

Introduction: Teacher Education and Social Justice

By Karen Hunter Quartz & Jeannie Oakes

One of the most important education policy challenges facing California and the nation is developing new ways to recruit, develop, and retain a high quality teaching force for urban schools. Over the next decade, schools, particularly in states like California, will need to hire an unprecedented numbers of new teachers. Most of these new teachers will begin teaching in disadvantaged urban and rural communities and in schools where most students battle poverty and negotiate cultural and linguistic differences between home and school. These young people urgently need teachers who want to teach them and who can teach well. They also need teachers who will stay in teaching, remain in poor communities, and become leaders of much needed school reform.

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In an effort to meet this challenge, a growing group of teacher educators committed to social justice through urban school reform are changing the ways we educate teachers and think about their development. This special issue of *Teacher Education Quarterly* explores new theories of teacher education and

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development based on socio-cultural learning theories and an explicit commitment to social justice.

In the issue's lead article, Marilyn Cochran-Smith provides a helpful framework for navigating the multiple and contested meanings associated with "multicultural" and "social justice" teacher education. She poses eight key questions to help educators and policymakers interrogate central concepts such as access, diversity, culture, equity, teacher quality, school success, and educational reform. For instance, her fourth question—the teacher learning question—probes the general assumptions about how, when, and where adults learn to teach. Peter Hoffman-Kipp's article takes a look at this question in depth in his article on model activity systems. He provides a theoretically rich framework for understanding how preservice teachers develop a political consciousness and cultural sensitivity in their teaching. Intersecting the political content of critical pedagogy with situative and distributed notions of cognition from cultural-historical activity theory, Hoffman-Kipp broadens the current communities of practice discussion surrounding how teachers learn to teach in urban, multicultural settings.

A vast number of teachers learn to teach on the job, with little or no preparation. In 2001-2002, half (51%) of all teachers in California were underprepared. Unlike their privileged counterparts, urban schools shoulder the burden of this underprepared workforce. In fact, if you are a student of color in California, you are now five times more likely than a non-minority student to have an underprepared teacher. Addressing this important policy issue head on, Hedy Moscovici explores the effect of a teaching module that encourages secondary science teachers working on emergency permits to analyze their power positions within the classroom, their school, district, and community. She uses critical theory and constructivism as lenses to help these teachers engage their own students in inquiry science and more broadly the process of becoming transformative intellectuals.

Other urban teachers who benefit from continuing or inservice teacher education include the many veteran educators who guide or supervise student teachers. In their article, Sheila Lane, Nancy Lacefield-Parachini, and Jo Ann Isken discuss the bi-directional learning relationship that exists between novices trained as social justice educators and their more experienced, but pedagogically conservative mentors. Based on a study of these "against the grain" student teaching placements, they report how novice teachers "disrupted practices" in classrooms and schools as well as how guiding teachers were changed as a result of their interaction. Ronald Glass and Pia Wong also address the intersection of teacher education programs and urban school faculty in their article on the Equity Network, a university-district-school-union collaboration to institute a dozen professional development schools to serve low-income, culturally and linguistically diverse students. Using the principles of engaged pedagogy, Glass and Wong investigate the structural, equity, and political obstacles that confront the reconstruction of teacher education programs in the effort to make them responsive to the needs of urban schools.

Empowering urban teachers to critique the structural inequities inherent in schools is a theme that runs throughout this issue. Ernest Morrell probes this theme from a sociocultural perspective in his study of a professional development seminar situated in meaningful practice and empowering of teachers as intellectuals and as agents of reform. Morrell articulates four key participation structures that facilitate teachers' legitimate peripheral participation in the activity of critical research. In her article on the detrimental impact of teacher bias, Camille Wilson Cooper also argues that teacher educators must help new teachers recognize schools as sites of political resistance, which they must work to improve. Based on a study of African American mothers' beliefs about the negative impact teacher bias has on students' self-esteem and academic achievement, Cooper draws from feminist theory to underscore the importance of recognizing the learning potential and cultural resources of diverse learners.

Together, this collection provides insight into the collective struggle to improve urban schools through a specialized approach to teacher education that asks prospective and inservice teachers to delve into the theories and practices that guide teaching, learning and life in urban schools and communities. As the authors in this issue aptly demonstrate, teachers taught to grapple with the failure of many instructional techniques to engage students of color, to question deficit conceptions of low-income, culturally and linguistically diverse students, and to take action to right these wrongs have the potential to radically transform the woeful state of our nation's urban schools.

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