to recognize the impact and value of their own work (Chubbock, 2008). Agarwal and colleagues' (2009) study of beginning elementary educators with an acknowledged commitment to social justice found that the "teachers were able to reflect on their practices, but they often did so in a disappointed way, criticizing their own efforts as falling short of their greater visions" (p. 245).

While the practical and personal challenges faced by social justice teachers are formidable, it may be most difficult for teachers to sustain a social justice agenda in an environment of school reform focused on the delivery of a mandatory (often scripted) curriculum designed to prepare students for success on standardized measures of achievement.

Dover (2013) reported that the teachers in her study "detailed specific curricular and policy mandates that inhibit their ability to teach for social justice in their educational context" with two reporting that they "face scripted curriculum packages that limit their curricular and pedagogical authority" and five describing the pressure to "teach to the test" (p. 94).

Agarwal (2011) describes the need for such teachers to "delicately balance what they want to teach with what they are able to teach" (p. 53). She carefully documented the struggle experienced by a new teacher committed to social justice who, when faced with an observation by an administrator, chose to set aside her social justice agenda when teaching a lesson from the mandatory curriculum.

Leading for Social Justice

Similar to teacher education, the literature on educational leadership is replete with definitions of leadership for social justice. Presented here are several of the most commonly cited. In 1996, Foster envisioned that, "leadership must be critically educative; it can not only look at the conditions in which we live, but it must also decide how to change them" (p.185). Six years later, Rapp (2002) maintained social justice leaders are those who "resist dissent, rebel, subvert, possess oppositional imaginations, and are committed to transforming oppressive and exploitative social relations in and out of school" (p. 226). Dantley (2002) described leaders for social justice as those who "create agendas to deconstruct racism, sexist and ageist epistemological monoliths and will simultaneously construct strategies for resistance and reconstruction" (2002, p. 31). Goldfarb and Grinberg (2002) characterized such leadership as "the propensity to critically articulate, conceptualize, create, and promote spaces for change coherently…" with the values of "equity, equality, and fairness in social, economic, educational and personal dimensions" (p. 161-162). These two scholars emphasized that leadership should focus on changing institutional practices, policies, and power relationships that favor a few over many. Similarly, Scheurich and Skrla (2003) argued that, "leaders for social justice should create schools in which virtually all students are learning at high academic levels…There are no persistent patterns of differences in academic success or treatment among students grouped by race, ethnicity, culture, neighborhood, income for parents, or home language." (p. 2).

Theoharis (2007), in his study of seven social justice principals and their urban Midwest public schools, defined social justice leaders as those who "make issues of race, class gender, disability, sexual orientation, and other historically and currently marginalizing conditions in the United States central to their advocacy, leadership practice, and vision" (p. 223).

Based on the work of these scholars and others, Weems (2013, p. 27) proposed leaders for social justice are: those who reject deficit views of traditionally marginalized groups (Rieser, Pursch, & Skrla, 2002; Theoharis, 2007; Valencia, 1997), question and resist oppressive and exploitative social relations (Dantley & Tillman, 2006; Rapp, 2002), and critically articulate, conceptualize and create more equitable

educational arrangements (Blackmore, 2002; Goldfarb & Grinberg, 2002).

Regardless of wording, these definitions center on leaders who critically question societal and school inequities (Fraser, 2012), keep equity at the core of their practice (Baker-Martinez, 2012; Fraser, 2012), and work to change inequitable school practices, policies, and procedures (Nelson & Guerra, 2008; Theorharis, 2009; Weems, 2013).

Principal preparation. While the student population in U.S. schools is rapidly changing, the vast majority of principal preparation programs are not (Baker-Martinez, 2012; Hawley & James, 2010; Hoff, Yoder & Hoff, 2006; Merchant & Shoho, 2006). Aspiring principals leave these programs unprepared to lead school staff in serving the needs of diverse students from low socioeconomic backgrounds (Cambron-McCabe & McCarthy, 2005; Hawley & James, 2010; McKenzie & Scheurich, 2004; Theoharis, 2009).

Even among the small percentage of programs identified as "exceptional or innovative" due to their change efforts, the programs reportedly give significantly less attention than expected to issues of "social justice, equity, excellence, and equality" (Jackson, 2001, p. 18). Rather than integrate social justice content throughout curricular and field experiences, this content is often concentrated in a single course that centers on broad issues of discrimination, inequitable school resources, poverty, and the principal's duty to pursue social justice (Bruccoleri, 2008; Hawley & James, 2010).

In other words, these programs tend to focus "on societal sources of inequity while providing educational leaders with little to no guidance on how they can address them in schools" (Hawley & James, 2010, p. 2).

Professional practice. Once in the field, new social justice leaders report they face insurmountable barriers in advancing the work that challenges even the most prepared principal (Theoharis, 2007). Theoharis (2008, 2009) found principals encountered three types of barriers—resistance at the school, the district, and institutional level.

Baker-Martinez (2012) and Weems (2013) reported similar findings in their respective studies of three principals leading social justice efforts in southwestern urban public schools, and two superintendents advancing social justice in a Midwestern suburban district. Resistance at the school level included the amount and variety of administrative tasks that divert time and attention from equity work (Theoharis, 2008, 2009), pressure from staff and community members to maintain the status quo (Baker-Martinez, 2012; Theoharis, 2008, 2009; Weems, 2013), privileged parents making demands benefitting only their children and staunchly opposing equity measures (Theorharis, 2008; 2009; Weems, 2013), and staff's deeply ingrained negative beliefs (i.e., deficit thinking) about the diverse students and families they serve (Baker-Martinez, 2012; Theoharis, 2008, 2009; Weems, 2013).

Failing to see the assets such students and families bring to schooling, staff tended to blame students' lack of achievement on perceived internal deficiencies without considering the role inequitable systemic structures, practices, and policies play in the educational process (Garcia & Guerra, 2004; Valencia, 1997; Valencia & Black, 2002). In discussing staff resistance to social justice, one principal explained, "I heard from teacher after teacher that particular students—who inevitably were students of color, low-income students, or students with disabilities—needed to be removed from the classroom, punished, sent home, or excluded from academic and social time" (Theoharis, 2009, p. 92). Although this principal, "did not believe these teachers hated these children or were overtly classist or racist or ableist" (p. 92), he did think they did not see it as their responsibility to educate diverse students.

District level resistance stemmed primarily from an organization focusing on trivial matters, standardization of expectations across schools, and pressing tasks that maintain a bureaucracy while averting attention from equity work (Theoharis, 2008; 2009). Consequently, social justice leaders report having little time and discretion to implement equity measures as they see fit. Additionally, they encountered resistance from central office administrators who pay lip service to social justice but fail to support equity efforts with the necessary structures and resources. Lastly, these leaders faced resistance from principal colleagues lacking the knowledge, skills, and desire to implement social justice, with the latter expressed as deficit thinking about the community they serve (Baker-Martinez, 2012; Theoharis, 2008, 2009).

Insufficient resources, detrimental state and federal requirements, and inadequate principal preparation comprised resistance at the institutional level. Resources, such as time and money for sustained professional development were often unavailable to support social justice efforts (Baker-Martinez, 2012; Theoharis, 2008, 2009). Some state and federal rules and statues also acted as barriers to equity efforts, which included cuts to state budgets (Weems, 2013) and subsequent reduction in school funding (Baker-Martinez, 2012; Theoharis, 2008), a lack of support and policies guiding English as a Second Language programs (Theoharis, 2008), school choice initiatives (Weems, 2013), and the negative effects of accountability policies and testing (Cambron-McCabe, 2006; Skrla, Scheurich, Garcia, & Nolly 2004; Theoharis, 2009; Weems, 2013).

Principal preparation programs disconnected from the reality of leading diverse schools also constituted institutional resistance because these programs graduate countless numbers of aspiring principals lacking the necessary knowledge, skills, and attitudes to be leaders for social justice (Theoharis, 2008, 2009; Hawley & James, 2010).

While potentially beneficial to students, families, schools, and communities, leadership for social justice can be personally and professionally challenging (Baker-Martinez, 2012; Garza, 2008; Theoharis 2009; Weems, 2013). Leaders reported that the amount of time and energy expended daily on management of resistance ultimately took a serious toll on their physical, mental, and emotional wellbeing (Marshall & Oliva, 2010; Theoharis, 2007; 2009).

Furthermore, as a result of their relentless efforts to challenge the status quo, many of these courageous leaders risked job loss (Garza, 2008; McGhee & Nelson, 2005; Nelson, Guerra, & Henry, 2011; Weems, 2013) and other repercussions such as public scrutiny, personal attacks, loss of professional status and friendships, demotion, conflicts with peers and superiors, and isolation from others within the school, district, and/or community in which they resided (Baker-Martinez, 2012; Garza, 2008; Nelson, Guerra, & Henry, 2011; Theoharis, 2008, 2009; Weems, 2013).

Finally, in this age of testing, accountability, and reduction in force, research (Guerra, Nelson, Jacobs, & Yamamura, 2013; Nelson, Guerra, & Henry, 2011) suggests leaders may need more than knowledge, skills and a moral imperative (Fullan, 2003) to lead social justice efforts but also the courage to follow through in the face of resistance and personal risk.

Preparing Idealists or Realists?

Currently, we work as faculty in two different preparation programs at universities in the Southwestern region of the U.S. While Robertson works in teacher education, Guerra works in educational leadership. Although Robertson has recently changed positions, she spent over twenty years actively involved in the devel-

opment and implementation of a program to prepare culturally and linguistically responsive special educators, with considerable emphasis on disproportionality and other issues of equity (Robertson, 2012). Guerra's work is focused specifically on preparing aspiring leaders for social justice and practitioners currently in the field. Both programs have employed diverse faculty with expertise in different aspects of social justice including race, culture, linguistic, and economic differences and disabilities.

Nationally recognized for their emphasis on multicultural education and/or social justice preparation, neither program would be categorized as inadequately preparing graduates. On the contrary, over the last 20 years the teacher education program received grants totaling in the millions for their exceptional work in quality teacher preparation. Likewise, in 2011, the University Council of Educational Administration (UCEA) recognized the educational leadership program as "one of the best in terms of addressing issues of equity, diversity, access, and community engagement at a much deeper level than other educational leadership programs around the country" (p. 3).

Both programs integrate diversity and social justice knowledge, skills, and dispositions in multiple courses rather than in a single course. Grounded in social constructivism, instruction often consists of facilitated learning using provocative course readings and activities; autoethnography and critical discourse; creating opportunities to reflect on, challenge, deconstruct, and reframe students' deficit thinking; examining data from multiple perspectives; applying theory to school policies and practices; faculty modeling of skills and dispositions; and assignments and field experiences in the school and community that address equity.

Reflections on our years of work in these preparation programs and with practitioners in public schools, our research, and on our preservice preparation first as special education teachers and later as educational leaders, leave us with several nagging questions. Given the barriers and outcomes for PfSJ once in the field, why do we (and other faculty) continue to prepare students as idealists rather than realists when years of change theory (Gordon, 2004; Hall & Hord, 2001; Fullan, 2006; Wagner et al., 2006) informs us otherwise? Aside from the knowledge, skills, and dispositions we teach, why are we not providing essential guidance in how to advance social justice in this hazardous context (Picower, 2011; Esposito, Davis & Swain, 2012)?

Apparently, we and other faculty have been remiss in not preparing developing practitioners for the realities of social justice work and the potential costs to their leadership, status, self-confidence, relationships, livelihood, and desire to persevere. Could this be attributed to our own lack of experience as PfSJ in schools?

The reality is that many university faculty have not recently worked in PK-12 schools, if at all, much less as social justice practitioners. In our teacher and leader preparation programs, faculty do not work alone in preparing students. It takes several years and the efforts of multiple faculty members to transform students into PfSJ. So why are we expecting new educators to enter schools often as the sole crusader in leading social justice transformation, something that we would not dare conceive of doing alone and could not do by ourselves? Although social justice work is challenging in higher education, academic freedom and tenure of senior faculty offer some protection. However, in this age of accountability many schools are unsafe places in which to advance social justice. The work for the PfSJ is not just arduous but precarious and the victories may be few and far between.

Some reading this article may conclude we are opposed to social justice; nothing is farther from the truth. As female faculty and one of color, we personally experience or observe inequities daily, and are committed to preparing students to transform schools (including post-secondary institutions) to just organizations where all students have equal access, are treated with the highest respect, and educated well. But based on our years of work, we struggle with the ethical dilemma of sending PfSJ into the field, knowing the odds of success are not in their favor.

Consider for a moment the rate at which beginning teachers leave the profession. Between one third to one half of new teachers leave within the first five to seven years of teaching (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 2007) and in poor urban schools where the need for social justice work is great, 50% leave during their first five years (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 2003).

Picower (2011) notes that many of those leaving are "service oriented" and "idealistic" teachers seeking to "make a difference" (p. 7). She further argues that the attrition of such teachers limits the access of new teachers for social justice to appropriate mentors, thus jeopardizing their retention. Several recent case studies of beginning social justice teachers document the disillusion and attrition of these teachers leaving in two years or less (Baran, 2014; Chubbock, 2008; Machado, 2013) and Chubbock's work identifies unrealistic expectations established during preservice preparation as a contributing factor.

Principals, in general, do not leave their positions at such startling rates as teachers (NCES, 2010) and no information could be found on the percentage on PfSJ leaving the field. Departure from social justice work for this group appears to take the form of retirement, transfers, or other career changes (Theoharis, 2009; NCES, 2010).

In an effort not to sacrifice PfSJ committed to lasting change, we offer the following recommendations which we hope will assist faculty and the practitioners they prepare to advance social justice in the current school context. Our goal is that by sharing the following advice aspiring PfSJ will recognize the power of their individual efforts, persist in their work, and ultimately create an even larger following of those committed to improved outcomes for underserved and marginalized students and families.

Essential Advice and the Voice of One

Be realistic about what you can change. There is considerable power in what an individual educator can accomplish. Citing chaos theory, Heather Haas (2004) reminds us that "little things, like a butterfly flapping its wings over Hong Kong today, can have big effects, like causing a hurricane in Florida a week from now . . . as a teacher, the butterfly effect gives me hope and keeps me working even on the days that I seem to have no impact at all" (para. 7).

Take inventory of what you can change, determine what is within your control, and consider a realistic timeframe in which to accomplish your goals; this inventory will enable you to establish reasonable expectations for yourself. As a single PfSJ, will you likely transform the larger environment in which you work quickly and effortlessly? No. However, you can have considerable impact on one classroom, one student, one family member, and one fellow educator; later you may impact an entire departmental team or school faculty.

Practitioners who start by attempting to transform an entire campus or district will end up pushed out or burned out. Small successes form the foundation of larger more transformative work and should be highlighted in order to build momentum.

Get the lay of the land. Do not introduce social justice in your team, department, or

school on the first day or even within the first few months on the job. Without first establishing credibility and trust with others and understanding the school's culture (Reeves, 2009), the risks of experiencing negative repercussions like silencing and isolation (Bender-Slack, 2010; Bogtoch, 2010; Dover, 2013; Ritchie, 2012) are high and future attempts at advancing social justice work may be unsuccessful. Since it takes time to learn and manage a new job and acclimate to the culture of the school, dedicate the first half of the school year to doing so while focusing your social justice efforts on your own practice.

In other words, work to make a difference in your work with students, their families and the community. During this time, identify powerful individuals (e.g., teachers, parents, and administrators) who are supportive of equity and receptive to change; also identify those opposed and listen for deficit thinking to determine its degree (Katsarou, Picower & Stovall, 2010; Reeves, 2009).

After this honeymoon period is over, you can expand your social justice work with those identified as supporters. Determine whether your team, department or school has a vision that clearly addresses equity, access, and high standards for all children (Glickman, Gordon, & Ross-Gordon, 2014; Gordon, 2004). If not, then engage in conversations with staff, parents, and the community and work to develop a vision or revise the current one.

Participating in this development process increases awareness of equity and its importance and intensifies investment in supporting the newly created vision. Once the vision is finalized and staff buy-in is ascertained, all decisions around instruction, curriculum, classroom management, parent and community involvement, professional development, staffing, supervision, etc. should support attainment of this vision.

Prior to making decisions and acting upon your decision, encourage others to ask, "How does this decision or action support attainment of our vision?" If the decision or action is inconsistent with the vision, seek more compatible alternatives. Deceivingly simple, this question is critical in guiding future decisions and actions when staff do not meet job expectations.

Find and work with other like-minded individuals. Seek out "early adopters" (Hall & Hord, 2001), or those willing to learn about equity, diversity and social justice (Berman & Chambliss, 2000) to increase critical mass and collaboration and decrease working in isolation (Guerra & Nelson, 2008a; Richie 2012; Theoharis, 2009). In this small learning community build relationships among these like-minded individuals (Nelson & Guerra, 2008) and establish yourself as a learner and facilitator, not an expert. Gather together regularly to read and discuss articles or texts related to social justice (Gordon, 2004; Guerra & Nelson, 2008b). Plan with your colleagues to explore and implement new instructional strategies and collect data on your efforts using video or other recording strategies (Glickman, Gordon, & Ross-Gordon, 2014).

Share your results within this learning community where discussion and peer coaching can occur. Once staff members experience success, other colleagues will take note and express interest in learning and little by little capacity will be built. Then, identify one questionable practice, procedure, or policy within the school and/or the broader community and work with other group members to change it (Guerra & Nelson, 2008a).

Staff can use action research to study the concern, collect and analyze data to identify underlying causes of the problem, and develop an action plan to guide and monitor change efforts and evaluate results. (Glanz, 2014; Glickman, Gordon, Ross-Gordon, 2014). Working with this community of early adopters, increases your chances of experiencing success and persisting in social justice work (Hall & Hord, 2001; Guerra & Nelson, 2008a).

Avoid preaching, selling and confrontation as a means of transforming deficit beliefs. Preaching/selling the merits of social justice does little to convince educators to change their deficit thinking or practice. Similarly, a confrontational approach tends to alienate most well intentioned teachers who want to do a good job but have little understanding of inequities, diversity, and social justice (Guerra & Nelson, 2009).

Confrontation often results in shutting down communication, leaving educators humiliated and with little desire to engage in future conversations. If you want to bring educators to the table for transformative dialogue (Freire, 1970), present a variety of school data disaggregated by race/ethnicity, gender, economic class, and disability but not yet by individual teacher or the dialogue will stop because of an unsafe environment (Guerra & Nelson, 2009).

In order to identify where change is needed, examine each set of data through multiple perspectives, and ask probing questions that prompt discussion and reflection on current practice. Once trust is established within the learning community and everyone understands that the goal is growth rather than judgment, data can be disaggregated to engage in an iterative process of reflection and transformation.

Build capacity in small increments and over time. Working in schools one often hears "If you just wait long enough, this too shall pass." The "this too" is the introduction of a new program or practice. Watching initiatives come and go, many educators have learned not to change because by the next school year, the current one will be replaced by another. Instead, start in small increments and build capacity over several years (Gordon, 2004) and continue to build meaningful professional relationships (Theoharis, 2009). In year one, start your social justice work with those like-minded individuals you have identified (Guerra & Nelson, 2008a) and focus on increasing the remaining faculty's awareness of current inequities within the school.

Once these volunteers experience success, word will spread and by year two, a second group of individuals will come on board. Work with this second round of volunteers using the first to assist in this process. As numbers build and word of success spreads, continue your work increasingly including initial adopters as volunteers and mentors. These veterans can now collaborate with leadership to identify and use action research to study and change inequitable practices and policies across the school including referral to discipline and special and gifted education and other functions like staffing and supervision.

By the end of year three, critical mass will increase and the few remaining holdouts will realize equity and social justice are here to stay. Often feeling pressure from their colleagues to change, they transfer out of the school. If they do stay and make little to no change, then its time for the leader for social justice to counsel them out as social justice work continues.

Do not start with staff most in need of change. Although common sense might say to start with those who have the most work to do. While smaller in number (approximately 15% in a school), these individuals tend to hold the most severely entrenched deficit beliefs about whole groups of diverse students, families and communities that are extremely resistant to change (Nelson & Guerra, 2014). Sometimes outspoken and defiant, they tend to actively resist social justice efforts and in many cases attempt to undermine authority (Guerra & Nelson, 2011). Do not engage in this battle of wills. Consumed by the demands of your job, emotionally overwhelmed, and exhausted, you are more likely to succumb to their resistance, which accomplishes their objective.

Be strategic in the risks you take. It is critically important that beginning PfSJ

"pick their battles" to avoid negative repercussions like job loss, silencing and marginalization. The system has a lot of hidden and/or institutionalized inequities that you will recognize and should challenge but you cannot fight them all. Be judicious in choosing those battles and in your approach to address them. Challenge inequities that when transformed will result in the most significant impacts and take a non-threatening approach with staff. Use of these strategies will establish your credibility and build trust that will provide a foundation for lasting change. For example, ELs are expected to demonstrate competence on high-stakes assessments administered in English despite limited time and opportunity to acquire the language. While arguably an inequitable policy, it does no good to simply argue to abolish the practice.

Begin by considering and discussing reasonable expectations for growth versus meeting arbitrary standards and explore fair uses for the data collected. As Picower (2011) reminds us, "not feeling compelled to have all the answers allow[s] people to be more fully involved" (p. 13); our job is to ask informed questions that advance the discussion of social justice issues. When considering diverse learners in the special education process, we prepare aspiring PfSJ to examine factors other than disability to explain a lack of academic or behavioral success.

Of particular importance is a thorough examination of the student's educational history and opportunity to learn, including an examination of the appropriateness of the instructional environment given the students' background characteristics. Such discussions have the potential to not only discourage inappropriate referrals to special education but also to support faculty in examining deficits in the instructional program for culturally and linguistically diverse learners (Garcia & Ortiz, 2006).

Engaging colleagues in these discussions will advance your social justice work by raising important questions within your work community while minimizing personal risks and reveal "sociopolitical explanations (e.g. poverty, racism) for problems rather than individual attributes (e.g. laziness)" (Richie, 20012, p. 121).

Stand fast in your beliefs of equity. Even when others are telling you equity, responsive teaching and social justice are unrealistic within the constraints of accountability and state standards, show resistors how it can be done one step at a time through examples, modeling, and collaboration. Help resistors understand that social justice perspectives provide the "lens" through which we support students to meet established standards (Dover, 2009). In other words, while the standards designate the skills students should learn, they do not dictate the content to use or how to teach these skills (Agarwal, 2011; Dover, 2013; Poplin & Rivera, 2005).

Remain cognizant of district goals and forces driving and impeding change. Observe school board meetings, follow district policy changes and identify external pressures that facilitate action. It is also important to identify key individuals both within the district and in the larger school community (Katsarou, Picower, & Stovall, 2010) who can support the change and those with the ability to marginalize your efforts.

With this information in mind, demonstrate ways in which your social justice work enables you to accomplish district goals. Maintain open lines of communications with your superiors and community and inform them of your work and accomplishments (Gordon, 2004). Doing so will eliminate surprises and, sharing your successes will likely result in reduced pressure on accountability and more support for your efforts. It is rare that the system fails to support those whose students are successful.

Network within the larger PfSJ community. Since social justice work is difficult, exhausting, and stressful, seek emotional and technical support. Support can be found within your school/district and externally, in the broader professional community. Identify other PfSJ of similar rank in the school or district and convene regularly to get and give emotional support (i.e., empathy, encouragement), mentorship, and technical assistance such as sharing strategies for working with resistors (Picower, 2011; Richie, 2012; Theoharis, 2009).

In addition, identify professionals in surrounding districts, contact former cohort members and faculty from your preparation program, and tap professional networks such as the National Association for Multicultural Education (NAME), National Association for Bilingual Education (NABE), Council for Exceptional Children, Division for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Exceptional Learners (DDEL), University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA), American Educational Research Association (AERA), Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN), and the Southern Poverty Law Center/Teaching Tolerance.

Several regional associations including the New York Collective of Radical Educators, Teachers for Social Justice Chicago, and Teachers 4 Social Justice (San Francisco) are also available. Participate in such communities both within and outside of your specific working environment—the first will enhance your ability to effect change within your own context and the latter will enable broader conversations that focus on an exchange of effective practices in multiple settings.

Attend professional development workshops as a way of networking with those interested in social justice and encourage early adopters from the learning community to accompany you; then share your experiences with others. Recommend specific experiences or individuals as resources to your colleagues and administrators. Faculty from your social justice preparation program can be excellent supports and may welcome the opportunity to engage with you and your co-workers.

While professional development such as conferences, one-day workshops, motivational speakers, and sit and get sessions may be effective for networking, they do little for changing practice (Loucks-Horsley & Matsumoto, 1999; Reitzug 2002) and are often costly, particularly when several staff have to travel out of town. Job-embedded professional learning in contrast is not only cost effective because practitioners within the school or district collaborate and learn from each other, and because these experiences are grounded in daily work with direct applications to problems of practice that can easily align with the school's vision and improvement goals (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995, Hawley & Valli, 1999; Hirsch, 2009).

These interactive experiences among practitioners develop their problem solving, reflection, and decision-making skills, which in turns empower them as leaders (Darling-Hammond, Wei, Andree, Richardson, & Orphanos, 2009; Gordon, 2004; Reitzug, 2002).

Hire strategically. Serve on or lead hiring committees and invite others who have knowledge of district goals, the school's vision, and equity related issues along with the ability, commitment, and courage to speak out in support of equity and social justice change. These individuals will be instrumental in assessing interview protocols for bias and revising them to include questions which will reveal deficit beliefs and practice, listening for willingness to learn and change, and identifying like-minded individuals who should join the staff (Guerra, 2012).

After all interviews are conducted and debriefing of applicants begins, have committee members ask and answer, "How will each applicant support attainment of the school's vision?" to determine the best individual for the job. Keeping the school's

vision of equity and social justice at the forefront of hiring discussions and decisions strategically builds a critical mass of staff who are willing to learn and change practice, making social justice work much easier.

Forgive yourself. Developing into a practitioner for social justice is a journey, not a destination. We all make mistakes in our travels but with time and attention these missteps decrease in frequency. Recognize your prejudices and do not act on them but when mistakes are made be open to feedback, admit your errors and apologize; practice forgiveness with colleagues who will also make mistakes (Guerra, Nelson, & Arndt, 2012). Do not let guilt consume you when expectations are not met.

In other words, view these instances as "learning opportunities," not "failures" and understand that all PfSJ experience similar opportunities. Critical self-reflection is an essential disposition of culturally responsive practitioners (Hammerness et al., 2005; Gay & Kirkland, 2003). Maintain a reflective journal (as you were likely required to do in your preparation program) and provide yourself time and space to examine compelling issues in your work. Reflect upon your performance and identify alternate behaviors to implement the next time the situation occurs.

Have you heard the expression, "guilt thy name is mother?" In many cases, the word mother could also be replaced with educator. Chubbock's (2008) study reminds us that frequently promising practitioners are lost because they cannot meet their own expectations.

Value and celebrate your own progress. Find ways to value your own progress no matter how small. Rather than focusing on your limitations and failure to positively influence resistors, focus on those students, families and professionals with whom you made a difference. If the change you hoped for does not happen, do not assume all the responsibility for a lack of success.

Consider what facilitated and inhibited your capacity to be effective. Environmental variables of which you were unaware and over which you have no control may be operating and impeding your efforts. You have not failed; your hard work has likely increased your understanding of organizational structures and strategies for accomplishing your goals and undoubtedly you have made a difference in the lives of select individuals. Focus your reflection on what you have learned and accomplished (Agarwal et al, 2009). This should result in your recognition of your skills and success and encourage persistence.

Conclusion

In reflecting on our own preparation of aspiring PfSJ we realized that we incidentally share this essential advice in classroom discussions. But after writing this article, we will no longer leave this sharing to happenstance but will intentionally integrate this information into our coursework and field experiences and encourage other program faculty at our institutions to follow suit. In doing so, we want to mentor and support our students in becoming idealists who realistically manage their careers to remain in the field and persist at social justice work.

We began this piece with our mentor's reflection that little has changed despite his years of work in advancing social justice. We remind him that his efforts in preparing us (and others) as leaders for social justice are akin to tossing a pebble in a pond and watching the ripples appear. The single pebble can have a far reaching impact. The title, "The Voice of One—The Power of Many: Making Change One Individual at a Time" was chosen to remind us that as we each work individually we have the power to make a difference in the lives of other individuals and collectively we can impact our field, our future and the future of public schooling. As Cochran-Smith et al. (2009) reminds us "addressing equity and social justice at the individual level may be a starting point" (p. 373). As we work together we make headway in exposing issues of social justice and highlighting the need for transformative change.

While the journey is long and arduous, there are indicators of increased attention on equity and social justice. The number of sessions focused on social justice at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association (AERA) has steadily increased (Adams, 2010) and the theme for the 2015 conference was "Toward Justice: Culture, Language, and Heritage in Education Research and Praxis" (AERA, 2014). There has been a similar trend during the last ten years in the University Council on Educational Administration's (UCEA); all sessions for 2014 addressed the theme, "Righting Civil Wrongs: Education for Racial Justice and Human Rights" (UCEA, 2014).

Between 2003-2014 the U.S. Department of Education funded the Monarch Center: The National Outreach and Technical Assistance Center on Discretionary Awards for Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs) to support faculty in minority-serving institutions to obtain federal funding and build institutional capacity to improve outcomes and services for culturally and linguistically diverse students with disabilities ("About Us," n.d.). These and other indicators provide evidence that our work is not for naught.

We conclude with a folktale shared by James M. Patton (personal communication, July 17, 2014):

> The grandfather told his young grandson that they needed to move a mountain in front of their home. The grandson exclaimed that it could never be done, it was too big. The grandfather acknowledged the challenging nature of the task but clarified that it could be completed if approached one step at a time. Each day the boy and the grandfather moved one pebble. By the time the boy reached adulthood, the mountain had been moved.

It is our sincere hope that PfSJ's are prepared for not only the challenges they will face but aware of the potential that they have. It is imperative that these change agents acknowledge and value their individual contributions, regardless of size, and realize their collective power to transform schools into socially just and equitable environments. We would like to thank our mentor for his guidance on our journey of change.

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