Teachers' & Teacher Candidates' Views of Social Injustice

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Introduction

This article conveys the results of a research study that interpreted the images taken by teachers and teacher candidates of social injustices in their university communities. Castro's (2010) seminal review of a quarter century's worth of literature

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discovered broadening awareness and acceptability within teacher preparation of culturally responsive teaching and social justice issues; however, it also documented persistence of shallow interpretations of justice-oriented concepts. Many of the data from the aforementioned literature review derived from attitudinal surveys that informed about how respondents interpreted information provided by researchers, but not necessarily patterns of thinking of their own derivation.

In this article, we describe results of a project that required students to use their cell phones to take two pictures of social injustices. One image was to depict injustices on their campus, and the other image presented injustices in the community. The assignment also required students to provide descriptions of the images and their representations of social injustices. These images and descriptors inform about the social lenses through which our students view the educational environments and surrounding communities.

Defining Social Justice

According to Hytten and Bettez (2011), literature with regard to social justice falls within five strands or categories: (a) philosophical/conceptual, (b) practical, (c) ethnographic/narrative, (d) theoretically specific, and (e) democratically grounded. Literature that falls within the category of social justice philosophy interprets the meaning of social justice. This scholarship involves broad coverage of social justice's abstract nature and foundations and serves to clarify the nature of the concept considered (Hytten & Bettez, 2011). The practical and ethnographic/narrative strands relate to the application of the ideal of social justice in terms of theories and portraits of social justice in educational settings.

Literature within these two strands describes school accomplishments and offers personal accounts in school settings (Hytten & Bettez, 2011). Theoretically, specific literature concerns strategies that overtly challenge specific oppressive conditions, such as racism and sexism (Hytten & Bettez, 2011). Democratically grounded literature relates to understandings of

the purpose for education in democratic environments. As a whole, these categories suggest that social justice represents a multifaceted concept that involves characteristics with tangible recognizable features. If such is the case, the question arises as to why social justice involves different interpretations.

Viewed from a psychological perspective, social injustices may relate to a need or rationale for a portion of the social community to control resources in manners that unjustly restrict access by other community members. Research (e.g., LeDoux, 2002; Panksepp & Biven, 2012) that offers evidence of affective underpinnings to patterns of cognition would suggest that an emotional framework guided by care and compassion may allow for more open thinking that recognizes social participants as autonomous individuals who have the right to freedom from control by one or a few.

This mind-set differs from a controlling emotional base, which limits acceptance of alternative points of view and prompts a hoarding of resources. A socially unjust situation occurs when one or a minority of individuals control access and distribution of resources to the detriment of the whole community.

Teacher Attitudes Toward Social Justice

Pugh and Garcia (1996) observed the importance of issues-centered teacher education instruction. Studies have indicated successes of efforts to influence teachers and preservice teachers' dispositions toward diversity and social justice (Peterson, Cross, Johnson, & Howell, 2000; Weisman & Garza, 2002). Yet preservice teachers indicate that the use of movies and visual media has the greatest influence on their dispositions.

Teacher and teacher candidate dispositions toward social justice represent an important area of study because they inform about teachers' and teacher candidates' propensity to (a) discuss or explore relevant content in classrooms, (b) employ instructional strategies that support just environments, and (c) properly respond to the genuine needs of underrepresented children.

Mills and Ballantyne's (2010) observation of a dispositional hierarchy (founded on self-awareness/self-reflectiveness and rising through openness to a pinnacle of commitment to social justice) through their analysis of teacher candidate autobiographies has provided a framework through

which teacher education may convert awareness into action.

This framework may affirm the value of facilitating caring environments inside and outside classrooms that allow candidates to experience opportunities to make mistakes and learn from them (Watson, 2008). Professional education environments that discourage open communication may threaten teachers' willingness to implement community-based approaches to learning (Smith-Maddox, Cooper, Davis, Manby, & Moore, 2001).

When prepared under conditions that offer conversation in safe environments that value contributions of all parties, teachers may develop self-assuredness to challenge hostile environments that marginalize equitable input of all participants to decision-making (DeCremer & Tyler, 2005; Johnson & Johnson, 2008).

Use of Art

The various art forms (e.g., music, visual, drama, and writing) represent tools to express concerns about injustice and inform about their presence within education (Wellenreiter & Lucey, 2019; O'Connor, 2010). Offering deep and nuanced meanings of its subjects, art offers potential to release emotions within individuals who create and/or experience them.

Lucey and Laney (2009) described the discipline-based art education (DBAE) model as a classroom tool for teaching about economic injustices, employing two song–visual pairings to arouse students' awareness of the simple yet complex nature of social injustices. Yet they point out that the experience remains incomplete unless students create and share their own artistic renderings of the depicted issues. The activity offers students the opportunity to learn both the value of expressing

their own ideas about social issues and the challenges associated with creating artworks that effectively communicate the depths of their subjects.

Jonothan Neelands's (O'Connor, 2010) contrasting of curricula founded on economic needs with those founded on student needs conveyed the importance of implementing learning processes that take into account student perspectives of social issues (see Table 1). In using art education, educators face the challenge of recognizing the acceptance and necessity of valuing alternative social perspectives as presented through the various art forms to realize a holistic view of content.

Review of Literature

The following literature review illustrates how learner-centered art processes offer potential for releasing tensions prompted by controlling environments. For example, Shapiro (2006) conveyed the emotional relief communicated by school administrators who created various artworks to release their frustration about socially stressful working conditions.

Ganesh (2007) described the importance of valuing context when interpreting art forms in his description of images sketched by educators. The images concerned the professional impositions associated with standardized testing. Bell (2010) offered several art-based classroom activities to stimulate awareness of social "stock" stories that perpetuate myths of merit-based social successes and the importance of illuminating resistance stories that challenge such notions.

Laney and Lucey (2012) described the benefits of using the DBAE model to prepare teacher candidates at two institutions for community inquiry into social injustices and creating developmentally appropriate

Table 1
Neelands's Comparison of Economic Needs and Student-Centered Curriculum

	Economic needs curriculum	*Student-centered curriculum*
Purpose	Prepare learner for economic role in society	Respond to learner's developmental needs
Composition	Training in skills for future economic role	Meaning-making activities and experiences
	Skills tested in outcome	Assessment of processes used by learner to make meaning
Framework	Rigid framework that requires learner to adapt	Flexible framework that adapts to learner needs

Note. Adapted from *Creating Democratic Citizenship Through Drama Education: The Writings of Jonothan Neelands*, by P. O'Connor, Trent, UK: Trentham Books, p. 73.

lessons for their classrooms. Art-creation experiences offer opportunities that empower learners to inform their communities about the counternarratives that challenge commonsense notions associated with the societal status quo.

Social justice is a complex subject that requires critical self-reflection and awareness to stimulate open discussion to foster compassionate environments. When used in manners that value learners' needs, various art forms provide tools for engendering open classroom conversations about patterns of social injustice and associated citizens' responsibilities.

The project described in this article provided an opportunity for teachers and candidates at two teacher preparation institutions to produce their own images of social injustice. It provided insights into participants' perspectives of their social settings and the views teacher educators possess in their teaching about these matters.

Methodology

Design of Study

Understanding students' beliefs of equality and fairness through social movements, media, and study may increase public discourse, awareness, and social activism (Passy, 2001). In an attempt to understand students' different perceptions of social justice, embedded within the community, the authors utilized an image-based content analysis research design to capture students' environmental experiences through reflection and communication (Creswell, 2007; Ozlem, 2011).

The study participants consisted of undergraduate and graduate students enrolled in the courses described below who consented to have their images and descriptions analyzed for this research study. The undergraduate students were at an urban public southeastern institution of higher learning enrolled in an elementary social studies methods course during the fall 2013 semester (17 participants) or an elementary undergraduate social studies methods course in the spring 2014 semester (33 participants). Graduate students at this institution were enrolled in a middle-grade social studies methods course during the spring 2014 semester (15 participants).

Graduate and undergraduate participants at a large public midwestern teacher education institution were enrolled in a multicultural education course during the summer 2013 semester (19 participants) or in an elementary social studies methods course during the fall 2013 semester (34 participants). In total, there were 118 study participants.

Students in these courses completed tasks in which they used their cell phones to take two images of social injustices. The assignment required that one image be taken on campus and another image be taken off campus. Students also provided explanations of their images that described (a) the injustice and (b) why the image represented an injustice.

Criteria for Analysis

For the purpose of this study, the researchers, using predetermined criteria, selected 52 (44.08%) of the students for analysis of their images and explanations. In their development of the project, the authors posited that examining the students' understanding of social injustice would lead to a deeper understanding of how teacher education programs may shape their programs in relationship to their candidates' needs.

The analysis interpreted two accounts of social injustice features: the visual content through photography and interpretation provided by the student. The analysis process (identified by Clark-Ibanez, 2004, and Vinson and Ross, 2003, as image-based content analysis) generated categories specific to environmental and social experiences. This content analysis appealed to the authors because, as described by Kincheloe and Berry (2004) and Ozlem (2011), photography and visual content complement traditional classroom work, and such use of visual techniques offer new ways of capturing the complexity of social realities as they relate to society.

For the purposes of this article, three questions guided the study of each social injustice case:

1. What images do students perceive as social injustices at the university level?

2. What images do students perceive as social injustices at the community level?

3. What themes do students identify in the representation of social injustice?

The first two questions related to themes and research identified by Better (2013), who attempted to identify how college students identified social inequalities embedded within society. The third question sought to highlight patterns more specific to university and community settings.

Each student's view consisted of certain assumptions about social injustice's most distinctive characteristics as a problem and about possible remedies. Each view also contained the student's beliefs about the varying levels and definitions of social injustice.

The analysis of each student's photographic record was categorized according to its dominant view to identify potential clusters within social justice perspectives. In an effort to establish the conformability of findings, researchers were involved in data analysis (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). One of researchers at the southeastern institution analyzed and categorized student accounts. These categorizations were confirmed by one of the other researchers at the southeastern institution.

Findings

For purposes of this article, the authors describe findings of analysis that concerned guiding questions 1 and 2. While some exceptions occur, the presentation does not generally distinguish between images on and off campus.

The analysis revealed the emergence of three major themes with regard to social injustice at the university and in the surrounding communities: (a) injustices that prevented resource access to those with disabilities, (b) injustices that controlled access to resources based on gender stereotyping, and (c) injustices that provided access to resources based on special interest and economic privilege. The following sections describe each of these perspectives and provide supporting images and explanations as examples of these views.

Injustices That Concern Physical Access

Of the 52 students whose images were analyzed, 40 (76.92%) provided images of injustices that related to prevention of access to community members with physical disabilities. Undergraduate elementary students from the southeastern and midwestern universities perceived social injustices within their universities and local communities through the lack of facilities and accommodations for members with disabilities or different manners of physical processing information.

Furthermore, graduate students from the midwestern university viewed such social injustices occurring at the university level, while undergraduate middle school students from the southeastern university viewed disabilities as an off-campus phenomenon. The predominate concern

related to recognizable contraventions of the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA).
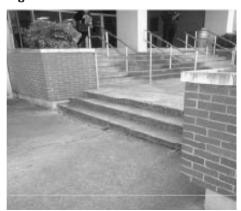
The images captured by these 40 students could be differentiated into two categories: (a) obvious limits to accessibility and (b) subtle limitations to access. Thirty-seven (92.50%) of the 40 students provided images of social injustice that depicted lack of proper facilities for those with disabilities.

Readily apparent injustices. Figure 1 presents a condition that is typical of those that concerned injustices that related to building and resource accessibility. The perceived social injustice appears in the form of a lack of wheelchair accessibility at convenient parking and building entrances. The student explained the social injustice as a situation in which stairs lead to the second floor of the building, whereas the back (disability) entrance provides access to the first floor, on which few classes meet. This situation presents a formidable challenge compounded when the building's elevator is out of service.

The provided image and description capture the different views of accessibility for those with disabilities as perceived by higher education institutions and as interpreted by those needing the accommodations to access the learning that these institutions offer. From one view, higher education institutions may tout their accomplishments meeting the requirements of the ADA to provide for access as required by law. Those with disabilities adjust their transportation processes to decisions that concern building access made by university building planning officials.

With regard to providing adequate facility access to those with physical disabilities, institutions of higher learning have much work to do. For example, Kennedy (2000) observed the overall lack of parking accessibility for students with disabilities at universities, commenting that "parking issues on campuses, which cause problems for non-disabled students, too, are often cited as problematic for students with disabilities because there may not be enough accessible spaces or entrances close enough to buildings" (p. 17).

Several students identified a similar pattern of subtle injustices with regard to parking accessibility. While drivers with disabilities receive the parking convenience of reserved spaces located closed to their destinations, three students observed nondisabled patrons and students either illegally parking or potentially abusing preferred parking reserved for individuals with disabilities. This emphasis was based on describing abuse in relation to weight and short-term medical procedures.

Subtle access injustices. Students did not limit depictions of injustices that concerned resource accessibility for people with disabilities to readily apparent conditions, such as building entrances and parking lots. Images conveyed messages about less obvious access concerns as well.

Images that related to obscure injustices that concerned access for people with physical disabilities or subdominant physical processes illustrate such conditions. In Figure 2, a student captured the predominance of right-handed chairs in lecture halls. The student explained the image in the following manner:

> This picture represents social injustice that is found on campus. It is considered social injustice because all of these desks in the . . . auditorium [are] suited for right-handed people only. The students who are left-handed will not be comfortable in these particular desks and may struggle when it comes to writing.

Right-handed desks in auditorium seats disadvantage left-handed individuals

Figure 3

with regard to their organization and writing processes. These conditions go unnoticed by those who benefit from the convenience of their desk structures.

Yet from a higher education institution's perspective of plant facilities, right-handed desks make economic sense. From an economic view, the image demonstrates the cost savings associated with the purchase of mass-produced desks for auditorium use.

The presence of manually opening doors in stores represents the other subtle social injustice. Figure 3 presents a store without an automatic door. The student observed that the heavy door would present access difficulties for a person with physical disabilities. The subtlety of this situation relates to the mobility of individuals without disabilities and their maneuverability to move obstacles in closed spaces.

From the store's perspective, the door situation may present a form of security as a subtle deterrent against theft. In addition, store management may consider the installation of automatically opening doors as an unnecessary expense that detracts from store profitability. If the store leases the space within a strip shopping center, it is possible that the storeowner dismisses door access matter as the responsibility of the center owner.

The final image, Figure 4, that relates to injustices that concern facility access captures the limited access to parking on the university campus. The student described the situation in the following manner:

> Cars that are not supposed to be parked along the . . . street. . . . This is a social injustice because if an emergency vehicle were to have to park along the street there would be no room. These cars also block traffic making it slow and aggravating.

The student views the disregard for the parking situation as an injustice because of the inconvenience to drivers and potential community service respondents. Thus students did not limit images that

Figure 1

Figure 2

Figure 4

expressed concerns about parking access to the conditions that affected people with disabilities. Parking access represented an injustice for all individuals.

The presentation discounts the university's perspective that parking spaces exist in a nearby parking garage and sizable parking lot. These parking conditions intend to balance the community's parking needs with a pedestrian feel for the campus community.

Injustices That Control Access Through Gender and Ethnic Stereotyping

One-fourth of students (13 of 52) from both the midwestern and southeastern universities characterized social injustices that related to gender and ethnic/racial stereotypes. Of the 13 students, 10 identified both on- and off-campus social injustices through gender stereotyping. Examples include the color and style of boys' and girls' clothing, gender representation in graduate school recruitment posters, racial representation in student-organization recruitments, and sexual depictions of women.

Figure 5 is an example of the stereotyping based on gender. In this situation, the student observed the designation of parking spaces for pregnant women at a local hospital. The student expressed the injustice as being insensitive to the needs and views of other potentially needy patients and their families.

Another student captured evidence of racial discrimination in a poster on campus that advertised an advanced educational opportunity (Figure 6). According to the student,

> Due to the fact that all of the individuals in this picture are White, I believe that this is social injustice for any non-White person. The message that it relays is that only White males and females are welcome to this film school in New York.

Figure 5

Figure 6

Since this school offers bachelor's and master's degrees in fine arts, it can also relay the message that only Whites are capable of earning these high educational fine art degrees. If multicultural races were represented within this picture, it would show that this school is accepting of all races and ethnicities.

The student observed the subtle messages about the school's expectations for its applicants conveyed by the physical characteristics of students selected to represent the school. The poster relates to the various subliminal messages that occur through media and the manners by which they may be used to limit access to opportunities for education and training.

Images provided by three students documented disrespect of religious expression through stereotyping as a form of social injustice. For example, one student from the institution observed that practicing Muslims are not allowed to wear their hijabs either during the written driver's test or in their driver's license pictures (Figure 7).

In many Western countries, Muslim women wear the hijab by choice to demonstrate their commitment to their faith and as a statement of identity (Jasperse, Ward, & Jose, 2012). As Droogsma (2007) explained, since the September 11 attacks, the choice to wear the hijab in the West has been threatened and Muslim women's identity challenged as noted above. Thus restricting Muslim women's right to wear the hijab regardless of the situation is viewed as an injustice. These rights may be balanced with law enforcement officials' legal need to identify criminal suspects.

Social Injustice Through Special Interest and Economic Privilege

The final category concerns restricted access to resources based on special interest and economic privilege. Fourteen (26.92%) students suggested that social and economic privileges offer bases of social injustice. As in other perspectives, students viewed such injustices both on and off the university campus.

A majority of students from both institutions focused their perceived views of campus special and economic interest on athletes' special privileges, newer training facilities, and elite status within the university setting.

Ten students identified the potential economic divide between athletic programs compared to student organizations' facilities and spirit entities such as the university band. In their report *The Academics Athletics Trade-off*, Denhart, Villwock, and Vedder (2009) noted that inequalities in university funding of programs have been an issue since intercollegiate athletics began in 1852. The inequitable distribution of funds can be directly tied to revenue-generating programs. Universities spend money on programs and events that will provide a financial return on the investment.

Figure 7

Figure 8

Figure 8 captures a school marching band practice. The student who took the picture adamantly described the reasoning behind the image:

> This picture is showing a social injustice because the ridiculous amount of time and effort that the band puts in to support all of the athletic teams on the (university) campus. The band makes all of this effort and rehearses for hours, but is recognized hardly if at all. Moreover, the football team is talked about tirelessly even though they win hardly ever. How is this fair for the students that put in all this work? Moreover, the athletic bands are given such a small stipend for all of this work whereas the team athletes for football, basketball, soccer, etc. are given full rides and many times gifts and discounts to stores and restaurants. These people do not realize how hard it is for a band to cheer a losing team until the final seconds of every game. It is not only a physical and monetary injustice, but the emotional drain is also a large effect from these situations.

The reflection conveys the frustration with the allocation of resources assigned to the athletic program that yields dubious outcomes. While economics presents the basis for rationalizing the abundance of athletic resources, the students' reflection also communicates a valuing of emotion of care, which economic decision-making arguably tends to discount. Injustices may relate to a shortage or absence of care for those who experience emotional sensitivity.

In terms of special and economic privilege off campus, the remaining four students indicated the lack of notable businesses, such as restaurants, grocery stores, transportation, and proper public works projects, in lower income neighborhoods compared to their middle- and upper-class counterparts. As an elementary methods student from the southeastern university noted,

> some people in my neighborhood lack transportation and can't afford to move to communities that have nice restaurants, malls, and places for kids to eat. If these places are available to the upper middle class, they should be offered to the lower middle class.

Mobility and privation have drastically altered the landscape of urban areas. People with the means to relocate to nicer or more exclusive communities have done so, resulting in the desertion of many urban areas. Those people who remain often cannot afford to move elsewhere; consequently, when money and the people who earn it leave a community, so do businesses, restaurants, and stores. Urban "food deserts" have become a huge concern given that schoolchildren and their families living in inner-city communities lack access to vegetables, fruits, whole foods, and other quality items (Mead, 2008). Figure 9 depicts one such food desert. The student notes that residents who depend on these food sources ingest sugars and food preservatives that result in adverse health conditions.

Discussion

The sample of images reveal that students observed social injustices that related to physical access constraints, personal traits and belief-based stereotypes, and access to goods and services. This section explains how the images convey students' interpretations of social justice, how they inform about participants' dispositions toward social justice, and how this research informs the community about the use of art creation in teacher education.

Figure 9

Contributing to a Definition

The analyzed images present social injustices as concepts that involve control of access to social resources based on an individual's or group's physical representation, state, or skill set. This interpretation fits within the broad philosophical categories of social justice described by Hytten and Bettez (2011), with the images also conveying representations of practical and narrative strands. Campus images displayed various aspects of the participants' higher education communities. The images in which people represented the subject of the focus contribute to an account of the presented persons' social narratives, illuminating the relationship of their stories within the broader social context. Each image could be cataloged as theoretically specific and discussed in relationship to education for democracy. The pictures contribute to dialogues about ableism, sexism, racism, religionism, and classism within education and provide testimony to the relevance of these topics to teacher preparations.

Although the topic of social justice may possess conceptual appeal, teacher education faces a formidable task in comprehensively defining social justice because the concept in practice challenges the foundational principles of the social system. Westheimer and Kahne's (2004) seminal work observed that systems resist preparing justice-oriented citizens because such a process would disempower those who benefit from the existent social structures. The patterns of images evidenced in this research study would suggest a general student resistance to or ignorance of situations that represent unjust treatment of individuals based on their gender, race/ethnicity, religion, and economic status.

At the same time, many of the images originate from teacher candidates nearing the completion of their programs of study. The prevalence of images that concern contraventions of ADA may communicate a programmatic emphasis on legalistic or safe forms of injustice and their cursory treatment of social conditions disrespectful of those commonly mistreated in society. Castro's (2010) finding of a persistence of shallow understandings of critical perspectives toward history and society among teachers and teacher candidates would suggest education programs have much work to do in their efforts to effect meaningful change in their students' multicultural embrace.

An important aspect of achieving socially just settings relates to the methods that prompt dominant members of society to reduce their perceived need to control resources (including people), whether through reduction of physical obstacles, easing of compliance standards, or simply being less judgmental. Panksepp and Biven's (2012) disclosure of affective influences on human cognition would indicate that patterns of these affects relate to responses to the environment. Each person has the potential to experience various degrees of compassion or control given the nature of the context that he or she occupies.

The analyzed images convey this dichotomy, with the message associated with the image relating to the perspective of the interpreter. For example, the reserved parking sign for expectant mothers represents a hospital courtesy to provide convenience for those experiencing great physical stress. It represents a nuisance or affront for those who need urgent hospital access for other legitimate reasons.

Justice-oriented citizens examine the social structures that cause patterns of inequity within a society (Westheimer, 2015; Westheimer & Kahne, 2004). When the dominant basis for interpreting social justice results from only one portion of a community, dialogues need to consider how protocols silence alternative perspectives that may empower underrepresented perspectives.

Teacher and Teacher Candidate Attitudes

The analysis indicates that teachers and candidates harbor largely legalistic attitudes toward social justice. The images convey an awareness of laws that guide professional obligations (e.g., the ADA) and aspects of their programs; however, the pictures do not necessarily suggest that the participants conceptualize the concept of social justice.

This confusion relates to Nucci's (2001, 2008) distinction between morality and social convention, wherein morality is a process that avoids harm to others and social convention involves a process of following rules. The images in this research study convey depictions of situations that represent wrongs created by implicit social agreements. The concept of morality relates to processes and matters unaddressed by or even in contravention of the law.

It is also posited that the prevalence of images that concern matters of convention relate to the predominately White, female nature of the sample and their social conditioning that prevents recognition of social inequities. Garrett and Segall (2013) reasoned that the ignorance and avoidance tendencies by White teachers to messages of critical social justice in preparation and training represent excuses for the pride they experience from the benefits received from being members of the dominant culture. Absent critical education about the patterns of resource control, disinformation, and other oppressive behaviors employed by the education system, teachers and candidates lack the ability to recognize evidence of the injustices from which they gain advantage.

Art Use

The images inform about the use of art as a means of expressing views about social justice, the students' perspectives, and the community. The capturing of these images challenged students to consider a concept that classrooms often discuss but may clarify in various ways. This picturing and reflection process contained elements of art creation that offered participants the opportunity to consider the concept on their own terms.

In their description of an activity that concerned the experience and creation of artworks that reflect social justice and related learning outcomes, Lucey and Laney (2009, 2012) conveyed the advantages of stimulating teacher candidates' inventive and social capabilities to foster social inquiry learning. The current study presents analysis of works resulting from an activity that required students to make meaning of the community, as guided by their interests and circumstances. The experience empowered students to realize the professional appropriateness of contemplating these conditions. It also provided teachers and candidates with the opportunity to view their (prospective) students' communities through lenses of injustice.

Through their assignment of clinical interviews with school families who were different from them, Kidd, Sánchez, and Thorpe (2004) experienced successes fostering candidates' deep awareness of alternative modes of social interpretation. Future research may consider the outcomes examining interpretations of pictured social injustices by facilitating conversations between those capturing the images and representatives of those presented in the images.

Null Injustices

Finally, we observe that the photos captured by students convey images of legal injustices; however, they do not reflect educational or unauthenticated injustices. Students provided images that they had readily identified as inappropriate or wrong, yet did not consider images that present the structural issues that prompt injustices to occur. Westheimer (2015) pointed out the importance of engaging students in conversation and social inquiry that examine these structural injustices and dispel education myths. We encourage additional research studies that interpret how variance of citizenship emphasis in social studies methods may affect how students view social injustice.

Conclusions

The study found that, when assigned to take images of social injustices in their communities, most of the students who were enrolled in social studies methods or diversity-focused courses provided images that related to inconvenience of access of physical resources. The remaining images contained patterns of related to entitlement and prohibition based on physical traits or allocation of resources based on social privilege. The authors believe that the outcomes of this study offer much opportunity for teacher education instruction and research.

The use of various art forms in teaching and learning offers much potential for informing about the systems of thinking that occur within candidates. As teaching represents a social and political act, art processes may provide a diagnostic tool for learning about candidates' views of society and how to shape teacher education processes in relation to those perspectives.

Results of this study are not generalizable to teacher education in general or even to student populations at the participating institutions. Nevertheless, findings based on analysis in the current study indicate participants from the two institutions were able to legally define social injustices; however, they ignored, resisted, or did not recognize injustices that relate to more common practices involving gender, race, and class.

Nearly 8 out of every 10 students analyzed images concerning the presence of injustices related to individuals with physical disabilities. Because the assignment involved the students picturing injustices that they identified or recognized, the findings indicate the patterns

of injustices that are important to the students. These images represent the topics that students were comfortable talking about and those that affected them most, whether through professional obligations or personal experiences. Students cared the most about these issues.

Future research may consider the outcomes of assignments that require students to capture images of patterns of injustice that concern specific forms of or bases for injustice. Such experiences may represent opportunities for students to develop empathy for victims of such conditions and stimulate their motivation to realize the importance of their profession as a social and political pursuit designed to bring meaning to the lives of those in need.

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