Chapter 2
What Is Social Justice Education?

Abstract This chapter provides an operational definition of social justice education. It gives characteristics of social justice education. Various educational theories such as critical, critical race, postmodern, post-structural, feminist, engaged pedagogy, and multicultural education are analyzed in the context of social justice education. The chapter shows that some of the theories proffered are aligned and some are misaligned to the operational definition of social justice education. In essence, this chapter answers the question: what is social justice education?

Keywords Social transmission theory · Social justice education theories · Postmodern theory · Engaged pedagogy · Multicultural education theories · Critical theory

In order to contextualize the narratives of social justice educators, it is important to provide an overview of theories associated with social justice education. There is a myriad of definitions of social justice education ranging from teaching tolerance to advocating for transformation of oppressive structures. This chapter provides an operational definition of social justice education and highlights theories that underpin it. First, I briefly delineate what constitutes social transmission theories from which social justice education theories emanate. Second, I discuss social justice education theories including critical, critical race, postmodern, post-structural, feminist, and multicultural education theories.

2.1 Social Transmission Theory

Similar to theories that seek for social transformation, social justice education emanates from social transmission theories. What are social transmission theories? Transmission theories postulate that a society can only survive if it maintains and replicates the present socio-economic and political structure (DeMarrias and LeCompte 1995). Maintenance and replication of the socio-economic and political structure or the status quo can be attained through transmission of the dominant group's desirable

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cultural traditions, beliefs, and values from one generation to the next. In other words, social transmission theories support and uphold current socio-economic and political arrangements; they posit that inequities in society are inherent and in many ways unavoidable. The two main forms of social transmission theory are functionalism and structural functionalism. Discussion of these theories is in the context of schools.

2.1.1 Functionalism

Functionalism adheres to the belief that schools should "serve to reinforce the existing social and political order. [It] assume[s] there is consensus on the values and beliefs in society, especially on the allocation and use of power" (DeMarrias and LeCompte 1995, p. 7). Based on this overarching belief in the role of schools as institutions to buttress the existing socio-economic and political order, functionalism asserts that schools should meet three basic objectives (Morrow and Torres 1995). The first objective that schools must meet is to ensure that existing social and political structures are not disturbed. Accomplishing this objective requires that schools teach values that abet uncritical patriotism, encourage un-scrutinized acceptance of laws and rules, and instill obedience of all authority figures and power representatives; these tenets engender a desirable environment for maintenance and replication of the status quo. When students learn to comply and conform to the wishes and expectations of authority figures, they pose minimum threat to the status quo.

The second objective of functionalism is to facilitate assimilation of students into a single national culture or the dominant culture. Hirsch et al. (1988) pointed out that "the acculturative responsibility of the schools is primary and fundamental" (p. 18). In other words, schools operate as a machine that acculturates those who do not possess the 'desirable' cultural values, which are values of the dominant culture, or what (Hirsch et al. 1988) called the 'national culture' (p. 15). Schools accomplish the second objective through overt and covert curriculum (Hirsch et al. 1988; Ravitch 1995; Schlesinger 1991). Functionalists postulate that every person who undergoes the schooling process should harbor beliefs and values at the end of the process that mirror those of the dominant culture.

Functionalism asserts that the third objective of schools is to sift or sort citizens into various occupation slots in preparation for their existence in the capitalistic system (Spring 1997). Schools accomplish this by "categorizing students by academic ability and then pointing them toward appropriate career goals" (DeMarrias and LeCompte 1995, p. 10). Schools steer students deemed to possess higher academic abilities toward leadership occupations, whereas students perceived to have lesser academic ability are directed toward menial occupations. Sorting students into occupation slots facilitates efficiency of the economic facet of the society, which is paramount for preservation of the status quo.

In sum, functionalists, proponents of functionalism such as Hirsh, Schlesinger, and Ravitch,[1] believe that there are three main purposes of schools.

[1] Ravitch has since changed her stance on this issue.

The first purpose is the education of students so that they are compliant and obedient to the power structures and figures, thus ensuring perpetuation of the status quo. The second purpose is to teach the dominant culture as a unifying force for U.S. citizens. The third is to determine students' cognitive capabilities and correspondingly prepare them for their roles in the capitalistic economy.

2.1.2 Structural Functionalism

Structural functionalism largely draws from functionalism. Similar to functionalism, structural functionalism assents that the role of schools is (a) to maintain the status quo by sorting students into future workplace positions, (b) teach students obedience of authority and powerful figures, and (c) assimilate students into the dominant culture. Fundamental to structural functionalism is the belief that societal institutions are similar to living human bodies; societal "structures, like bodily organs, evolve to carry out vital functions in society and they must maintain an equilibrium with each other in order for societal health to be maintained" (DeMarrias and LeCompte 1995, p. 6). Structural functionalism contends that schools should serve as the function of heart for a living; without a heart, the living body (society) cannot survive. Structural functionalists believe that assimilation of students into the dominant culture, and a constant supply of a docile labor force predicate survival of the society. Further, structural functionalism postulates that schools ought to serve the function of ensuring that schools do not permit thoughts, beliefs, and values that are incongruous with the status quo (Parsons 1961).

Social transmission theories, specifically functionalism and structural functionalism, contend that the primary role of schools is to maintain the existing socioeconomic and political order. According to these theories this can be accomplished through teaching values that encourage complicity with existing laws and authority, molding students to uncritically embrace the dominant culture, be intolerant of views that do not support the dominant culture, and sifting and sorting students to neatly fit into the capitalist hierarchical structure. Moreover, social transmission theories perceive schools as one of the most important socializing institutions, and thus having a salient role in creating social unity.

2.2 Social Justice Education Theories

Social justice education theories concur with social transmission theorists' assertion of schools as primary tools to maintain the status quo by teaching obedience, compelling students to embrace the dominant culture, and sorting students according to capitalistic hierarchies. However, social justice education theories contend that when schools serve as transmission tools of the dominant culture, they also serve to perpetuate inequities and social injustices that exist in society. Instead

of serving as transmission tools, social justice education theorists contend that schools should serve as sites for social amelioration in which social justice, an ideal of democracy, is practiced and cultivated (Adams et al. 2007). Social justice education theories maintain that schools should serve as sites of democracy with all its inherent ideological, cultural, religious, and social diversity, and should serve to work toward social justice, a significant signpost of democracy.

Many theories fall under the umbrella of social justice education theories. According to Bell (2007), social justice is both a goal and a process. The goal of social justice is "equal participation of all groups in a society that is mutually shaped to meet their needs… in which distribution of resources is equitable and all members are physically and psychologically safe and secure" (Bell 2007, p. 1). The process of attaining the vision of social justice is complex, continuous, and, at times frustrating and overwhelming. It entails actions that are "democratic and participatory, inclusive and affirming of human agency and human capacities for working collaboratively to create change" (Bell 2007, p. 2). Bell (2007) asserted that the goal for social justice education is to

> enable people to develop the critical analytical tools necessary to understand oppression and their own socialization within oppressive systems and to develop a sense of agency and capacity to interrupt and change oppressive patterns and behaviors in themselves and in the institutions and communities in which they participate (p. 2).

Critical, critical race, postmodern, post-structural, feminist, and multicultural education theories espouse the social justice education goal. The common thread among social justice education theories is the demand for institutions such as schools to (a) unveil and (b) transform oppressive policies and practices (Mthethwa-Sommers 2012). Some theories that fall under the umbrella of social justice education theories are explored below.

2.2.1 Critical Theory

According to the foundation of critical theory, social science or human relations, such as education, may not be understood from a scientific, objective, rational perspective. Rather, discernment of human relations requires identification of subjectivity and recognition of historical, economic, and political influences on human relationships. Critical theory is concerned with the role of institutions, such as schools, in propagating economic, social, and political inequities. Critical theorists differ from western Marxists by recognizing that exploitation is not only economically based but can emanate from gender, racial, and nationality based exploitation. Hooks (1994) asserted that examining the Marxist focus on economic exploitation denies issues of gender, race, and nationality which contour economic exploitation. Critical theorists, therefore, believe that inequities that exist in the society emanate in part from racism, sexism, classism, and ableism (Hooks 1994).

Central to critical theory is the notion of *conscientization* or critical consciousness (Freire 1970), the first step toward attainment of social justice. *Conscientization*

means an awareness of how economic, social, cultural, and political power shapes human relations and the way we see and understand the world. *Conscientization* requires that a person locates herself or himself within social, economic, and political hierarchical structure. Knowledge of one's location enables one to interrogate power differentials and one's beliefs, values and ideologies, all steps toward attainment of social justice.

Critical theorist Hooks (1994) defined critical consciousness as the individual's awareness and as a product, shaped and molded by values and belief systems that venerate whiteness, maleness, heterosexuality, and monetary richness. She pointed out that it is only when an individual is aware and accepting of the fact that she or he is a product of a racist, sexist, heterosexist, and elitist society that she or he can begin working toward making society a more equitable place for everyone. Bartolome (1994) referred to critical consciousness as political clarity, which she defined as

> the process by which individuals achieve a deepening awareness of the sociopolitical and economic realities that shape their lives and their capacity to recreate them. In addition it refers to the process by which individuals come to better understand possible linkages between macro-level political, economic and social variables and subordinated groups' academic performance at the micro-level classroom. Thus, it invariably requires linkages between sociocultural structures and schools (cited in Leistyana 1999, p. 14).

Conscientization, critical consciousness, and political clarity refer to what (Leistyana 1999) called having presence of mind. Presence of mind reveals "the social nature of our cultural assumption" (p. 14), and the existence of unequal power relations in the structures of the society. As individuals have an opportunity to reflect on how they are situated in this society, they also have an opportunity to unlearn some of the prejudices that they harbor against the marginalized groups.

The notion of dialogue is also significant to critical theory. Dialogue is defined as a strategy for tackling and examining familiar phenomenon from various points of view. Critical theorists contend that dialogue is fundamental to understanding the nature of oppression, building bridges, and forming coalitions among those who want to eradicate oppressive structures and practices. Hooks (1994) asserted that dialogue is essential because:

> As we educate one another to acquire critical consciousness, we have the chance to see how important airing diverse perspectives can be for any progressive political struggle that is serious about transformation. Engaging in intellectual exchange where people hear a diversity of viewpoints enables them to witness first hand solidarity that grows stronger in a context of productive critical exchange and confrontation (as cited in Florence 1998, p. 87).

Thus, dialogue provides an opportunity to examine one's locations in society while hearing how other people are located in society. Dialogue also provides varying viewpoints on issues and creates a microcosm of democracy that embraces plural and diverse viewpoints. Dialogue is closely linked to critical consciousness.

Among critical theorists such as Hooks (1994) and Freire (1970), it is believed that critical consciousness and dialogue are essential to facilitate interrogation of unequal socio-political and economic social structures in society. The questions

then become: how do critical consciousness and dialogue manifest themselves in schools and in the classroom? How can educators create an environment that cultivates critical consciousness and dialogue?

2.2.2 Critical Theory Classrooms

Freire (1970) asserted that traditional schooling is undemocratic because of its reliance upon the 'banking method' of education. The 'banking method' of education occurs when teachers, bankers of knowledge, perceive students as empty ampoules or containers waiting for deposits of the dominant cultural group's bodies of knowledge. The knowledge is often withdrawn from the students in the form of tests and exams. The education process is similar to a bank transaction whereby knowledge is deposited and withdrawn by teachers. A student's role in this method is of a passive receptor of bodies of knowledge that often are foreign to the student's lived experiences (Freire 1970, 1973, 1992).

The banking method of teaching does not facilitate critical consciousness and dialogue, it actually thwarts opportunities for their occurrence. Critical theorists argue that both students and teachers be perceived as subjects. They reject the role of a teacher as a depositor of knowledge, and assert that the role of the teacher ought to be "apprenticing students into a body of knowledge, and ensuring a critical examination of that body… an illuminator of the object, a revealer of the object" (Freire as cited in Leistyana 1999, p. 29). They also reject the role of a student as a passive recipient of knowledge. They assert that the role of a student ought not to be that of an object, but rather that of a subject who can also assume the role of a teacher, who engages in dialogue with the teacher and fellow students, and who can critically examine epistemologies presented in class.

In *Teaching to Transgress,* Hooks (1994) analyzed the traditional hierarchical arrangement of classroom that places teachers as possessors of knowledge and students as being bankrupt of knowledge or tabula rasa. She equated hierarchical classroom structures to the hierarchical power structures of the larger society, with the dominant group at the top of the power structure, dictating and ideologically controlling the subordinated groups (students) occupying bottom levels of the structure. She advocated the dismantling of the hierarchical structure of teacher/students. Instead, she argued, classrooms should be places where both students and teachers engage in knowledge exchange. She contended that students bring their cultural worldviews into the classroom, and that these views should be heard and contrasted with knowledge forms presented in the classroom, thus making the classroom a place for dialogue and critical examination of various knowledge forms.

Chomsky (2000) posited that the traditional method of teaching places teachers as doctrine managers. Doctrine managers instill the dominant group's epistemologies, belief systems, and values, and see to it that students adhere to the dominant groups' doctrine through constant monitoring and management of students' doctrines and beliefs. Chomsky argued that teachers do not serve as doctrine managers

in a classroom that encourages critical consciousness and dialogue; alternatively, they provide spaces for students to critically examine dominant groups' epistemologies and ask questions such as "Who benefits from the current socio-economic and political arrangement?" and "How is democracy's tenet of social justice facilitated and thwarted by the current structural arrangement?". (p. 35)

In *Teachers as Intellectuals,* Giroux (1988) provided the following guidelines on how teachers can resist their traditionally assigned roles in schools: "First, they need to analyze how cultural production is organized within asymmetrical relations of power in schools. Second, they need to construct political strategies for participating in social struggles designed to fight for schools as democratic spheres" (pp. 101–102). Giroux (1988) maintained that teachers have to understand antecedents of oppression and domination, and devise a way to overthrow oppressive structures; he believed that the role of a teacher is not that of an automaton, as evidenced in traditional theoretical approaches, but, instead, the role of a teacher becomes that of an active participant in "shaping the purposes and conditions of schooling" (p. 126). Furthermore, transformative teachers "must work to create the conditions that give students the opportunity to become citizens who have the knowledge and courage to struggle in order to make despair unconvincing and hope practical" (p. 128).

The role of students involves interrogation of their beliefs, value systems, and ideologies. Students examine their roles and locations within the power structure. Like other critical theorists, Giroux (1988) envisioned students and teachers going beyond what he called "the language of critique" of the dominant culture and traditional education to "the language of possibility" (132). Implementation of critical theory means "more than simply acknowledging differences and analyzing stereotypes; more fundamentally, it means understanding, engaging, and transforming diverse histories, cultural narratives, representations, and institutions that produce racism and other forms of discrimination" (Giroux 1994, p. 328).

Teachers and students who engage in critical theory go beyond unveiling oppressive structures and practices. They incorporate liberatory measures into the classroom by making the content and context of the classroom harmonious with social justice measures. In so doing, both the students and teachers challenge the status quo by turning a classroom into a model of democracy. In many ways students would engage in praxis, an "ongoing relationship between theoretical understanding and critique of society and action" (Freire as cited in Leistyana 1999, p. 45) that moves people toward taking measures to change a system. Freire was adamant that without praxis, critical consciousness or examination of one's location and societal structures is fruitless.

Lankshear and McLaren (1993) identified six Freirian principles that align a teacher with critical theory:

1. The world must be approached as an object to be understood and known by the efforts of learners themselves. Moreover, their acts of knowing are to be stimulated and grounded in their own being, experiences, needs, circumstances, and destinies.
2. The historical and cultural world must be approached as a created, transformable reality, which, like humans themselves, is constantly in the process of being shaped and made by humans' deeds in accordance with ideological representations of reality.

3. Learners must learn how to actively make connections between their own lived conditions and being and the making of reality that has occurred to date.
4. They must consider the possibility for "new making" of reality, the new possibilities for being that emerge from new makings, and become committed to shaping a new enabling and regenerative history. New makings are a collective, shared social enterprise in which the voices of all participants must be heard.
5. In the literacy phase learners come to see the importance of print for this shared project. By achieving print competence within the process of bringing their experience and meanings to bear on the world in active construction and reconstruction (of lived relations and practice), learners will actually experience their own potency in the very act of understanding what it means to be a human subject.
6. Learners must come to understand how the myths of dominant discourse are, precisely, myths which oppress and marginalize them—but which can be transcended through transformative action (pp. 43–44).

In other words, teachers should treat their students as subjects of education and center their experiences in the classroom. When students are at the center of learning, they are more likely to examine critically the inequities that exist in the society, and to be encouraged to locate the origins of such inequities and how they are perpetuated. When people understand their roles as subjects rather than objects of history they are likely to engage in action.

Aside from the teacher/student role, critical theorists maintain that bodies of knowledge, or the overt curriculum, have to be inclusive of knowledge forms from historically marginalized populations (Shor and Friere 1987). Freire asserted that the curriculum ought to be reflective of contributions of various groups of people, not just the contributions of White Anglo-Saxon heterosexist males. Thus, critical theorists' call for rejection of classist, racist, heterosexist, and sexist curriculum, which disaffirms students of color, LBGTI students, female students, and students who come from lower social class backgrounds.

Promulgating her concept of engaged pedagogy, Hooks (1994) stated that the objective of education should be to facilitate democracy, not to replicate social inequities. She asserted that facilitation of democracy can only occur when both students and teachers partake in engaged pedagogy, which involves "interrogating biases in curricula that re-inscribe systems of domination, while simultaneously providing new ways to teach diverse groups of students" (p. 10). Engaged pedagogy therefore rejects domination under the guise of objective, universal knowledge, and embraces the notion of education for freedom and democratic existence where pluralistic knowledge forms are presented for students.

In summary, critical theorists believe that societal structures and institutions are currently unequal and unjust. As one of the main societal institutions, schools reproduce the class, race, sex, and other forms of inequities. Critical theorists argue that in order for schools to be congruous with democracy and facilitate realization of social justice education, several changes have to occur. First, teachers and students have to engage in *conscientization*, critical consciousness, and dialogue. Second, teachers have to reject the banking method of teaching and view themselves as intellectuals rather than depositors of information. Third, the curriculum, both overt and clandestine curricula, has to be reflective of the racial, gender

and sexuality, class, and other forms of diversity in the society. Fourth, societal structures and practices have to be critically scrutinized critically; and fifth, teachers and students have to view themselves as facilitators of democracy.

2.2.3 Multicultural Education Theory

Multicultural education theory falls under the overarching umbrella of social justice education theories. Sleeter and Grant (1987) provided a typology of multicultural education approaches that some schools have adopted in order to realize the notion of democracy. The authors warned, however, that not all multicultural education approaches promulgate social transformation and attainment of social justice. Some of the approaches maintain the status quo by encouraging assimilation while masquerading as being pluralistic. However, most approaches that fall under multicultural theory analyze the current system as unjust and call for schools to be congruent with democratic ideals, the two essential signposts of social justice education.

Sleeter and Grant (1987) conducted a meta-analysis of studies in multicultural education and classified their findings into five approaches of multicultural education: (a) teaching the exceptional and the culturally different; (b) human relations; (c) single group studies; (d) multicultural education; and (e) multicultural and social reconstructionist education.

The first approach, teaching to the exceptional and culturally different, is concerned with assisting students who do not possess what Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) called the cultural capital of the dominant culture prevalent in schools. The overarching objective of this approach is therefore to "remediate [assumed] deficiencies or build bridges between the student and the school" (Sleeter and Grant 1988, p. 35). This model of multicultural education does not advocate social transformation; instead, it advocates assimilation of culturally diverse students into the dominant culture. In other words, this approach calls for the abandonment of one's culture and the embracing of the dominant culture; and studies reveal a positive correlation among minority and economically disadvantaged students' willingness to embrace the dominant culture and academic success (Anyon 1980; Au and Jordan 1981; Bourdieu and Passeron 1977; Fordham and Ogbu 1986; Villegas 1988). Therefore, the perception of this approach is that the assimilation of students is oriented toward anti-social justice education.

The basis of the human relations approach is cultural relativism (Leistyana 1999). This approach recognizes students' different cultures and embraces them as equal. It also encourages students to be receptive of other cultures. Sleeter and Grant (1988) pointed out that in this approach, students are exposed to different cultural artifacts, and foods; however, the authors contended,

> This is no guarantee that they will learn about issues such as the poverty [for example] in Chinatown or the psychological devastation many Asian immigrants face when they realize they must surrender much of their identity to assimilate into American society (p. 13).

Sleeter and Grant argued that discussion of respect for non-dominant cultures is superficial when it takes place in the absence of discussions of institutional barriers that exist for people of color and does not call for transformation. Therefore, this approach to multicultural education does not align with social justice education as it neither unveils oppressive structures nor seeks to transform those structures and practices.

The third approach, single-group studies, pays attention to power relations amongst different cultural groups. This approach recognizes the hegemonic role of schooling and seeks to provide counter-discourses to enable students to assume the agency role in challenging and demystifying the dominant discourse. However, this approach tends to target members of one marginalized group; for example, women's history targets mainly women and men who are interested in women's issues. According to Martin (1993), this tendency has limitations because it preaches to the converted and in schools it may be an elective rather than a compulsory course. Members of the dominant culture need exposure to issues that women and people of color face. The single-group studies approach reinforces the peripheral status of women and people of color by the not being part of the mainstream curriculum. Furthermore, this approach has been criticized as essentializing, treating groups as monolithic and reductionistic, and ignoring intra-group diversities (Sleeter and Grant 1988). While this approach appears to meet the criteria of social justice education by unveiling oppressive structures and practices and calling for transformation of structures and practices (Sleeter and Grant 1988), the approach has a tendency to homogenize groups which is anti-social justice education. Greene (1996) explained,

> Wherever we are trying to build a democratic community, we cannot ascribe fixed essences to people and treat them as 'representative' of given groups, cultures, and even genders. Treating them as various and situated, we have to take into account a diversity of perspectives and realities (cited in Leistyana 1999, p. 34).

To view groups as monolithic and without intra-group differences is to presume that all group members have similar experiences and their individual histories do not affect their experiences. For example, to treat all women the same way is to overlook the fact that while women's experiences may be similar they are also different in terms of social class, race, and sexuality.

Sleeter and Grant (1988) asserted that the most widely used approach in US schools is multicultural education. This approach, akin to the human relations approach, seeks to expose students to various cultures and affirms cultural differences. Structural inequalities in this approach are only addressed minimally; the focus is on celebration and affirmation of cultural differences. Unlike the human relations approach whose objective is to teach tolerance, this approach reveres all cultures, thus teaching acceptance instead of tolerance of cultural differences. This approach embraces a curriculum that is inclusive of racial groups that have been historically marginalized. This widely used approach is not in alignment with social justice education because it minimally addresses structural inequities and does not call for transformation of oppressive structures and practices.

The fifth approach, multicultural social reconstructionist, considers inter- and intra-group variability. This approach encourages dissection and deconstruction of the dominant ideology, and its marginalizing effects on people of color, women of

all colors, lesbians and gays, people with disabilities and those who are economically marginalized. Thus, this approach deals with the systemic nature of domination and oppression. It critiques socio-political norms and the role of school in masking asymmetrical power relations in the society. The multicultural social reconstructionist or MCSR (Martin 1993) approach also encourages students and teachers to be agents for social change. Implementation of this approach requires that students and teachers engage in four exercises. First, they are to practice democracy, which entails standing up for one's beliefs, engaging in dialogue with other people, and mobilizing in order to "acquire power, [and] to exercise power" (Sleeter and Grant 1994, p. 223). Permitting of divergent views while engaging in classroom discussions is a practice of democracy that is necessary in implementing MCSR. Second, they are to analyze the circumstances of their own lives, which involves introspection. Students and teachers analyze their locations within the hierarchical social structure. They question their roles as either agents/targets of oppression, or both. According to Sleeter and Grant (1994), such self-analysis is critical because, when students and teachers are aware of their positionalities, then they can take action against oppression. The third goal of MCSR is the development of social skills, which includes the ability to interact with people from various social classes and racial backgrounds. Students must be empowered to engage in introspection, self-analysis, and to practice democracy. Such empowerment is generated in the classroom that becomes a microcosm of the society, "a training ground" (Sleeter and Grant 1994, p. 228), for shaping students to be active democratic citizens. Fourth, they are to unify regarding race, class and gender. Addressing issues of class, gender, race encourages coalition of those battling against oppression. Challenging the dominant culture and encouraging individuals to become social change agents positions the MCSR approach in accord with social justice education.

Sleeter and Grant's (1988) typology revealed that teachers use multicultural education as a term for various approaches to education. Four of the multicultural approaches they identified do not conform to the notion of social justice, only one, MCSR is congruous with goals of social justice education.

Banks (1996) also conducted a study that examined social studies approaches used in US schools and identified five strands of multicultural education practiced in the United States. The first strand, which is commonly used in schools, is content integration. Banks (1997) also referred to this strand as the contributions approach, whereby teachers disseminate information about heroes, lifestyles, and artifacts from various cultures. This approach is not congruous with social justice theory as it celebrates cultures without unveiling and seeking to transform oppressive structures and practices.

Banks' second strand is knowledge construction. Teachers and students work together to understand how one's positionality and how one's views informed by one's gender, social class, and race, shape one's understanding of societal issues. This approach, therefore, stresses the importance of understanding that the process of knowledge construction is intimately connected to the knowledge of the constructor's positionality. That is, students'and teachers' worldviews are shaped by

their experiences as members of various groups in society. While it has elements of social justice education, this approach does not advocate for transformation of oppressive structures and practices; understanding how knowledge construction occurs is inadequate for considering this the approach as oriented toward social justice education.

Banks' third strand is equity pedagogy, which is about teaching methods and classroom practices which are inclusive of students from all backgrounds. Banks asserts that this strand is not about including histories of disadvantaged groups but it is about reaching all students in the classroom, especially those who are historically marginalized. This strand is less about the content and more about the methods of teaching that are deliberately inclusive and aimed at ensuring success for all students. While this strand has some elements of social justice education, it does not meet the criteria for social justice education as it leaves knowledge power structures undisturbed.

The fourth strand is prejudice reduction, involves persuading students from the dominant culture to embrace people from historically marginalized cultures and to formulate positive attitudes about them. It encourages students from the dominant culture to embrace students from historically marginalized racial and cultural groups. This approach does not meet criteria for social justice education as it does not interrogate cultural power disparities and does not call for transformation of the status quo.

Banks' fifth strand is empowering school culture and social structure. This strand involves transformation of the whole school culture in order to make it socially receptive and academically rewarding for students from multiple backgrounds. Banks states that a school that has empowering school culture and social structure has a visibly diverse administration, teaching body, student body, curriculum, and school practices. In other words, it is a school that goes beyond a mission statement that declares respect for diversity but is a school that practices diversity. Aspects of this strand include interrogation of dominant culture's ways of knowing. This strand of multiculturalism meets criteria for social justice education as it interrogates and transforms social injustices, albeit at a school level.

In other works, Banks (2008, 2009) introduced the concept of multicultural awareness for social justice. This concept addresses skills and mindset required for navigation of the pluralistic and global society in which we exist. Banks asserted that one requires not only social and cultural awareness but also inclusive communication skills, and social action to change align educational practices with the global social justice agenda. The concept of multicultural awareness for social justice meets the criteria as it advocates for transformation of education practices.

Other works categorized as multicultural education that meet the criteria for social justice education include Gay's (2001) notion of cultural responsive teaching, Ladson-Billings' (1995) theory of culturally relevant pedagogy, McLaren's (1995) critical multiculturalism, and Suzuki's (1984) social class multiculturalism. Gay's (2001) concept of culturally responsive teaching and Ladson-Billings' (1995) theory of culturally relevant pedagogy recognize inequities in the curriculum, and advocate for inclusion of course materials that affirm all students. Both

Gay and Ladson-Billings contend that school culture is not universal and objective, but reflective of societal power structures. They proffer pedagogical alternatives that are more inclusive and reflective of the student body.

McLaren's (1995) critical multicultural education is geared toward achievement of equity through economic and socio-political change. Critical multicultural theorists embrace the idea of schools as sites of transformation in order to facilitate transformation of oppressive sociopolitical and economic structures. Teachers who embrace this line of multicultural education examine the role of language in construction of meaning and background; they also explore various forms of knowledge and they are conscious of ways Eurocentric knowledge forms have been used to obliterate some people and affirm others. Central to this form of pedagogy is the notion of praxis, which entails continuous reflectivity and action.

Suzuki's (1984) concept of social class multicultural education emanates from Marxist theory and is based solely on attainment of socioeconomic diversity. Suzuki asserted that the economic system of capitalism is the root of social inequities and therefore, any multicultural discourse should begin with a critique of the economic structure that legitimizes and perpetuates asymmetrical power relations. She contended that inequities in the society are perpetuated in schools through differentiated curricula and unequal distribution of resources, and argued that the disparities in educational funding and curricula content lead to the inability of those who are marginalized to tap into the economic resources; in turn, this perpetuates the cycle of economic disparity and unequal distribution of wealth. According to Suzuki, working toward eradication of oppression by only including multiple forms of knowledge is inadequate, and cannot in and of itself eliminate oppression. She suggested that examination and advocating for eradication of capitalism as a system based on economic inequality, exploitation of women of all colors, and people of color, are appropriate steps toward abrogation of oppression (Suzuki 1984).

2.2.4 Postmodern Theory

Postmodern theory can also be associated with social justice education theory as it questions "not only the authority of traditional science, but the legitimacy of any authoritative standard or canon—whether it be art, music, literature, science or philosophy" (DeMarrias and LeCompte 1995, p. 32). Postmodern theory rejects the dualism mind/body or logic/emotion as partial, if not completely false. Lyotard and other postmodern theorists argue that the so-called meta-narratives are partial and should not be treated as objective logic for there is no such thing as objective logic. According to postmodern theorists, a narrator's experiences and historical and cultural location in the society shape all narratives (Lather 1991). Postmodern theorists contend that both students and teachers should engage in deconstruction of grand narratives and should be cognizant of the relationship between power and knowledge or what Foucault (1980) called "regime of truth" (p. 131). "Each society has its regime of truth, its 'general politics' of truth: that

is the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true" (p. 131). Chomsky (2000) referred to this form of grand lie as "regimentation of minds" (p. 31). Regimentation of minds, or the selling of the grand lie, occurs through dissemination of impartial information as partial, and of subjective information as objective, thereby allowing the dominant group to ideologically control society or enact what Gramsci (Gramsci 1971) called hegemony.

Postmodern theorists contend that schools, as institutions, are responsible for socialization of the youth, and therefore are at the forefront of the regimentation of minds, which is situated within the power structure. Postmodern theory posits that knowledge is located within a power structure; which is different from the popular term of "knowledge is power", often attributed to Foulcault. In his interview with (Foucault and Raulet 1983) illuminated that power and knowledge are different concepts: power is not knowledge, and vice versa. He stated elsewhere that while knowledge and power are dissimilar terms, they are relational. "There is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations" (Foucault 1977, p. 27). In other words, those who have power have the ability to postulate what ought to be regarded as valid forms of knowledge. Thus, knowledge can only be regarded as reflective of who has power. What does this look like in the classroom? Cognizance of knowledge and power relations not only warrants questioning textbook knowledge but also the values that the teacher brings into the classroom in the form of clandestine curriculum. The teacher who is aware of the relationship between power and knowledge becomes self-reflective, thinks about how his or her pedagogical practice might unwittingly marginalize some students and privilege others, and how the curriculum might reflect the power structures. It does not end with reflection; the teacher then implements a curriculum and pedagogical practice that is pluralistic and representative of all groups. Furthermore, the teacher encourages students to engage in social justice activism.

2.2.5 Post-structural Theory

Similar to postmodern theory, poststructural theory has characteristics of social justice education theory. The notion that power permeates educational discourse and practice undergirds the educational work of poststructuralists such as Cherryholmes. Cherryholmes (1988) defined power as "relations among individuals or groups based on social, political, and material asymmetries by which some people are indulged and rewarded and others negatively sanctioned and deprived" (p. 5). In this regard, power in schools serves to reward some students and punish some students based on their positionalities or locations in the hierarchical societal structure. For example, Cherryholmes (1988) argued that by embracing positivism schools transmit a notion of universal values, a fallacy. He insisted that the values that are promoted as universal are values of

the people who have power. The imposition of the so-called universal values privileges students who already possess such values, called cultural capital by Bourdieu and Passeron (1977), and disadvantages students who have different values. The contents of the overt curriculum are also entangled in power relations. Cherryholmes (1988) pointed out that the focus on meta-narratives and discourse that purport to be rational, objective, and linear, buttresses the dominant group's power stronghold. Simultaneously, meta-narratives disenfranchise those whose knowledge forms, narratives, and discourses are omitted. Cherryholmes (1988) contended that the high-stakes tests that claim objectivity are actually reflective of who has power. He rejected the objectivity argument of tests as rationalized by construct validity, stating that "construct-validity and research discourses are shaped, as are other discourses, by beliefs and commitments, explicit ideologies, tacit worldviews, linguistic and cultural systems, politics and economics, and power arrangements" (p. 106).

Saturated with values of the dominant culture, the so-called "objective" tests then reward those who are familiar with knowledge forms and values of the dominant culture while punishing those who belong to subordinated cultures. Cherryholmes (1988) asserted that those in power proclaim tests or standardized evaluation methods as objective and with construct validity because they have the power also to define what constitutes objectivity and construct validity; they do this to preserve their own dominance and power. Post-structural theorists suggest that educators should be encouraged to reject the so-called scientific objective knowledge forms and practices, and become critical pragmatists (Cherryholmes 1988). Critical pragmatists are cognizant of the power relations in educational settings; they also reject absolutism, universalism and scientific methods of education. Critical pragmatists are educators who embrace multidimensionality, various forms of epistemology, and acknowledge the ambiguities ever present in human relations. Munro (1998) pointed out that post-structural teachers who work in institutions whose main purpose is facilitation, not transformation, of the eco-political system should resist their positions as guards of the status quo by becoming change agents. When teachers encourage their students to be deconstructive, to question, and to problematize issues, they are or would be performing in opposition to their posts as guards of the status quo, and thus in harmony with post-structural theory. It is only then that schools will shift from being incubators of negative power to being "multiple sites of power" (Munro 1998, p. 35).

Social justice education is clearly complex; the theories discussed have qualities of social justice education but social justice education, as any democratic education theory, remains open-ended and incomplete in terms of oppressions that it seeks to unveil and transform. Nevertheless, there are two commonalities among theories oriented toward social justice education: (a) an education that recognizes and acknowledges that educational institutions preserve the status quo, which affirms people from the dominant group and marginalizes people from non-dominant groups in society; (b) an education that advocates for transformation of educational institutions in order to be equitable and socially just.

2.2.6 Lessons for Teacher Education

This chapter explored some of the theories aligned with social justice education theory. It also illuminated multicultural theories that masquerade as being social justice education based when they are not. This chapter also provided lessons to teacher education, the first of which is what constitutes social justice education: an education that unveils issues of domination and subordination and seeks to achieve equity and social justice by eliminating domination and subordination of people.

The chapter also highlighted the complexity of social justice education, what it is and what it is not, which may provide opportunities for educators to examine their school or university curricula and programs. Questions arise as to whether the curricula and programs are social justice education-aligned, or masked as social justice education aligned when they are not.

Social justice education theories encourage teachers and students to be actively involved in fighting for social justice and ameliorating discriminatory policies and practices. For example, students are encouraged to investigate social class inequities and work to eliminate them as part of their classroom projects and work. In an English Language Arts classroom for example, the students might examine the Harry Porter series for gender construction and question the roles girls and boys and women and men occupy in the series; they might explore construction and 'normalization' of hierarchy based on sexuality and disability; or they might examine the subtext of colorblindness. Through examination of the characters, students might uncover covert ideologies of oppression delineated in the series and participate in writing a letter to either the author or the publisher highlighting their findings and requesting books that affirm everyone. This project meets social justice education criteria by unveiling oppressive structures and practices within a fictional book series and calling for transformation of those structures and practices.

Another lesson social justice theories afford is the significance of validating all students in the classroom. Students from dominant and non-dominant groups experiences, and knowledge forms need equal validation in the overt and covert curriculum. The message of holistically embracing all aspects of the student is ever more critical today in the NCLB and RTTT context that claims to only focus on the minds and embraces a color-blind, gender-blind, language-blind, socio-economic blind attitude. An education focused on tests and ignoring students' situated identities cannot be an education for social justice. In the classroom, teachers might circumvent the cognitive/affective dualism, for example, by exploring how technology can be used to privilege some people and disadvantage some people, especially females, in so-called developing worlds, and people who are generally poor. As students use iPads, iPods and iPhones, a project examining how these gadgets are made, who makes them, who benefits from them, and who is shortchanged would be one way of blurring the cognitive/affective false duality. The exploration of pollution and/or environmental racism in a local or a global context might incite students to contact politicians about their findings, advocate for social justice by demanding equitable pay for makers of technological gadgets, and demand pollution reduction or an end in environmental racism.

In conclusion, this chapter has provided examples of theories that are commonly associated with social justice education. The chapter has also explained criteria on how educators can identify theories and practices that are social justice education oriented and create curricula and practices that are in alignment with social justice education.

2.3 Reflection Questions

1. Do you think social justice education theories are relevant to subjects such as mathematics and science? Why and Why not?
2. Can you provide examples of a social justice education oriented mathematics unit? Can you provide examples of a social justice oriented science unit?
3. Many teachers assert that they can no longer engage in social justice education because of external demands such as NCLB and RTTT. What are your views on this issue?
4. Using Sleeter and Grant's (1988) multicultural education approach typology, to which approach were you exposed in your k-12 educational experience?
5. What kind of changes will you make in your teaching to align yourself with social justice theories?

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