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How Does a Social Justice Teacher Education Program Influence Teacher Practice? A Mixed Methods Case Study

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by

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This dissertation of Erika Rae Reece is approved, and it is acceptable in quality and form for publication on microfilm and electronically.

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSEERTATION

How Does a Social Justice Teacher Education Program Influence Teacher Practice? A Mixed Methods Case Study

by

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Doctor of Philosophy in Education

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There has been a significant shift in public school student demographics throughout the last twenty years. Most students enrolled in public schools are now students of color, yet the teaching force remains overwhelmingly comprised of white women. The racial and cultural mismatch between students and teachers has given way to various inequities in the classroom, disproportionately impacting students of color. In response to the shift in student demographics and widening opportunity gaps, teacher education programs (TEPs) have sought to improve teacher preparation by integrating social justice into their curriculum. While extensive research has focused on understanding these efforts, little research has focused on understanding the impact of these efforts once preservice teachers graduate and become fully certified, full-time teachers. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to gain a deeper understanding of the way a teacher education program, with a social justice focus, prepares teachers to incorporate teaching for social justice into their pedagogy and practice. To accomplish this, the study explored alumni's perceptions of what they learned about teaching for social justice and how these

perceptions impacted their practice. Through a mixed-methods case study, the study explicitly addressed three research questions: (1) In what ways do alumni perceive that Sunvale University helped to prepare teachers to teach for social justice? (2) What components of social justice education did TEP alumni identify as being learned from the program? (3) What aspects of TEP alumni's current classrooms reflect what they learned about social justice in their teacher education program? Analysis of the surveys, interviews, and classroom observations corroborated current research on teaching for social justice, while also highlighting key findings that strengthen the field's understanding of what it means to prepare a teacher to teach for social justice.

Chapter 1: Introduction

The demographics of students in public schools have drastically shifted over the last twenty years, as most students enrolled in public schools are now students of color (Richards, Brown, and Forde, 2007). Despite this demographic shift, the teaching force remains overwhelmingly comprised of white, middle-class women (Banks and Banks, 2004). The mismatch between teachers and students has given way to various inequities in the classroom, disproportionately impacting students of color (Banks and Banks, 2004). In response to the shift in student demographics and widening opportunity gaps, teacher education programs (TEPs) have sought to improve teacher preparation by integrating social justice into their curriculum (McDonald, 2005). Education researchers have investigated these efforts, often focusing on the impact of a social justice course on preservice teachers'(PSTs) beliefs and student teaching practices (Mills and Ballantyne, 2016). However, scarce research examines the impact of these efforts once PSTs graduate and become fully certified, full-time teachers. Therefore, the purpose of this study was twofold: (1) to document alumni perceptions of their TEP's articulation and implementation of social justice pedagogies and practices; (2) to document how these perceptions influence alumni's social justice instructional practices.

Guided by a social justice conceptual framework, I conducted a mixed-methods case study to address these research goals. Using explanatory sequential design, I began with the quantitative component of the study by collecting and analyzing survey data. Upon completing this, I collected and analyzed the qualitative data, including interviews, open-ended survey questions, and classroom observations. Most research on social justice teacher education is small-scale and qualitative, making it challenging to generalize outcomes. Thus, more rigorous empirical research is needed that investigates the impact and outcomes of social justice TEPs.

Using a mixed-methods design gave way to comprehensive data collection and analysis, leading to a deeper understanding of the successes and challenges experienced by the TEP.

Teachers have the most direct impact on students; therefore, improving teacher education so teachers are ready to foster classrooms where all students are equally valued is crucial to creating better academic, social, and emotional outcomes for all students (Darling-Hammond, 2000). As more and more teacher education programs turn to social justice to make these improvements, research needs to document and analyze these efforts. Without such research, it is challenging to understand the impact of a social justice-based TEP on teacher practices. Even more, it is challenging to understand the impact on the learning environments and experiences created for students. Closing opportunity and equity gaps in education is a relentless process; however, producing meaningful research on social justice teacher education can lead to tangible positive outcomes for students, particularly students of color. Through this study, it was my aim to contribute research that empowers TEPs to incorporate social justice across their program, giving way for teachers who are prepared to challenge systemic inequities and serve all students equitably.

Rationale

The United States teaching force is racially homogenous and overwhelmingly made up of white women (National Center for Education Statistics, 2020). According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) (2020), American public schools have approximately 3.1 million teachers; 79 percent are white, while teachers of color comprise only 21 percent of the teaching profession. Furthermore, current demographics of students enrolled in teacher education programs demonstrate the teaching force is projected to maintain its whiteness (Epstein, 2005),

as 75% of individuals enrolled in a TEP based in an institute of higher education are white (National Center for Education Statistics, 2020).

While the teaching force remains predominantly white and female, the American population has become increasingly diverse. This trend is especially prevalent among students in public schools, as student demographics now reflect various linguistic, racial, and cultural backgrounds (Richards, Brown, and Forde, 2007). According to the NCES, in 2020, students of color accounted for 53% of students in public schools, while white students accounted for 47%. Furthermore, 63 out of the largest 100 school districts in the US are primarily composed of students of color (La Salle et al., 2020). The percentage of white students enrolled in public school is projected to decline through at least fall 2027, while the percentage of students from diverse racial backgrounds is projected to increase (Richards et al., 2007).

These statistics and projections indicate that most public school students are taught by teachers who do not share the same racial or cultural background. Stated differently, 53% of public school students in the US are Latinx, Asian, Native American, and Black (NCES, 2020), yet less than 20% of public school teachers come from those groups (DOE, 2016). This divergence is even more dramatic in urban areas where Latinx and Black students make up most of the student population (Epstein, 2005).

Teacher-Student Demographic Mismatch

The contrast between the diverse student demographics and the predominantly white teaching force is problematic as it creates a mismatch of cultural backgrounds, perspectives, and understandings in the classroom (Banks & Banks, 2004). Scholars argue this demographic mismatch can lead to inequities in student outcomes, as it may impact teachers' judgment of student abilities and behaviors, ultimately affecting students' futures (Lindsay & Hart, 2017; La

Salle et al., 2020). These inequities manifest in various ways, but a leading example of racial inequity in schooling is the exclusionary discipline practices that disproportionately impact students of color and the racialization of curricular tracking (Lindsay & Hart, 2017; Oakes, 2005; Chapman, 2011).

Research upholds that students of color, particularly Black students, are disproportionately sent to the office, suspended, and referred to special education (La Salle et al., 2020). Lindsay and Hart (2017) noted that teachers use their discretion to decide whether student behavior warrants an office referral. If teachers are subconsciously predisposed to be more lenient toward same-race students, teacher-student demographics could impact disciplinary outcomes (Lindsay & Hart, 2017). Studies on preschool-age children have also demonstrated that implicit bias of white teachers leads to more negative interpretations of behavior in students of color (Neitzel, 2007; Gilliam et al., 2016). Research has also provided evidence that the more Black students are exposed to the same race teachers, the less likely they will experience exclusionary discipline (Lindsay & Hart, 2017). This is important to note, as exclusionary discipline practices contribute to the school-to-prison pipeline (Skiba et al., 2014).

In addition to discipline, another example of racial inequities in schooling includes tracking, the practice of separating students into separate classes and groups by educational need and ability, as this practice detrimentally impacts academic opportunities for students of color (Oakes, 2005). Most students placed in the higher-level tracks are white, and they are often exposed to enriched courses that provide challenging content and develop critical thinking skills (Oakes, 2005). In contrast, Black and Latinx students are disproportionately represented in the lower track, where their courses are characterized by rote lessons and fill-in-the-blank worksheets (Oakes, 2005). Teachers frequently decide or heavily influence students'' placement

into these tracked courses (Chapman, 2011). Thus, teachers not only play a significant role in determining the type of discipline a student receives, but they also critically impact students' academic trajectories.

The research has made it clear that the widening demographic mismatch between teachers and students leads to inequitable outcomes for students of color (Egalite & Kisida, 2018). This is evident through disciplinary practices and curricular tracking (Lindsay & Hart, 2017; Oakes, 2005; Chapman, 2011). While there are white teachers who are successful, loving educators for students who do not share the same cultural, racial, and linguistic backgrounds as themselves, the research still overwhelmingly demonstrates that the cultural divide between white teachers and students of color leads to racialized opportunity gaps. This research elevates the importance of preservice teacher education for generating systemic change in schools, starts with preparing teachers to create classrooms where all students are equally valued and treated equitably.

Teacher Education

In response to the cultural mismatch and widening opportunity gaps, teacher education programs (TEP) have sought to improve teacher preparation by incorporating social justice into their programs (McDonald, 2005). These improvement efforts usually occur by creating structural changes to curriculum and programming. For example, programs have added courses in multicultural education, required clinical experiences with students from diverse backgrounds, and created opportunities for prospective teachers - mainly White, middle-class teachers - to consider their beliefs and attitudes about students of color (Banks, 1995; Gay, 1994; Grant, 1994; Ladson-Billings, 1995). Various scholars have critiqued these efforts, however, noting their

additive approach gives way to little impact on teacher learning (McDonald, 2005; Enterline, Cochran-Smith, Ludlow, & Mitescu; 2008).

In response to these critiques, some programs have sought to integrate social justice across their entire program (McDonald, 2005). However, despite these efforts, research on social justice teacher education has continually focused on studying the single additive efforts (Argwal, Epstein, Oppenheim, Oyler, Sonu, 2010). This is problematic for primarily focusing on standalone efforts limits the ability to comprehensively understand the TEP curriculum as a whole. Furthermore, this limitation makes it challenging to understand the interconnections of learning opportunities across courses and the relationship between faculty pedagogy and the program's overall goals (McDonald, 2008). Thus, there is a need for rigorous empirical research that studies teacher education programs that weave social justice into the foundation of their curriculum and programming.

Further research is needed to examine these programs' impact on teachers' pedagogy and practice. This research is essential for more TEPs are adopting social justice frameworks to prepare teachers to challenge systemic inequities and close opportunity gaps. As social justice in teacher education becomes more common, more scientific research is needed to understand its impact on teacher preparation. This scientific research has grown to be even more important and necessary in today's climate, as restrictions on teaching about topics such as race and gender have become prevalent across the United States. Since 2021, 18 states have imposed these bans or restrictions, with states like Florida banning courses like AP African American Studies (Najarro, 2023). Additionally, the censorship of books that feature characters of color or characters who identify as LGBTQ+ continues to increase at an alarming rate in states all across the country (PEN America, 2022). These restrictions are not just limited to conservative states

but are also being implemented at local levels throughout various blue-leaning states (Najarro, 2023). Thus, producing research that provides empirical evidence that supports the need for social justice teaching is critical to challenging the restrictions and bans that are aiming to disrupt teacher's efforts to create equitable and inclusive classrooms.

Research Questions

This study aimed to understand how teachers have incorporated, ignored, or rejected elements of curriculum and instruction focused on social justice education in their teacher education program. To accomplish this, I explored graduates' perceptions of what they learned about teaching for social justice and how they view their current pedagogy and practice as influenced by what they learned in their TEP. The following questions guided this study:

1. In what ways do alumni perceive that Sunvale University helped to prepare teachers to teach for social justice?
2. What components of social justice education did TEP alumni identify as being learned from the program?
3. What aspects of TEP alumni's current classrooms reflect what they learned about social justice in their teacher education program?

Studies that examine social justice in teacher education frequently analyze the impact of preservice teachers' readiness to address social justice issues in their teacher education programs. Still, little research examines the connection between teacher education programs and the impact of teacher practice in the classroom (Cochran-Smith, Shakman, Jong, Terrell, Barnatt, and McQuillan, 2009). Moreover, most research on social justice teacher education is small-scale, narrowly focused, and qualitative (Dover, 2013). As a result, these studies do not produce outcomes that can be generalized, demonstrating the need for more rigorous research (Hollins &

Guzman, 2005; Sleeter, 2012). This study aimed to address these gaps using a mixed-methods case study design to answer the research questions.

Theoretical Framework

The social justice conceptual framework that guided this study is largely influenced by the work of Marilyn Cochran-Smith (2009, 2010) and Alison Dover (2013). In Cochran-Smith's framework, she outlines six principles that comprise teaching for social justice. These principles guided my understanding of what a TEP should teach prospective teachers regarding social justice teaching and informed the study's design and analysis. These principles are discussed at length in Chapter 2; however, I briefly describe them in the figure below:

Principle	Description
1. Enable significant work within communities of learners	Teachers maintain high expectations for all students, believing all students are capable of dealing with complex ideas.
2. Build on what students bring to school with them: knowledge & interests, cultural & linguistic resources	Teachers acknowledge, value, and work from their students' cultural and linguistic resources. They construct a multicultural and inclusive curriculum so students can connect meaning to their own lives.
3. Teach skills, bridge gaps	Teachers not only teach skills but also know how to bridge gaps between what is often assumed children know and what they actually do not know. Social justice teachers, in particular, bridge this gap through culturally responsive practices.
4. Work with, not against individuals, families, and communities	Teachers draw on family histories, traditions, and stories, demonstrating they respect all students' family and cultural values. They seek to involve students' families while also recognizing that a family's involvement is impacted by their time, availability, and cultural understanding of education.
5. Diversify forms of assessment	Teachers diversify assessments by using a wide array of evaluation strategies and not relying on standardized tests as the sole indicator of students' abilities. They acknowledge that students maintain different strengths and seek various forms of assessment to optimally understand a student's learning and progress.
6. Make inequity, power, and activism explicit parts of the curriculum	Teachers empower students to name and recognize inequities and equip them with the tools to confront, challenge, and dismantle these disparities.

Figure 1.1. Cochran-Smith's Six Principles of Teaching for Social Justice (2009, 2010)

Cochran-Smith's framework is pedagogical and practitioner-focused, providing tangible descriptions of what teaching for social justice looks and sounds like. Dover's framework, however, builds upon Cochran-Smith's work by outlining five key conceptual and pedagogical frameworks that serve as the foundation of teaching for social justice. Her framework is important to include as it helped guide my understanding of the theoretical and pedagogical

foundations that give way to social justice teaching. The table below briefly captures Dover's framework.

Conceptual/Pedagogical Framework	**Description**
Democratic Education	Emphasizes the civic functions of schooling, such as self-governance, community engagements, and experiential learning.
Social Justice Education	Social justice education emphasizes curriculum content connected to social identity and injustice, oppression theory, intersectionality, and reflexive teaching practice.
Culturally Responsive Education	In culturally responsive classrooms, teaching and learning are student-centered, where students' unique cultural strengths are viewed as assets and are used to promote student achievement.
Multicultural Education	Multicultural education promotes understanding, respect, and equity among diverse groups, preparing students to thrive in a globalized world.
Critical Pedagogy	Critical educators see social justice as a foundation for disrupting and changing unjust, unequal, and undemocratic political institutions. They view teaching as a political process and commit to critical reflection, dialogue, and social activism.

Figure 1.2. Dover's Teaching for Social Justice Conceptual/Pedagogical Framework

These conceptual frameworks fit this study, as the research questions focused on understanding what alumni learned about teaching for social justice and how they apply this to practice. In Chapter 2, I further address the definition of social justice teaching that guided this study and provide a detailed analysis of the current research on social justice teacher education.

Significance of Study

Sleeter and Owuor (2011) contend that what happens when preservice teachers (PSTs) leave their teacher preparation programs is unclear, and further research is needed to understand

the impact of teacher preparation on teaching practice. They state, “We need research that follows teachers through their teacher preparation programs and into their first years of teaching so we can determine the extent and ways multicultural teacher preparation helps them to become better teachers” (p. 534). This study is significant because it examined teachers’ practices once they graduated from the teacher education program, contributing empirical research that links the impact of a TEP to teacher practice.

Liu and Ball (2019) note that much of the research on social justice teacher education focuses on preservice teachers’ beliefs. They assert we need more research that goes beyond assuming that teacher candidates' beliefs necessarily lead to different behaviors and actions in their classrooms (Liu & Ball, 2019). We need research that investigates how teachers incorporate or disregard these beliefs into their pedagogical practices. Without this research, we must be cautious about believing claims that PSTs, especially white PSTs, have been transformed during their teacher preparation program (Liu & Ball, 2019). To improve teacher education, particularly teacher education for social justice, we need more literature that looks at what happens when preservice teachers leave and become full-time teachers. This study expanded upon the existing literature by focusing on teacher practices rather than teacher beliefs. The study specifically investigated teachers’ perceptions of what they learned about teaching for social justice and how these perceptions play out in practice.

A major criticism of social justice is that social justice is an ambiguous concept that is widespread but undertheorized and vague (Cochran-Smith, 2009; Liu & Ball, 2019; Zeichner, 2011). This lack of a unified definition has led to limited conceptual frameworks across the research, leading to discrepancies between theory and practice (Cochran-Smith et al., 2009). We need consensus across teacher education programs and a detailed framework that establishes a

clear definition of what it means to prepare teachers for diversity, social justice, and equity. Developing this framework will empower teacher education researchers to investigate the connection between theory and practice. This is important as more research is needed that examines how teachers translate theory into everyday practice to better evaluate the impact of teacher education programs on actual teaching practice. This study aimed to clarify successful practices in social justice teacher education and document how a teacher education program meets its goals to create teachers who are change agents, student advocates, and racial allies.

Educators also need more empirical evidence that supports teaching for social justice. There is an overabundance of small-scale, narrowly focused qualitative studies that make it challenging to generalize outcomes (Mills & Ballantyne, 2016; Liu & Ball, 2019). We need more empirically sound research as standardization and accountability mandates (like NCLB) require a scientifically based rationale for any classroom-level intervention (Dover, 2013). By conducting a mixed-methods study that utilizes quantitative and qualitative methods, this study contributes rigorous empirical research that examines the impact of teacher education for social justice.

Positionality

My interest in social justice teacher education emerged from my role as an elementary school teacher in Detroit, Michigan. When I applied to doctoral programs six years ago, I applied as an eager elementary school teacher who desperately wanted to understand how to teach students in low-income, urban settings effectively. I recognized the ways I had fallen short as a teacher - failing to incorporate my students' cultural and linguistic identities into the fabric of my curriculum - and I was keen to make up for these shortcomings through my doctoral studies. I believed that if I gained a better understanding of the technical aspects of social justice teaching, I could help other teachers successfully teach marginalized students. At the time, I did not

recognize that many of my shortcomings as a teacher stemmed from the pervasiveness of whiteness within my classroom, nor did I realize how my identity as a white woman protected and privileged whiteness. Even more, I did not understand that the technical aspects of social justice teaching will remain shallow if a teacher does not simultaneously examine their own assumptions, beliefs, practices, and their actual effects, especially on students of color. This understanding motivates me to conduct meaningful research that deepens my awareness of social justice pedagogy and contributes findings that further the field's conception of teaching for social justice.

Throughout my journey as a Ph.D. student, I have come to understand that I cannot continue with my journey as an educator and researcher if I do not continually question and examine my own racial identity and beliefs. Indeed, Gloria Anzaldua and bell hooks call for white people to locate themselves within structures of privilege and to shift perspectives to understand the ways in which unacknowledged white supremacy inhibits any authentic efforts toward equity. Engaging with the literature and dialogues around social justice pedagogy has challenged me to confront uncomfortable truths about race, privilege, and the perpetuation of inequities, propelling me toward a deeper understanding of my role in perpetuating and challenging these dynamics. Through my research, I strive to practice reflexivity, critically examining how my background influences my interactions, interpretations, and decisions and seeking to mitigate the impact of my biases on the research process and outcomes.

As someone who hopes to one day work with preservice teachers, I am ultimately accountable to students. Therefore, it is my responsibility to put forth meaningful research that seeks to deepen our understanding of what it means to prepare teachers who are change agents, student advocates, and racial allies. With this in mind, my research is centered on investigating

the way teacher education programs are challenging preservice teachers to critically engage with social justice issues such as race, sexuality, gender, and white supremacy. My hope is that my research will not only illuminate pathways for preparing socially just teachers but also inspire a continuous cycle of self-reflection and action among educators who are committed to dismantling systemic inequities. In this way, my work seeks to be a bridge between academic theory and the practical realities of teaching, with the ultimate goal of transforming classrooms into spaces where all students are valued, understood, and empowered.

Summary

Meaningful research on teacher education for social justice is necessary, as more and more TEPs are using social justice as a means to prepare teachers to serve increasingly diverse students. The more we know about the impact of social justice TEPs, the better we can train teachers to foster classrooms where all students are equally valued and treated equitably. Therefore, this study aimed to document alumni perceptions of their TEP's implementation of social justice and investigate how these perceptions influence alumni's social justice instructional practices. The study was guided by the teaching for social justice frameworks put forth by Marilyn Cochran-Smith (2009, 2010) and Allison Dover (2013). It utilized a mixed methods case study approach to address the research questions. Through this methodological approach, the data revealed several key findings that shed light on how alumni perceived their social justice TEP prepared them to teach for social justice and how this knowledge impacts their current teaching practice. The greater goal of these findings was to contribute meaningful research that aims to improve overall teacher education for social justice.

In the chapters that follow, I will dig deeper into social justice teacher education literature, my methodology, findings, and discussion. Specifically, in Chapter 2, research and

scholarship relevant to developing the design of this study and the guiding questions are examined. Chapter 2 centers the social justice framework while also reviewing and analyzing empirical research that investigates TEP's efforts to incorporate social justice into their programs. Through this analysis, it is apparent that social justice efforts across TEPs include incorporating standalone diversity and equity courses, focusing on changing preservice teachers' beliefs and attitudes, utilizing fieldwork and service learning projects as a way to expose PSTs to diversity, and programmatic efforts to incorporate social justice across an entire program. The methodological approaches used in these studies also demonstrated that most research on social justice teacher education is small-scale and qualitative. In Chapter 3, the mixed methodology that was used in this study will be discussed at length. The qualitative and quantitative approaches will be detailed, and the analysis process will be explained. These methodological choices were heavily influenced by the literature presented in Chapter 2. Chapters 4, 5, and 6 will present the quantitative and qualitative findings respectively. These chapters are broken down by research question, each including several themes that highlight the findings. Finally, chapter 7 discusses the implications and recommendations for policy and research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

As described in the background literature in the previous chapter, the shift in student demographics and widening opportunity gaps has led many teacher education programs to improve teacher preparation by integrating social justice frameworks across their curriculum and coursework (McDonald, 2005; Schiera, 2023; La Salle et al., 2020). Various scholars and practitioners (Cochran-Smith, 2004; Dover, 2009; Grant & Agosto, 2008) assert that by preparing prospective teachers to teach from a social justice lens, they will be more inclined to use teaching practices that challenge and disrupt structural inequity and discrimination based on race, class, gender, and other human differences (Nieto and Bode, 2007). In turn, this can create learning environments that work to close opportunity gaps, ensuring all students are equally valued and set up to thrive (Liu & Ball, 2019). Thus, this study aimed to explore what alumni from a social justice-based TEP perceived they learned about social justice and how they applied this knowledge to practice. Specifically, the study addressed three research questions:

1. In what ways do alumni perceive that Sunvale University helped to prepare teachers to teach for social justice?
2. What components of social justice education did TEP alumni identify as being learned from the program?
3. What aspects of TEP alumni's current classrooms reflect what they learned about social justice in their teacher education program?

In this chapter, I address the social justice conceptual framework that guided my understanding of what it means to teach for social justice. This framework is largely influenced by the work of Marilyn Cochran-Smith (2009, 2010) and Alison Dover (2013). The framework is significant because it shaped the survey and interview questions used in the study and influenced my

interpretation of the study's findings. Following this, I review and analyze empirical research that investigates TEPs' efforts to incorporate social justice into their programs. This foundational literature informed my understanding of teacher education for social justice and helped shape the research questions that guided the study. Furthermore, analysis of this literature highlighted the importance of utilizing mixed methods and elevated the need to understand how social justice teacher preparation impacts teaching practice once teachers have graduated and are in full-time roles. The review of this literature is broken into four sections:

1. Standalone diversity coursework
2. Preservice teacher dispositions
3. Programmatic view of TEPs
4. Fieldwork/Service Learning

Social Justice Conceptual Framework

Despite its widespread use across teacher education programs, critics agree that teacher education for social justice is undertheorized and vague (Cochran-Smith et al., 2009; Dover, 2009; Grant & Agosto, 2008; Shakman et al., 2007). Several scholars have responded to this criticism by contributing significant scholarly work that expands the theoretical, pedagogical, and practical understanding of teacher education for social justice (Cochran-Smith, 2009; Dover, 2013; Picower, 2011). For this study, I defer to the conceptual frameworks put forth by Marilyn Cochran-Smith (2009, 2010) and Alison Dover (2013). Cochran-Smith has written extensively about teacher education for social justice and is a co-creator of the Learning to Teach for Social Justice Scale (LTSJ) (Enterline et al., 2008). This scale informed the survey used in this study. Her teacher education for social justice framework outlines six fundamental principles that embody the values, actions, and beliefs of social justice teaching. This framework largely

impacted my interpretation of the study's findings. Expanding upon Cochran-Smith's (2009, 2010) framework, Dover (2013) describes five key conceptual and pedagogical orientations that give way for a social justice framework. These frameworks are important to review, for they provide an overview of the foundational literature that paved the way for a social justice conceptual framework while also giving credit to the scholars whose research significantly shaped Cochran-Smith's (2009, 2010) and Dover's (2015) conceptualization of teaching for social justice. Together, Cochran-Smith (2009, 2010) and Dover's (2015) conceptualizations of teaching for social justice advised this study. Below, I provide a brief definition of social justice and then proceed to review Cochran-Smith (2009, 2010) and Dover's (2015) frameworks.

Definition of Social Justice

For this study, "teacher education for social justice," "social justice education," and "teaching for social justice" are used interchangeably to mean what Cochran-Smith (1999) has asserted, "Part of teaching for social justice is deliberately claiming the role of educator as well as activist based on political consciousness and on the ideological commitment to diminishing inequities of American life" (p. 116). Social justice education focuses on equity, access, power, and oppression, situating teaching as a political act that recognizes how cultural, racial, economic, and political systems create disparities in educational opportunities and academic outcomes for students of color (Cochran-Smith, 1999; Dover, 2013). Social justice educators work to dismantle these systems, intending to redistribute educational opportunities that lead to a more just society. Based on this conceptualization, teacher education for social justice focuses on assisting educators in critiquing the larger socio-cultural, political dimensions of teaching and schooling (Cochran-Smith, 1999; Picower, 2011; Dover, 2013).

Social justice teaching seeks to challenge the traditional views of knowledge used in standards, textbooks, and curriculum, acknowledging these perspectives do not include the ways of knowing upheld by marginalized groups (Cochran-Smith et al., 2009). Teachers who utilize social justice practices understand the importance of enhancing the curriculum so it is responsive to the unique identities and backgrounds of each of their students (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Gay, 2018; Cochran-Smith, 2009). They value their students' lived experiences, and work to ensure students see themselves reflected in what they are learning (Villegas & Lucas, 2002; Nieto and Bode, 2007). Thus, as stated by Cochran-Smith et al. (2009), the role of teacher education is to "prepare new teachers to challenge the cultural biases of curriculum, educational policies and practices, and school norms" (p. 351).

Social justice educators are constantly aware of the sociocultural and political contexts of their teaching. They are encouraged to continually reflect upon their social identity in relation to the identities of their students, especially as related to differences of privilege, concerns of power, and oppression (Dover, 2013; Picower, 2011). Teachers who place equity and social justice at the center of their pedagogy and practice know how to challenge racism and other forms of bias (Picower, 2011). Therefore, teacher education for social justice engages preservice teachers in examinations of racism and oppression for teachers to build the knowledge base that will assist teachers in knowing how to challenge racism and bias (Dover, 2013; Picower, 2011).

At the heart of social justice teaching is the importance of advancing equity across all societal issues. Teachers who champion social justice work diligently to dismantle barriers for their students so each student can thrive. They employ teaching methods designed to question, address, and dismantle the misconceptions, falsehoods, and stereotypes contributing to systemic inequalities and discrimination rooted in race, class, gender, and various human differences

(Nieto and Bode, 2007). Their goal is to close opportunity gaps and transform learning spaces so every student is given the opportunity to flourish.

Cochran-Smith's Six Principles

In Cochran-Smith's (2009, 2010) framework, she outlines six principles that comprise teaching for social justice. These principles, therefore, guided my understanding of what a TEP should teach prospective teachers regarding social justice teaching. This understanding informed the survey and interview questions and my interpretation and analysis of the findings.

The first principle in Cochran-Smith's (2009, 2010) framework upholds that teachers for social justice maintain high expectations for all students, believing all students are capable of dealing with complex ideas. Believing all students can achieve at high levels and maintaining high expectations is fundamental to fostering academic achievement and equitable opportunities. Further, it is critical to cultivating students' development as confident, capable, and resilient individuals. Cochran-Smith's (2009, 2010) second principle holds that teachers acknowledge, value, and work from their students' cultural and linguistic resources. They construct a multicultural and inclusive curriculum so students can connect meaning to their own lives. Moreover, they assume that knowledge is socially constructed and that curriculum is developed with teachers and students. This is especially important given that the demographics of students have widely shifted, with white students no longer being the majority of students in public schools (Richards, Brown, and Forde, 2007). It is crucial that all students see themselves reflected in what they are learning, as this helps students build a positive identity, fosters a sense of belonging, and makes education more relevant to their own lived experiences (Howard, 2017).

The third principle upholds that teachers not only teach skills but also know how to bridge gaps between what is often assumed children know and what they actually do not know.

Social justice teachers, in particular, bridge this gap through culturally responsive practices, recognizing how aligning teaching practices with students' identities and experiences can foster an inclusive learning environment and improve academic outcomes. The fourth principle focuses on families and communities, stating teachers for social justice draw on family histories, traditions, and stories, demonstrating they respect all students' family and cultural values. They seek to involve students' families while also recognizing that a family's involvement is impacted by their time, availability, and cultural understanding of education.

The fifth principle upholds that teachers for social justice diversify assessments by using a wide array of evaluation strategies and not relying on standardized tests as the sole indicator of students' abilities. These teachers recognize that standardized testing is inherently biased, only testing for a specific type of knowledge (Bazemore-James, Shinaprayoon, & Martin, 2016). They acknowledge that students maintain different strengths and seek various forms of assessment to optimally understand a student's learning and progress. Finally, the sixth principle maintains that teachers for social justice make learning about inequities, power, and activism an explicit part of the curriculum. They empower students to name and recognize inequities and equip them with the tools to confront, challenge, and dismantle these disparities.

Principle	Key Components
1. Enable significant work within communities of learners	● Students are makers of meaning and all are capable of dealing with complex ideas ● High expectations for all students and provide opportunities for them to learn academically challenging knowledge and skills ● High expectations for themselves - recognizing that they are decision makers, knowledge generators, and change agents ● Foster learning communities - believe in a shared sense of responsibility for learning within collaborative grouping (rather than homogeneous grouping or tracking)
2. Build on what students bring to school with them: knowledge & interests, cultural & linguistic resources	● Teachers acknowledge, value, and work from the cultural and linguistic resources as well as the interests and knowledge of their students ● Teachers develop social participation structures and narrative and questioning styles that are culturally and linguistically congruent with those of the students ● Construct curriculum that is multicultural and inclusive so that students can connect meanings in their own lives to traditional content
3. Teach skills, bridge gaps	● Teachers for social justice know how and where to help students connect what they know to what they do not know and use prior skills to learn new ones ● Teachers have to learn how to learn how to teach skills but also bridge gaps between what is often assumed children know and what they actually do not know
4. Work with not against individuals, families, and communities	● Teachers for social justice draw on family histories, traditions, and stories and they demonstrate respect for all students' family and cultural values ● Teachers do not become a wedge between student & their community - they do not convey the message that a student has to separate from their race or cultural group to succeed ● Teachers demonstrate they are connected to rather than disengaged form, afraid, or condescending toward their students and their communities
5. Diversify forms of assessment	● Teachers for social justice diversify assessment by using a wide variety if evaluation strategies for formative as well as cumulative assessments and by not relying on standardized tests as the sole indicator of students' abilities and achievement
6. Make inequity, power, and activism explicit parts of the curriculum	● Teachers encourage their students to think critically about the information to which they are exposed and make explicit in the curriculum issues that are often kept underground ● Help students name and deal with individual instances of prejudice as well as structural and institutional inequities by making these issues discussable in school ● Modeling activism/helping students explore how they themselves can question the status quo

Figure 2.1 - Cochran-Smith's Six Principles for Teaching for Social Justice

Dover's Framework

Cochran-Smith's (2009, 2010) framework is pedagogical and practitioner-focused, providing tangible descriptions of what teaching for social justice looks and sounds like. Dover's (2015) framework, however, builds upon Cochran-Smith's (2009, 2010) work by outlining five key conceptual and pedagogical frameworks that serve as the foundation of teaching for social justice. Her framework is important to include as it helped guide my understanding of the theoretical and pedagogical foundations that give way to social justice teaching. The five conceptual and pedagogical frameworks include democratic education, social justice education, culturally responsive education, multicultural education, and critical pedagogy. By crediting these five frameworks, Dover (2013) pushes against the criticism that social justice education is ambiguous and vague, for she details how teaching for social justice is grounded in five robust frameworks.

As described by Dover (2013), democratic education emphasizes the civic functions of schooling, such as self-governance, community engagements, and experiential learning. Teachers who subscribe to this philosophy encourage students to become active participants in their communities and to use their agency to generate social change. The second pedagogical framework Dover (2013) describes is social justice education. She asserts that social justice education includes aspects of democratic education, critical pedagogy, critical multicultural education, and culturally responsive education. In addition, social justice education emphasizes curriculum content connected to social identity and injustice, oppression theory, intersectionality, and reflexive teaching practice. In Dover's (2015) description of social justice education, she is referring to a broader approach to education that encompasses the curriculum, classroom practices, school policies, and the overall school culture to promote social justice and address

systemic inequities. In contrast, when referring to teaching for social justice throughout this paper, I specifically focus on the instructional practices and strategies to promote social justice within the classroom.

The third component of Dover's (2015) framework is culturally responsive education. In culturally responsive classrooms, teaching and learning are student-centered, where students' unique cultural strengths are viewed as assets and are used to promote student achievement (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Culturally responsive teachers maintain affirming views of students from diverse backgrounds, considering each student's unique cultural background and characteristics as learning resources rather than problems to overcome (Villegas et al., 2002). The next component Dover (2013) describes is multicultural education. She describes multicultural education as a multidimensional framework, maintaining five key components: (1) multicultural curricular content; (2) an examination of knowledge construction processes; (3) prejudice reduction; (4) equity pedagogy or classroom practices designed to promote academic achievement across racial, ethnic, and social class groups; (5) the restructuring of school culture and organization to facilitate equity and empowerment. Multicultural education promotes understanding, respect, and equity among diverse groups, preparing students to thrive in a globalized world.

The final component that comprises Dover's (2015) framework is critical pedagogy. Critical educators see social justice as a foundation for disrupting and changing unjust, unequal, and undemocratic political institutions. They view teaching as a political process and commit to critical reflection, dialogue, and social activism. Teachers who utilize critical pedagogy empower students to question and challenge societal norms and injustices, fostering a deeper, critical

understanding of the world around them and encouraging them to be active, informed participants in shaping a more equitable society.

Figure 2.2. Conceptual and pedagogical foundations of teaching for social justice from Dover (2013)

The frameworks put forth by Cochran-Smith (2009, 2010) and Dover (2013) largely influenced my interpretation of teaching for social justice. Cochran-Smith's (2009, 2010) framework specifically helped me understand what teaching for social justice looks and sounds like on a practical level, while Dover's (2013) framework provided me with a foundational understanding of the conceptual and pedagogical frameworks that comprise teaching for social justice. These conceptual frameworks fit this study, as the research questions focused on

understanding what alumni learned about teaching for social justice and how they apply this to practice. Both frameworks were used when developing the survey and interview questions. Furthermore, the frameworks helped me interpret the findings, illuminating what was learned about social justice in the TEP and what was put into practice by alumni. In subsequent chapters, I further address the ways in which the frameworks guided my interpretation and analysis of the data.

Review of Literature

In addition to the frameworks put forth by Cochran-Smith (2009, 2010) and Dover (2013), empirical research that examines the common practices employed by TEPs to prepare preservice teachers to teach for social justice also largely informed my understanding of social justice teaching and influenced the study's overall design. This research bolstered my conception of the pedagogical and practical efforts made by social justice TEPs, enabling me to better understand alumni's perceptions of Sunvale's efforts to prepare them to teach for social justice. It also elevated the areas researchers commonly focus on when studying social justice teacher education while highlighting the areas that need further research. Therefore, this study aimed to contribute to the existing research by shedding light on the practices of a social justice-based TEP while also employing research methods that are not commonly used with the hope of contributing to the gaps in research. This section is broken into four themes:

1. Standalone diversity coursework
2. Preservice teacher dispositions
3. Programmatic view of TEPs
4. Fieldwork/Service Learning

I have broken this section into these four categories as these are the four lenses through which education researchers often investigate social justice within teacher education programs.

Standalone diversity course. The most common approach to incorporating social justice into a teacher education program is to include coursework related to racial, cultural, and linguistic diversity (Liu & Ball, 2019). In most programs, however, this takes the form of one or two separate courses, with the rest of the program giving minimal attention to race and culture (Liu & Ball, 2019). Thus, there is a tendency in teacher education research to examine the pedagogy of a standalone diversity course (McDonald, 2008). This research frequently focuses on the course's efficacy of teaching white students to teach students from diverse backgrounds by examining the course's impact on white students' attitudes and beliefs towards race and diversity. This literature informed my understanding of the pedagogical tools and practices used in social justice teacher education courses as well as their impact, influencing my interpretations of the data collected in the study.

Miller and Owusu-Ansah (2016) utilized pre and post-test surveys to understand the impact of a diversity course on white female PSTs. Their data analysis showed that students in the class moved from having a surface-level understanding of diversity to a deeper reflection of families and students' concepts, terminology, and cultural displays. Similarly, in a study by Davis et al. (2008), scholars analyzed two assignments in a culturally relevant teaching course. These assignments aimed to push students to examine their own identity and how their life experiences have shaped their understanding of race and culture. Analysis of the assignments showed they helped students think about the complexity of identity formation, and they helped deepen students' understanding of white privilege.

Ohito (2016) explored the impact of using discomfort as a pedagogy to disrupt white supremacy in teacher education. More specifically, she examined how this pedagogy can be used in social justice education to teach white PSTs. Results indicated that using a pedagogy of discomfort helped students make a more profound meaning of racial oppression and created a learning community where students were emotionally open, supporting one another as they deepened their critical consciousness about race, racism, and white supremacy. Milner (2006) utilized qualitative methods to examine the impact of his urban education course. Through interviews and artifact collection, he discovered that PSTs who showed the most promise for teaching in urban schools could engage in a deep level of reflection, thinking about themselves in conjunction with their students. Similarly, Pezzetti (2017) examined how PSTs enrolled in his Social Contexts of Education course talk and write about racial diversity. Through observation and interview data, Pezetti concluded that participants valued racial diversity in their own lives, continually positioning themselves as nonracist, but viewed incorporating race and diversity into their curriculum as a challenge.

Schiera (2019) also sought to understand the impact of a Social Foundations course by examining how the course supported PSTs' development as social justice educators. Specifically, he investigated if the course helped PSTs connect theoretical understandings of social justice and day-to-day application as student teachers. Data analysis revealed the participants all believed that good and just teaching extends beyond the classroom and the role of social justice educators is to enable students to examine power structures within society critically. Grant et al. (2018) examined the impact of an online multicultural education course on white preservice teachers' engagement with diverse content. The results demonstrated that most students exhibited

resistance or compliance to engaging with diverse content. The students who did embrace the content struggled to incorporate multicultural education into their pedagogies.

Most studies in this section share findings demonstrating that the courses positively impacted preservice teachers, arguing that participants in the studies deepened their understanding and awareness of race, racism, and whiteness. However, it is essential to note that most articles were written by the faculty members who taught the courses. These faculty members frequently used case study and narrative methods. While these methods gave way for depth and detail, they also enabled the instructor to highlight what they saw as positive outcomes. Because the course instructors wrote these articles, their perspectives may uphold bias toward discussing the success of their work. This highlights how deeper discussion regarding the evaluation and interpretation of case study and narrative research is needed across teacher education research. Because of this, I chose to employ a mixed-methods case study, using quantitative and qualitative data sources to minimize bias across my interpretations and findings. Furthermore, I sought to expand upon this research by surveying and interviewing alumni to gain insight into their experiences and knowledge learned in the TEP rather than utilizing faculty members as my main source of participants.

The common trend across these articles was to examine the various strategies used to raise awareness about issues related to race and culture, predominantly focusing on how to transform the beliefs and attitudes of white students. Data analysis frequently consisted of analyzing critical reflection assignments, where PSTs were prompted to reflect on their own identity in relation to systems such as racism. While the articles reported positive outcomes, these outcomes appear to be surface-level, indicating the stand-alone diversity course method is not producing white teachers who are critically transformed. This further elevates the need for

teacher education programs that incorporate social justice into their entire curriculum and program rather than relegating it to one standalone diversity course. For this study, I chose the TEP at Sunvale University to serve as the site for my case study, as the TEP infuses social justice across its entire program. Indeed, this was a key finding for the first research question, as survey and interview participants perceived that social justice was infused throughout the whole program. By studying a TEP that weaves social justice into the foundation of its program, the findings of this study contribute empirical research that highlights the impact of an entire social justice teacher education program on teacher learning.

While the articles in this section continually reported positive findings, none examined the courses' impact on PSTs' pedagogical practice as they become full-time teachers. Because of this, it is impossible to know how these courses directly impacted teaching practice. This illuminates the need for more research that follows teachers through their TEPs and into their first years of teaching to determine the extent and ways social justice teacher education prepares them to become better teachers (Sleeter and Owuor, 2011). This research is essential for more TEPs are adopting social justice frameworks to prepare teachers to challenge systemic inequities and close opportunity gaps. As social justice in teacher education becomes more common, more scientific research is needed to understand its impact on teacher preparation. Thus, utilizing alumni, rather than preservice teachers, as the study's participants was significant, for the findings contributed to these needs.

Influences on preservice teacher dispositions. TEPs also try to address the demographic mismatch between teachers and students by developing preservice teachers' attitudes and multicultural knowledge base (Sleeter, 2001). Because preservice teachers are predominantly white and female, these efforts typically focus on developing the attitudes and

beliefs of white PSTs. As a result, a significant amount of teacher education research is dedicated to investigating the impact of TEP curriculum and programming on white PSTs' attitudes and beliefs towards cultural and racial diversity. While this literature provided insight into how the impact of social justice curriculum is typically assessed, I chose not to focus solely on white preservice teachers in this study as this is so commonly overdone in the research. However, despite this intentional decision, the qualitative data showed there was one distinct difference between white interview participants and interview participants of color: white teachers more frequently expressed how the program opened their eyes to existing inequities in society, challenged their worldviews, and encouraged them to think critically about injustices within society. This finding demonstrated that while the program is not focused solely on white PSTs, it may be impacting white PSTs differently. This finding is in line with the research outlined below, which captures how other social justice courses and TEPs focus on the beliefs and attitudes of white PSTs.

In a case study by Ramirez et al. (2016), researchers examined how two white preservice teachers enacted CRP during their student teaching by investigating their attitudes and dispositions. The two PSTs were selected to partake in the study because they demonstrated an aptitude for CRP. Data analysis revealed the participants upheld affirming attitudes toward diverse students, a genuine commitment to learning about students, and a commitment to engaging youth through culturally responsive teaching in their classrooms.

Skepple (2014) also investigated PSTs' attitudes and beliefs about culturally responsive teaching by exploring what personal and professional factors influence white PSTs' knowledge and skills. Skepple's findings revealed that limited prior exposure to diversity impacts PSTs cultural diversity knowledge base and ability to teach diverse learners effectively. Analysis of the

data also demonstrated that while white PSTs relied on their previous experiences with diversity to shape their understanding of the world, many still struggled to recognize people of color's daily lived experiences. Finally, Skepple's findings showed that even though PST's were confident in their knowledge of culturally relevant pedagogy, they were less confident in their ability to put their knowledge into practice in a classroom setting.

A study by Milner et al. (2003) revealed similar findings to Skepple (2014). Using quantitative methods, Milner et al. (2003) assessed the cultural sensitivity of preservice teachers by replicating a study done by Larke (1990) twenty years prior. Analysis of the survey data revealed that PSTs were more likely to agree with statements that emphasized cultural inclusion and respect than the PSTs in Larke's (1990) study. Similar to Skepple (2014), however, most PSTs reported neutral responses regarding integrating culturally responsive practices into their curriculum and assessments.

Two studies (Marx 2004; Marx & Pennington, 2003) specifically examined the beliefs and attitudes of white PSTs to understand how white PSTs conceptualize race, whiteness, and white racism and how these understandings influence their beliefs. Both qualitative studies demonstrated that the participants did not view their whiteness as a racial identity, upheld deficit views towards people of color, and viewed racism as an individual problem maintained by extremists.

Like much of the research on social justice teacher education, these studies focused on the beliefs and dispositions of preservice teachers. While this research is essential, the studies do not connect beliefs to teaching practice. Liu and Ball (2019) argue we need more research that goes beyond assuming that teacher candidates' beliefs necessarily lead to different behaviors and actions in their classrooms (Liu & Ball, 2019). We need research that investigates how teachers

incorporate or disregard these beliefs into their pedagogical practices. Without this research, we must be cautious about believing claims that PSTs, especially white PSTs, have been transformed during their teacher preparation program. To improve teacher education, particularly teacher education for social justice, we need more literature that looks at what happens when preservice teachers leave and become full-time teachers. Therefore, this study aimed to expand upon the existing literature by focusing on teacher practices rather than teacher beliefs. It specifically investigated teachers' perceptions of what they learned about teaching for social justice and how these perceptions played out in practice once they graduated from the program.

The studies in this section primarily focus on white preservice teachers. This is partly due to the racial make-up of teacher education programs, but this is also an intentional choice commonly made by researchers in teacher education. By only focusing on white preservice teachers, this research privileges whiteness and fails to consider the diverse experiences and perspectives within a teacher education program. By excluding preservice teachers of color from the research, we fail to understand how they interpret and practice social justice teaching. Therefore, I intentionally chose to recruit a racially diverse group of participants for this study. While one of the findings highlights a difference in perceptions by white teachers, the study as a whole seeks to elevate a wide range of viewpoints and experiences.

Programmatic view of TEP. Because the dominant trend in teacher education research is to examine the impact of an individual social justice course, there is little current research that considers an entire teacher education program (McDonald, 2008). This limits the ability to comprehensively understand the TEP curriculum as a whole, the interconnections among the opportunities to learn across courses, and the relationship between pedagogies and the broader aims of programs (McDonald, 2008). If we are genuinely invested in closing the opportunity

gaps that disproportionately impact students of color, then research needs to focus on understanding TEPs as a whole. The more we know about TEP's attempts to incorporate race and diversity issues throughout their entire program, the more effectively we can design programmatic experiences that are genuinely transformative. The studies described below attempt to address this issue. These studies are significant because they served as the primary inspiration behind the design of this study, as this study investigated the impact of a TEP who infuses social justice teaching across its entire coursework and curriculum.

In a study by Cochran-Smith et al. (2009), scholars examined how PSTs in a social justice-focused TEP understood the concept and how their understandings impacted the learning opportunities they created in their classrooms as student teachers. Data collection primarily consisted of multiple in-depth interviews with the participants (n = 12), classroom observation, interviews with their principals and mentors, and artifact collection. Analysis of the data revealed the participants were deeply committed to equity, incorporating their students' lived experiences into their instruction while teaching students to think critically and to challenge the universality of traditional curriculum.

In a study by Cross (2003), she explored a TEP's efforts to incorporate issues of race into their TEP curriculum. Through interviews with graduates of the program, she learned the program taught graduates how to respect children's language, use diverse literature, recognize cultural diversity, and acknowledge background knowledge and experiences. Like Cross (2003), Athanases and Martin (2006) also interviewed graduates of a TEP to understand graduates' views of the program's strengths in preparing teachers to advocate for educational equity. Anthanases and Martin chose this program because it emphasizes preparing teachers for social justice, educational equity, and race and diversity. Through focus groups, it became clear that the

program successfully prepared the teachers to teach from an equity-based lens to diverse learners, as the program placed a heavy emphasis on putting culturally relevant pedagogy at the foundation of its TEP curriculum.

McDonald (2008) used qualitative case study methods to examine the pedagogy of assignments in two teacher education programs by examining assignments across several courses. The data analysis revealed that most assignments aimed to connect teachers' coursework with their field placement experiences. McDonald's analysis also revealed that while most of the assignments focused on social justice, they focused on meeting the needs of individual students rather than examining the social, political, and institutional conditions of schooling.

Each of these studies examined multiple facets of a teacher education program to better understand how the program is preparing preservice teachers to teach for social justice. Their examination of an entire program versus a standalone course is critical because it gives way to a comprehensive understanding of the TEP curriculum, highlights the interconnections across classes, and illuminates the correlation between pedagogy and the broader goals of the program. Similar to the studies described, this study investigated a TEP that infuses social justice across its entire curriculum through various forms of data collection. Like Cochran-Smith's (2009) study, this study examined how teachers interpreted social justice based on what they learned from their TEP and how their understanding impacted their practice. However, unique to Cochran-Smith's (2009) study, this study focused on full-time teachers who have already graduated from a program, not preservice teachers. By concentrating on fully certified teachers, my goal was to expand upon the existing research on social justice teacher education programs.

Fieldwork. A common technique employed by TEPs to expose their preservice teachers to diversity is through fieldwork or service-learning projects. Various scholars suggest that these

opportunities are beneficial, for many white PSTs have had limited exposure to students of color (Liu & Ball, 2019). In addition, exposing PSTs to diverse students through a fieldwork experience is believed to help prepare them to teach racially and culturally diverse students. Fieldwork experiences are frequently required in social justice teacher education programs; therefore, including these studies in this review is helpful because they demonstrate the various ways TEPs incorporate social justice into their curriculum beyond the classroom.

Beaudry (2015) used qualitative methods to investigate the efforts to integrate community-based field experiences into a semester-long TEP course by examining how participants (n = 3) interpreted their field experience and courses. Furthermore, she explored how these two variables influence participants' teaching and learning in their subsequent semesters of student teaching. The study's primary finding demonstrated that participants valued community-based field experiences, and it enabled them to connect to issues and ideas related to community, education, and diversity in ways that solidified them and made them tangible.

Baldwin et al. (2007) employed qualitative methods to explore how service-learning programs situated in diverse communities provide preservice teachers with opportunities to cultivate more profound understandings of culturally diverse learners. The authors examined the service-learning programs in two different settings: an urban program and a rural program. Analysis of the data revealed that service-learning could positively impact PSTs, challenging their deficit assumptions and promoting teaching practices that embrace diversity.

Boyle-Baise and Kilbane (2000) conducted a case study with ethnographic techniques to investigate if a service-learning experience effectively prepares preservice teachers to become multicultural educators. The majority white preservice teachers (n=24) completed this service-learning requirement in tandem with their multicultural education course. The goal for the

service-learning project was to expose PSTs to culturally diverse and low-income groups, to challenge preconceived stereotypes, and for PSTs to gain awareness of community problems and resources. Data analysis revealed that while PSTs demonstrated a great deal of growth (i.e., exposure to diversity, challenging their own biases), PSTs still struggled to view the unique cultural assets of families and communities in which they served, and they struggled to recognize the systemic inequities that create challenging conditions within these communities.

These three articles all report positive outcomes in their findings, arguing that participants in their studies deepened their understanding of race and diversity through their service-learning projects or community-based fieldwork experiences. These findings corroborate the argument made by scholars that fieldwork provides preservice teachers with the opportunities to consider issues related to education, diversity, and equity in ways that promote and support strong teaching for diversity (Liu & Ball, 2019). This literature pertains to this study, as I am interested in understanding the various ways teachers learn about social justice through their teacher education program. Fieldwork or service-learning projects are vital components teachers may attribute to learning about social justice. The research on fieldwork gave me a deeper understanding of fieldwork experiences and enabled me to ask interview questions that pertain to this effectively.

Through these articles, however, it is apparent that service-learning projects benefit white preservice teachers, giving them an experience with diversity so they feel prepared to teach in diverse settings. In these studies, PSTs were not challenged to think about institutional racism and how it is contextualized within the settings where they completed their projects, nor were they pushed to deconstruct deficit notions they upheld about students of color. Beaudry (2015) noted that while the experience bolstered students' awareness of incorporating diversity into their

pedagogy, the experience reinforced their deficit beliefs for several participants. These examples demonstrate how short-term disconnected experiences, if not done carefully, can produce harm because they re-instantiate deficit beliefs. To gain deeper insight into the purpose and meaning behind the fieldwork experiences required within Sunvale's TEP, the survey and interview questions asked participants questions regarding how the TEP addressed systemic racism and other institutional inequities. The purpose behind these questions was to understand the challenges and success the TEP experienced in teaching these various topics and how the teachers' knowledge of them informs their practice.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I addressed the conceptual frameworks on social justice teaching put forth by Marilyn Cochran-Smith (2009, 2010) and Allison Dover (2013), as these frameworks were instrumental in guiding the design of this study. Cochran-Smith's (2009, 2010) framework outlines six key principles that constitute teaching for social justice. Each principle is practitioner-focused, describing pedagogical and practical elements that social justice educators should incorporate into their teaching. Dover (2013) builds on Cochran-Smith's (2009, 2010) work; however, her framework focuses on the conceptual foundations that give way to social justice teaching. Each framework is valuable, for they informed my understanding of social justice teaching from both a practical and theoretical perspective, empowering me to develop survey and interview questions grounded in theory but aiming to capture participants' practical experiences.

This chapter also addressed the foundational literature that sheds light on the most common ways TEPs adopt social justice practices and reveals the research methods frequently used to analyze these practices. This research bolstered my conception of the pedagogical and

practical efforts made by social justice TEPs, enabling me to better understand alumni's perceptions of Sunvale's efforts to prepare them to teach for social justice. It also elevated the areas researchers commonly focus on when studying social justice teacher education while highlighting the areas that need further research. This exploration showed that more large-scale, longitudinal, mixed-methods studies are needed to further understand what it means to prepare teachers to teach for social justice. Additionally, the literature revealed that more studies are needed that look at the impact of a social justice teacher education program that infuses social justice throughout its entire curriculum. These studies should also consider the TEP's impact once preservice teachers have graduated and become full time teachers. While this study was not large-scale or longitudinal due to time and financial constraints, it did utilize mixed methods to better understand alumni's perceptions of what they learned about social justice in their TEP and how they apply this knowledge to practice. The design of this study, thereby, contributes to the existing gaps in the research. The subsequent chapters further discuss the methodological design of the study as well as the study's findings and implications.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This study aimed to better understand how a teacher education program with a social justice focus prepares teachers to incorporate teaching for social justice into their pedagogy and practice. To accomplish this, I explored alumni's perceptions of what they learned about teaching for social justice and how these perceptions impact their practice. The following research questions guided the study:

1. In what ways do alumni perceive that Sunvale University helped to prepare teachers to teach for social justice?
2. What components of social justice education did TEP alumni identify as being learned from the program?
3. What aspects of TEP alumni's current classrooms reflect what they learned about social justice in their teacher education program?

To address these research questions, I conducted a mixed-methods case study that utilized quantitative and qualitative research methods. Mixed methods are valuable because they provide a better understanding of research problems and complex phenomena than quantitative or qualitative methods alone (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Furthermore, it provides a way to offset the weaknesses of a single method (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Employing mixed methods also allows triangulation of multiple data sources, increasing the validity of a study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Various scholars have noted that more rigorous empirical research on social justice teacher education is necessary, as standardization and accountability mandates require a scientifically based rationale for any classroom-level intervention (Dover, 2013). By using mixed methods, it was my goal to contribute to such research.

The quantitative data collected for this study includes survey responses. Utilizing quantitative methods allowed me to contribute to the current gap in research, as scholars argue that research on social justice teacher education primarily consists of small, qualitative case studies. The qualitative data collected in this study includes interviews, open-ended survey responses, and classroom observations. This form of data collection gave way for rich, nuanced data as participants had the opportunity to share their experiences in detail. By merging the results from the quantitative and qualitative datasets, I was able to amplify participants' voices while reporting statistical trends (Creswell & Plano Clark 2018).

In addition to mixed methods, I also chose to utilize case study methods to understand how the TEP prepares teachers utilize social justice teaching methods. Case study methods allowed me to conduct an in-depth examination of the TEP, as I relied on multiple sources of evidence: interviews, survey data, open-ended responses, and classroom observations. This study is considered an embedded case study because it is a single case study that involves a unit of analysis at more than one level (Yin, 2018). Yin (2018) noted that embedded case study design allows for a more detailed level of inquiry because there are more opportunities for extensive analysis. This is beneficial as it gives more profound insights into the single case (Yin, 2018). The single case in the study is the teacher education program, and the subunits are the teachers. I interviewed 17 teachers and spent eight hours observing three teachers in each of their classrooms. These teachers each serve as a single embedded case within my larger case study. By viewing the teachers as embedded single cases, I was better able to understand how the teacher education program influenced their knowledge and understanding of social justice teaching and their ability to translate that knowledge into practice.

Sample and Population

The teacher education program that served as my case study site was a large university in the Southwestern United States. I have given the university the pseudonym Sunvale University. I chose the TEP at Sunvale University for three primary reasons:

1. The TEP has demonstrated a commitment to social justice and diversity that extends beyond a short-term focus.
2. The TEP supports teachers to work in schools with students from diverse backgrounds.
3. The TEP is engaged in a process of integrating social justice across multiple courses and student teaching placements.

This program offers two teaching credential options: the M.Ed. multiple subject credential and the M.Ed. single subject credential. Sunvale uses a cohort model where PSTs in each track take most of the same courses together throughout the program to generate community and establish a cohesive learning experience (Seifert & Mandzuk, 2006). The program's design fosters collaboration as it encourages students to build relationships, support each other, and work together (Seifert & Mandzuk, 2006). The TEP is representative of other TEPs in the region in terms of the student population and the program's mission. While the TEP is a one-year graduate program, many of the students in the program attended Sunvale as an undergraduate, where they minored or majored in Education. The undergraduate courses primarily focus on race, culture, language, and equity in education. Thus, students may enter the TEP with a strong foundation and understanding of these concepts.

The subunits within this case study are alumni who obtained a credential from the teacher education program. I focused on alumni rather than current students because the aim of the study was to understand what teachers perceived they learned about social justice teaching from the TEP and how they translated this knowledge into practice. The vast majority of research on

social justice teacher education focuses on the beliefs and practices of pre-service teachers. Scholars assert that more rigorous empirical research is needed to examine a TEP's impact on fully certified, full-time teachers (Zeichner, 2011; Sleeter & Owuor, 2011; Cochran-Smith, 2009). By focusing on alumni of the program, my goal was to contribute to this gap in the research. The alumni who participated in the study graduated from the program within the last ten years (2012-2022). By binding the case to include only participants who graduated between 2012 and 2022, I was able to consider how the curriculum within the TEP changed throughout these ten years. These changes are important to consider as they may impact participants' understanding of social justice teaching.

This study had three groups of participants. The first group of participants are the respondents who completed the survey. I utilized snowball sampling methods to find participants willing to take the survey (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Because of IRB and privacy protocols, I was not able to email the survey directly to alumni. Therefore, the TEP program director and several other willing TEP faculty members emailed the survey to alumni on my behalf. I also posted the survey in the alumni Facebook group. Through these collective efforts, 36 people completed the survey. Of the participants who reported their race, nine were Hispanic/Latinx, ten were White, and one was Asian American. Twelve participants reported having a multiple subject credential, while 14 reported having a single subject credential. More details about the participants' demographics are included in the table below. Participants completed the survey anonymously; therefore, they have not been assigned pseudonyms.

Table 3.1. Survey Participant Demographics

Survey Participant Demographics						
	Race/Ethnicity	**Gender**	**Grades Taught**	**Subjects Taught**	**Year Graduated From TEP**	**Credential Focus**
1	Latino/a	F	K,1,2,3,4,5, 6,7,8,9,10,11,12	Other	2013	Multiple subject - Bilingual Authorization Program
2	White	M	N/A	N/A	2019	Multiple subject
3	Other	M	9,11,12	English	2012	English
4	Latino/a	F	9	Math	2021	Math
5	White	M	9,10,11	English, ESL		English
6	Hispanic	F	1,2,3,4,5, 6	All	2018	Multiple subject
7	White	F	K,1,2,3,4,5, 6	All	2021	Multiple subject
8	White	F	3	All	2019	Multiple subject
9	Latino/a	F	9,10,11	Other	2020	World Languages
10	Hispanic	F	9,10,11,12	Math	2016	Math
11	Other	M	4	All	2020	Multiple subject - Bilingual Authorization Program, Elementary Math Concentration
12	White	F	10,11	Science	2020	Science
13	White	F	5	All	2019	Multiple subject

Table 3.1. Survey Participant Demographics

Survey Participant Demographics						
	Race/Ethnicity	**Gender**	**Grades Taught**	**Subjects Taught**	**Year Graduated From TEP**	**Credential Focus**
14	Latino/a	F	N/A	Other	2016	Multiple subject - Bilingual Authorization Program, Elementary Math Concentration
15	White	F	K,1,2,3,4,5	Other	2013	Multiple subject - Bilingual Authorization Program
16	Two or more	F	6,7,8	English, Social Studies, ESL	N/A	Multiple subject
17	Hispanic	Prefer not to say	11,12	English	2017	English
18	White	F	7,8	Science	2017	Science
19	Prefer not to say	F	6,7,8	English	2019	English
20	Latino/a	M	9,10	Other	2018	World Languages
21	White	M	8	English, Social Studies	2017	English
22	Latino/a	F	9,11	English, Other	2020	English
23	Two or more	F	K	All	2020	Multiple subject

Table 3.1. Survey Participant Demographics

Survey Participant Demographics						
	Race/Ethnicity	**Gender**	**Grades Taught**	**Subjects Taught**	**Year Graduated From TEP**	**Credential Focus**
24	White	F	N/A	Other	2015	Multiple subject - Bilingual Authorization Program
25	Latino/a	F	6	Math	2012	Math
26	Latino/a	F	12	Social Studies	2016	English
27	N/A	F	7,8	English	2021	English
28	Asian American	F	8	Science	2018	Science

The second group of participants in the study are the participants who participated in an interview. To find interview participants, I employed two strategies. First, the survey asked respondents if they were interested in participating in a follow-up interview. Second, I asked the interview participants who volunteered for an interview via the survey if they had friends or colleagues who would be interested in participating in an interview. Through these two methods, I was able to conduct Zoom interviews with 17 participants. Across the participants, seven identified as white, seven as Latinx, and three as Asian American. Thirteen out of the seventeen interviewees were female. The participants' credential focus spanned a wide range, with secondary math being the most common credential. Further details about the participants' demographics are listed in the table below. Each interview participant was given a pseudonym.

Table 3.2. Interview Participant Demographics

Interview Participant Demographics						
Name	**Grade Taught**	**Subject**	**Year Graduated**	**Race/Ethnicity**	**Gender**	**Credential Focus**
Morgan	Kinder	All	2020	White	F	Multiple Subject
Diego	9 & 10	Spanish	2018	Latinx	M	World Language
Emily	7	Science	2017	White	F	Science
Isabella	11 & 12	English	2015	Latinx	F	English
Erin	TK & 2	All	2016	Latinx	F	Multiple subject & BLA
Luis	9 & 11	Math	2016	Latinx	M	Math and BLA
Camila	10	Spanish	2020	Latinx	F	World Language
Alyssa	K-6	STEAM enrichment	2021	White	F	Multiple subject with math concentration
David	9	Math	2021	Latinx	M	Math
Carmen	6	Math	2012	Latinx	F	Science
Sophia	10, 11, 12	Math	2016	White	F	Math
Lance	11 & 12	Math	2016	White	M	Math
Grace	9, 10, 11	Math	2022	Asian	F	Math
Teresa	8	Science	2013	White	F	Science
Aria	8	English & US History	2017	White	F	English

Table 3.2. Interview Participant Demographics

Interview Participant Demographics						
Name	**Grade Taught**	**Subject**	**Year Graduated**	**Race/Ethnicity**	**Gender**	**Credential Focus**
Stacy	8	Science	2018	Asian	F	Science
Megan	8	Math	2016	Asian	F	Math

The third group of participants in the study are the participants who participated in classroom observations. During the interviews with each participant, I asked if they were willing to let me observe their classroom. Five interview participants indicated they were open to classroom observations; however, I ended up observing only three teachers. The demographics for each observation participant are shared in the table below. More details about the observation participants are also shared in Chapter 6. I spent eight hours in each teacher's classroom. These observations aimed to gain insight into how the teachers implement social justice teaching into their daily practice.

Table 3.3. Observation Participant Demographics

Observation Participant Demographics								
Pseudonym	**Grade Taught**	**Subject**	**Year Graduated**	**Age**	**Race/Ethnicity**	**Languages Spoken**	**Gender**	**Credential Focus**
Diego	9 & 10	Spanish	2018	38	Latinx	Spanish, English	M	Single subject - World Language
Isabella	11 & 12	English	2015	30	Latinx	Spanish, English	F	Single subject - English
Carmen	6	Math	2012	49	Latinx	Spanish, English	F	Single subject - Science

Data Collection Procedures

This mixed-methods case study loosely followed an explanatory sequential design. I began by conducting the quantitative phase and followed up with the subsequent qualitative phase to help explain the quantitative results (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). The survey window opened in September and closed in mid-November. My intention was to begin interviews after the survey window closed; however, I kept the survey open for longer than I initially planned to help increase the number of survey respondents. Thus, I began conducting interviews by mid-October. I completed the interviews by January, and then I moved on to classroom observations. The observations took place from February to May.

Creswell and Plano Clark (2018) assert that qualitative research in explanatory sequential design is implemented to explain the initial results in more depth. Thus, in this study, the quantitative data is meant to give a high-level overview of alumni's perceptions of what they learned about social justice in the TEP and how they apply this knowledge to practice. In contrast, the qualitative data provides in-depth information that extends upon the quantitative results. The table below highlights the data collection methods and which research question they aimed to address. This table shows that most of the data collection was qualitative.

Table 3.4. Data Collection Methods

Data Collection	Method	Research Question
Likert-Style Survey Questions	Quantitative	RQ1, RQ2, RQ3
Open-Ended Survey Questions	Qualitative	RQ1, RQ2, RQ3
Teacher Interviews	Qualitative	RQ1, RQ2, RQ3
Classroom Observations	Qualitative	RQ3

Quantitative procedures. The quantitative data collected in this study consisted of the survey data (see survey in appendix). By including a quantitative component in this study, my

goal was to contribute quantitative data on social justice teacher education, as scholars assert most of this research is conducted through small qualitative studies (Reagan & Hambacher, 2021). Moreover, Dover (2013) argues that more rigorous empirical research on social justice teacher education is necessary, as standardization and accountability mandates require a scientifically based rationale for any classroom-level intervention. My goal was to contribute to this rigorous empirical research by utilizing mixed methods.

Learning to Teach for Social Justice - Beliefs Scale. The scale I used for the survey was called the "Learning to Teach for Social Justice-Beliefs" (LTSJ-B) scale (Enterline et al., 2008). This validated scale was designed to measure teachers' perceptions, expectations, and beliefs about teaching, their sense of preparedness for teaching, and once in the classroom, their reported practices and strategies (Enterline et al., 2008). It was developed using literature on social justice and teacher education. The scale includes 24 items, and for each item, respondents answer using a 5-point rating scale (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Uncertain, 4 = Agree, and 5 = Strongly Agree).

The items that make up the LTSJ-B scale were chosen because they reflect the belief that teaching is an opportunity to generate change, and they encompass key ideas about justice, the distribution of learning opportunities, and the recognition of the knowledge and identities of diverse groups (Enterline et al. 2008). As described by Enterline et al. (2008), the key ideas include:

> High expectations and rich learning opportunities for all pupils; an asset-based perspective on the cultural, linguistic, and experiential resources pupils and families bring to school; the importance of critical thinking in a democratic society; the role of teachers as advocates and agents for change; challenges to the notion of a meritocratic society;

> teaching as an activity that is related to teachers' deep underlying assumptions and beliefs about race, class, gender, disability, and culture; and the idea that issues related to culture, equity, and race ought to be part of what is speakable and visible in all aspects of the curriculum (p. 276).

In addition to the LTSJ-B scale, I added questions to the survey. I developed these questions utilizing the social justice conceptual framework. I added these questions because more questions were needed to capture respondents' perceptions of the TEP. Moreover, given the LTSJ-B scale was created in the early 2000s, certain topics that are more prevalent in schools today were missing. Specifically, I added more questions about sexuality and gender. Finally, I added questions that pertain to the current political climate. These questions were important to consider because I anticipated the current climate would have an impact on a teacher's ability to implement social justice practices in their teaching. I specifically added questions asking how the TEP prepared teachers to teach for social justice given the current climate (i.e. Covid-19, Donald Trump's presidency, pushback against Critical Race Theory, etc.). I did this knowing it could impact my quantitative results; however, I believe adding these questions was still imperative because they were needed to capture information relevant to the present social justice teacher education landscape. I will later discuss the limitations this caused, and recommend that future research focuses on creating validated scales that seek to capture the experiences of social justice educators in today's climate.

The survey was emailed to participants by faculty and posted in alumni Facebook groups. The survey was conducted entirely online, for this allowed the participants to fill out the survey on a day and time that was convenient for them. Before the participants began the survey, a message appeared on the screen that informed the participants they could opt out of the project or

skip a question at any time during the survey. The message also asked the participants to fill the survey out independently and keep their answers private. An additional message appeared that informed the participants that the survey should not take longer than 20 minutes and that they should complete the survey in one go, as they cannot save their answers. Finally, the respondents were notified their responses would remain anonymous, and they were asked to sign a consent form before proceeding with the survey. The program director sent teachers two reminder emails to take the survey.

Qualitative procedures. The qualitative data collected in this study included interviews, open-ended survey responses, and classroom observations (see protocols in appendix).

Educator Interviews. The interviews took place after the majority of the survey data had been collected. These interviews aimed to better understand how the TEP informed teachers' social justice teaching practices. Interview participants were asked questions such as how your TEP integrated social justice into its program, how the TEP influenced their thoughts about inequities that exist in schools, and how they included families and communities to enhance their instruction. The interviews were semi-structured and conducted via Zoom. Each interview lasted approximately one hour. The Zoom interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim (with participants' consent) using Zoom's transcription feature and were checked for accuracy before proceeding with data analysis. Zoom gave way to greater flexibility than in-person interviews, allowing me to interview participants who live far away.

Faculty Interview. In addition to the teacher interviews, I also interviewed the teacher education program director. This interview was 90 minutes long and took place over Zoom. The initial purpose of this interview was to better understand the structural mandates that inhibit or promote social justice curriculum and programming throughout the TEP. I wanted to better

understand how state regulations impact the program's ability to incorporate issues and topics related to diversity, equity, and inclusion so I could better understand how the TEP weaves social justice into its curriculum. However, after conducting this interview, the findings from the interview that were most relevant to this study revolved around the program director's description of the program's goals. Thus, for the purpose of this study, I briefly address the interview with the program director in Chapter 7 when discussing the program's goals versus its outcomes.

Open-Ended Survey Questions. In addition to the interviews, the survey also included several open-ended questions. Like the interviews, these questions aimed to gain deeper insight into participants' perceptions of how the TEP prepared them to teach for social justice. The open-ended questions allowed the survey respondents to provide information beyond the survey questions that were used purely for quantitative data collection. Moreover, including open-ended survey questions allowed those who did not participate in interviews to provide more details regarding their TEP experiences. Survey respondents were asked questions such as, what were the most valuable aspects of your teacher preparation program, and what aspects would you like to change about your TEP?

Observations. In addition to the survey and interviews, I also observed three teachers. These teachers completed the survey, participated in the interview, and volunteered for classroom observations. The observations aimed to gain a deeper awareness and understanding of the teachers' classroom practices as they pertain to social justice. When conducting the observations, I tried to connect how their pedagogy and practice aligned with the social justice conceptual framework guiding this study. I spent approximately eight hours in each teacher's

class, breaking these hours up over four to five visits per teacher. Detailed descriptions of the teachers' backgrounds and of the visits are included in chapter six.

Data Analysis Procedures

As noted by Merrian and Tisdell (2016), data analysis is a meaning-making process; thus, data analysis aimed to make meaningful connections between the data and research questions posed for this study. Given that this study used a loose explanatory sequential design, data analysis happened primarily in sequential order, where all quantitative data was collected and analyzed before the majority of the qualitative data was collected and analyzed (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). The quantitative collection and analysis proceeded with the qualitative portion, for the qualitative results were meant to corroborate and further explain the quantitative results. Moreover, the data was analyzed using the teaching for social justice conceptual framework. This framework served as a tool to analyze the TEP's integration of social justice into their curriculum, teachers' perception of that integration, and teachers' ability to translate that perception into practice.

Quantitative analysis. The survey data was meant to give a high-level overview of what participants perceived they learned about social justice teaching in their TEP. It was also meant to give a broad overview of participants' teaching practices as they pertain to social justice teaching. Further, I prioritized including a survey in this study because the majority of research on social justice teacher education is small-scale and qualitative. By including a survey, it was my goal to address this gap in the research. While my intention was to have a large survey sample size and rigorous statistical analyses, finding participants to take the survey was challenging. The TEP does not have a reliable way to contact alumni from the program. As a result, I was limited to using email lists that were not completely accurate. Furthermore, due to

IRB protocols, I was unable to email the survey directly to alumni; thus, I had to rely on program faculty members to email the survey to alumni. As a result, 36 people completed the survey.

To analyze the survey data, I began by creating and analyzing bar plots for all the survey responses. This was helpful, as it presented the categorical data in a visually comparative, clear, and accessible manner (O'Dwyer & Bernauer, 2013). Further, it gave me a high-level overview of participants' responses as they pertained to each survey question. Following this, I conducted the Spearman rank test on all possible combinations of the survey data, for this test assesses the strength and direction of the association between two variables (O'Dwyer & Bernauer, 2013). I chose this test because it is a non-parametric correlation test that works with Likert scale data (O'Dwyer & Bernauer, 2013), and the questions used in the survey were all Likert-style. By running the Spearman rank test on all possible data combinations, I was able to thoroughly check for correlations. Through this test, it was evident that all of the possible correlations were weak to nonexistent. It is also worth noting that demographic variables such as age, gender, race, etc., were also not significantly correlated with any question, nor did they display any differences between demographic groups.

The lack of statistically significant correlations may have occurred for three different reasons. First, this could largely be due to the survey's small sample size. Second, this could also be due to the fact that I added nonvalidated questions to the scale. Adding non-validated questions can undermine the validity and reliability of the scale, as validated scales are designed to provide reliable and valid measurements (Groves et al., 2009). Non-validated questions do not uphold the same level of validity, which may impact the generalizability of a study (Groves et al., 2009). Despite this, I still uphold that adding questions relevant to the current day was necessary and important. Finally, the lack of statistical significance could also be due to the

survey participants' response bias, as the survey was sent to participants by faculty members. People who remain in contact with their professors years after graduation are more likely to have had a positive experience in the program and, therefore, may present bias in their responses. Furthermore, survey respondents may have reported answers they thought were ideal rather than reporting fully truthful answers. However, despite these limitations and lack of statistical significance, descriptive statistics and frequencies were still helpful when seeking a high-level overview of alumni's perceptions of the program and their practice. Furthermore, the interviews and observations helped offset these limitations as they provided rich detail that bolstered the quantitative findings. Therefore, the subsequent findings chapters are largely focused on the qualitative data, with survey question response rates shared throughout the chapters to further elevate the findings.

Qualitative Data Analysis. The primary qualitative data that was analyzed for this study includes the teacher interviews, observation field notes, and open-ended survey question responses. Each interview was transcribed via Zoom's transcription tool and then manually checked for accuracy. Field notes were taken during every classroom observation and then edited to be in narrative form after the observation was completed. Due to the sequential design of the study, qualitative data analysis began after quantitative data analysis was completed and after all of the qualitative data was collected. The data was analyzed through an inductive open-coding process (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Strauss & Corbin 1998) to identify key themes relevant to the research questions and social justice framework guiding this study.

I began by initially reading all the interview transcripts to better immerse myself in the details. As I did this, I highlighted phrases, sentences, and paragraphs that aligned with the research questions. Next, I placed these highlighted quotes into a separate document broken up

by each research question. I then read through the quotes again, this time assigning keywords based on emerging themes and patterns. For example, within the quotes assigned to the first research question, I quickly noticed that participants described how social justice felt embedded throughout the program, so I began to highlight wherever this was stated. After the second round of open coding, I organized the coded data by subthemes under each research question.

I repeated this process when analyzing the observation field notes and open-ended survey responses. However, during my second iteration of coding for the field notes and survey questions, I did not use as open of a process. Instead, I coded these data sources according to the themes that had emerged during the second round of coding the interviews. After this process was completed, the first research question had four main themes, the second research question had three main themes, and the third research question had four main themes. I discuss these themes in detail in the subsequent chapters; however, the figure below briefly summarizes each theme.

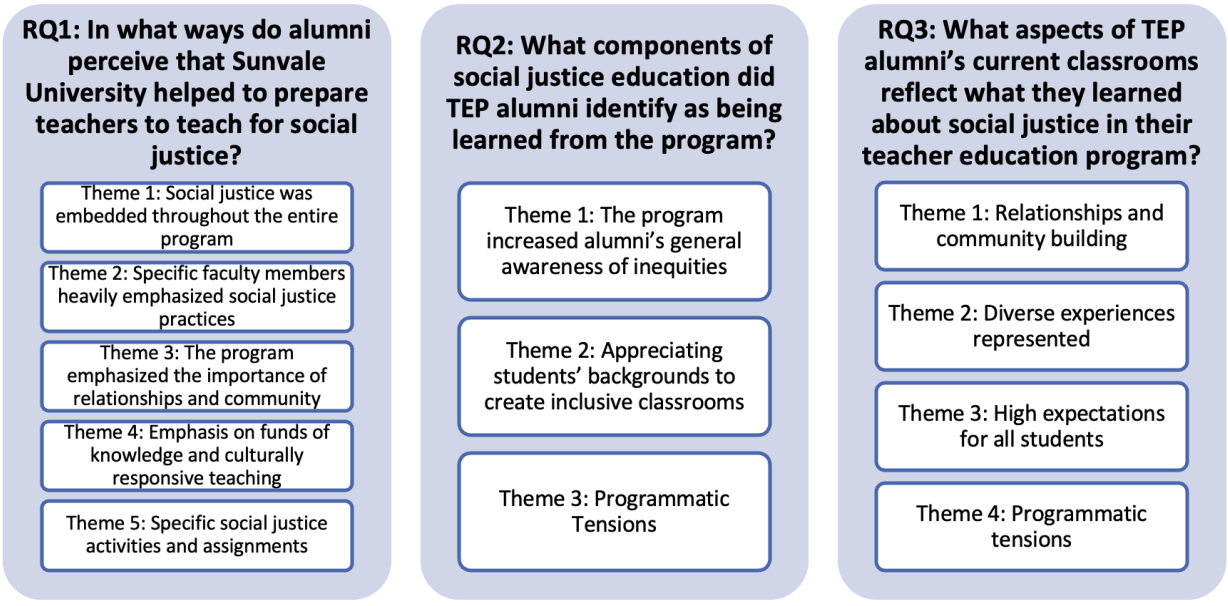

Figure 3.1. Research Questions Findings and Themes

This form of open coding allowed me to view the data without strict assumptions, empowering me to discover new insights into both social justice teacher education and teaching for social justice (Strauss & Corbin, 2004). After I completed the coding process and developed the main themes I would be discussing in the findings chapters, I looked for ways the social justice framework connected to the findings. This strategy allowed me to seek out the ways the findings corroborate existing theoretical knowledge about social justice teaching while also discovering new facets of social justice teaching that contribute to existing theoretical frameworks.

Issues of Validity, Reliability, Trustworthiness of Data

Internal Validity and Reliability. Mixed methods was a useful methodology because triangulating multiple forms of data helped increase the validity of the study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). As noted by Merriam & Tisdell (2016), the process of triangulation involves using multiple sources of data, multiple methods of data collection, and/or multiple theories to confirm emerging findings. Triangulation is important because it counters the concern that a study's findings are based on a single source or method (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Therefore, triangulation of the survey data, open-ended survey responses, interviews, and classroom observations helped boost the credibility of this study.

The survey data provided a high-level overview of alumni's perceptions of what they learned about social justice in the TEP and how they are applying this knowledge to practice. A potential limitation of the survey is the response bias of participants, as they may have been inclined to give socially desirable responses (Groves et al., 2009). This is especially likely given that faculty members asked the respondents to take the survey. While the survey data is still valuable, the interviews and observation data help offset this limitation by providing more

nuanced data. The hour-long Zoom interviews allowed participants to explain in greater detail what they learned about social justice teaching and how they apply it to practice and gave me the opportunity to ask important follow-up questions. The classroom observations allowed me to build a trusting relationship with the participating teachers over the course of three months, giving way to deep conversations with these teachers and their willingness to let me observe their teaching. Furthermore, observing these teachers allowed me to connect actual teacher practice to the things teachers shared about their practice in the survey and interviews. Overall, each component of the data collection process was intentionally designed to be connected to one another and was strategically selected to address the research questions.

To ensure the data and findings are trustworthy, I engaged in regular informal checks with various faculty to seek their feedback throughout the different stages of analysis. Lastly, I have provided information regarding my positionality and assumptions in the first chapter as an additional method for ensuring trustworthiness and internal validity (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Summary

This chapter discussed the methodology used to answer the following research questions:

1. In what ways do alumni perceive that Sunvale University helped to prepare teachers to teach for social justice?
2. What components of social justice education did TEP alumni identify as being learned from the program?
3. What aspects of TEP alumni's current classrooms reflect what they learned about social justice in their teacher education program?

A mixed methodology approach was used to provide triangulation and a more robust quantitative and qualitative data analysis. Semi-structured interviews were conducted, transcribed, and

analyzed from 17 teachers, while over twenty hours of observations were used to further corroborate the survey and interview responses. While the survey data did not uphold statistical significance, the frequencies still remained valuable in supporting the findings. The validity, reliability, and trustworthiness of this dissertation were strengthened with the use of triangulation and member checks. Chapters four, five, and six present the findings for each research question. Each chapter largely focuses on qualitative data, with quantitative data sprinkled throughout to bolster the findings.

Chapter 4: Research Question #1 Findings

Through quantitative and qualitative data collection, I investigated alumni's perceptions of how their teacher education program prepared them to utilize social justice-based practices in their classrooms. This study specifically examined what alumni thought they learned about social justice teaching and how they saw themselves implementing what they learned into their teaching practice. The study examined three primary research questions:

1. In what ways do alumni perceive that Sunvale University helped to prepare teachers to teach for social justice?
2. What components of social justice education did TEP alumni identify as being learned from the program?
3. What aspects of TEP alumni's current classrooms reflect what they learned about social justice in their teacher education program?

When analyzing the findings for the research questions, I was guided by the conceptual framework that underpins this study, primarily the teaching for social justice framework put forth by Marilyn Cochran-Smith (2004). As mentioned in chapter two, additional scholars and academic work also guide my overall framework; however, because Cochran-Smith (2004) heavily influenced my interpretation of teaching for social justice and, therefore, my interpretation of the data, I briefly review her framework in the figure below.

Principle	Description
1. Enable significant work within communities of learners	Teachers maintain high expectations for all students, believing all students are capable of dealing with complex ideas.
2. Build on what students bring to school with them: knowledge & interests, cultural & linguistic resources	Teachers acknowledge, value, and work from their students' cultural and linguistic resources. They construct a multicultural and inclusive curriculum so students can connect meaning to their own lives.
3. Teach skills, bridge gaps	Teachers not only teach skills but also know how to bridge gaps between what is often assumed children know and what they actually do not know. Social justice teachers, in particular, bridge this gap through culturally responsive practices.
4. Work with, not against individuals, families, and communities	Teachers draw on family histories, traditions, and stories, demonstrating they respect all students' family and cultural values. They seek to involve students' families while also recognizing that a family's involvement is impacted by their time, availability, and cultural understanding of education.
5. Diversify forms of assessment	Teachers diversify assessments by using a wide array of evaluation strategies and not relying on standardized tests as the sole indicator of students' abilities. They acknowledge that students maintain different strengths and seek various forms of assessment to optimally understand a student's learning and progress.
6. Make inequity, power, and activism explicit parts of the curriculum	Teachers empower students to name and recognize inequities and equip them with the tools to confront, challenge, and dismantle these disparities.

Figure 4.1. Cochran-Smith's Six Principles for Teaching for Social Justice

Thus, the analyses across the subsequent findings (chapters 4, 5, and 6) are shaped by the conceptual framework guiding this study, particularly the work of Cochran-Smith (2004). This chapter will specifically address the findings of the first research question. These findings are drawn from the interview and survey data. The findings for this question are broken into five themes:

1. Social justice was embedded throughout the entire program
2. Faculty
3. Relationships and community building
4. Emphasis on funds of knowledge and culturally relevant pedagogy
5. Social justice activities and assignments

Theme 1: Social justice was embedded throughout the entire program

A primary goal of this study was to understand alumni's perceptions of how they were prepared to teach for social justice by the TEP. Therefore, at the beginning of each interview, I asked the participants how the TEP prepared them to teach from a social justice lens. In response to this question, interview participants overwhelmingly described how the TEP embedded social justice principles and teaching practices throughout its entire curriculum and across all of its courses. In other words, they emphasized that social justice was not siloed to one or two specific courses; rather, they perceived that it was woven throughout the whole program. This is significant because research (McDonald, 2005; Liu & Ball, 2019; McDonalnd & Zeichner, 2009) has shown that many teacher education programs choose to incorporate social justice as a supplemental or additive component of their program, thereby under-preparing prospective teachers to center equity and social justice in their own teaching (McDonald, 2005; Liu & Ball, 2019; McDonalnd & Zeichner, 2009). Programs that weave social justice throughout their entire framework are more likely to prepare teachers who are capable of prioritizing equity and who are prepared to transform educational opportunities for students from diverse backgrounds (McDonald, 2005; Liu & Ball, 2019; McDonalnd & Zeichner, 2009).

When asked, "How did the teacher education program integrate social justice into its program," Julia, an interview participant who graduated from the TEP in 2016, shared she

appreciated how social justice was not siloed in the program, unlike the other TEPs attended by her friends:

> *I really appreciated that the program didn't silo social justice. I think we did take a social justice class. I kind of forget now, but it wasn't like… I would talk to my friends in other teaching programs, it was like they had their social justice class, and then that was kind of the only time it was mentioned. But I felt like it was woven into every course that we did. So I really appreciated that. Like if I were in a literacy class, it was still about social justice. Like everything, they always talked about how to make teaching more equitable in every single course that we took.*

Echoing similar sentiments, Grace, an interview participant who graduated from the program in 2022, also emphasized how classes and readings centered around equity and inclusion:

> *We touched on social justice like the entire program is built on social justice. I think every single time we had a reading or a class, it was centered around, okay, let's talk about how we can think about equity and inclusion and think about how students bring more than just, you know, their brains to school right, they bring everything. So it was, it's a lot. I would say that the program did a really good job of teaching us to be mindful of those things.*

Dismantling inequitable teaching practices is central to teaching from a social justice framework (Cochran-Smith, 2004; Dover, 2009); therefore, in addition to asking participants how the TEP integrated social justice into its program, I also asked participants how the program prepared them to address issues related to inequity in the classroom. In response to this question, Alyssa, an elementary STEAM enrichment teacher, discussed how using equitable teaching practices was emphasized throughout the whole program, describing how preservice teachers were taught to ensure all students have equitable access to opportunities, particularly those historically marginalized in education settings.

> *And then within the main subject classes, they always dedicated certain lectures to social justice, and then throughout their other lectures, they would integrate conversations in because it was really prevalent whenever we would be talking about, you know, like okay, we have this math problem, you should be paying attention to who's feeling like they can always raise their hand and answer. And who isn't. Who isn't feeling ready to speak in front of the whole class, and why, that might be, you know. So, conversations about who's feeling comfortable in the classroom and who isn't. And why that might be were always*

> *circulating in our discussions throughout the whole curriculum. And then also equity is just integrated throughout. So whenever we were learning about a new technique or a kind of lesson, or you know, anything like that we would be, we would touch on who might have more access to this kind of learning than others historically, and how we can, how we can bring that access to everyone.*

Alyssa's description demonstrated how preservice teachers were encouraged to create inclusive classrooms that particularly respond to the needs of students who have been historically marginalized in the classroom. Her response also reiterated how alumni perceived that equity was at the forefront of the program, as she described how most courses and assignments focused on developing prospective teachers' ability to center equity in their pedagogy and practice.

In addition to the interview responses, responses to the following open-ended survey question reinforced the finding that alumni perceived social justice was largely embedded throughout the entire program.

> *Question: Based on your experiences in schools and classrooms, what were the most valuable aspects of your teacher preparation program?*

In response to this question, one survey respondent shared:

> *I think the program's biggest strength is its emphasis on social justice, equity, and action. It was not just one class or one lesson. Rather, this was found throughout the courses and preparation classes.*

This open-ended response supports the finding from the interview responses, further highlighting how alumni believed that social justice was entrenched throughout the entire TEP. Mirroring the same sentiment, another survey respondent also noted how they valued how social justice and equity were prioritized throughout the program:

> *I also appreciate the social justice lens and the strive for promoting equity for all students. I felt like that was a strong point of the program and was addressed in most classes.*

A follow-up open-ended survey question asked participants to share more about what they valued in the program. In response to this question, a respondent acknowledged they chose to

attend Sunvale University because of the program's emphasis on diversity and equity, stating, *I chose to attend Sunvale University in 2012 because it was clear that the program valued diversity and equity, and that was borne out throughout the duration of the program.* Most survey respondents and interview participants graduated from the program between 2016 and 2021; however, this respondent graduated from the program in 2012, eleven years prior to the survey date. Their response indicates the program has maintained a long-term commitment to equity, a commitment that has impacted teachers for over a decade.

A core component of preparing prospective teachers to teach for social justice is ensuring they are prepared to teach students from all backgrounds (Cochran-Smith, 2004; Dover, 2009). Teachers who center social justice recognize each student's unique background as a strength and work to create equitable learning opportunities so all students can flourish (Cochran-Smith, 2004; Dover, 2009). While I did not ask interview participants or survey respondents if they believed attending a TEP that embedded social justice throughout its entire program specifically prepared them to teach students from all backgrounds, I did ask survey respondents how prepared they felt to teach students from various backgrounds. The majority of respondents reported feeling this preparation was excellent or good, as seen in the table below:

Table 4.1. Theme 1 Quantitative Findings

Rate how your teacher education program prepared you to teach students:	**Excellent/Good**
With different ability levels in the same class	77%
From different socio-economic backgrounds	89%
From diverse racial/ethnic/cultural backgrounds	92%
In an urban school system	92%
With different linguistic backgrounds	92%
With different gender orientations	89%
With different sexual orientations	92%
With special needs	92%

Because research (McDonald, 2005; Liu & Ball, 2019; McDonald & Zeichner, 2009) suggests that programs that do not silo equity and social justice are more likely to prepare prospective teachers who are capable of prioritizing equitable learning opportunities for all students, I believe it was worth highlighting the finding that most survey respondents felt very prepared to teach students from all backgrounds, as seen in the table above.

Theme 2: Faculty

Throughout the interviews and across the open-ended survey responses, participants named various faculty members who embodied social justice practices. As stated in the first finding, participants described social justice as being embedded throughout the entire program; therefore, the naming of multiple professors, who all teach different courses, as social justice champions corroborates the finding that social justice was incorporated across courses and curriculum. As seen in the table below, survey responses also indicated that alumni believed most faculty members upheld beliefs aligned with social justice values and principles.

Table 4.2. Theme 2 Quantitative Findings

The Sunvale University Teacher Ed Faculty:	Strongly Agree/Agree
Represented multiple voices and experiences around race and racism	81%
Represented multiple voices and experiences around gender and sexuality	67%
Upheld the belief that the purpose of teaching is to enhance students' learning and their life chances by challenging inequities of school and society	89%
Upheld the belief that there are significant disparities in the distribution of educational opportunities, resources, achievement, and outcomes between minority/low-income students and white/middle-class students	89%

Two faculty members, however, were mentioned more than others. Across 17 interviews, Tiffany and Kathi were mentioned 11 times. Further, when asked the open-ended survey question: *Based on your experiences in schools and classrooms, what were the most valuable aspects of your teacher preparation program?* Tiffany and Kathi were mentioned five times out of 23 complete responses (36 total responses). Thus, across the interviews and survey responses, they were mentioned 16 times in total. Throughout these responses, alumni frequently noted how the classes taught by Tiffany and Kathi helped them better understand the disparities within education and empowered them to think about how they would incorporate social justice practices into their own teaching.

Tiffany and Kathi have been on faculty in the teacher education program for over fifteen years, and they each serve as secondary supervisors, overseeing preservice teachers who are working on their single-subject credentials. Prior to their time on faculty, they worked as K-12 teachers and administrators in Sunvale, both teaching in schools that primarily serve students who have been historically marginalized. Further, they both received their Doctorate of Education from Sunvale University, highlighting the education department's continued legacy

and commitment to preparing all educators to center equity and justice. Below, I share examples of the ways in which alumni perceived that Tiffany and Kathi prepared them to teach for social justice, beginning with examples shared about Tiffany and following up with examples shared about Kathi.

Tiffany

Camila, a high school Spanish teacher who graduated from the TEP with a single-subject world language credential, described how social justice was pervasive across the program while also highlighting the impact Tiffany had on her understanding of diversity:

> *A lot of that 129 series I remember was a lot of our own identity exploration, and I remember the materials in particular that Tiffany used in 129a. I remember that being such a foundational or formative experience, that course in particular because the content that we were reading and the content that we had to work with and write about was so, it shook my world a bit because I grew up in LA and I think I took a lot of the diversity for granted. And then moving to Sunvale was a bit of a culture shock because there's so much segregation in Sunvale, more than what I was used to seeing, and that paired with the readings from Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria. That course, in particular, I think, set the stage, and then it felt like it was really well embedded within much of the content.*

Camila highlights how her experience in Tiffany's class helped her navigate new experiences with racial segregation in a new city, becoming more aware of how this particularly plays out within schools. Building on this, Diego, another high school Spanish teacher who graduated from the program in 2018, described the profound impact Tiffany had on his view of students:

> *Tiffany was the teacher who taught the 129a series or the 128 course, and I think it's something that she did really well. I still, you know, think about and carry with me a couple of examples. One, she always talked about how, if you want to teach a student, you have to recognize and understand that they are bringing with them into your classroom everything that's going on in the community, everything that's going on in their family…. and I feel like for me, that is definitely an example of teaching for social justice because as a teacher for social justice, as a social justice teacher, I think it's really important to understand and recognize students as a whole person. And so I think for me that was one of the first real tangible examples that I can remember because it happened in one of the first classes that she gave like you're viewing a student as more than just a student, right?*

In Marilyn Cochran-Smith's (2004) teaching for social justice framework, she asserts that social justice teachers build on what students bring to school, valuing their knowledge, interests, and cultural and linguistic resources. While Diego did not state that he does these things because of Tiffany, he illuminated how Tiffany's class helped him understand the importance of valuing a student as a whole person and not just a student. He recognized the importance of understanding community and family context, acknowledging how these facets of a student's life impact how students show up in the classroom. Diego perceived this as an important element of social justice teaching and credits Tiffany with helping him understand this.

Luis, a high school math teacher, further reiterated how Tiffany encouraged him to prioritize getting to know families, even as a high school teacher: "I remember Tiffany telling us to call home like, you know, the first week to connect with families and things like that." Another core principle of Cochran-Smith's (2004) framework is valuing families. She recommends that teachers take the time to get to know students' families as a means to better incorporate family histories, traditions, and cultural values into their teaching. Furthermore, she emphasizes that by getting to know families, teachers demonstrate that they care about the communities in which their students live. Therefore, by encouraging teachers to call students' parents as a way to connect with families, Tiffany is teaching her students how to incorporate elements of Cochran-Smith's (2004) principles into their teaching practice.

Emily, another interview participant, also recalled the way Tiffany influenced her thinking about racial inequities by describing the readings from the 129-course series taught by Tiffany:

> *And then I remember in the 129 series, there were definitely some different readings and some different lectures with regards to the socioeconomic and racial demographics of*

> *students in Sunvale, and kind of touching in and talking about, you know, what's going on with those particular, the communities where the students are coming from.*

Emily's description accentuates how alumni perceived that Tiffany's class helped them understand the racial and socioeconomic backgrounds and circumstances of the students they served throughout their time in the teacher education program.

Kathi

Several interview examples also highlighted how alumni perceived Kathi's teachings as preparing them to teach for social justice. Camila highlighted how Kathi's class encouraged her to see things through a social justice lens:

> *And so I feel like it was encouraged within most of the courses for us to observe things with a social justice lens. And then also I think it was modeled really well within the world language courses in particular, with Kathi, and there was one course that I think that she taught that everybody had to take in the summer. And so with courses like that, and then, even within our own content, Kathi was really great about it.*

Her response elevated Kathi's impact on her social justice mindset and reiterated the finding that social justice was embedded throughout most of the TEP coursework. Luis also recalled how all professors were passionate about social justice, but Kathi, in particular, prioritized using social justice frameworks throughout most of her classes:

> *"I remember it was in Kathi's class… That's not to say the other professors aren't vocal about it (social justice); I mean, they clearly are. But I just remember experiences in Kathi's class that really kind of hit at that frame…. Kathi would have us do really thought-provoking readings and discussions about social justice issues."*

Luis' response demonstrated that while he perceived all the professors as passionate about social justice, Kathi's passion shined so brightly that he still remembers the impact of the readings and discussions from her class nearly eight years later. When asked how the TEP integrated social justice into the program, David, a high school math teacher, gave specific examples of teaching practices upheld by Kathi. This response builds on the other examples provided about Kathi, reinforcing her impact on participants' knowledge of social justice teaching.

> *I would say there's a class that we take some time between our first year and our second year that is taught by Kathi. I don't remember the name, but I remember it's taught by Kathi. It's specifically focused on developing social justice inside your teaching practice, where you have to do a couple of hours of volunteer work in the community. So I think that for me, having that class specifically focuses on the topic of social justice, I think, is a prime example.*

Across the descriptions of how Tiffany and Kathi taught alumni to use social justice practices in their teaching, it is evident that most alumni recalled the thought-provoking readings and discussions they had in their classes. Alumni perceived that these readings and discussions helped them better grasp the disparities within education and empowered them to think about how they would incorporate social justice practices into their own teaching. Further, in addition to Tiffany and Kathi, it is evident that most interview and survey respondents perceived that all faculty were passionate about social justice, upholding values that aligned with core social justice principles.

Theme 3: Relationships & Community Building

When asked about the program's strengths, interviewees and survey respondents frequently noted the faculty's emphasis on relationships and community building. Specifically, they shared that faculty in the TEP deeply cared for students and strove to model how to build good relationships with students. Thus, this is the third theme or finding for this research question. For example, Erin, an interview participant who graduated from the TEP in 2016, shared how being cared for by faculty profoundly impacted her ability to create meaningful relationships with her own students:

> *I've often gotten, 'Oh, you're really good like you're a really good teacher. You're really good with classroom management, or you're really good at building relationships.' And I think that came from the program, being able to create and develop this classroom community with my students. Those were things that were modeled by professors like Mike and Tracy and Lori. They really created this environment where everybody felt valued or was valued and acknowledged, and they knew your name, and you know, like you could eat lunch with them, and I think that is really valuable, in my opinion.*

Building on Erin's description of the professors, a survey participant shared how meaningful relationships with faculty shaped their perspective as a teacher when asked what they valued most in the program. They also emphasized how important this was given their racial identity:

> *Secondly, I value the way in which relationships are modeled and engaged between instructors and students. I grew as a more effective educator because my teachers and instructors modeled for me what relationship building is. They made me feel welcomed and valued inside the classroom. As a student of color, this had a big impact on me.*

This response stands out, as this educator underscored the impact faculty's focus on modeling relationship building had on their practice and their own ability to engage with students. An elementary school teacher reinforced the shared perception that faculty valued developing meaningful relationships with students in the TEP, as she stated she still feels supported by faculty members even though she has graduated and is a full-time teacher. Several other interview participants shared this sentiment, all stating they know they can reach out to faculty at any time and they will respond with care. For example, Alyssa, an elementary school teacher, shared:

> *...and supported like I can still get in contact with my professors if I need to, my old professors to ask them a question, get their advice on something, or figure out, you know, the solution to a problem I'm having.*

Feeling supported by faculty beyond the TEP is important because novice teachers often lack the critical support needed to grow as new teachers (Picower, 2011; Darling-Hammond, 2005). The first few years as a teacher can be very challenging and isolating, knowing they still have support from faculty, however, can help alumni feel empowered as new teachers (Cochran-Smith et al., 2009; Picower, 2011).

Several participants also shared how community building, in general, was emphasized throughout the program as an essential component of developing a student-centered classroom. Erin, a former second-grade teacher, shared:

> *Community building. There was a lot of that. There was a lot of emphasis on community building across all of the courses, and it was modeled as well. So I think it also was something that helped a lot.*

Reinforcing the importance placed on community, Camila shared, "They really emphasized this idea of building community with your students and using community circles and all these other strategies." Similarly, a survey respondent also described the importance of community building sharing, "I valued the sense of community a lot. We were all working towards similar goals together, and I never thought the professors didn't believe we could get there."

Developing positive relationships with students is important, for research shows that positive teacher-student relationships contribute to better school adjustment for students, leading to higher social and academic outcomes (Howard, 2017). Research (Howard, 2006; Valenzuela, 2010) also argues that to be an effective social justice educator, teachers must be persistent in establishing authentic, caring relationships with their students, as this is foundational to all other principles across social justice teaching. Participants' perceptions that the faculty's ability to develop relationships and create inclusive environments had a profound impact on how they engage with students, laid a foundation for them to carry out other social justice-based practices.

Theme Four: Funds of Knowledge & Culturally Responsive Teaching

When asked about their perceptions of the way the teacher education program attempted to prepare them to teach for social justice, interview and survey participants often described the emphasis the program placed on funds of knowledge and culturally relevant pedagogy. Therefore, this comprises the fourth theme for this research question.

Researched and defined by Moll et al. (1992), funds of knowledge refers to the idea that students are competent and have knowledge, and their life experiences make up this knowledge. Moll et al. (1992) argue that successful teachers recognize the knowledge and strengths each student brings to their class and incorporates this into their teaching and curriculum. Building on this concept, Cochran-Smith's (2004) teaching for social justice framework also includes elements that are similar to Moll's (1992) concept of funds of knowledge. For example, the second principle in her framework outlines the importance of building on the existing knowledge, interests, and cultural and linguistic resources students bring to the classroom. Thus, the perception that the TEP prepared teachers to teach for social justice by emphasizing the importance of funds of knowledge reinforces the significance of this idea within Cochran-Smith's (2004) framework.

In an interview with Erin, a high school Spanish teacher, she described how the program utilized students' funds of knowledge, "The program emphasized funds of knowledge and embedding multiple identities within the curriculum so students can see themselves reflected in it." Erin acknowledged how the program reiterated the importance of using funds of knowledge so students feel their own identities are reflected in what they are learning. Similarly, Teresa, a middle school science teacher who graduated from the program in 2013, also described how the program taught her about the importance of embedding student identity into the curriculum; however, she connected this to culturally responsive pedagogy instead of funds of knowledge. Teresa stated, "But when we talked about culturally relevant pedagogy, it was one of the main topics that come up in EDS, and they always say, so how are you going to incorporate pieces of your students' background culture and things like that into your lesson." Like funds of knowledge, culturally relevant pedagogy sees students' cultural backgrounds as assets that

should be incorporated into curriculum and instruction (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Gay, 2018). Teachers who utilize culturally responsive pedagogy create culturally and racially affirming classroom cultures, building meaningful connections between students' academic and sociocultural realities (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Gay, 2018). This is a core component of social justice teaching.

The first open-ended survey question asked respondents: *Based on your experiences in schools and classrooms, what were the most valuable aspects of your teacher preparation program?* In response to this question, one teacher specifically described the emphasis the program placed on culturally responsive classrooms, sharing: "It has been about seven years since I graduated, so things may have changed. The focus on Responsive Classroom resources and practices continue to be impactful to this day." This comment not only reiterated alumni's perception that the TEP emphasized culturally responsive teaching but also demonstrated the impact this had on this teacher's practice.

In addition to these qualitative findings, several multiple choice survey responses also indicated the program incorporated aspects of culturally responsive pedagogy and funds of knowledge into the TEP curriculum.

Table 4.3. Theme 4 Quantitative Findings

Question: The Sunvale University teacher ed faculty…	**Strongly agree/agree**
Included opportunities for me to learn about culture, language, and the social and cultural contexts of schooling	89%
Represented multiple voices and experiences around race and racism	81%
Taught me how to analyze curriculum so I can recognize what and who is being left out	75%
Taught me how to uncover what has been deemed the universal perspective in discussions about pedagogy, growth, learning, experience, expectations, or family	83%

Each of these statements is derived from the scale developed by Enterline et al. (2008). This scale aimed to understand what alumni perceived they learning about social justice teaching in their teacher education program and was the foundation for creating the survey guiding this dissertation. While these statements are intended to measure perceptions regarding social justice teacher preparation, they each reflect elements of culturally responsive pedagogy and funds of knowledge; therefore, I believe it is important to include them in this finding. Within funds of knowledge and culturally responsive teaching, value is placed on understanding and embracing students' backgrounds, particularly students of color or students who have been historically marginalized (Moll et al., 1992; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Gay, 2018). Furthermore, emphasis is placed on incorporating multiple perspectives and voices within the curriculum, refraining from only teaching one specific perspective (Moll et al., 1992; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Gay, 2018). As demonstrated by the high percentages, most survey respondents strongly agreed or agreed that the TEP faculty did these things in their courses. This finding further corroborates the qualitative findings, that alumni perceived TEP faculty taught and emphasized the importance of culturally responsive pedagogy and funds of knowledge as a means to prepare prospective teachers to teach for social justice.

Theme 5: Social Justice Activities and Assignments

When asked how the program prepared them to teach for social justice, many interview participants discussed specific activities the program utilized, such as field trips, guest speakers, readings, and journal or reflection prompts. Based on the participants' descriptions, these activities aimed to expose the teacher candidates to the diversity across Sunvale and to the various activists and teacher activists committed to advancing equity and social justice work. Further, they sought to encourage preservice teachers to reflect on their own identities, unpack

their unconscious biases, and become aware of experiences and perspectives different from their own. Therefore, this theme focuses on describing the social justice activities and assignments, as shared by the interview and survey participants.

Alyssa, an interview participant who graduated in 2021 with a multiple-subject credential, described how she valued the diverse perspectives the guest speakers provided:

> *I also appreciated how the professors brought in a lot of guest speakers and guest lecturers. So we would have classes taught by people we hadn't learned from before, who brought in new perspectives, and when they couldn't bring in someone for a whole class, they would bring in guest lectures for one class within the larger class. So we heard from a lot of different perspectives on a lot of different … And almost all of our guest speakers' talks were based on social justice, too. So we heard from, you know, a teacher from the LGBTQ community talking about how it is to teach with that in mind.*

The guest speakers helped Alyssa understand that her perspectives are not universal and that exposure to different people, thoughts, and ideas is valuable. During an interview with Sophia, an alumni who graduated in 2016, she also described the way the guest speakers widened her perspective on issues within her own community:

> *I believe even one guest speaker was someone who was affected by gang violence in their school, and he came in and talked about his experience and his girlfriend's experience and how they're completely affected by it. And it was really eye-opening thinking that this happens in Sunvale, and I didn't even consider that, so it was really the guest speakers that kind of brought it to my attention.*

Many graduates of the TEP continue teaching in Sunvale, often in schools with students from diverse backgrounds. Therefore, exposure to different people across the Sunvale community may prepare them to teach students from diverse backgrounds more effectively. Indeed, multiple participants perceived that exposure to different experiences and viewpoints throughout Sunvale helped prepare them to teach with diverse perspectives in mind.

In addition to guest speakers, the TEP also utilized field trips throughout Sunvale to expose preservice teachers to diverse perspectives and experiences. Morgan, a kindergarten

teacher, described how being exposed to these perspectives made her more aware and helped her bring diverse experiences into her teaching practice:

> *So I think the program helped me bring diverse experiences into the classroom because one of the teachers told us about all these like Sunvale things like the Chicano Center, and we did field trips to these places, and they brought light to all these diverse places that I had never heard of, because I had just come to Sunvale.*

A common goal across social justice-based teacher preparation programs is to expand the sociocultural consciousness of preservice teachers, helping them understand that their worldview is not universal and that people's perspectives are shaped by a variety of factors such as race, class, and gender (McDonald and Zeicnher, 2009; Villegas and Lucas, 2002). These responses demonstrated that participants discerned the program helped expand their worldviews and perspectives. This is further demonstrated through the journal and reflection prompt activities described by the interviewees. For example, Morgan described how reflecting on her own background and speaking with educators who had different identities than her helped her to be aware of her own biases:

> *All these activities where we were, you know, delving deeply into our own backgrounds and kind of discovering like rediscovering who we were as people, and, moreover, as educators, I think, was the most valuable thing because these activities are not things you think to do, and being in person with other educators of different backgrounds, really like, opens your eyes to see the different perspectives, and to kind of check your own biases. And the experience itself teaches you so much about being an educator. I think that's the most outstanding part of the program.*

As Morgan notes, reflecting on her identity and biases prepared her to be a better educator. Researchers argue that social justice teacher education programs should train prospective teachers to be in a continual cycle of dialogue and critical reflection to confront their own beliefs and improve student learning (Darder, 2002; Delpit, 1995; Dover, 2009). This is seen in the reflection above as she notes checking her biases and in the description below, as Aria describes the importance of reflecting on her practice to become a better teacher.

> *We did a lot of reflections. And I remember this was not specifically said to me or to my classmates, but I remember thinking you get what you put into it. And so if you put in a lot of efforts, you're going to get a lot of results that are going to support your own teaching your own self as a teacher and like that's what I did like when we, because we did a lot of reflections on the readings, on the teachings that we did on the observations that we had like on all the things that we had. It was very reflective, and I think that that's an aspect that we don't really see as important, and a lot of people may see like oh, I know the reflection like, Let me just. But if you truly think about the things that you're doing in the steps that you're taking to become a better educator, then this reflections become essential in building whatever you are trying to build, because they give you like a like, a glimpse of what could, or what did, or what you should have done better, and what you can improve for the next time.*

In addition to reflections and journaling, interview participants described other activities that centered on social justice. Participants listed readings about systemic inequities in education, taking an implicit bias test, reading about migrant students and discussing how to support them, learning about policies that have impacted bilingual education, and reading Pedagogy of the Oppressed by Paolo Friere. All of these activities comprise alumni's perceptions of how the TEP attempted to prepare them to teach for social justice.

Summary

The first research question aimed to understand how alumni perceived the TEP prepared teachers to teach for social justice. Interviews with alumni and survey data were used to explore the findings for this question. Through exploration and analysis of the data, it was evident that five themes emerged as key findings:

1. Social justice was embedded throughout the whole program
2. Faculty/Kathi/Tiffany
3. Relationships and community building
4. Emphasis on funds of knowledge and culturally responsive pedagogy
5. Social justice activities and assignments

Each of these themes highlights the perceptions upheld by alumni and contributes to the greater findings of what comprises a social justice-based teacher education program. While this study is not meant to be evaluative of the TEP, the insights shared by alumni help shed light on the facets that constitute a TEP committed to social justice and help clarify what it means to prepare a teacher to teach for social justice. This is pertinent as a common critique of social justice education is that it is undertheorized and vague. This study aims to combat this critique by highlighting what alumni perceived they learned and how they applied it to practice.

The findings for the first research question elevated several key ideas related to social justice teacher education. First, alumni perceived social justice and equity were embedded throughout the entire program. They described how they felt it was incorporated across their courses and stated they believed most faculty incorporated social justice principles into their teaching. Furthermore, as described in the fifth theme, they gave specific examples of activities, readings, and assignments that were given across their coursework as a means to prepare them to teach for social justice. The descriptions given by alumni are significant because research (McDonald, 2005; Liu & Ball, 2019; McDonalnd & Zeichner, 2009) has shown that many TEPs choose to incorporate social justice as a supplemental or additive component of their program. Programs that weave social justice throughout its entire framework are more likely to prepare teachers who are capable of prioritizing equity and who are prepared to transform educational opportunities for students from diverse backgrounds (McDonald, 2005; Liu & Ball, 2019; McDonalnd & Zeichner, 2009). While alumni cannot state if they felt more prepared to teach for social justice because the TEP embedded social justice across its courses, this finding still bolsters existing research that asserts social justice should not be merely relegated to one or two courses.

When asked what the primary strengths of the program were, many participants shared they valued and appreciated the importance faculty placed on developing meaningful relationships with them and the intentional focus the faculty placed on creating an inclusive community across the teacher education program. This finding is particularly significant because it is the only finding that is consistent across *all* findings for *all three* research questions. For example, the next chapter (ch. 5) addresses what alumni learned about social justice teaching from the program. In this chapter, I discuss how alumni perceived they were taught the importance of understanding their students and creating a classroom community that is inclusive of all identities. The third findings (ch. 6) chapter addresses how alumni applied what they learned to practice. In this chapter, I also discuss how alumni prioritized creating a classroom environment where all students feel included and cared for. Therefore, developing meaningful relationships, authentic care for students, and creating inclusive classrooms is a theme that is seen within the findings for each research question.

Finally, the findings for this research question also demonstrated that alumni perceived the program attempted to prepare them to teach for social justice by emphasizing the importance of funds of knowledge and culturally responsive pedagogy. Cochran-Smith's (2004) teaching for social justice framework includes various principles that maintain deep similarities to the principles and values that guide funds of knowledge and culturally responsive pedagogy. Therefore, this finding reinforces the notion that incorporating students' funds of knowledge and culturally relevant practices into one's pedagogy is a significant component of social justice teaching.

Overall, this chapter focused on alumni's perceptions of how the TEP attempted to prepare them to teach for social justice. While the five findings are based on the alumni's

perceptions and are not meant to evaluate the TEP, they do shed insight into what it means to prepare a teacher to teach for social justice. These findings help offset existing critiques that social justice education lacks theoretical grounding and clarity.

Chapter 5: Research Question #2 Findings

The first research question guiding this study sought to understand alumni's perceptions of what the program specifically did to teach prospective teachers about social justice practices. This chapter, however, focuses on what alumni perceived they learned about social justice from the TEP by addressing the second research question guiding this study: *What components of social justice education did TEP alumni identify as being learned from the program?* The findings for this research question are drawn from the multiple choice and open-ended survey questions and interviews with alumni. They are organized across three main themes:

1. General awareness of inequities
2. Appreciating students' backgrounds to create inclusive classrooms
3. Programmatic tensions

Theme 1: General Awareness of Inequities

When asked what they learned about social justice teaching, participants across the survey and interviews noted the program helped them build a general awareness and understanding of inequities within schooling and society. Phrases such as "opened my eyes" and "made me more aware" were commonly used in interview participants' responses, demonstrating the emphasis the TEP placed on building prospective teachers' general awareness of inequities in schooling.

Throughout the general data analysis process, I found there were no substantial or statistically significant differences in how different racial groups responded to specific survey or interview questions. However, when analyzing the interview data about teachers' perceived outcomes from the program, it was very clear that white teachers primarily shared how the program widened their understanding of racial and educational inequities. Because of this, I

believe it is important to note I am sharing significant quotes from white interview and survey participants.

Alyssa, an elementary school teacher who graduated from the program in 2021, described how the program taught her to notice existing inequities within the school system:

> *The first thing is it really taught me to notice them. Because I mean, there was a lot that I obviously didn't know about before being in this program. So, being given all the examples and the history of inequities in the school system really has helped me notice when there is inequity. And then, we talked a lot about how important it is to advocate for your students in lots of different ways.*

A critical component of social justice teaching is moving beyond recognizing injustices and inequities to actually taking action and creating change (Dover, 2009). Alyssa points out how the program taught her to recognize inequities in the school system while also emphasizing the importance of advocating for your students. Emily, a 7th-grade science teacher who graduated from the program in 2017, also shared the different ways the program taught her to think critically about common classroom norms and procedures:

> *I think it made me much more aware of them (inequities). There are a lot of things in classrooms that we just take for granted because every classroom we've ever been in did it that way, like, why do students raise hands, and why do we have bathroom passes and all of those kinds of procedural things… it kind of brought to light why those existed, and how they came about. And you know, are there things that I would like to change? Probably. Am I feeling capable of doing that right now? No. And I just recognize that, and you know, I move on and put my energy where it can be most successful. But I think that the program did a really nice job of making us question all of those habits and behaviors in ways that kind of just allow you to be self-reflective over time.*

An important aspect of social justice teacher education programs is encouraging self-reflection and challenging prospective teachers to build a critical consciousness (Picower, 2011; Mills & Ballantyne, 2016)). This quote shows that the TEP taught Emily to think critically about inequities, particularly traditional classroom norms and procedures. Here, Emily is questioning these norms and their potential for reproducing inequities. However, as she describes, she does

not always have the agency to change the inequities she sees despite being a fifth-year teacher. As described by Cochran-Smith et al.(2009), this lack of agency is commonly felt by new teachers as they are often faced with various challenges that inhibit their ability to teach beyond the prescribed curriculum. This highlights the need for better support for novice teachers so they feel capable of incorporating social justice practices into their teaching.

Teresa, a middle school science teacher who graduated from the program in 2013, captured the way a professor taught her to think critically about her identity and the opportunities she has been given:

> *She asked the class you know how many of you think you got here due to hard work, and you know, I'm thinking I've worked hard all of my life, and my hand went straight in the air. And then, when she introduced the concept of opportunity and how our starting line can kind of be different, even though we're following the same path. I think that was really eye-opening for me, and I think that actually, when you talk about teaching for social justice, is one of the biggest takeaways I got from the program and what it meant to me at this time was recognizing that not everyone is afforded the same opportunity and I love the analogy of headwinds and tailwinds, where we all might be traveling in the same direction. But if you're going into a headwind, it's gonna be that much harder than someone who has a tailwind pushing behind them. So I kind of mentioned that the social justice piece it really did shift it for me. You know, my whatever my life experiences were to that point, it did open me up to more perspective, so very grateful that's how I launched my teaching career.*

This response stands out, as it captures how the TEP encourages preservice teachers to think critically about their own identity and how it impacts the opportunities and experiences they are given. This description shows how the TEP changed Teresa's perceptions and beliefs about inequities, launching her teaching career from a place of criticality and awareness. Furthermore, Teresa graduated from the program in 2013, her experience in the program thus demonstrates how the TEP has historically been dedicated to helping prospective teachers develop this critical awareness.

Morgan, a kindergarten teacher, also shared how the program helped develop her awareness of racial disparities throughout history and how those disparities have continually impacted the education system:

> *They made us cognizant that there are racial disparities within the curriculum, which is ingrained in the school systems, which is ingrained in teachers who have been teaching for you know, 30 years. So they brought to life that racial injustice in the classroom is a systemic problem that stems from so far back that it's basically white men who write history, and that history is what we teach the kids. So it stems so far back, hundreds and hundreds of years ago, where, you know, only white privileged men were able to learn how to write, and then the white, privileged men wrote the narratives of, you know, women and people of color and native individuals, and how that whole systemic issue started hundreds of years ago, and it stems into our classrooms today so kind of drawing the lines of racial injustice, and just knowing how it's rooted like history is rooted in racism.*

Morgan's description highlights how, in addition to developing preservice teachers' awareness of their privilege and biases, the program also connected the larger historical context of racism within the United States to modern schooling. Thereby, raising her awareness of the way racial disparities manifest within education.

Social justice teacher education programs often seek to challenge and expand prospective teachers' existing beliefs about inequities within society (Dover, 2009; Agarwal, 2010), aiming to prepare teachers capable of challenging norms that perpetuate inequities, thereby closing opportunity gaps. Because the teaching force is predominantly made up of white women, existing research commonly examines how the beliefs and attitudes of prospective white teachers change after taking courses focused on race, inequity, and power (Liu & Ball, 2019). The intention of this study was not to research the perspectives of white teachers solely; however, this finding demonstrates that the white participants experienced the most "eye-opening" moments throughout their time in the program. This sentiment is reflected in an open-ended survey response by an anonymous respondent:

> *I think for some people in my program, it was very eye-opening as many white teachers had never thought about race or had a conversation about racial diversity before. For me, I had grown up with these conversations, so it was not as eye-opening, but I felt that the professors did a good job facilitating these conversations and pushing back on problematic thinking voiced in class.*

As this respondent notes, the exposure to conversations about race was imperative for white prospective teachers, as many of them had not had critical conversations about race, inequity, and power. This was further made clear through the significant amount of times white interviewees used phrases such as "opened my eyes" and "made me more aware."

Theme 2: Appreciating Students' Backgrounds to Create Inclusive Classrooms

Three central principles of Cochran-Smith's teaching for social justice framework include:

1. Building on students' knowledge, skills, and resources by acknowledging and incorporating their cultural and linguistic assets into one's teaching
2. Helping students connect what they know to what they do not know and using their prior skills to learn new ones
3. Appreciating the complexities of individuals, families, and communities by respecting students' cultures and cultural traditions of families and by incorporating activities that value the neighborhoods and communities in which students live

In line with these principles, when asked what they learned about social justice teaching practices, participants emphasized being taught the importance of understanding students' backgrounds and using this knowledge to create classrooms that are inclusive of their students' unique cultural and linguistic identities. This is significant because research (Howard, 2017) suggests that students have greater academic success when they feel valued and see their identities and backgrounds reflected in their learning. For example, Lance, a high school math teacher who graduated from the TEP in 2016, shared:

> *I think the primary takeaway that I got from the program was to always consider where your students are coming from, both in terms of what experiences they've had in the past but also how you might engage them in a way that is meaningful for them, or it really targets them specifically. And so that is something that I took away. The largest thing I took away.*

Lance's response demonstrated how he learned from the TEP the importance of understanding his students so he can more effectively help them connect with what they are learning. Sharing similar sentiments, Erin, a former second-grade teacher, described how the program taught her to be mindful of students' unique backgrounds:

> *The first step would be to get to know who your students are, and this varies, depending on their age. Older students are able to tell you more than younger students. And then being able to leverage what you know to learn about the families, and to learn about the caretakers, because a lot of the times we may not have just a mom and dad, you know, you may have two moms, you may have two dads. You may have a friend that's being the caretaker, and so being able to not assume that you're going to have the atypical mother and father taking care of that student. And so we also talked about being inclusive for neurodivergent students and what that looks like. I don't necessarily remember a whole ton about being inclusive about LGBTQ, but it was a lot about validating who your students are and acknowledging that not everybody is going to quote-unquote fit into this society or mold that we all have, and we have been conditioned to believe everybody is fits into this mold.*

In this description, she emphasized the way the program taught her to be critical of her own assumptions and beliefs of what a "typical" student should be and instead embrace the diverse identities her students bring with them to the classroom. Erin later shared the importance of incorporating this knowledge into her curriculum, stating, "It helped me be a critical thinker, not just of what I'm thinking, but of what I'm doing. So, if I read the curriculum and see that there are deficits in the curriculum, I implement some of the strategies I learned to be able to reach my diverse learners." An essential component of social justice teaching is constructing a curriculum that empowers students to connect meaning in their own lives with traditional content (Cochran-Smith, 2004). Erin illustrated that she learned from the TEP to think critically about what is missing from the curriculum and how to make it relevant to her students.

Open-ended survey responses also indicated how the teacher education program prepared prospective teachers to build inclusive classrooms that embrace and celebrate diversity across students' backgrounds. In an open-ended response, when asked what they valued most about the program, a participant shared:

> *The most valuable aspects were the philosophical foundations to understand my role as a facilitator for all students - to meet them where they are and maintain high expectations, to leverage community, family, and individual assets and funds of knowledge as central pedagogical containers for teaching content and for giving students opportunities for explicitly naming, talking about, and addressing larger school, community, and society issues facing them and their generations (social justice issues to environmental justice, etc.)*

In this response, this teacher emphasized several components of social justice teaching` that they perceived the program successfully taught, noting how they specifically learned how to utilize students' funds of knowledge in their curriculum. Multiple-choice responses further demonstrated that teachers perceived they were prepared to build inclusive classrooms by learning about various principles that are included within Cochran-Smith's (2004) framework.

Table 5.1. Theme 2 Quantitative Findings

Rate how your teacher ed program prepared you to:	**Excellent/Good**
Draw on family histories, traditions, and stories, and demonstrate respect for all students' family and cultural values	89%
Construct curriculum that empowers students to connect meanings in their own lives with traditional content	89%
View students as makers of knowledge and meaning	86%
Acknowledge, value, and build upon students' existing knowledge, interests, cultural, and linguistic resources	75%

These survey responses demonstrated that most respondents believed the program taught them how to value and incorporate students' cultural and linguistic resources, knowledge and interests, and family traditions into their teaching. This is significant, as research (Howard, 2017; Gay,

2018) suggests that students, particularly those historically marginalized, have greater academic success when they feel valued and see their identities and backgrounds reflected in their learning.

Theme 3: Programmatic Tensions

The third finding underscores areas where alumni wished for deeper learning, as it pertains to learning to teach for social justice. I have chosen to include this in this chapter because this chapter addresses what alumni learned about social justice practices from the TEP, and while alumni shared many things they learned, they also discussed areas where they wished their learning had been deeper. This data is worth including because it helps provide a more nuanced understanding of what is needed to prepare teachers to teach for social justice from the lens of practicing teachers.

Multiple participants noted they felt prepared by the program to recognize educational inequities related to race but unprepared to address them. For example, Emily, a middle school science teacher, emphasized how the program taught her to be aware of racism and racial inequities in schooling, but she felt unequipped to challenge these existing ideologies:

> *I think the program, you know, stressed the importance of dealing with those kinds of things, and made it very clear that those are the realities of our school system. You're stepping into an environment that is entrenched in racism because of how schools were built to serve a majority white population; that's the reality. But I don't know that I really felt prepared to do anything about that, you know. I think we got a lot of strategies for doing little things in our own classroom to make sure all students feel welcome. But, I still really at my school, you know, we have a very conservative staff and I just feel like I can only do what I can do in my tiny little classroom, and some of the things they experience outside of that, I just I can't control, and I can't let it affect me to an extent, you know.*

As noted in the first theme, many participants reported how the program overall increased their general awareness of inequities within schooling and society; however, beyond this, participants did not describe being taught how to challenge these inequities. Emily echoed this sentiment as she described how she felt ill-equipped to challenge racist structures within her school. She feels

confined by the beliefs of her conservative colleagues and only capable of having an impact within her own classroom.

Similarly, several other participants described being unprepared to have hard conversations with staff members or parents in regard to race and beliefs about students. Luis, a high school math teacher, shared, “I'll just say the program taught me more, but it didn’t teach me how. I guess you know what I mean, like how to, how then can I take what I know and challenge other people and engage in those hard conversations with other people.” Luis is referring to challenging his colleagues' deficit-oriented beliefs about their students of color, reinforcing that the TEP prepared him to recognize problematic viewpoints but did not prepare him to challenge them.

Other teachers shared being unequipped to handle certain conversations with parents. Morgan, an elementary school teacher, shared, “I definitely felt prepared to work hard to build an inclusive classroom with my students on both racial equity and gender and sexual orientation identity, I don't know if I feel as prepared communicating all of that with parents, so that's the thing that's been a struggle.” Likewise, Isabella shared, “I feel like that's where I could have been more prepared, getting backlash from parents that don't agree with what we're talking about.” Both Morgan and Isabella expressed they felt prepared to incorporate social justice topics into their teaching, but they were unsure of how to handle parents who disagreed with their teaching practice.

Teachers also mentioned feeling unprepared to address problematic comments and conversations with students. An open-ended survey respondent highlighted feeling unequipped to respond to racist, sexist, or ableist situations, sharing, “It would be beneficial to go through specific scenarios for addressing racism/sexism/ableism in the classroom/on campus rather than

talking about the fact that it should, in general, be done." Another survey respondent emphasized the same point, stating, "We did not get practice or insight on how to disrupt instances of racism, sexism, or homophobia in the classroom." Several interview participants expressed the same critique, sharing they wished the program had given them opportunities to practice responding to hypothetical situations.

Finally, while many interview participants shared learning about culturally responsive teaching in the program, several described feeling unequipped to enact the pedagogical practice. Teresa, a middle school science teacher, shared:

> *But when we talked about culturally relevant pedagogy, it was one of the main topics that comes up in EDS, and they always say, so how are you going to incorporate pieces of your students' background culture and things like that into your lesson, and I don't feel I left the program getting that to be honest with you. I got a lot of examples of what it wasn't. But I don't think I really understood what it was until I was with a group of students who were nothing like me because a lot of it is the willingness to learn and listen rather than impose what you think your classroom should have. If that makes sense? It was me being a practitioner to be able to figure that out. I didn't really understand it, leaving from a kind of a theoretical point didn't hit home for me.*

Within the multiple choice survey responses, when asked if they were prepared to construct a multicultural and inclusive curriculum, only 55% of respondents said excellent or good. While this is more than half, most survey questions have response scores in the 80-90% range; thus, this is one of the lowest response scores. This response score further corroborates that teachers learned what culturally responsive teaching was from a theoretical perspective but lacked the skills to create a curriculum that is truly culturally responsive. When examining the findings for the third research question in the next chapter (ch. 6), which investigates how alumni enacted social justice teaching, it is made further evident from survey data that alumni struggled to implement core principles of social justice teaching, such as culturally responsive pedagogy.

Summary

This chapter focused on what alumni perceived they learned about social justice from the TEP by addressing the second research question guiding this study: *What components of social justice education did TEP alumni identify as having been learned from the program?* The findings for this research question were drawn from the survey and interview responses. Data analysis showed that the three primary themes were prevalent across the data:

1. General awareness of inequities
2. Appreciating Students' Backgrounds to Create Inclusive Classrooms
3. Areas for deeper learning

The first two themes shed insight into the components alumni identified as having been learned about social justice teaching by the TEP, while the third theme underscored areas where alumni wished for deeper learning. The perspectives shared by alumni throughout these themes further illuminated the social justice components taught by TEPs committed to justice and equity and helped clarify what it meant to prepare a teacher to teach for social justice. This was important as a common critique of social justice education is that it lacks theoretical depth and clarity. This study aimed to combat this critique by highlighting what alumni perceived they learned and how they applied it to practice.

The findings for the second research question elevated several key ideas related to social justice teacher education. First, they shed insight into the importance of developing prospective teachers' general awareness of inequities within society. The sixth principle in Cochran-Smith's (2004) teaching for social justice framework is making inequity, power, and activism explicit parts of the curriculum. She argues that teachers committed to social justice help students name and deal with individual instances of prejudice, as well as structural and institutional inequities.

In order for a teacher to do this, they must first be aware of these prejudices and inequities themselves. While the finding that alumni believed the program expanded their general awareness of inequities does not highlight how they helped students recognize and challenge inequities in their own classrooms, it does illuminate how the TEP sought to give preservice teachers a foundational understanding of inequities and injustices within society.

While the intention of this study was not to solely research the perspectives of white teachers, the finding that white participants more often described how the program broadened their understanding of inequities underscores how the TEP may unintentionally impact white prospective teachers differently than teachers of color. This finding is in line with the existing body of research (Sleeter, 2016; Liu & Ball, 2019; Wiedeman, 2002) that asserts social justice-based teacher education courses often seek to challenge or widen white preservice teachers' perceptions and beliefs about racial inequities.

The second finding highlighted how alumni believed they were taught that understanding students' backgrounds and creating classrooms that are inclusive of their students' unique cultural and linguistic identities are essential components of social justice teaching. This theme is significant because valuing students' cultural and linguistic resources, family traditions, and existing knowledge are core components of social justice teaching (Cochran-Smith, 2004). Further, elements of this finding exist in the findings across all three of the research questions that guide this study. For example, a finding for the first research question highlighted how alumni valued how faculty built an inclusive community within the TEP, valuing each preservice teacher's unique background, while a finding for the third research question illustrates how alumni developed relationships and built community with their own students. This significance is

worth noting because appreciating students' backgrounds and creating inclusive classrooms is the only theme that is seen across the findings for each research question.

Finally, the findings for this research question also illuminated areas in which alumni wished deeper learning and preparation had occurred within the TEP, as it pertained to learning to teach for social justice. This finding particularly demonstrated that alumni wished they had greater preparation for addressing difficult conversations regarding inequities and injustice, particularly as they pertain to race. I chose to include this theme in the chapter dedicated to what alumni perceived they learned about social justice because it helped further clarify what is worth including in a social justice TEP from the perspective of a practicing teacher. This clarification is important, as critics argue that components of social justice teacher education are often not clear enough.

Chapter 6: Research Question #3 Findings

This chapter focuses on the findings for the third research question: *What components of TEP alumni's current classrooms reflect what they learned about social justice in their teacher education program?* This research question aims to understand how alumni say that they enact social justice teaching, connecting what they learned in the program to their teaching practices. Research on social justice TEPs largely focuses on the beliefs and attitudes of preservice teachers while they are in their teacher preparation program, with little focus on how these beliefs and attitudes impact their teaching once they have graduated and have their own classrooms (Cochran et al., 2009). Therefore, this research question aims to understand how knowledge gained during a teacher preparation program translates into a teacher's practice once they teach full-time. The findings where alumni report their practices are drawn from the quantitative portion of the survey and alumni interviews.

The third research question also includes findings drawn from classroom observations of three teachers: a sixth-grade science teacher, an 11th and 12th-grade English teacher, and a 10th and 11th-grade Spanish teacher. Over the course of four months, I spent approximately twenty hours in each of their classrooms. While these teachers also participated in an interview, the purpose of the observations was to document how these teachers applied what they learned about social justice teaching to practice. Rather than including a separate section about these teachers, vignettes from the observations are included across the findings for this research question. The findings are separated into four themes: relationships and community building, student backgrounds, high expectations for all students, and contradictions in quantitative data.

Theme 1: Relationships & Community Building

The first theme for this research question is focused on the importance alumni placed on relationships and community building within their classrooms. Across the interviews, various alumni shared how they sought to build relationships with students and family through phone calls home, newsletters, community circles, and other getting-to-know-you activities. David, a high school math teacher described the importance of calling home to share good news with parents, explaining how this helps build rapport with his students' families:

> *But one strategy is just calling home, seeing how the student is doing. Not so much calling and being like your student was not doing good today but to also give compliment calls to home so when the calls do come, it's not like oh, it's a bad thing. It can be a good thing then.*

As a high school teacher, David teaches approximately 120 students, and calling each of their homes can be very time-consuming, yet he does so anyway because he wants to form connections with their parents. This is significant, for black and brown students historically receive more negative phone calls home to their families and are often viewed through a deficit lens (Yosso, 2005; Thompson, 2005). As a teacher of primarily Latinx students, he challenges this narrative by viewing his students from an asset-based lens and ensuring families receive positive phone calls about their students.

Grace, another high school math teacher, shared how she uses online check-ins to deepen her relationships with her students:

> *I also have check-ins, where students like we do the community circle, but they also have check-ins online. So every Friday, I have them do a quick check-in. So the questions are like, how are you feeling? It's a mood meter with pictures and whatever I have that day. And then I also do questions like, how are you doing in your classes? Your other classes, not just math, how can I support you in math? How are you doing in math? How can I support you and last one I put a fun question in there like, who would play you in a movie*

> *about your life? So just a fun question for them. And then the last one is, do you need to check in? And whether they put yes or no. I like personally checking in with them, seeing what's going on? And for some reason my kids love doing these, and they tell me their whole life story every single Friday.*

While the math teachers in this study often noted the difficulties with creating a social justice curriculum, they all still emphasized the importance of developing strong relationships with their students and the importance of seeing their students as a whole person, not just as students in their math class. This is personified through the two examples the high school math teachers described.

In addition to high school teachers, elementary school teachers also shared the value they place on building community in their classrooms. For example, Erin, shared how she built community through morning greetings, ensuring she greeted every student as they arrived:

> *I did a lot of reading, so I read that's how I built community. I did morning readings and did a morning greeting. So I greeted all my students every single day. At some point I had 32 and I took the time to greet them. And then we read, and I asked, like we had a discussion about the book. It was not really meant to be this teaching moment. It was more of teaching students to think, to think and connect with the text. So a lot of the times I would ask questions that would ask them to reflect on what they would do, or how like how the character or the main character in the book relates like, resembles or connects with them.*

Through morning readings and greetings, Erin prioritized nonacademic time to build relationships with her students and help them feel connected to the various topics they discussed in class. The emphasis she placed on making her students feel welcome and connected to her classroom is particularly important, as they are only kindergartners, and their early school experiences will lay the foundation for how they perceive teachers and schooling for the years to come (Clayback, Williford, and Viteiello, 2023). Further, by establishing positive relationships with them, Erin is helping them see school as a positive and encouraging place, increasing the likelihood of strong academic engagement (Howard, 2017). This is significant because research

asserts that to be an effective social justice educator, teachers must be persistent in establishing authentic, caring relationships with their students (Howard, 2006; Valenzuela, 2010), as this is foundational to enacting all other principles across social justice teaching.

Alumni also referenced utilizing the relationship-building activities they learned in the TEP within their own classrooms. Some of these activities included student ethnographies, creating a class quilt, student surveys, a name tent activity, torn paper bios, and asking students the name and pronouns they would like to be called. Other alumni described building trust and rapport with students through their own willingness to share personal stories and experiences with their class. By opening up with their students, they helped facilitate a classroom environment that is safe and trusting so students feel they too can be open with one another. For instance, Erin shared how she tells her students about her experience as an English Learner (EL), making her students who are EL feel safe in her classroom:

> *We did curriculum roses and thorns, and that allowed the students to be able to share what they were feeling in a safe place. I think that's it. I did a lot of connecting with my own background, which made it safe for them to be able to share things that were they connected with or from their background. So I often talked about, you know, being born and raised in Mexico, and speaking Spanish only until I was thirteen, and it made them comfortable, especially for my English language learners when they struggled to say a word. I made it like the classroom environment was so that they are able to say a word, it was okay for them to ask like how do you say you know this or that without feeling like they were going to be made fun of. And so I talked about my own experience with language and learning, and how it's not easy, and it's not black and white, and it takes time. The same thing was applied for all the other subjects, but having this growth mindset around, everybody can grow from the experiences of everybody.*

This description demonstrates how Erin uses examples from her own life to invite students to bring their whole selves to her class. Further, she is challenging dominant and deficit narratives that require students to leave their culture and language behind (Valenzuela, 2010), exemplifying the qualities of a social justice teacher.

The three teachers who participated in classroom observations also prioritized caring for their students. I observed their classrooms from February to May, and it was evident that each teacher had developed a strong classroom culture where students feel deeply cared for and valued. This was made clear through their interactions with each student and through the students' relationships with them.

Carmen, a middle school math teacher in her mid 40s, always greeted every student at the door as they entered her classroom. Carmen is a native Spanish speaker who immigrated to the US from Mexico when she was 16. Carmen is a veteran teacher with over 12 years of experience, and it was evident she still thoroughly enjoys teaching and being with her students. She was joyful and upbeat and exuded a loving and kind teacher persona. She treated her students respectfully and often referred to them in endearing terms such as “honey” or “love.” Each day, Carmen would tell them she was happy to see them, compliment them, or ask them how they were doing. Carmen teaches over 100 students per day, yet she takes the time to make sure she greets each individual, starting off every class period on a positive note.

The majority of her students were also Latinx. Because of this, Carmen often spoke in Spanish in her classroom. She often interchanged between English and Spanish, from giving directions in side conversations with students to giving direct instruction. Speaking in Spanish signaled to her students that their cultural and linguistic identity was welcomed and embraced in her classroom. It allowed students to be themselves and utilize Spanish to help them better understand math. Furthermore, it deepened her relationship with her students, contributing to a classroom culture where students felt wholly seen, valued, and cared for.

Isabella, a high school English teacher in her late 20s, also created a classroom environment where students felt respected, valued, and cherished. Isabella was in her 7th year of

teaching, working at a high school in the community where she was raised. It was evident that Isabella valued her role as a teacher and mentor to her students. She always maintained a positive and enthusiastic attitude in her classroom, bringing excitement to whatever she taught. Like Carmen, she also shared the same Mexican background as most of her students and frequently spoke Spanish with them. In addition to speaking in Spanish, she demonstrated her care for her students in various ways. During one class visit, Isabella did a unique check-in with her students to gauge their emotional feelings before beginning her lesson on The Great Gatsby. She asked students to put their heads down on their desks and cover their eyes. She then asked students to hold their hands up and give a rating depending on their mood and feelings. She started off by saying, "Give me a four if you're feeling your best today," she then proceeded to say, "A three if you feel good, a two if you feel okay, a one if you're not so good but don't need a check-in, and a zero if you do need a check-in." She would pause after each number, evaluating how each student was feeling. This exercise, which Isabella did two to three times per week, demonstrated how she cared for her students beyond academics. She sees them as whole people who need to be cared for beyond English class.

Students often talked to Isabella about their personal lives, showing how they trusted her and felt safe enough to be vulnerable with her. During my second visit, I stayed for two class periods. The students had an extended break between the classes to eat a snack and get fresh air. Multiple students came into her class to use her microwave during this time. Isabella did not mind at all, even though it was her break, too, and she enjoyed chatting with each student while they waited for their food. One student in particular came in during the break and was visibly upset; she was crying and seemed very emotional. She began talking to Isabella in Spanish. While I do not speak Spanish, the student was clearly telling Isabella about her problem. At the

end of the conversation, Isabella asked her in English if she needed a hug. The girl nodded yes, and Isabella lovingly embraced her. This entire interaction exemplified the trust Isabella has built with her students and her willingness to go above and beyond to ensure her students feel cared for at school.

During another class, students worked independently on an assignment when a student sitting in the front row told Isabella he was hungry. Isabella was prepared, as she told him, "I thought you might be, so I brought popcorn with me today. Would you like some?" The student smiled and said yes. Isabella then poured him a bowl of popcorn that he happily munched on while he continued to work. Isabella's comment and willingness to share food with her student showed that she knows him so well that she can anticipate he will be hungry. This personifies how she sees her students as more than English students and strives to care for them as a whole person.

The third teacher to participate in observations was Diego. While in his late 30s, Diego was only in his fourth year of teaching and taught high school Spanish at a charter school in Sunvale. Like Carmen and Isabella, Diego also had a Latinx background and grew up speaking both English and Spanish. Diego's students were the most diverse of the three teachers, representing students from all backgrounds. Diego began every class period by enthusiastically greeting his students. In the front of his classroom is a large hand-painted banner that says, "Si se puede," which means "Yes we can." Diego always stood in front of this banner when greeting his class. I often observed during the afternoons, so his class greeting frequently went like this:

Diego: Buenos tardes clase!
Students: Buenos tardes
Diego: Se puede?
Students: Si se puedo!

Starting each class this way helped set a positive tone for the period and reminded students that Diego believed in them. While Diego's interactions with students and overall classroom presence demonstrated that he cares for his students and prioritizes building classroom community, some of the examples he provided in his interview elevated the authenticity he brings to developing relationships with students and cultivating a classroom where students feel empowered to bring their whole selves. For example, when asked how he gets to know students, he shared:

> *We write a letter and we in the letter we're going to talk to them about why we teach, and so I get we. We both really were committed to like being really real with our students about like why you know why we teach what we teach, and so in that letter I talked to them about you know who I am, about my mom, about the challenges that I've had growing up and stuff but also the ways in which I've overcome those challenges, and why I'm going to continue to be there for them but why I'm also going to continue to push them to do things that maybe it's going to take them a little bit out of their comfort zone. And so I want to model that kind of inviting environment for them to kind of be comfortable, bringing their full self into the classroom right away. And so I think that's one of the first steps just being able to model what I expect from them. The other ways that I that I learn about my students is that a lot of my assignments are really geared towards giving students an opportunity to bring themselves into the classroom.*

Building on this, he further shared how he uses himself as an example in activities before asking students to open up about themselves. He does this to create trust with and among his students so they feel comfortable and can more easily relate what they are learning to their own lives:

> *So in my classroom, for example, you know we're gonna learn about how to talk about our families, right? And so we're learning the vocabulary in Spanish we're learning, you know the structures to use, and we're doing all that stuff that I need to make sure to take care of in terms of the you know, standard side. But when, instead of just talking about a generic family, right, what I do is I introduce to them my own family right, and I have them kind of engage in different activities to learn about my family, and then we flip it right where all the stuff that they did to analyze my family now they're gonna do for themselves, and they're gonna bring that information in and share it with the class or share with their partners, right? So that's just one example of how I try to tailor my activities and my assignments in my class to make sure that the students are the ones who are really the textbook of the class and we're learning from their experiences. And they're bringing their experiences into the classroom.*

Through the interviews and observations, it was made clear that these alumni deeply value their relationships with their students and place a strong emphasis on building classroom community. This theme is a finding across all three research questions, suggesting alumni view caring for students as a core component of social justice teaching.

Theme 2: Diverse Experiences Represented

The second major finding of this research question is the representation of diverse experiences in classrooms. From classroom decor to books and toys to curriculum and instruction, it was evident alumni incorporated diverse experiences into their teaching pedagogy to elevate social justice-based practices.

Nearly all of the survey, interview, and observation participants who participated in this study teach in schools where the students are predominantly students of color, primarily Latinx. This is largely because the TEP intentionally emphasizes preparing prospective teachers to teach in urban neighborhoods and diverse settings. However, among the interview participants, two teachers taught in schools that serve primarily white students. One of these teachers, Alyssa, an elementary school STEAM teacher, stressed the importance of exposing her students to diverse experiences since racial and cultural diversity is lacking within her school community:

> *I'm trying to draw from stories and news events, and you know, new discoveries and stuff from everywhere, not just from somewhere they would be familiar with. So that's part of what I'm doing, because when we're learning about an engineering feat, if I have the option of showing them a video of something in San Francisco or showing them something in Typae, I'm choosing the Typae one. I want to make sure that they know that discovery and science and, you know, engineering and all these things come from all sorts of places. Not just a place that looks like where they're from.*

Alyssa also shared that she encourages personal expression and highlights her students' unique strengths to emphasize different types of diversity, given racial and cultural diversity is nearly nonexistent at her school.

> *So that's a lot of what I'm doing. I'm also trying to bring their personal expression into a lot of these things, because I'd like to highlight not each individual student, because that might be uncomfortable for them, but just highlight the fact that we do have some diversity, right? So when there is diversity, I'd like to celebrate that. So we have lots of moments for students to express themselves.*

She later explained that she sometimes feels limited as to what social justice principles and teaching practices she can incorporate into her practice, given the all-white student body, their white parents, and the conservative community in which she teaches. Therefore, while she would like to move beyond representing diverse experiences as her main form of social justice practice, this practice is currently where she feels most confident and safe. This exemplifies how a teacher's agency and ability to implement social justice practices depends on the school and community context in which they teach. Among the participants in this study, the only teachers who noted they feel limited due to their school and community contexts are the teachers who teach in majority-white neighborhoods.

Stacy, a middle school science teacher who works in a school where the students are almost all Latinx, described the importance of incorporating different perspectives into science so students are exposed to more than Western interpretations of scientific phenomena:

> *Just one of the great things about science, because there's a lot of phenomenon that happen not just in one part of the world, but also all across the world, too. And it's really nice to see different cultures insights and experiences with different phenomenon. We were just talking about lunar eclipses and the moon phases in science, and how the ancient Mayans saw it one way, whereas other people in China saw it the other way.*

A key component of social justice teaching includes critiquing universalists' views of knowledge and incorporating diverse cultures and experiences into classroom lessons and discussions (Dover, 2009; Cochran-Smith, 2004). While both science teachers are not teaching their students to critique traditional science content and perspectives, they are teaching their students that different perspectives exist beyond Western, Eurocentric beliefs, expanding students' exposure

and worldviews. Similarly, Teresa, a middle school science teacher, described subtly encouraging her students to notice and question why scientists are often portrayed as white men. For example, she shared:

> *If you know you show the students the first walk on the moon they're going to notice it's a bunch of white guys, or if you show them you know, picture of the NASA team now they're going to see the difference between those two things. And rather than just like letting it slide by like if we were to show him a video clip or something like that, inserting specific questions that did you notice anything about who is in this video or who was participating in this activity, what stood out to you just to see if they're picking up on those things, because, as you know that gets kind of in their unconscious real in their head of like oh, NASA looks like these people, and so I think that those subtleties need to be made deliberate in the classroom. and when you're talking about science, a lot of it is who is practicing and who is not.*

Through this quote, it is evident Teresa encourages her students to think about why white men have historically been given more opportunities to be scientists, challenging them to think about power and societal inequity, core components of social justice teaching (Cochran-Smith, 2004).

Similar to the science teachers' efforts to represent diverse perspectives, Morgan also shared that she tries to represent racial, cultural, and linguistic diversity through the books and toys in her classroom. She emphasized that her students come from diverse backgrounds, each with a unique racial and cultural identity. Because of this, it is important to her that her students see themselves reflected in the literature they read and the toys they play with:

> *Exactly, and making sure, especially in kindergarten that the toys represent them, so we have a lot of books and a lot of toys that you know are representative of all the kids and just having those mirrors that the kids see. They see themselves, and they see their friends in their classrooms and their books and whatnot. I think that's honestly huge for my level…. We do a lot of work in the classroom where I'll open a page of a book, one of the really great books that we have, and I go, which person looks like you? Which person looks like your friend next to you, and the kids get so excited to see themselves in the literature, and more invested every time they read a book they're like oh, my goodness, that's my friend. That's whatever it brings, you know curriculum it bridges the gap between curriculum, school life, and real life.*

By ensuring her students see themselves reflected in their toys, books, and curriculum, Morgan upholds core components of social justice teaching and demonstrates that she respects all students' families and cultural values. This is critical, for when students see themselves in what they are learning, they feel valued, their self-esteem rises, and they become more invested in school (Villegas and Lucas, 2002).

Through classroom observations, it was evident each of the three observed teachers prioritized classroom decor as a means to reflect diverse experiences and the diverse racial and cultural backgrounds of their students. Isabella identifies as Mexican-American and primarily teaches Latinx students; therefore, her classroom was decorated in Mexican decor. Her colorful and inviting classroom gives off a relaxed and homey atmosphere. There are large, colorful Mexican tapestries hanging on the walls of her classroom, with large, beautiful, matching flowers constructed out of paper placed alongside them. She has placed Dia de los Muertos skulls throughout the room, and a large sombrero and donkey pinata are placed on a shelf near her desk. There are also beautiful pieces of terra cotta pottery that she bought in Mexico thoughtfully placed throughout the room. On the back wall of her classroom, there is a large poster that says, "Ponte las pilas -Pa." This means "get to work," and it was commonly said by her dad, a working-class immigrant from Mexico who serves as a large inspiration in her life. The entire classroom reflects her Mexican identity and her students and cultivates an environment where the Spanish language and Latinx culture are valued and embraced.

In addition to the Mexican decor, she also has a small pride flag hanging next to the American flag in the front of the classroom, signaling that LGBTQIA+ students are welcome in her classroom. There are signs by the door that say, "This is a safe zone," with a rainbow triangle behind it, and an additional sign that says, "Racism, sexism, and homophobia are not allowed

here." Across the classroom, on a side wall next to her desk, there is another sign that reads, "Teachers for social justice."

Carmen is an immigrant from Mexico whose students reflect a wide range of diverse backgrounds. In her classroom, the decor is not solely focused on Latinx culture but seeks to embrace multiple identities. For example, on the wall in the front of her classroom, she has various posters that say, "Black Lives Matter," "Being Mexican Isn't a Crime," and one with a big rainbow heart that says "Safe space." She also has a small pride flag and a small transgender flag hanging in her room. The classroom has a lot of math posters throughout the room, but several social justice-based posters are interspersed between the math posters. One poster in particular says "La lucha sigue" in Spanish, which translates to "the struggle continues" or "the fight goes on." This expression is often used in social or political activism to convey a commitment to persisting in the struggle for a particular cause, justice, or change. Another poster says, "I teach because I believe every student and teacher deserves information, opportunity, and access." She also has a famous painting by Diego Rivera of an Indigenous woman holding a basket of lilies on her back and a poster of an African American woman with a large afro holding up a black power fist on the side wall of her classroom. Her classroom reflects her personal commitment to activism and seeks to highlight various experiences of people of color.

Diego's classroom is decorated with Latin decor and social justice messaging. Diego is first-generation and was raised by his mother, who immigrated from Mexico. Unlike traditional Spanish classrooms and curriculum that focus on teaching Spanish from the Spaniard perspective, a country that dominated and colonized other Latin-Indigenous countries, Diego centers his Spanish curriculum and decor around the Indigenous, immigrant, and working-class experience of people who speak Spanish. For example, he has a large black and white photo of

Cesar Chavez and other farm workers protesting their working conditions hanging on a wall in his classroom. The flags of Mexico and El Salvador are in front of his classroom. Next to the flags is a large hand-painted banner that says, “Si se puede,” a saying commonly used by the United Farm Workers of America and other activist groups. Next to his desk is a poster that says “la educacion no se negocia – que se dialogar cuando el future esta en riesgo.” This expression emphasizes the importance of education and is often used to underscore the critical role that education plays in shaping the future and the need to address challenges through constructive conversation. In the back of his classroom hangs another poster that says, “Viva la Raza,” meaning “Long live the people.” In this context, the people refer to those who identify within the Chicano community. The phrase is used as a form of expression, pride, or solidarity with this cultural identity and has been historically associated with Mexican-American or Chicano activism.

In Diego’s classes, he often would connect his Spanish lessons to the lived experiences of various Latinx groups, striving to ensure his students understood that Latinx people are not monolithic; rather, there is immense diversity across the Latinx lived experience. He also strove to connect his lessons to current events and circumstances so his students would understand and connect with the present-day realities facing many Latinx people. These efforts demonstrated the importance he placed on ensuring diverse people and experiences were represented in his teaching.

Throughout my visits, Diego’s class spent time reading Francisco Jimenez’s memoir, which captures Jimenez’s life growing up in the 1950s in a migrant farm working family in the central valley of California. During one particular visit, the class read a passage detailing extreme flooding in the Central Valley and how this affected the migrant workers living

situations, health, and job opportunities. The week before they read this passage, California experienced unprecedented rain, leaving the Central Valley under harsh flooding. Like the floods Jimenez describes, the current flooding destroyed many of the homes occupied by present-day migrant workers and ruined many crops, leaving farm workers out of work and out of pay. Diego used this opportunity to connect Jimenez's experience with flooding to the present-day flooding. After they finished reading the passage in Jimenez's memoir, Diego projected several images of towns, homes, crops, and fields that were currently completely flooded.

> *The creek has flooded and now all these fields are underwater. What happens to this water? The natural process is it goes down into the ground and gets purified through a water table process, but what happens when there's too much and the ground cannot not absorb that water?*
>
> *So what do you think happens to those fields, can people work? No, in total people have estimated that farm workers haven't worked in 3 weeks. If you're someone who's living paycheck to paycheck that's really hard. This kind of event for us is an inconvenience, but for them this is completely devastating.*
>
> *So we all experience rain but we all don't experience it the same. I want you to think about this rain, for us maybe we get wet, but I want you to think about the people who are living downtown in tents… like Franciso did. So I want you to think about that – why did Francisco use water as part of his book, because he wants us to think about it differently, because we have privilege and hopefully that motivates you to do something with that privilege. I will keep you updated on what's happening in this valley, this is Salinas, this is the strawberry capital of the world.*

Diego used this opportunity to elevate the lived experiences of a particular group faced with immense challenges and structural inequities. The experiences of migrant workers are very different from the lived experiences of his students, and by exposing them to the realities of migrant workers, he challenged his students to think critically about power, privilege, and inequity within society.

Representing diverse experiences across one's teaching and curriculum is essential to social justice teaching (Dover, 2009; Cochran-Smith, 2004). It is critical that students not only

see themselves reflected in what they are learning but are exposed to unique perspectives that challenge Western ideals (Dover, 2009; Cochran-Smith, 2004). Widening students' viewpoints helps prepare them to work and live in an increasingly diverse and global world and gives them tools to analyze and critique knowledge that is deemed universal and true. Through the interviews and classroom observations, it was evident alumni value this component of social justice teaching, representing diverse experiences and their students' backgrounds through their teaching, curriculum, books, toys, and classroom decor.

Theme 3: High expectations for all students

Teachers who utilize a social justice framework believe that all students can achieve at high levels; therefore, they are concerned with not only their students' social and emotional development but are also deeply committed to the academic growth of each student (Cochran-Smith, 2004). These teachers understand how to nourish their students intellectually and emotionally, hold high and transparent academic expectations, and know how to meet students where they are (Cochran-Smith, 2004). Thus, upholding high expectations is an essential component of social justice teaching. Across the interviews, classroom observations, and survey responses, it was evident that alumni maintain and uphold high expectations for all of their students, making this the third finding for this research question.

Sophia, a high school math teacher, shared the importance of building her students' confidence so they, too, believe they can achieve at high levels in math:

> *So once I make a student who historically has struggled in math, once I make them understand and that they can actually achieve at a high level that's when I get the trust, and that's when I can start cranking it up, right. But it takes building it up.. it's daily…. I believe, first of all I believe that all kids, my students, you know, can achieve math at the highest levels… I believe that over and over again, right? And I believe I need to meet them where they are and I need to push them and I need to feed that and cultivate that. And yes they are resilient, but there's a different resilience when it comes to math…*

> *they're resilient at other parts in their lives. They are, and I just want to make sure I tap into that resiliency.*

Sophia recognizes the importance of building a trusting relationship with her students, for it is the foundation for ensuring her students feel safe and confident in her math class. She recognizes they have already come to her class filled with resiliency, and it is her job to help them utilize that resiliency in math. This quote stood out for many students, particularly black and brown students, have experienced trauma in math and lack the belief that they can achieve due to these traumatic experiences (Vettivelu & Ferreyro-Mazieres, 2022). Sophia recognizes this, yet she still believes that every student can achieve at high levels and that it is her job to help them get there. Rather than maintaining deficit beliefs about her students, she continually sees them from an asset-based lens, an important facet of equitable and just teaching.

Grace, another high school math teacher, shared how she does not group students by ability because she believes that every student is fully capable of participating at the same level:

> *I just use randomization to make the groups, which means sometimes there will be a group that's like, okay, I've paired up the strongest kids in the class. But I don't really worry about it too much because they're going to get a new group every day, so not having kids pigeonholed into roles, I think, is a good way to build equity, and really show like no, I actually am expecting all of you, to participate at the same level. Which is why I'm not pairing you up with a kid that's at the top of the class, so that he can do, or she can do all the work; they're all being expected to figure out the problems.*

Rather than assigning groups by ability, Grace demonstrates her efforts to use detracking methods, as she believes each student can contribute at high levels. This is an equitable and social-justice-based practice, as research demonstrates that detracking helps eliminate bias and inequitable opportunities for lower-performing students, and it can overall lead to increased academic performance for all students as they are all being given the opportunity to engage in challenging coursework (Oakes, 2005).

In addition to the interviews, several survey responses also demonstrated how participants value the importance of upholding high expectations for all students. For example, when asked if the teacher education program prepared them to maintain high expectations for all students, 83% of participants agreed or strongly agreed. In addition, when asked if they believe all students can deal with complex ideas, 81% agreed or strongly agreed. The following survey questions further highlighted participants' beliefs about their students' capabilities:

Table 6.1. Theme 3 Quantitative Findings

Think about the context of your classroom and school experiences and respond to the following statements about your own teaching practices:	**Response**
It's reasonable for me to adjust my level of student outcomes classroom expectations for students who don't speak English as their first language	90% disagree
Whether students succeed in my classroom depends primarily on how hard they work	78% disagree
Realistically, my job as a teacher is to prepare students for the lives they are likely to lead	70% disagree

These questions demonstrate that most survey participants believe it is their job to support students and help them achieve at high levels, regardless of their background.

Across the classroom observations, it was evident that each teacher maintained high expectations for their students. Diego, Carmen, and Isabella did not track their students or assign them to groups based on their abilities. They spoke to all of their students respectfully and expected the same level of work from each student. All three teachers frequently circulated throughout the classroom, helping students whenever they needed it, and all three often gave students positive words of encouragement, letting their students know they believed in them.

One particular class period, when I was observing Carmen in her sixth-grade math class, she held individual conferences with each of her students to review their grades as progress

reports were due the following week. While her students worked independently, she called one student up at a time to join her at a table for their conference. During each meeting, she would tell the student their current grade and then ask them questions to help them reflect on their efforts and learning over the past several months. These reflection questions demonstrated her respect for each of her students, her belief that all students can achieve at a high level, and her eagerness to empower students to take ownership of their own progress. Further, these conferences exemplified her belief that teachers and students can work in a collaborative partnership rather than an authoritarian relationship. She asked the students questions like:

- What are your strengths in this class?
- What do you enjoy the most about math?
- Where would you like to improve?
- Do you think this grade is accurate?

In addition to these questions, she told each student what she liked about them and why she was proud of them. She often shared things outside of math, telling students things like "You're a good communicator" or "I really like how you are always willing to help others." Finally, she asked each student if they'd like the opportunity to turn in their missing assignments or retake a quiz, further reiterating her belief that all students can achieve and should be given the support necessary to help them succeed.

Upholding high expectations for all students is a core component of social justice teaching. Teachers who maintain this belief view their students from an asset-based lens and work hard to ensure each student is given the support they need to achieve at high levels. Through interview, observation, and survey data, it was apparent through their teaching practices

that the TEP prepared alumni to believe all students can achieve and succeed at high academic levels.

Theme 4: Programmatic Tensions

While much of the interview data demonstrated that alumni had felt prepared to utilize social justice practices, several contradictions in the quantitative data showed teachers had struggled to implement these practices into their teaching. The table below highlights four key questions that represent these struggles. The table shows that the agree to strongly agree responses ranged from 11% to 67%. This was much lower than most other questions, where the agree to strongly agree responses ranged from 75-90%.

Table 6.2. Theme 4 Quantitative Findings

Think about the context of your classroom and school experiences and respond to the following statements about your own teaching practices:	**Agree or Strongly Agree**
For the most part, covering multicultural topics is not relevant to the subjects I teach	67% agree/strongly agree
I incorporate diverse cultures and experiences into my classroom	11% agree/strongly agree
Although I appreciate diversity, it's not my job as a teacher to change society	56% agree/strongly agree
Part of my responsibilities as a teacher is to challenge school arrangements that maintain societal inequities	36% agree/strongly agree

The first two statements demonstrate that survey participants struggled to incorporate diversity into their teaching. This contradicts findings from the interview and observation data for this research question. Further, in the first and second research questions, participants shared that the TEP taught them the importance of incorporating diverse backgrounds into their teaching. These survey results, however, illustrate that while alumni were taught this importance, they still struggle to implement it in their practice.

The third and fourth statements in the table demonstrate survey participants' beliefs that they are not responsible for addressing education and societal inequities within broader contexts. There are various reasons why a teacher does not feel responsible for creating broader system-wide change; however, based on several interview responses, this may largely be due to feeling like they lack the support to address inequities beyond the four walls of their classroom.

Within the survey, 78% of participants agreed/strongly agreed that the TEP prepared them to explicitly teach about activism, power, and inequity in schools and society. Despite this, when asked if they explicitly teach about these three things, only 44% agreed/strongly agreed. This is another example of the way in which alumni were taught the importance of a social justice principle but lacked the implementation of the principle in their teaching.

Across the open-ended survey responses, several noted how the program taught prospective teachers about certain social justice issues or principles but did not do enough to prepare them to implement these practices. Some of these responses included:

> *Overall, less general talk about ideals and more practical scenarios and explanations about how fulfilling those ideals would actually look.*
>
> *EDS professors talked about social justice, but I don't remember getting into specifics on how to enact change.*
>
> *More classes specifically on how to integrate culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy/curriculum into the classroom.*

These open-ended responses further demonstrated areas in which alumni wished they had received greater preparation. These responses also suggested possibilities as to why alumni struggled to implement the practices stated in the above table.

Summary

This chapter addressed the third research question guiding this study: *What components of TEP alumni's current classrooms reflected what they learned about social justice in their*

teacher education program? The goal of this question was to understand how teachers applied what they had learned about social justice in their TEP to their teaching practice. Through analysis of the interviews, observations, and survey data, four themes emerged across the findings for this question: relationships and community building, representation of diverse experiences, high expectations for all students, and programmatic tensions. Unlike the other research questions, the findings for this research question were drawn from an additional data source, the observation data. Incorporating the observation data allowed for better triangulation of the findings, giving way to greater reliability.

The first theme, relationships and community building, captured the importance alumni placed on establishing caring relationships with their students and the value they placed on developing a classroom community that embraces all students. This theme was significant because variations of this finding were present across all three research questions. For example, a key finding for the first research question was alumni's perception that faculty within the TEP deeply cared about them and strove to create an environment that was inclusive of all identities within the TEP. Additionally, an essential finding for the second research question highlighted how alumni believed they had been taught that understanding students' backgrounds and creating classrooms that are inclusive of their students' unique identities are essential components of social justice teaching. The emphasis on understanding students, relationship building, and inclusive classroom culture was the only finding that ran throughout all three research questions. This suggested that the participants in this study viewed these components as essential to social justice teaching.

The second and third findings for this research question, representation of diverse experiences and high expectations for all students, reflected various principles from Cochran-

Smith's (2004) teaching for social justice framework. Specifically, they highlighted the first principle, which outlines the importance of believing all students can achieve at high levels, and the second principle, which emphasizes the importance of incorporating students' diverse backgrounds into one's teaching. This was significant, as it demonstrated ways in which the participants were implementing social justice practices learned in the TEP into their teaching.

The fourth finding, programmatic tensions, elevated survey data that displayed various components of social justice teaching alumni struggled to enact. While this study was not meant to evaluate the TEP, this data illuminated areas for deeper learning across the TEP as a means to better prepare prospective teachers to teach for social justice.

Overall, the findings for this research question elevated how alumni said they enacted social justice teaching, connecting what they learned in the program to their teaching practices. Research on social justice TEPs largely focuses on the beliefs and attitudes of preservice teachers while they were in their teacher preparation program, with little focus on how these beliefs and attitudes impacted their teaching once they graduated and had their own classrooms (Cochran et al., 2009). Therefore, the findings for this research question were significant because they underscored how knowledge gained during a teacher preparation program translated into a teacher's practice once they taught full-time.

Chapter 7: Discussion, Implications, and Recommendations

This study aimed to investigate what teachers perceived they learned about social justice education in their teacher education program and how this perception influenced their social justice instructional practices. Through a mixed-methods case study, the study explicitly addressed three research questions:

1. In what ways do alumni perceive that Sunvale University helped to prepare teachers to teach for social justice?
2. What components of social justice education did TEP alumni identify as being learned from the program?
3. What aspects of TEP alumni's current classrooms reflect what they learned about social justice in their teacher education program?

The findings for each question were comprised of quantitative and qualitative sources, including multiple-choice survey questions, open-ended survey questions, hour-long Zoom interviews, and classroom observations. Across the findings for each research question, multiple themes emerged. The figure below summarizes the themes across the research questions.

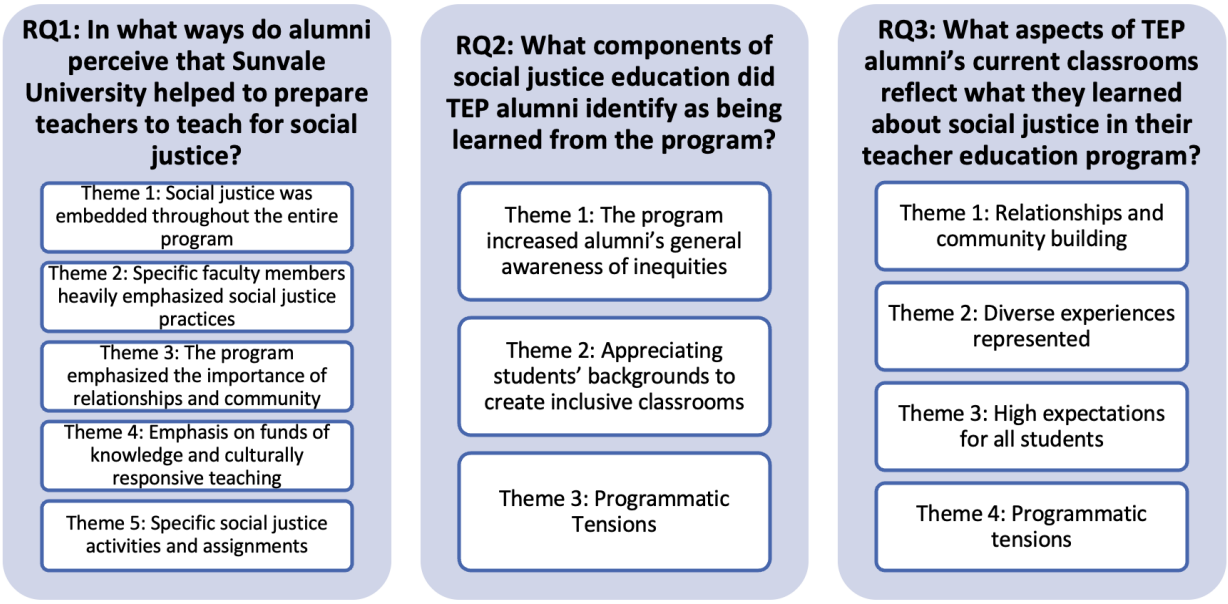

Figure 7.1. Research Questions Findings and Themes

While these themes are important, as they each highlight teachers' perceptions of what they learned about social justice and how they apply this to practice, this chapter will focus on the significance and implications of the major findings across the themes. Specifically, it will address how alumni perceived caring for students as a primary component of social justice teaching, how culturally relevant pedagogy was interpreted as social justice teaching, program intentionality versus program outcomes, the impact of race on participant's perceptions of what they learned, and the influence of school and community context on social justice teaching. In addition to this, I will address the study's limitations, suggest recommendations based on the significant findings, and offer areas for future research.

Relationships and Care for Students

While the findings for each research question varied, one theme was prevalent across the findings for all three research questions: alumni perceived developing relationships and caring for students as one of the most valuable components of social justice teaching. Not only did they perceive this as being taught by the TEP, but most participants also emphasized the importance

they place on this within their own teaching practice. When asked about the strengths of the program, alumni noted the faculty's ability to develop strong relationships with their students, making teacher candidates feel included, cared for, and part of a community. Alumni further shared that faculty emphasized the importance of building community with their students to create classrooms where every student feels valued, seen, and heard.

Through interviews and classroom observations, it was evident that alumni identified building strong relationships with students and creating caring classroom environments as critical aspects of their social justice pedagogy. They frequently described showing their care for students by embracing students' multi-faceted identities. Various alumni specified they seek to recognize that each student is more than a math or ELA student; rather, they bring unique backgrounds to the classroom, which should be celebrated and embraced. Alumni credited the TEP with teaching them the importance of these aspects, stressing how they perceived developing relationships and caring for students as essential to social justice teaching. Given that this theme appeared across all three research questions, this finding suggests that participants believed they were taught the most important aspect of social justice teaching is cultivating a classroom where relationships and care for students are at the core of one's teaching practice.

The way alumni described the importance of caring for students embodies "authentic caring," as coined and described by Angela Valenzuela (2010). Valenzuela (2010) argues that traditionally, teachers uphold aesthetic care, which focuses on instructional relationships where academics are the primary focus. However, authentic caring focuses on the reciprocal relationships among teachers and students. It goes beyond the routine teaching responsibilities and involves creating a supportive and nurturing environment that recognizes and values each student's needs, experiences, and identities. Furthermore, this form of caring promotes and

validates students' cultural backgrounds and values, ultimately creating a school environment where students feel that school is a home away from home. Geneva Gay (2018) builds on this, arguing that authentic caring is a core pillar of culturally responsive teaching, stating that teachers who utilize this practice value creating relationships where all students, particularly students of color, feel recognized, respected, valued, seen, and heard. Researchers (Martinez & Weighting, 2023; Leverett, D'Costa, & Baxa, 2022) also assert that in developing a caring environment, students are more likely to care about their teachers, be highly engaged in their education, and strive for high academic performance. This is particularly important for students of color, as they face more opportunity gaps and systemic inequities within the education system (Leverett, D'Costa, & Baxa, 2022; Goldberg & Iruka, 2023). Therefore, as the TEP is focused on preparing teachers to serve in diverse communities, especially communities that have been systemically marginalized, it is critical their teachers continue to learn how to demonstrate authentic care and how to develop meaningful relationships with students.

While authentic care is not explicitly a core principle of Cochran-Smith's (2004) six principles of pedagogy for social justice, teachers cannot enact these principles without the deep level of care that Valenzuela (2010) describes. For example, the second principle of Cochran-Smith's (2004) framework underscores the importance of building on what students bring to school, including their knowledge, interests, and cultural and linguistic resources. Building on this knowledge requires a deep understanding of who your students are beyond academics. Authentically caring for students empowers teachers to understand better who their students are from a holistic perspective, strengthening their ability to build on what students bring to school, as Cochran-Smith (2004) recommends. Further, Cochran-Smith's (2004) first principle calls on social justice educators to maintain high expectations for all students, providing each student

with the opportunity to learn academically challenging knowledge and skills. Research shows that positive teacher-student relationships contribute to higher academic outcomes, as students are more invested in their schoolwork when they feel genuinely cared for by their teacher (Howard, 2017). Thus, to effectively enact Cochran-Smith's (2004) first principle, teachers must first establish caring relationships with students. Alumni's perception that the TEP taught them caring for students is a critical component of social justice teaching, as well as the emphasis they placed on enacting this within their own practice, underscores the importance of authentic care and relationships as foundational to building deeper social justice practices. Therefore, this finding implies that relationships and caring for students are important aspects of social justice teaching and essential to enacting Cochran-Smith's (2004) six principles.

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy as Social Justice Teacher Education

When asked about their perceptions of how the TEP attempted to prepare them to teach for social justice, interview and survey participants often described the emphasis the program placed on culturally relevant pedagogy. Furthermore, when asked about the various components they learned about social justice teaching from the TEP, participants shared examples that aligned with the principles in Cochran-Smith's (2004) framework that are most similar to principles upheld by CRP. These overlapping principles include ideas such as valuing students' linguistic and cultural backgrounds, appreciating students' families and communities, representing diverse experiences in the curriculum, and maintaining high expectations for all students.

This finding is significant and worth noting in this discussion for two primary reasons. First, the emphasis participants placed on learning about culturally relevant pedagogy in the program underscores how the participants perceived CRP as foundational to social justice

teaching. Secondly, as a primary goal of this study was to contribute a deeper understanding of what it means to prepare teachers to teach for social justice, this finding demonstrates the theoretical underpinnings of social justice teacher education must include and give credit to those who have researched and articulated what it means to be culturally responsive. These scholars include people like Gloria Ladson-Billings (1995) and Geneva Gay (2018), whose work on CRP has profoundly impacted the way education researchers and practitioners address disparities in educational outcomes among students of different racial and ethnic backgrounds.

The theoretical framework guiding this study was largely comprised of the work on social justice teacher education by Marilyn Cochran-Smith (2004), as her conceptualization of the six principles of social justice teaching largely influenced my perception of what it means to teach for social justice. However, in addition to Cochran-Smith's (2004) work, I was also influenced by the work of Alison Dover (2009), as her framework specifically builds upon the work of Cochran-Smith (2004). In building on her work, Dover (2009) asserts that five key conceptual frameworks comprise teaching for social justice; culturally responsive education is one of these key frameworks. Dover (2009) acknowledges that components of Cochran-Smith's teaching for social justice framework are rooted in the tenets of CRP. These components include maintaining high expectations for all students, utilizing students' cultural and linguistic resources in the curriculum, teaching skills while bridging gaps, and drawing on family histories, traditions, and stories while demonstrating respect for all students' family and cultural values.

Dover's (2009) acknowledgment of CRP, coupled with the finding that participants perceived they were taught culturally responsive pedagogy is a core component of social justice teaching, imply that culturally relevant pedagogy is a framework that is fundamental to the larger framework of social justice pedagogy and must be included in social justice teacher education.

As critics argue that teaching for social justice is undertheorized, the distinction that culturally responsive pedagogy is foundational to social justice teaching helps clarify and deepen the theoretical and practical viewpoints that constitute teaching for social justice.

In addition to implying that culturally responsive pedagogy should be included in social justice theory and social justice teacher education, the findings also showed that while many participants noted the program taught them about culturally relevant pedagogy, participants still described difficulty implementing teaching practices that incorporated their students' diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. The findings did highlight how alumni value students' unique backgrounds and work to ensure diverse experiences are represented in their teaching; however, rarely did participants share how they specifically tailor their teaching and curriculum to incorporate their students' diverse cultural and linguistic identities. While participants are aware of the importance of CRP, they still struggle to enact it. This was made further evident through participant responses that indicated they wished they had been taught more tangible examples of culturally relevant pedagogy in the TEP rather than learning about CRP from a purely theoretical perspective.

This may have been a common critique across the participants because half of my interview participants were secondary math teachers. Mathematics is often seen as a universal language not influenced by race or culture (Martin, 2003; Tate, 1995; Larnell, Bullock, & Jett; 2016). This perception can lead educators to believe cultural relevance is less important in math than in subjects like English, where literature often reflects diverse perspectives and experiences (Izrazzy, 2007; Lee, 1995). However, this assumption overlooks the cultural aspects of mathematical problem-solving, reasoning, and applications. Further, while classes like Language Arts often involve literature and storytelling, concepts that naturally lend themselves to exploring

diverse cultural perspectives, math is perceived as more abstract and technical, making it seem less amenable to incorporating cultural relevance (Sleeter, 1997; Jett, 2012). The data from this study and the research on math instruction demonstrate the need to better prepare prospective math teachers to teach from a culturally responsive perspective. This is particularly important as academic gaps continue to persist in math for students of color due to systemic inequities and opportunity gaps within education. It is imperative that students of color see themselves reflected in what they are learning across all subjects, including math.

The Influence of Whiteness of Teacher Education Programs

When analyzing the data, there were scarcely any substantial or statistically significant differences in how different racial groups responded to survey or interview questions; therefore, most of the findings do not address or highlight race. However, the exception to this is the finding that alumni perceived the program widened their understanding of racial and educational inequities, as it was very clear white teachers primarily shared this view. While a few interview participants of color described how the program widened their awareness of inequities, most of the participants who described this awakening were white. This finding is significant because it illuminates how aspects of the TEP's efforts to prepare prospective teachers to teach from a social justice lens impact white preservice teachers differently than teacher candidates of color.

This finding is in line with the existing body of research (Liu & Ball, 2019; Picower, 2021; Sleeter, 2016) that asserts social justice-based teacher education courses often seek to challenge or widen white preservice teachers' perceptions and beliefs about racial inequities. The focus is primarily placed on white teachers because the teaching force and teacher education programs are still primarily composed of white women, even though K-12 student demographics have become drastically more diverse. As a result, existing research on social justice-based

teacher preparation courses commonly examines how the beliefs and attitudes of prospective white teachers change after taking courses focused on race, inequity, and power (Liu & Ball, 2019; Picower; 2021; Sleeter, 2016). The intention of this study was not to research the perspectives of white teachers; however, the finding that white teachers experienced the most "eye-opening" moments, coupled with the existing research, demonstrates how the TEP unintentionally affects white prospective teachers differently than teachers of color.

When describing how the program expanded their viewpoints, white alumni shared how it challenged their beliefs and assumptions, exposed them to systemic inequities in the school system, and raised their awareness of racial disparities. Challenging prospective teachers of all backgrounds to be aware of their privileges and opportunities is a critical component of social justice teacher education, as it helps prospective teachers understand how to be aware of inequities and break down barriers to inclusivity within their classrooms (Moore, 2008; Lewis et al., 2017). Further, by becoming aware of their privilege, educators can more readily identify and confront their biases and stereotypes, which then helps them foster a learning environment free from discrimination and bias (Moore, 2008; Lewis et al., 2017). By helping white teachers specifically challenge their beliefs about diverse students, researchers assert they will develop a greater capacity to empathize with their students of color, in turn developing caring relationships with their students (Picower, 2011).

Despite this research, various scholars (Liu & Ball, 2019; Picower; 2021; Sleeter, 2016) argue the focus on white preservice teachers within TEPs and across teacher education research remains problematic for a multitude of reasons. For example, Kohli, Dover, and Jayakumar (2022) highlight that while it is important to create spaces for preservice teachers to process their identities and privilege and how these facets relate to power and inequity, when this space is

being dominated by white women who are processing it can lead to a different set of issues and challenges for teacher candidates of color. As various emotions, thoughts, and feelings emerge in these settings, there is the risk of silencing teachers of color (Kohli, Dover, & Jayakumar, 2022; Kohli, 2009). This may then impact a TEP's efforts to recruit more diverse teacher candidates. Furthermore, because most of the existing research on social justice teacher preparation privileges the perspectives and experiences of White women, it unintentionally excludes, silences, and ignores the presence of preservice teachers of color in TEPs and secures the norm of whiteness (Liu & Ball, 2019; Sleeter 2016). This is problematic, as it can seriously undermine the efforts to diversify the teaching profession (Liu & Ball, 2019; Sleeter, 2016). Finally, while white teachers may develop an awareness of general inequities and display an aptitude for social justice teaching practices, they are still entering the profession with a lifetime of hegemonic reinforcement to see communities of color in a particular way (Sleeter, 2016).

These critiques lead me to assert there is a significant need to move away from working to transform white teachers' belief systems and move to find innovative ways to recruit more teachers of color. Indeed, it is well established from various studies (Kohli, 2009; Villegas and Irvine, 2010; Carver-Thomas, 2018) that teachers of color make a measurable difference in the social and academic lives of students of color. Villegas and Irvine (2010) highlight five key practices that teachers of color engage in to improve student academic outcomes:

1. High expectations
2. Culturally relevant teaching
3. Developing trusting and caring relationships with students
4. Confronting issues of racism through teaching
5. Serving as advocates and cultural brokers

All five of these practices were exemplified by Carmen, Isabella, and Diego, the three teachers who participated in the observations. Each of these teachers identifies as Latinx and shares a similar background with most of their students.

Research has shown that preservice teachers of color come into teacher education programs with at least a basic understanding racial inequities across society, often from first-hand experience (Carver-Thomas, 2018). Recruiting more candidates of color could empower a TEP to spend less time building candidates' general awareness of inequities and instead more time preparing teacher candidates with tools to dismantle racist structures within schooling. As TEPs are quick programs (1.5-2 years), there is often not enough time to ensure candidates are deeply aware of general inequities in schooling and society *and* thoroughly prepared to challenge these inequities. This was evident in the findings, as participants shared how the TEP prepared them to recognize inequitable structures, but they still felt unsure of how to challenge them. Alumni specifically noted feeling unsure of how to address hard conversations around race with colleagues and students, unequipped to handle parents who question their social justice practices, and unprepared to fully create a culturally responsive curriculum. If the TEP focuses more on recruiting candidates who have a foundational understanding of inequities and injustices, they can spend more time better preparing preservice teachers to challenge and dismantle these structures.

Impact of Current Political Climate on Social Justice Teaching

Prior to collecting data, I anticipated that many teachers would share restrictions they face within their schools from parents, administrators, and school board officials due to the current political climate. Since 2021,18 states have imposed bans or restrictions on teaching topics of race and gender (Najarro, 2023). Legislators have banned the College Board's AP

African American Studies course in states like Florida. Additionally, the censorship of books that feature characters of color or characters who identify as LGBTQ+ continues to increase at an alarming rate in states all across the country (PEN America, 2022). These restrictions are not just limited to conservative states but are also being implemented at local levels throughout various blue-leaning states (Najarro, 2023). Because of this, I expected the teachers I surveyed, interviewed, and observed to share about challenges they have faced, given they all are advocates for social justice teaching. However, across the data collection, only three teachers expressed how the current climate of restriction and censorship has impacted their teaching.

There are a variety of reasons as to why the majority of participants reported not receiving pushback or restrictions. Most significantly, however, it is worth noting the three teachers who reported feeling impacted by the current climate are the only teachers in the study who teach predominantly white students; everyone else teaches primarily students of color. A report (Pollock, Rogers, et al., 2022) focused on localized pushback by researchers at UCLA found that districts that are most likely to enroll a racially mixed or majority White student body experience heightened levels of local hostility towards teaching about race, diversity, and gender. This corroborates the finding that the participants who fear pushback the most are the participants who teach in predominantly white communities. Furthermore, the findings from this report, coupled with the findings from this study, demonstrate how a teacher's agency and ability to implement social justice practices depends on the school and community context in which they teach.

The teachers in this study who primarily teach students of color reported feeling supported by their administrators, unaware of local restrictions, and unafraid of addressing race-related topics. In contrast, the teachers with majority white students reported feeling supported

by their administration but afraid to explicitly address anything that could be deemed controversial by parents, such as topics related to race and gender. These three teachers all shared that their main form of social justice teaching is subtly representing diverse experiences in their teaching; beyond this, they fear retaliation from white parents and students. This also speaks to the larger issue of whose voices get privileged within the education system. These teachers are very aware of the way white interest groups have largely advocated for legislation that restricts teaching about race and gender and are, therefore, very reluctant to talk about anything that could get them in trouble with white parents. As a result, whiteness is privileged and centered at the expense of instruction that focuses on diversity, equity, and justice. Conversely, the teachers who work with students of color do not feel limited due to fear of retaliation from parents. This is not to say that all parents of color are supportive of all social justice topics, as topics like gender and sexuality receive great pushback across all racial groups; however, the privileging of white parental voice continues to outweigh the privileging of parents of color.

Even though few participants voiced concern about local pushback in their communities, all preservice teachers should still be equipped with the skills to navigate an increasingly polarizing and political climate. As states and local school boards continue to roll out teaching restrictions related to race, gender, and sexuality, it is imperative that all preservice teachers, particularly those in social justice-based TEPs, are empowered with the tools and resources to continue prioritizing equity and justice. Core to social justice education is the belief that education should challenge, confront, and disrupt misconceptions and stereotypes that give way to systemic inequity based on human differences like race, class, and gender (Nieto and Bode, 2007). This belief is the antithesis of the current pushback that is being experienced in school

communities across the country. If TEPs can continue to equip teachers with the skills to navigate this context and prioritize social justice, then equitable outcomes will continue to be prioritized for all students. This is critical to closing opportunity gaps for students, specifically those who have been historically marginalized due to race.

Program Intentionality v. Program Outcomes

When interviewing the TEP program director, she described social justice as being central to the program, with the primary goal of the TEP being to prepare teachers who can be effective in transforming opportunities for young people who have been marginalized in various ways, particularly racially, ethnically, socioeconomically, linguistically, and culturally. In addition to placing equity at the forefront of the coursework and curriculum, the program intentionally places its preservice teachers in high-need, urban areas for their student teaching experience with the intention of ensuring teachers are prepared to work with students from systemically marginalized backgrounds. When comparing the intentions and goals of the program as described by the TEP director with the various outcomes as they pertain to social justice teaching as perceived by participants in this study, it is evident the program is achieving its intended equity goals while also leaving room for ways to develop the full scope of their social justice-oriented curriculum.

An essential finding for the first research question guiding this study included teachers perceiving social justice as embedded throughout the whole program. This is significant because research has shown that TEPs often incorporate social justice as a supplemental or additive component of their program rather than integrating it throughout their entire framework (McDonald, 2005; Liu & Ball, 2019). For example, programs often add singular multicultural education classes or require a brief clinical experience with students from diverse backgrounds

(McDonald, 2005; Liu & Ball, 2019). This can result in graduates who may be underprepared to center equity and social justice in their own teaching (McDonalnd & Zeichner, 2009). Further research (McDonald, 2005) suggests that programs like the TEP in this study, which aim to integrate a vision of teaching and learning focused on social justice principles throughout the *whole* program, are more likely to effectively prepare teachers to transform educational opportunities for students from diverse backgrounds. By embedding social justice throughout its entire program, the TEP is making strong efforts to prepare teachers who are capable of creating inclusive classrooms that value and recognize multiple perspectives and are responsive to the unique needs of all students. This is central to social justice teaching (Santamaria 2009; Wade, 2007; Dover 2015). Further, by incorporating social justice across the entire program, the TEP is working towards its goal of ensuring graduates are prepared to teach students from diverse backgrounds. Indeed, nearly all survey and interview participants currently teach full-time in diverse urban settings, demonstrating the commitment these teachers have to serving students who have been systemically marginalized.

A critical finding across the second research question guiding this study included teachers' perceptions that the program made them more aware of systemic inequities throughout society, particularly within the education system. Many of the participants described how the program challenged biases and perceptions they upheld by heightening their awareness of the way societal norms, education policies, and systemic racism have worked together to create inequitable schooling opportunities, especially for students of color. This finding demonstrates how the program centers equity throughout its curriculum to prepare teachers capable of transforming opportunities for students from diverse backgrounds, a central goal of the TEP, as described by the TEP director. A core component of social justice teacher education is

challenging and expanding prospective teachers' existing beliefs about societal inequities (Dover, 2009; Agarwal, 2010), aiming to prepare teachers capable of challenging norms perpetuating inequities. Therefore, alumni's perception that the TEP expanded their beliefs and awareness highlights the program's efforts to incorporate social justice principles into its coursework and curriculum.

While participants' commitment to teaching in urban areas, in addition to participants' perceptions that the TEP incorporated social justice across its entire program, thereby challenging their beliefs and expanding their awareness of inequities, highlight how perceived program outcomes are in line with program goals and intentions, other findings elevated areas in which the TEP has room to improve the scope in which they utilize social justice teaching across its courses and curriculum. This study is not intended to be evaluative; however, participants did share areas in which they wish they had received greater preparation so they could more effectively teach for social justice. Participants primarily described being prepared by the TEP to recognize inequities as noted above but unprepared to address them. They expressed feeling unprepared to have hard conversations with colleagues or parents in regard to race and beliefs about students, and they further shared feeling unprepared to address problematic comments and conversations with students. A critical component of social justice teaching is moving beyond recognizing injustices and inequities to actually taking action and creating change (Dover, 2009). As participants have highlighted, preparation is needed that moves from merely training prospective teachers to recognize inequities to preparing teachers with concrete examples of how to transform environments.

When asked what they perceived they learned about social justice and what they implemented in their practice, participants largely referred to social justice topics that revolved

around race and class; rarely was gender or sexuality mentioned. Several participants noted they felt unprepared by the program to address gender and sexuality in their teaching, while a few participants noted they felt uncomfortable addressing LGBTQIA+ related topics in their class due to the current political climate. In line with these findings, research (Brant and Willox, 2019; Roseik, Scmitke, and Hefferman, 2017) has shown that LGBTQ topics receive significantly less teacher preparation class time than other issues, especially race, and are eight times more likely to be omitted from multicultural teacher education courses. This is detrimental because it leads to teachers who are underprepared to develop classrooms that are inclusive of LGBTQ students and topics.

At the heart of social justice teaching is the importance of advancing equity across all societal issues. Teachers who champion social justice work diligently to dismantle barriers for their students so each student can thrive. We are currently facing a political climate that is actively working to remove LGBTQ rights and is striving to strip away any type of teaching or curriculum that is inclusive of gender or sexuality (Najarro, 2023). This has damaging effects on all members of society but acutely impacts LGBTQ students. LGBTQ youth who experience negative school climates are more likely to experience isolation from friends and family, depression, drug and alcohol use, low self-esteem, lack of engagement in school, and poor academic performance (Brant and Willox, 2019; Roseik, Scmitke, and Hefferman, 2017). Social justice advocates (Nieto and Bode, 2007) argue that social justice in education must challenge, confront, and disrupt "misconceptions, untruths, and stereotypes that lead to structural inequality and discrimination based on race, class, gender, and other human differences" (p. 11). Thus, for a classroom to be truly rooted in social justice, it must include LGBTQ+ students and education.

This begins by strengthening social justice teacher education so that queer-inclusive teacher education curriculum is valued.

The TEP director described social justice as being central to the TEP, with the primary goal of the program being to prepare prospective teachers to transform opportunities for youth who have been marginalized. In order for the program to continue to achieve this intended outcome, it must become deliberately more intentional about including LGBTQ topics across its coursework and curriculum. As policies continue to marginalize LGBTQ youth, it is critical that teacher education programs prioritize the inclusion of these students. This finding is important as it strengthens the understanding of what should be included in teaching for social justice frameworks, further clarifying what theoretical and practical components should be incorporated in social justice teacher education.

Limitations

While this study aims to contribute meaningful research to the field of teacher education, the study's findings are constrained by various limitations. Three primary limitations hinder the study's findings: sample size, sampling methods, and survey design. The first limitation of the study is the sample size. Across the data, 36 people completed the survey, 17 participated in interviews, and three teachers volunteered to be observed. I included a quantitative component to this study because research on social justice teacher education is largely small-scale and qualitative. By using a survey, I hoped to capture the viewpoints and understandings of a larger sample than interviews alone would afford. However, given that 36 people completed the survey, it is challenging to generalize the results as the sample is not large enough to reflect the characteristics of everyone who has graduated from the program in the last ten years.

The sampling methods used to gather participants for this study also pose various constraints, as I used convenience sampling and snowball sampling methods. Finding survey participants was challenging, as the TEP does not have reliable ways to contact alumni from the program. As a result, I was limited to using email lists that were not completely accurate. To help offset this challenge, I asked faculty members to email the survey to alumni. These faculty members were very helpful but only emailed the survey to people they were still in contact with. Because of this, there may be bias in the survey sample. People who remain in contact with their professors years after graduation are more likely to have had a positive experience in the program and, therefore, may present bias in their responses.

The survey served as the launching point for all data collection. It was my primary method for gathering participants for the interviews, as participants could indicate if they would like to participate in a follow-up interview. This form of self-selection for the interviews also presents bias as people who self-select may have different characteristics, attitudes, or experiences than those who opted not to participate (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). This introduced a potential source of bias because the sample may not represent the broader population. Furthermore, at the end of each interview, I asked the participants if they could refer me to anyone else who would be interested in participating in an interview. Using this snowball sampling method may have limited the diversity of the interview participants, as people tend to refer individuals with similar characteristics or backgrounds (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). While the limitations of the sample size and sampling methods present potential biases, using quantitative and qualitative methods helped offset these limitations as I triangulated multiple data sources (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

The third limitation that impacted the study's findings was the design of the survey. While I used a validated and reliable scale as the foundation of the survey, I added additional questions that had not been validated. Adding non-validated questions can undermine the validity and reliability of the scale, as validated scales are designed to provide reliable and valid measurements (Groves et al., 2009). Non-validated questions do not uphold the same level of validity, which may impact the generalizability of the study (Groves et al., 2009). Furthermore, to analyze the data, I used descriptive statistics and correlations. While the descriptive statistics provided a high-level overview of the survey results, none of the correlations were statistically significant. This may be due to the small sample size, but could also be due to the additional questions that were not validated. However, because the research on social justice teaching is undertheorized and vague, very few validated scales exist that capture what teachers perceived they learned in their TEP and how they apply it to practice. The scale I used for this study was one of the only robust and rigorously designed surveys I could find. While this scale was expertly put together, it is ten years old and missing aspects of social justice teaching that are relevant and important in today's setting, mainly questions regarding gender and sexuality. Therefore, I believe including the additional questions in the survey was critical to ensuring all aspects of social justice teaching were represented. These questions were grounded in the literature about social justice teaching and helped capture a broader understanding of what participants perceived they learned and how they applied this to practice.

Recommendations

Through this study, I sought to expand existing knowledge about social justice teaching in an effort to contribute to a more concrete understanding of what constitutes social justice teacher education and what social justice teaching looks like in action. To achieve this, I

investigated alumni's perceptions of what they learned about social justice and how they apply this to practice. Through analysis of the findings, four key recommendations come to mind:

1. Recruit teacher candidates with social justice predispositions
2. Increase number of teacher candidates of color
3. Enact TEP curriculuar changes
4. Support for novice teachers

Teacher Candidate Predispositions. A critical component of social justice teaching is moving beyond recognizing injustices and inequities to actually taking action and creating change. Regardless of racial and social identities, social justice TEPs should be very mindful of who they recruit into their programs, putting forth efforts to recruit prospective teachers who already have a critical understanding of structural inequities. If prospective teachers enter TEPs with these understandings already, then TEP faculty can spend more time preparing teachers with the skills needed to dismantle inequitable structures in schools and less time building their general awareness. The findings from this study corroborate these statements, as the data showed that alumni felt prepared by the program to recognize inequities but unprepared to address them. Specifically, they expressed feeling unprepared to have hard conversations with colleagues or parents in regard to race and beliefs about students, and they felt unprepared to address problematic comments and conversations with students. Further analysis of the data showed alumni also struggled to create a curriculum that is culturally responsive and LGBTQ+ inclusive.

TEPs are often short programs; because of this, it is difficult to prepare prospective teachers to have a deep understanding of inequities in society and schooling while *also* preparing them to tackle these inequities. This is seen in the findings of this study, as alumni reported how the program deepened their awareness of inequities but did not fully prepare them to challenge

them. Teachers who are champions for social justice work to dismantle structures in their classrooms and schools that lead to structural inequity based on race, class, gender, and other human differences (Nieto and Bode, 2007). Their goal is to close opportunity gaps and transform learning spaces so every student is given the opportunity to thrive. Because of this, TEPs need to move beyond raising prospective teachers' general awareness of inequities to ensuring teachers are prepared with tangible skills that empower them to dismantle these inequitable structures. As a result, more prospective teachers will enter the teaching force prepared to have difficult conversations regarding race and beliefs about students, and more will be prepared to design and implement a curriculum that is responsive to their students' unique backgrounds.

If a TEP is truly dedicated to preparing a teaching force that is equipped with the knowledge and skills to implement social justice practices, then they must ensure their teachers know how to move beyond recognizing injustices and inequity to actually taking action and creating change. Recruiting candidates who already have a deep and critical understanding of inequities and injustices will empower a TEP to teach preservice teachers how to take action and create change more effectively.

Prioritizing Teacher Candidates of Color. In line with the recommendation to recruit teacher candidates who have a critical understanding of structural inequities across schooling and society, TEPs also need to focus heavily on recruiting more candidates of color. This is imperative for several reasons. First, as previously stated, the demographics of K-12 students in public schools have shifted so white students are no longer the majority. As a result, most public school students are being taught by people who do not share the same racial, cultural, or linguistic background as them. While there is more to a good teacher than race, research has demonstrated that there are many benefits for students when they share the same racial or

cultural background as their teacher (Kohli, 2009). Various studies (Warner and Larbi-Cheriff, 2022) have shown that teachers of color uphold greater cultural competencies, build trust with students who share their background more easily, harbor less unconscious biases towards students of color, and more effectively develop a curriculum that is reflective of their students' diverse backgrounds. These are all important components of social justice teaching.

Because teachers of color are more likely to already understand the challenges students of color may face due to inequitable racial opportunities, TEPs who primarily serve prospective teachers of color may spend more time preparing these teachers to dismantle inequitable structures within schooling and less time educating them about general inequities throughout society. This can result in novice teachers who are better equipped to transform learning environments and close opportunity gaps for students. Indeed, some researchers (Picower, 2009) assert that the urgency for teachers who can best serve students of color is so great that teacher education should move away from working to transform white teacher belief system and move to finding innovative ways to recruit more teachers of color. The less time a program spends on transforming white teachers' belief systems, the more time they can prepare other candidates to use social justice practices founded on equity and transformation.

In addition to recruiting more prospective teachers of color, research on social justice teacher education needs to also focus significantly more attention on the experiences of these preservice teachers. Currently, much of the research on social justice teacher education focuses on the experiences of white teachers. By centering whiteness in the research, we weaken our opportunity to understand and support the experiences of preservice teachers of color. Without this knowledge, efforts to recruit and enhance the experiences of preservice teachers of color are

constrained. This ultimately leads to fewer students receiving instruction from teachers who do not share their racial, cultural, or linguistic background.

Curricular Changes. As the findings demonstrated, many participants noted the program taught them about culturally relevant pedagogy. Yet, participants still described difficulty implementing teaching practices that incorporated their students' diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. The findings highlighted how alumni value students' unique backgrounds and work to ensure diverse experiences are represented in their teaching; however, rarely did participants share how they specifically tailored their teaching and curriculum to incorporate their students' diverse cultural and linguistic identities. Therefore, teacher education programs need to work to ensure that teacher candidates not only grasp culturally responsive pedagogy from a theoretical perspective but are given ample opportunities to learn how to design a curriculum that is truly responsive. It is particularly important that preservice teachers also learn practical ways to implement CRP in mathematics instruction, as many of the math teachers in this study noted feeling unequipped to use CRP in their math instruction. This is a common remark made by math teachers in general, elevating the need to better prepare math teachers to center diversity overall (Larnell, Bullock, and Jett, 2016).

Preservice teachers should be given tangible resources and be given plenty of opportunities to practice designing culturally responsive lessons and activities. This can occur during specific courses, but TEPs should also consider offering various workshops focused on helping preservice teachers build the skills needed to be culturally responsive teachers. These workshops should provide preservice teachers with practical skills that can be immediately applied to practice.

The findings in this study also showed that teachers felt underprepared to address LGBTQ+ topics in their classrooms. Some teachers expressed feeling comfortable enough to ask students their pronouns, hang pride flags, and put up other LGBTQ inclusive decorations. However, beyond these surface level acts, most teachers expressed not knowing how to address gender and sexuality in their curriculum. As legislation continues to strip LGBTQ people of their fundamental rights, preparing teachers who know how to create classrooms that embrace all identities and incorporate queer-inclusive curriculums into their teaching is essential to the health and well-being of students (Brant and Willox, 2019; Roseik, Scmitke, and Hefferman, 2017; Najarro, 2023). Furthermore, a core component of social justice education is learning how to challenge, confront, and disrupt "misconceptions, untruths, and stereotypes that lead to structural inequality and discrimination based on race, class, gender, and other human differences" (Nieto and Bode, 2007, p. 11). Therefore, for a teacher education program to be truly rooted in social justice, it must extend beyond teaching about justice-related only to race and include gender and sexuality.

Finally, participants in this study also shared feeling unprepared to address challenging conversations with colleagues, parents, and students as they relate to race, LGBTQ+ topics, and beliefs about students. To better prepare preservice teachers to have these challenging yet important conversations, TEPs should consider holding additional workshops that provide space and time for preservice teachers to bring up their concerns, think through how they would handle these conversations, and even role-play with each other so they are better equipped to handle these inevitable challenges.

Supporting Existing Teachers. The interview data showed that while most teachers who participated in the study have a social justice mindset, their primary interpretation of social

justice teaching revolves around developing inclusive classrooms where every student feels seen, valued, and cared for. Each interview participant emphasized the importance of demonstrating authentic care for students, striving to view each student as a whole person with various interests and identities. While caring for students is very important, this is not the only facet of social justice teaching. Further, the survey data demonstrated that although most participants believe in the importance of core social justice principles, they struggle to enact them in their classrooms. Because of this, I believe there needs to be greater ongoing development and support for teachers, particularly new teachers, that empowers them to continue to develop their social justice practices. Participating in a fast-paced two-year graduate program is not enough time to fully prepare a preservice teacher with the skills to develop a fully culturally responsive curriculum, to prepare them with the abilities to confront educational inequities entrenched within a school system, or to prepare them with the abilities to teach students how to critique and challenge power and inequity within society. There needs to be more support for teachers that specifically focuses on social justice teaching so they can continue to expand their pedagogy and practice as it pertains to social justice.

The results of this study also demonstrated that the teachers who worked in predominantly white areas felt most concerned about restrictions and pushback regarding integrating social justice facets such as race, gender, sexuality, inequity, and power into their curriculum and teaching. Because of this, they limited their approaches to social justice teaching. As restrictions on teaching about topics such as race and gender continue to spread, and as the censorship of books that feature characters of color and characters who identify as LGBTQ+ continues to strengthen, it is pivotal that all teachers are given increased support toward their efforts to incorporating social justice teaching practices. This support is essential to ensuring

teachers feel empowered to continue utilizing practices that promote equity and prioritize fostering academic success for all students.

Future Research

At the onset of the study, it was clear that more research was needed to learn about what happens to teachers after they leave social justice teacher preparation programs (Cochran-Smith, 2004; Dover, 2013). While this study did accomplish that objective, several other areas of research must be examined to combat the critics of socially just teaching and strengthen the case for this approach. For these reasons, future research possibilities include the following:

1. To increase the validity of this study, future research could use a fully validated scale and increase its total number of participants. By surveying more graduates (approximately 150), in addition to increasing interview (to approximately 40) and observation (to approximately 10) participants, the study's findings would be more robust. Studying a larger sample size can yield a greater understanding of what socially just teaching looks like in the classroom and provide the TEP with more information about the program's impact on its alumni.
2. A longitudinal study that explores the long-term impact of social justice teacher education on teachers' practices and attitudes. While this study sought to gain the perceptions of alumni spanning a 10-year period, a longitudinal study that follows a cohort of teachers over a set period of time (5 years), can strengthen understanding of the impact social justice TEPs have on classroom practice.
3. This study overlooked a significant omission in existing research: student outcomes. Future investigations need to establish a link between social justice teaching practices and aspects of student achievement, success, or even their perceptions.

4. While this study lightly explored the context and culture of schools/communities, replicating the research across a broader array of environments would enrich our comprehension of the factors influencing the success or struggles of social justice teaching.
5. Future research might also more closely examine how the structure of different social justice teacher education programs impacts what alumni learn and how they apply it to practice. For example, a multi-site case study that compares a small liberal arts college to a teaching-focused university like a California State University to an R1 institution such as the University of California would provide insight into how the structure of a university and teacher education program affects program outcomes.

Conclusion

This study set out to examine the impact of a social justice teacher education program, by investigating alumni's perceptions of what they learned about social justice teaching and how they apply this knowledge to practice. Guided by a mixed methods approach and teaching for social justice framework, the study specifically aimed to address the following research questions:

1. In what ways do alumni perceive that Sunvale University helped to prepare teachers to teach for social justice?
2. What components of social justice education did TEP alumni identify as being learned from the program?
3. What aspects of TEP alumni's current classrooms reflect what they learned about social justice in their teacher education program?

The study sought to contribute to the field of research on social justice teacher education by focusing on alumni who graduated from a TEP that infuses social justice across its curriculum and coursework, as most social justice teacher education research focuses on the impact of a single course on preservice teachers' beliefs and attitudes. Utilizing a mixed methods case study approach gave way to nuanced findings that further the field's understanding of what it means to prepare teachers to teach for social justice. These findings both support the framework guiding this study while also illuminating areas that should be included in the conceptual and pedagogical aspects of a teaching for social justice framework.

While the findings shed light on various insights, several findings stood out as essential contributions to the field. Most notably, the findings highlighted how alumni deeply valued the integration of social justice throughout the whole program, centering equity and expanding their awareness of disparities in schooling. This finding reifies literature from the framework that suggests programs that do not silo equity and social justice are more likely to prepare prospective teachers who are capable of prioritizing equitable learning opportunities for all students (McDonald, 2005; Liu & Ball, 2019; McDonalnd & Zeichner, 2009). Further, this finding elevates the importance of dedicating more research to understanding the impact of these programs on teacher learning, teacher practice, and student outcomes.

While various alumni noted the program expanded their awareness of inequities and injustices within schooling and society, the majority of alumni who shared this perspective were white. This study did not intentionally set out to research white teachers' experiences, as current research shows there is already a significant focus on understanding white teachers' beliefs, attitudes, and experiences (Liu & Ball, 2019; Picower; 2021; Sleeter, 2016). However, this finding implies that the program impacted the white teachers who participated in this study

differently than the participants of color. While preparing white teachers to challenge their beliefs and expand their viewpoints is important, the implications of this finding suggest more attention needs to be focused on recruiting teacher candidates of color, as they may bring a deeper awareness and understanding of societal and educational inequities, allowing the program to focus more on preparing preservice teachers to challenge these inequities rather than simply recognize them.

The findings also suggested that alumni perceived the program taught them that culturally responsive teaching is essential to social justice teaching. This bolsters the framework guiding this study, as many of Cochran-Smith's (2004) principles are aligned with the guiding principles of culturally responsive pedagogy. Further, Alison Dover (2013) asserts that culturally responsive pedagogy is foundational to social justice teaching. Thereby, this finding, combined with the knowledge from the teaching for social justice framework, implies that teacher education programs dedicated to social justice should consider culturally relevant pedagogy as essential to preservice teachers' learning and development.

Alumni repeatedly described the emphasis the program placed on authentically caring for students through the way they interacted with preservice teachers in the program and through the things they taught. Faculty often emphasized the importance of understanding students' unique backgrounds, building meaningful relationships with students, and cultivating inclusive classroom environments. Many of the alumni then described the importance they place on this in their own practice. This implies that alumni perceived authentically caring for students as pivotal to enacting social justice teaching. While this is not included in the framework, this finding implies that enacting social justice principles is not possible unless meaningful relationships are created with students.

Finally, the findings also highlighted areas for growth, illuminating important social justice practices that alumni felt they struggled to implement. For example, while alumni shared culturally relevant pedagogy as being essential to social justice teaching, many still struggled to implement this into their own teaching practices. Furthermore, alumni expressed feeling unprepared to address difficult conversations with students, parents, and colleagues regarding topics such as race, gender, sexuality, or beliefs about students. They also struggled to develop curriculum and teaching practices that are LGBTQ inclusive. This highlights the need for ensuring social justice TEPs are preparing teachers to not just recognize injustices and disparities in schooling, but also preparing teachers to challenge and disrupt these inequities.

In closing, it is my hope that this dissertation will inspire teacher education programs to continue to prepare educators to use social justice practices to dismantle inequities in education, close opportunity gaps, and create learning environments where all students are valued and supported so they can thrive. As classrooms continue to become more diverse, and as restrictions on teaching about topics like race and gender become more prevalent, it is essential that teacher educators continue to find ways to support and prepare teachers to navigate these complex environments, so teachers feel empowered to create systemic change within their classrooms and school communities. Through the findings in this study, it was my goal to shed light on practices that bolster existing knowledge about teaching for social justice while also shedding light on areas that need further research and attention. Ultimately, I hope these findings empower teacher education programs and teachers to continue seeking ways to serve all students, particularly those who have been marginalized because of their racial, cultural, gender, or sexual identity, equitably.

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APPENDIX A

Survey

Part 1 - Teacher Education Preparation

In part one of the survey, you will be asked questions regarding how your teacher education program prepared you to teach for social justice.

Using the scale below, rate how your teacher education program prepared you to teach students:

	A = Excellent	B = Good	C = Fair	D = Poor
With different ability levels in the same class				
From different socio-economic backgrounds				
From diverse racial/ethnic/cultural backgrounds				
In an urban school system				
With different linguistic backgrounds				
With different gender orientations				
With different sexual orientations				
With special needs				

Using the scale below, rate how your teacher education program prepared you to:

	A = Excellent	B = Good	C = Fair	D = Poor
View students as makers of knowledge and meaning				
View all students as capable of dealing with complex ideas				
Maintain high expectations for all students				
Provide opportunities for all students to learn academically challenging knowledge and skills				
Acknowledge, value, and build upon students' existing knowledge, interests, cultural, and linguistic resources				
Construct curriculum that is multicultural and inclusive				
Construct curriculum that empowers students to connect meanings in their own lives with traditional content				
Draw on family histories, traditions, and stories, and demonstrate respect for all students' family and cultural values				
Diversify assessment by using a wide variety of evaluation strategies and not rely on standardized tests as the sole indicator of students' abilities and achievement				

	A = Excellent	B = Good	C = Fair	D = Poor
Help students name and deal with instances of prejudice as well as structural and institutional inequities				
Challenge the cultural biases of curriculum, educational policies and practices, and school norms				
Critique universalists views of knowledge				
Teach specific academic skills and bridge gaps in student learning				
Work in reciprocal partnership with students' families and communities				
Explicitly teach about activism, power, and inequity in schools and society				

Using the scale below, rate how your teacher education program prepared you to address the following forms of hate, bias, and injustice in your classroom

	A = excellent	B = Good	C = Fair	D = Poor
Racism				
Sexism				
Homophobia				
Antisemitism				

	A = excellent	B = Good	C = Fair	D = Poor
Islamophobia				
Ableism				
Xenophobia				

Using the scale below, the UC San Diego Teacher Education faculty…

	A = Strongly Agree	B = Agree	C = Disagree	D = Strongly Disagree
Represented multiple voices and experiences around race and racism				
Represented multiple voices and experiences around gender and sexuality				
Upheld the belief that the purpose of teaching is to enhance students' learning and their life chances by challenging inequities of school and society				
Upheld the belief that there are significant disparities in the distribution of educational opportunities, resources, achievement, and outcomes between minority/low income students and white/middle class student				
Included opportunities for me to learn about culture, language, and the social and cultural contexts of schooling				

	A = Strongly Agree	B = Agree	C = Disagree	D = Strongly Disagree
Taught me that curriculum and pedagogy need to be viewed as a political text				
Taught me how to analyze curriculum so I can recognize what and who is being left out				
Taught me how to uncover what has been deemed the universal perspective in discussions about pedagogy, growth, learning, experience, expectations or family				

Part Two - Teacher Practices

In part two of the survey, you will be asked questions regarding your teaching practices as they relate to social justice.

Think about the context of your classroom and school experiences over the past year and respond to the following statements about your own teaching practices

	A = Strongly Agree	B = Agree	C = Uncertain	D = Disagree	E = Strongly Disagree
An important part of being a teacher is examining my attitudes and beliefs about race, class, gender, disabilities, and sexual orientation.					
I assume all students are participants in knowledge construction					

	A = Strongly Agree	B = Agree	C = Uncertain	D = Disagree	E = Strongly Disagree
Issues related to racism and inequity are openly discussed in my classroom.					
For the most part, covering multicultural topics is not relevant to the subjects I teach.					
I incorporate diverse cultures and experiences into my classroom lessons and discussions.					
The most important goal for me in working with immigrant children and English language learners is to assimilate them into American society.					
It's reasonable for me to adjust my level of student outcomes classroom expectations for students who don't speak English as their first language.					
Part of my responsibilities as a teacher is to challenge school arrangements that maintain societal inequities.					
I teach my students to think critically about government positions and actions.					

	A = Strongly Agree	B = Agree	C = Uncertain	D = Disagree	E = Strongly Disagree
Although I appreciate diversity, it's not my job as a teacher to change society.					
Whether students succeed in my classroom depends primarily on how hard they work.					
Realistically, my job as a teacher is to prepare students for the lives they are likely to lead.					
I use a wide variety of formative assessments					
I use a wide variety of summative assessments					
I do not rely on standardized tests as the sole indicator of students' abilities and achievement					
I work in reciprocal partnership with students' families					
I explicitly teach about activism, power, and inequity in schools and society					

Part 3 - Open Ended Questions

In part three of the survey you will be asked to answer open ended questions.

Based on your experiences in schools and classrooms over the past year, what were the most valuable aspects about your UCSD teacher preparation program? List in order of importance from most to least.

Say more about what you valued in your program

Based on your experiences in schools and classrooms over the past year, what aspects would you like to change about your UCSD program? List in order of importance from most to least.

Say more about changes you think should be made to your program.

	Definitely yes	Probably yes	Probably no	Definitely no
Would you recommend the UCSD teacher education program to prospective teachers?				

	Yes	No
Looking back, do you believe that you need a teacher education program to be a good teacher?		

Why or why not?

	0 years	1-5 years	6-10 years	10+ years
How many years do you think you will teach during your career?				

What is your rationale for your previous answer? Why did you select the number of years that you did? Please answer even if you chose 0 years.

Part 4 - Demographics

In part 4 of the survey, you will be asked questions regarding your background and your position within your school. Your responses will be kept in confidence.

What is your age?	19-25 26-32 33-39 40-46 47-53
What is your gender?	Male Female Nonbinary Other Prefer not to say
What is your ethnicity?	American/Alaskan Native Black/African American Asian American Hispanic Latino/a White Two or more Other Prefer not to say
Where were you born?	Native-born US Native-born in Puerto Rico or US Islands Born to abroad to American parents Born outside of the United States Other Prefer not to say
Which language(s) do you speak at home?	English only English and a language other than English Other
What is the highest level of school you have completed?	Bachelor Master Master +30 units Doctorate Prefer not to say

What year did you graduate from the TEP?	2022 2021 2020 2019 2018 2017 2016 2015 2014 2013 2012 Before 2012
What type of teaching credential do you have?	Multiple subject Single subject
What was your teacher education program?	Multiple Subject/Elementary Single Subject - English Single Subject - Math Single Subject - Science Single Subject - World Languages Bilingual Authorization Program Elementary Mathematics Education Concentration
What was your undergraduate major?	Open ended
How many years have you worked as a teacher?	0-3 4-7 8-11 12+
How many years have you worked at your current school?	0-3 4-7 8-11 12+
What setting is your school located in?	Urban Suburban Rural

What type of school do you work in?	Public Charter Other. Please specify.
What percentage of the students at your school receive free and reduced lunch?	Continuous variable
What is your current employment status?	Substitute teacher Teacher candidate Teacher without tenure Employed full time (40+ hours per week) Employed part time (less than 40 hours per week)
What grades do you currently teach? Please select all that apply.	K 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12
What subject(s) do you currently teach? Please select all that apply.	Mathematics English Language Arts Science Social Studies ESL Physical Education Computer Education Special Education Music Theater/Dance Visual Arts Other Prefer not to say

APPENDIX B

Interview Protocol - Teachers

Basic Background Information

1. Tell me how you became interested in becoming an educator?
    1. Explore further, if needed with: What were some of the experiences that were important in getting you interested in becoming an educator?
2. Describe the diversity in your current classroom.
    1. How does this influence your impact on students?
    2. How do your students affect you?
    3. How do you address the diversity in the classroom?
    4. What role do you see yourself playing in students' academic success?

Beliefs

3. When you hear teaching for social justice or culturally relevant pedagogy, what does this mean to you?
    1. How does this affect your thinking? Your beliefs? Your actions?
4. What does it mean to be a change agent?

Teacher Education Program

5. How did you decide to get your M.Ed. credential from UCSD?
6. What stands out for you from your teacher education program?
    1. What were the most valuable aspects about your teacher preparation program?
7. How did your teacher education program integrate social justice into its program?
    1. Can you give some examples?
    2. Please provide some examples where social justice pedagogy was not integrated that you felt it should be?
    3. What would you like to change about your teacher education program?
8. In what ways did your teacher education program prepare you to address issues related to racism and inequity in the classroom?
9. In what ways did your teacher education program influence your thoughts about incorporating diverse cultures and experiences into your teaching?
10. In what ways did your teacher education program influence your approach to working with culturally and linguistically diverse learners?
11. In what ways did your teacher education program influence your approach to working with students who are ELs?
12. In what ways has your TEP influenced your thoughts about inequities that exist in schools?
13. In what ways has your teacher education program influenced your thoughts about the teacher's role in changing society?

14. If you could change anything about your TEP what would you change?
    1. Follow-up: Are there specific areas that you wish you received more support?
15. What were some of your TEP's strengths?

Teacher Practices

16. How do you become aware and informed of your students' backgrounds? What does it look like in your classroom?
17. When discussing diverse issues in the classroom, or a topic becomes controversial, how do you handle that situation?
    1. Has there ever been an instance where you've had to address such an issue?
    2. Do you reshape the prescribed curriculum to meet your students' needs? (i.e. using work of authors of color or created or brought in materials to teach about other subjects)
18. How do you include families and the community to enhance your instruction?
19. How do you connect to students "funds of knowledge" - the idea that school learning must be connected to children's prior knowledge
    1. How have you learned about your students?
    2. How have you developed relationships with your students?
20. How do you encourage students to question, examine, or even dispute power relations in your lessons?
21. How do you model attitudes of equity and compassion towards others?
22. Do you include students in the decision making aspects of the classroom? If so, how?
    1. How do you encourage student autonomy?

APPENDIX C

Interview Protocol - Director of Teacher Education Program

1. How would you describe the mission and goals of the teacher education program?
    1. How would you describe them as they pertain to social justice?
2. What are the primary ways in which the program seeks to prepare teachers to teach for social justice?
    1. What does this look like in classes?
    2. What does this look like in fieldwork?
3. Are there any policies or mandates that support or reinforce this work?
    1. Federal level
    2. State level
    3. Local level
    4. UC level
4. How do these policies help the TEP reach their goals as they pertain to social justice?
5. Are there any policies or mandates that hinder this work?
    1. Federal level
    2. State level
    3. Local level
    4. UC level
6. What challenges do these policies specifically present?
    1. Follow-up: How do they prevent the TEP from reaching their goals as they pertain to social justice?
7. How does the teacher education program circumvent these challenges?

APPENDIX D

Observation Protocol
Adopted from Pedulla, Mitescu, Jong, Cannady, 2008

Date:
Time:
Teacher Name:
Grade:
Subject:
Total number of students at the time of observation:
Demographics - racial diversity, gender
Goals for the observed class:
Planned activities for the observed class:
Describe the physical layout of the room (e.g., type of student seating, technology directly accessible by students, decorations)
Note if there is anything unusual about this particular class (e.g., quiz day, the first day of the semester, etc.)

Teacher Action	Connection to Literature	Notes
The instructional strategies and activities respected students' prior knowledge and the preconceptions inherent therein	• Build on what pupils bring to the classroom (Cochran-Smith, 1999) • Facilitate learning by building on pupils' own social and cultural backgrounds (LadsonBillings, 1995)	
The lesson was designed to engage students as members of a learning community	• Enable significant work for all pupils within learning communities (Cochran-Smith, 1999) • Demonstrate caring and building learning communities (Gay, 2002) • Develop a community of learners (LadsonBillings, 1995)	
Connections with other content disciplines and/or real-world phenomena were explored and valued	• Build on what pupils bring with them: knowledge and interests, cultural and linguistic resources (Cochran-Smith, 1999) • Teach skills, bridge gaps (Cochran-Smith, 1999) • Integrate content by using examples from different cultures and groups to teach in the discipline (Banks, 1995)	

Teacher Action	Connection to Literature	Notes
Students were actively engaged in thought-provoking activities that often involved the critical assessment of procedures	• Make activism explicit by questioning text and encouraging critical thinking (Cochran-Smith, 1999) • Enable significant work (Cochran-Smith, 1999) • Prepare pupils to have access to knowledge and critical thinking within the disciplines (Michelli & Keiser, 2005) • Promote the view that knowledge is not static; it's shared, recycled and constructed (LadsonBillings, 1995) • Develop pupils' critical and analytical thinking (Sleeter & Grant, 1987)	
Intellectual rigor, constructive criticism, and/or the challenging of ideas were valued	• Diversify modes of assessment (Cochran-Smith, 1999) • Respond to ethnic diversity in the delivery of instruction by matching instructional techniques to learning styles of diverse pupils (Gay, 2002) • Incorporate multiple forms of excellence through multiple assessments (Ladson-Billings, 1995) • Prepare pupils to have access to knowledge and critical thinking within the disciplines (Michelli & Keiser, 2005)	
The teachers' questions triggered different modes of thinking	• Diversify modes of assessment (Cochran-Smith, 1999) • Respond to ethnic diversity in the delivery of instruction by matching instructional techniques • to learning styles of diverse pupils (Gay, 2002) • Incorporate multiple forms of excellence • through multiple assessments (Ladson-Billings, 1995) • Prepare pupils to have access to knowledge and critical thinking	

Teacher Action	Connection to Literature	Notes
	within the disciplines (Michelli & Keiser, 2005)	
There was a climate of respect for what others had to say	• Work with individuals (Cochran-Smith, 1999) • Demonstrate caring and building learning communities (Gay, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 1995) • Prepare pupils to lead rich and rewarding personal lives, and to be responsible and responsive community members (Michelli & Keiser, 2005)	
Students were encouraged to generate conjectures, alternative solution strategies, and ways of interpreting evidence	• Diversify modes of assessment (Cochran-Smith, 1999) • Respond to ethnic diversity in the delivery of instruction by matching instructional techniques to learning styles of diverse pupils (Gay, 2002) • Incorporate multiple forms of excellence through multiple assessments (Ladson-Billings, 1995) • Prepare pupils to have access to knowledge and critical thinking within the disciplines (Michelli & Keiser, 2005)	
Students' cultural, linguistic, and experiential prior knowledge are viewed as assets and, when appropriate, are integrated into instructional strategies and activities.	• Build on what students bring with them (CochranSmith, 1999) • Include ethnic and cultural diversity content in the curriculum (Gay, 2002) • Content Integration – the extent to which teachers use examples, data, and information from a variety of cultures and groups to illustrate key concepts, principles, generalizations, and theories in their subject area or discipline (Banks, 1995) - • Facilitate learning by building on students' own social and cultural backgrounds (Ladson-Billings, 1995)	

Teacher Action	Connection to Literature	Notes
The instructional strategies accommodate and scaffold the learning of all students, including, when appropriate, boys and girls, ELLs, SPED, and students with diverse racial and cultural backgrounds.	• Equity Pedagogy exists when teachers use techniques and methods that facilitate the academic achievement of students from diverse racial, ethnic, and social-class groups. (Banks, 1995) • Enable significant work for all pupils (CochranSmith, 1999) • Teaching skills and bridging gaps (Cochran-Smith, 1999) • Scaffold to facilitate learning (Ladson-Billings, 1995)	
Students of all different skill levels are provided with rich opportunities to learn.	• Enable significant work for all (Cochran-Smith, 1999) • Prepare pupils to have access to knowledge and critical thinking within the disciplines (Michelli & Keiser, 2005) - Believe all pupils are capable of academic success (Ladson-Billings, 1995)	
The teacher demonstrates high expectations for all students	• Enable significant work for all (Cochran-Smith, 1999) • Prepare pupils to have access to knowledge and critical thinking within the disciplines (Michelli & Keiser, 2005) • Believe all pupils are capable of academic success (Ladson-Billings) • Preparing pupils to assume their highest possible place in the economy (Michelli & Keiser, 2005)	
The teacher facilitates social supports for learning in the form of social relationships, care, and cooperation among and between the teacher and students.	• Teach that civic engagement is not a solitary endeavor and recognize therefore that they have to create a community of support in promoting democratic citizenship (Kahne & Westheimer, 2003) • Building on what students bring with them (CochranSmith, 1999) • Foster community of learners (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Gay, 2002)	

Teacher Action	Connection to Literature	Notes
There is a fair and just environment that is promoted by the teacher and embraced by the students.	• Teach skills and bridging gaps (Cochran-Smith, 1999) • Make power and activism explicit (Cochran-Smith, 1999)	