

# A Study on Social Justice in Multicultural Education

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## ***Abstract***

*Although there is an increasing body of literature on social justice in the field of multicultural education, there is dearth of empirical research on how teachers perceive social justice in its relation to multicultural education. Due to conceptual ambiguity of social justice, researchers have approached teaching for social justice by addressing the idea of social justice or the reality of social injustice in a multicultural society. In this study I investigate teachers' empirical knowledge of social justice and its implications for multicultural education in Korea. This qualitative study with eight American teachers provides how they perceive social justice in their pedagogical practices of multicultural education. The primary finding from the study reveals that teachers' knowledge of social injustice is essential to teaching for social justice.*

*Key words: Social justice, Multicultural education, Experiential knowledge, Empathic knowledge, Logocentric approach, Grounded approach*

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## I . Introduction

Due to ambiguity of the concept of social justice, the meaning of social justice is full of “complex, frequently contradictory, and relational aspects” (North, 2006, p. 528) and consequently, the task of defining social justice is a “formidable challenge” (Wade, 2004, p. 4). In addition, researchers dealing with social justice issues are inevitably engaged in a cacophony of onto-epistemological issues. In other words, they examine the epistemological orientation to social justice in an ontologically unjust world. For example, feminist researchers conduct research for the purpose of correcting the invisibility and distortion of female experience in an already gendered society (Lather, 1988, 2004; Reinharz, 1992).

It is social justice that is in the center of multicultural education. In fact, multiculturalism is related inseparably to discrimination and oppression institutionally and historically. Many researchers understand multicultural education as social activism or a form of resistance to oppression (Sleeter & Grant, 2003; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Banks, 2001; Adams, Bell, & Griffin, 1997; Gay, 2000). Sleeter and Grant (2007) discuss patterns of institutional discrimination and emphasize multicultural social justice education. Multicultural education tackles the ontological reality of social injustice that takes place *behind* the veil of ignorance (Du Bois, 1989).

However, it is notable that multicultural education in Korea seldom focuses on structural violence that cultural minority groups suffer from in their everyday lives. A melting pot approach to multicultural education focuses on assimilating minorities without addressing social injustices that they face in Korea. Although the Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development decided to incorporate contents on cultural diversity into the 2007 national curriculum in 2006, “it is problematic that the predominant approach to ethnic minorities has tended to be based on assimilationism, requiring minority groups to give up their language and culture and blend into the mainstream society”(Hong, 2010, p. 392). In this context my

study is an attempt to find implications for multicultural education in Korea based on an investigation of American multicultural educators' understanding of social justice and their multicultural education pedagogies.

## **II. Conceptual Framework**

### **A. Culturally relevant pedagogy and social justice**

Along with efforts made by Banks and other leading scholars in the field of multicultural education, Ladson-Billings (1994, 1995) theorized culturally relevant pedagogy for a multicultural education practice. Culturally relevant pedagogy is a "pedagogy that empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes" (Ladson-Billings, 1994, p. 17-18). It addresses social justice issues through a critical examination of cultural mismatches between marginalized and mainstream cultures. Culturally relevant teachers use cultural knowledge, prior experiences and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to meet their academic and social needs. Culturally relevant pedagogy has three major components that are academic success, cultural competence and sociopolitical consciousness.

Culturally relevant teachers help students become academically successful not merely in student performance on standardized tests but rather a more robust and authentic learning. A variety of reasons have been examined to explain academic achievement gaps among diverse groups of students. They are cultural differences between home and school (Delpit, 1988), different historical perspectives (Epstein, 1998), teachers' expectations of academic achievement (Rist, 1970), teachers' caring and devotion to students (Howard, 2001). As the serious academic gap results from the history of multicultural and socially unjust realities, academic success of marginalized students is to correct social injustice.

Culturally relevant teachers need to help students develop

cross-cultural competency with their own subculture, and within and across different subsocieties and cultures (Banks, 1994; Ladson-Billings, 1995). Culturally relevant teachers enhance marginalized students' cultural competence by interacting with students and families (Mitchelle, 1998), utilizing culturally consistent communicative skills (Delpit, 1988), caring their students (Siddle Walker, 2001, 2005). For example, African American students experience "disaffiliation and alienation from African American culture" (Ladson-Billings, 2000, p. 210). They also undertake cultural accusation of "acting white" from kinship friends for their academic efforts (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986). They are marginalized or ignored from curriculum to school cultures (Epstein, 1998; Ogbu, 1999). Having cultural competence is to appreciate their own identity and challenge social prejudice and discrimination.

Sociopolitical consciousness goes beyond the individual characteristics of academic achievement and cultural competence (Ladson-Billings, 1994, 1995). This is what Freire called "conscientization." Students as political agents need not only to understand the political nature of schooling, but also see their role in the community, the nation, and the world. Beauboeuf-Lafontant (1999) propose politically relevant teaching to "emphasize the political understanding of social systems of power and a personal commitment to educating children regardless of their social origins" (p. 718). This is what makes multicultural education as social activism and a form of resistance to oppression.

### **B. Two approaches to social justice**

There are two clearly distinctive theoretical approaches to social justice discourses: logocentric and grounded approach (Tyson & Park, 2008). One is a deductive approach that employs an ideal concept of justice. The other is an inductive approach that begins with socially unjust realities. To logocentric theorists, justice is about "fairness" (Rawls, 1971, 1993) and "impartiality, choice, and reciprocity" (Barry, 1989). In this approach, the

meaning of social justice is legitimate within the “hegemony of autonomous individualism” (Fine, Weis, Wesseen, & Wong, 2000, p. 116). John Rawls (1971) who theorized justice strongly believed that the principles of justice are “perfectly credible” (p. 183). However, it is notable that he has to engineer the concept of the “Original Position” that is “a *purely hypothetical* situation characterized so as to lead to a certain conception of justice” (Rawls, 1971, p. 12; Italicized by the author). It is to “set up a fair procedure” and “use the notion of pure procedural justice” (p. 136).

On the other hand, Young (1990) develops a grounded theory of justice aiming to eliminate oppression that is “the vast and deep injustices some groups suffer as a consequence of often unconscious assumptions and reactions of well-meaning people in ... the normal processes of everyday life” (p. 41). Unlike logocentric theorists, grounded theorists deal with social injustices by lifting the veil of ignorance in postmodern cultural contexts. Social injustice is theorized either by constructing an account of separate system of oppression for each oppressed group such as racism, sexism, heterosexism, anti-Semitism, ableism, classism and multiple issues (Adams, Bell, & Griffin, 1997) or by describing criteria for determining whether individuals and groups are oppressed (Young, 1990; Bell, 1997). In order to discuss social injustices and change the status quo, the grounded approach to social justice deals with diverse inequalities and unequal diversities that take place behind the veil of ignorance.

Table 1. Two approaches to social justice

	Logocentric	Grounded
Approach	Deductive	Inductive
Starting point	Ideal concept of justice	Concrete examples of injustice
Main concept	Fairness and impartiality	Oppression and domination
Emphasis	Redistribution / Procedure	Resistance / Recognition
Context	Universal and culturally neutral	Historically and culturally specific
Perspective	Everyone's perspective	Perspectives of the oppressed
Representative Theorists	Rawls (1971) Barry (1989) Kohlberg (1981)	Young (1990) Collins (1991, 1998) Adams et al. (1997, 2000)
Theoretical background	Political liberalism	Postmodern critical theories

From Tyson, C. A. & Park, S. C. (2008, p. 31). Civic education, social justice and Critical Race Theory. In J. Arthur, I. Davies, & C. Hahn (Eds.). *The SAGE Handbook of education for citizenship and democracy* (pp. 29-39). Thousand Oaks: CA, SAGE.

### III. Methods

This study employed a multiple-case qualitative approach in naturalistic settings to examine how teachers understand social justice in their practices of multicultural education and how it influences their pedagogical practices. I made an inductive, constant and comparative data analysis until patterns emerge (Merriam, 1998). In conducting research I made consistent efforts to bring social justice issues into methodology by reflecting power relations between me as researcher and participants as creators of knowledge. It is to make an effort to conduct research on social justice in a socially just way based on my assumption that research is only trustworthy when it authorizes the power of participants who bring knowledge into the study

(Foucault, 1984).

I went through both community nomination and self-nomination not only to limit my power, but also to authorize the community in the process of selecting participants (Foster, 1991; Ladson-Billings, 1995). My role as a researcher was not to take “the imperialist position” (Smith & Deemer, 2000, p. 890), but to build a new community of exemplary multicultural educators. I was then able to “walk into” the community and “work with” participants. Participants consisted of 8 teachers at 8 different schools from 5 school districts and 1 charter school. Out of 29 teachers who were nominated by the community of 35 educational professionals, eight teachers identified themselves as multicultural educators who worked for social justice.

Data collected from each teacher consisted of 5 semi-structured 30-55 minute-long interviews, 9-10 classroom observations, 1-2 school or community observations, and my reflective journals for a period of 15 weeks. It generated 725 pages of transcription for a total of 1,575 minutes of interviews, 90 classroom and community observations, and reflective journals. During the interviews I also brought up with questions regarding their lessons, pedagogical decisions and my observations. I observed teachers teaching lessons in the classroom, working with people outside the classroom within the school, and working with people outside the school. My research journal was written or voice-recorded throughout the research period.

#### **IV. Findings in Their Individual Voices**

In what follows I re-present segments in personal stories of the eight participants. It is to reflect on a question of representation in qualitative research, which is “Can we ever hope to speak authentically of the experience of the Other, or an Other?” (Lincoln & Denzin, 2000, p. 1050) The authentic voices from interview transcripts make the voice more authentic than any other ways and reduce the actual or potential disparity of

understanding the lives of the participants (Scholes and Kellogg, 1966). I purposefully juxtapose multiple stories in order to bring complexities in social justice issues that multicultural educators experience in their lives.

Charo\*, - Elementary School (4<sup>th</sup> grade) Teacher

I remember growing up I used to come home and ask my parents what I should put down. "What do I put down on race?" My father said to me "Put down human. You are part of the human race." My mother told me "Put down both." And I told them back "There is not a blank and they don't let you put down both." At that time I thought that both was bad and that intermarriage was bad. My mother is from the Midwest. She is a seventh generation European American with England and Germany. My father was born in South America. He is a descendent from Inca Indians. I wanted to not have anybody notice me and just fit in. I didn't want to be different. But, you know, I was. I majored in African American Studies in college. It was just starting as a major then. There were no Latino Studies back then. It really helped me understand dominant versus non-dominant culture. My whole childhood made sense to me after that.

Hristo - High School Social Studies Teacher

My name is a barrier. No one even tries to say it. Hristo Vasilev. As soon as you hear it, the wall is up. I am from a small immigrant community with Eastern-European backgrounds. Both of my parents were born outside the U.S. I was very different and difficult not to be noticed even though I was born right here in the Midwest. I think I perceive more consciously than most other people because of living here and going to Eastern Europe on a yearly basis. As I would always be gone for three or four months and come back, I felt like I missed something and I had to keep my eyes open to see what was on the agenda. I am basically white when I am shopping until I pay for it with my credit card. Then I cease being white. The

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\* All names of the participants are pseudonyms.



interesting thing is that I can be the other or I can be part of the mainstream depending on what people choose because I can speak with no accent and because I fit in enough. I can fit in. I can do both sides.

Ellen - High School Social Studies Teacher

“What if I don’t believe in God?” There were some moments of silence. It was when we were talking about freedom of religion and speech. And I said, “You are putting me in a situation that I can’t get out of.” They assume that I am a Christian, but I am not a Christian, which blows them away. We are Dakota, Sioux. But, I don’t think I have any special qualities. I think maybe it made you be aware of difference. It’s from my father’s side. But, I do consider myself as a white.

Helen - Middle School English and Social Studies Teacher

I used to coach cheerleading. We wanted to do fundraising and the other coaches looked at me said “You’re going to have to go ask them.” It didn’t really occur to me. I was like “Huh?” And they were like “You have to go ask if we can do it because you’re the white one. They’ll say yes to you. But if we all go in there, it looks like a whole bunch of black people are coming in. They will probably say no.” So it put me on the other side. That was probably one of the first times people said to my face that I have something they don’t. It was a realization of what other people that aren’t white go through every day.

Amanda - High School English Teacher

I was at the bottom in my community. I grew up in a very white upper class high-end suburb. I didn’t fit into the high class because I was a lower class kid in my neighborhood. And then, yes, you are right. I crossed the border or boundary of my community when I went to college in Appalachia. You really get thrown into the deep end of the pool. It is because there is so much to tackle and you feel a lot of responsibility. I started caring about the environment first and then just making the connections and activities. I think there is no way that each of

us could live somebody else's experience. But, I wonder why we are still touched even though we haven't lived the experience. So it is really interesting that it is not always race or gender, it is just situational.

Troy - High School English Teacher

I floated in between two cultures. I have experienced two very diverse cultures. The worlds collide. I knew what it was like to be laughed at for being a townie, someone who had grown up in this rural college community, as if there was anything I could do about the fact that my mother's family has been there since 1870s. But yet my family was affiliated with the university as well too. So I knew what it was like to have a university affiliation and have the townies dislike me because of this. I moved from the rural town to an urban city to teach, and then again I came to this affluent suburban school. I developed a perspective of what it was like to be on the other side.

Tom - High School Art Teacher

I remember standing as close to the curb as I could and yelling at those kids to stop. For no reason other than he was black, they hit him and hit him. I will never forget that. I was in third grade. The African American kid lived across the street. Walking home from school we were just talking to each other across the street. These two fifth grade kids followed him home and they jumped on him. That memory to me is clear today. It bothers me enough that I want to change that. So, when it happens, I make efforts to change that.

Martha - Elementary School (Kindergarten) Teacher

I was raised on a pig farm. We had plenty to eat, but we didn't have a lot of money. I felt very on the edge about being a farm girl. There have been experiences of being someone from a rural area when I came to a city. I always felt like I was dropped in the wrong place at the wrong time. I've also experienced social injustice with race strongly with my friends who are from Africa, who is an African American, who is a

Latina and who is from Ireland. To me as a kindergarten teacher, the biggest social injustice is how people treat children. Just sit for a half hour and listen to the conversations. Children are told what to do, when to do it, and how to do it all of the time by everyone. They have less voice in our world than anyone.

## **V. Findings in Their Collective Voices**

There were five emerging findings from the study. First, participants prioritized their own knowledge of social injustice by acknowledging both powerlessness and privilege that they have experienced. Multicultural educators constantly brought their experiences of social injustice into the interviews as well as their lessons. Experience was a critical key to understanding multicultural and socially unjust realities.

Charo, Hristo, and Ellen had bi-cultural backgrounds and revealed a critical consciousness of a hierarchical structure in a society. Based on their historical, cultural, and lived experiences, they also expressed the importance of bi- or cross-cultural experiences between rural, urban, suburban, and global contexts. They experienced and learned the socially unjust reality at younger ages. For example, Charo was born into a racist world several years before the Brown vs. the Board of Education case in 1954. Growing up with a bicultural background she realized the hierarchy by taking on the perspectives of her father and the marginalized.

“I’ve experienced and witnessed social injustice a lot. When you witness it with a family member, you feel it yourself. I realized that the world was racist when I was pretty young. I saw how people responded to my father’s face and his name and his accent” (Charo).

Second, my participants extended their knowledge of social injustice by empathizing with those who experienced social

injustice. Jean, a high school English teacher, said that “I wonder why we are still touched even though we haven’t lived the experiences. There is no way that each of us could live somebody else’s experience.” However, my participants including Jean and Tom showed empathic distress with victims and empathy-based anger at aggressors (Hoffman, 2000). Empathic knowledge of social injustice was gained through and beyond their experiential knowledge of social injustice. It was related to the proximity to the people and the events. The following story of Tom, a high school Art teacher, shows how empathy extends experiential knowledge.

“For no reason other than he was black, they hit him and hit him ... That memory is clear to me today ... As a matter of fact, I took my oldest and middle kids to where I grew up, showed the house I lived in, and talked about the story on the way to a soccer game. It was because I wanted to pass the experience to my kids so that they will have that knowledge.”

Third, my participants emphasized emotional feelings in the face of social injustice. The feeling was an affective reflection on and a reaction to the socially unjust reality. The feelings expressed by my participants were critical questions attached to social justice and socio-moral issues. The feeling was a bridge between the ontology of social injustice and the epistemology to social justice. The illogical social injustice awakened them both to pathos, emotional feelings from social injustice, and ethos, ethical orientations toward social justice. In this regard, Martha, a kindergarten teacher, addressed the relationship between feeling and understanding by addressing a moral question attached to social justice.

“Justice is more about feeling than understanding ... I *feel* what is right instead of saying I fully understand what it is. I have an attitude or a leaning toward justice. That makes teaching for social justice is a progress forever.”

Fourth, my participants constructed a concept of social justice dialectically. They understood the concept of social justice as the void or the opposite situation of social injustice. They recognized new causes for social justice, which made teaching for social justice both process and goal. The dialectical conceptualization of social justice was based on comparative perspectives on powerlessness and privilege. For example, Helen, a middle school English and Social Studies teacher, showed an example of dialectical conceptualization of social justice. She taught at Sebastian Middle School\* where 88% of students are on free or reduced lunch. They wanted to help children at homeless shelters.

“We have been working on a project called the Penny War. Students want to buy toys and school supplies for kids who live in homeless shelters. I think it is still important for them to help others because they are still more fortunate than some other people.”

Finally, my participants demonstrated their willingness to work toward social justice even when they faced challenges in teaching for social justice. There were two types of challenges. One was an external resistance that included students’ low motivation, parents’ disapproval to curriculum decisions, and lack of support from colleague teachers. The other was an internal discomfort that resulted from one’s own reflections. For example, “I don’t think people want to face [social injustice] because they then have to think ‘How have I acted in the past?’ That is hard” (Jean). Hristo, a high school Social Studies teacher, also said “It is difficult to reflect critically on oneself because it can be painful sometimes if the reflection doesn’t result positively.” Exemplary multicultural educators created a socially just classroom environment, developed socially just curriculum, and empowered students from all cultural backgrounds. They also expressed their responsibilities to teach for social justice.

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\* The name of school is pseudonym.

## VI. Discussion

### A. Experiential knowledge of social injustice

Multicultural educators experience social injustice in “the normal processes of everyday life” (Young, 1990, p. 41). In identifying social injustice, experience is as authentic as it can possibly be. As a consequence, they had a solid understanding of social injustice and helped student examine the socially unjust reality. Their experience of marginalization and awareness of privilege enabled them to realize structural violence in the hierarchical society.

As social injustice is structural and institutional, no individual is free from experiencing the power relations. Teachers with bi-cultural backgrounds expressed their pain and anger from social injustice. As I mentioned in the biographies, Charo once wished that she was not different and could fit into the mainstream. But, she was different. Hriso’s bi-cultural and cross-cultural experience distinguished him from the mainstream. Ellen’s critical consciousness of her whiteness was somewhat related to her Native American cultural backgrounds. At the same time, their two-ness enabled them to acknowledge privileges. Instead of covering their otherness, they “uncovered” their empirical knowledge of social injustice in teaching for social justice.

All teachers including the three bi-cultural teachers expressed their privileges coming from whiteness. Cultural border-crossing experiences enabled them to experience “multiple outsider-within locations” (Collins, 1998, p. 230) in different cultural contexts. Martha’s cross-cultural experiences between rural, urban, and global communities helped her and her children understand the socially unjust realities in broader contexts. Privileges were identified and recognized by having cross-cultural experiences.

### B. Empathic knowledge of social injustice

Multicultural educators extended their experiential knowledge of social injustice by empathizing with others who experienced social injustice. My finding supports Hoffman's (2000) empathic duality of "empathic-distress-for victim components and empathy-based anger-at-aggressor component" (p. 98). It also supports that empathy is based on critical thinking. According to Gallo (1989),

"an empathic response is one which contains both a cognitive and an affective dimension ... the term empathy [is] used in at least two ways; to mean a predominantly cognitive response, understanding how another feels, or to mean an affective communion with the other" (p. 100).

My study reveals that empathy is a reasoned feeling. On one hand, it is a cognitive analysis of the socially unjust reality. On the other hand, it is an affective reaction to the oppressive nature of the world. Ellen's environmentalism and Jean's advocate for animal rights are examples of making cognitive and affective connections with the world. Ellen said, "I thought that I would save the earth by teaching. When I started getting involved with things that are environmentally conscious, I was just exposed to a whole bunch of different other things." In addition, teachers' understanding of other people's powerlessness was also based on critical consciousness of the socially unjust reality. Witnessing racial discrimination against family members and close friends extended their empirical knowledge of social injustice. Tom's experience of witnessing brutal racism against his African American friend led to empathic understanding of the socially unjust reality.

Empathy was related to caring (Gilligan, 1982; Noddings, 1984; Gilligan & Ward, 2004). In this regard, my study supports that teaching for social justice needs to focus on empathy and caring rather than logical understanding. It is important to note that teachers help students broaden their cultural boundaries by exposing them to diverse cultures through literature.

### C. Affective domain in multicultural education

Multicultural educators revealed an emphasis on feelings from social injustice. The feelings expressed were not psychologically analyticable emotions, but they were socio-moral questions related to social justice issues. Feeling social injustice occurs even before they understand its complexities and specificities. The feelings expressed had two dimensions. One was the proximity to the event of social injustice. The other was the extent to which social injustice influenced the society and its people. The feelings were pain, anger, helplessness, powerlessness, discomfort, guilt, caring, responsibility, etc. Multicultural educators who were both victims and witnesses understood how social injustice marginalized people. Understanding social injustice is based on an "article of faith expressed through deep feeling" (Collins, 1998, p. 48), "deep-seated moralism" (Lynn, Johnston, & Hassan, 1999), or "a heightened reflexive and moral sense" (Denzin, 2000, p. 911).

Throughout the research period my participants expressed how they *felt* when they experienced social injustice or witnessed others experiencing social injustice. The feelings were authentic in identifying social injustice, conveyed socio-moral inquiries to social justice issues, and moving toward the idea of social justice. Bloom's (1956) taxonomy of educational objectives for affective domain includes receiving, responding, valuing, organizing, and characterizing by a value of value complex. Banks's (1991) value inquiry model and Collins's (1998) search for social justice emphasize the importance of affective domain. Adams et al.'s (1997) also claims that social justice education practice balances the emotional and cognitive components of the learning process.

The feeling is an example of "shamefully silenced discourses" (Gilligan & Ward, 2004). Addressing feelings from social justice is not only to enhance critical consciousness of the socially unjust reality, but also to authenticate attitudes toward social justice. Teachers in my study used counter-storytelling



methods and contemporary realistic fictions. My finding supports Solorzano & Yosso's (2002) study on counter-storytelling and Tyson's (1999) use of contemporary realistic fictions. My study extends the literature that stresses the feelings of those who are oppressed in the society. The feelings of social injustice make connections between the reality of social injustice and the orientation to social justice. Based on the distressful feelings from social injustice, teachers moved toward social justice.

#### **D. Dialectical conceptualization of social justice**

Multicultural educators identified the concept of social justice based on their understanding of and feeling from social injustice. They constructed it in a dialectical way by considering both social injustice and social justice. In this aspect, my study reveals that multicultural educators move beyond a logocentric concept to social justice. No teacher in my study agreed with the concept of the Original Position on which Rawls fabricated two principles of justice. In constructing the idea of social justice, teachers appreciated the particular perspectives in historical and social situations. In this regard, my study supports Young's (1990) criticism of the logocentric approach to social justice.

"The attempt to adopt an impartial and universal perspective on reality leaves behind the particular perspectives from which it begins, and reconstructs them as mere appearances as opposed to the reality that objective reason apprehends. The experience of these appearances, however, is itself part of reality. If reason seeks to know the whole of reality, then, it must apprehend all the particular perspectives from their particular points of view. The impartiality and therefore objectivity of reason, however, depends on its detaching itself from particulars and excluding them from its account of the truth" (p. 102).

My study that proposes the dialectic concept of social justice extends the grounded approach by addressing both social

injustice and social justice within a theoretical framework. It is based on Derrida's(1976) concept of differ $\acute{a}$ nce and strategy of deconstruction, which enables me to account for social justice education both as a goal and a process. For example, while multicultural educators identified social injustice in a particular context, they also made connections with other cultural contexts such as rural, suburban, and global. Consequently, they developed comparative perspectives of privilege and powerlessness. They realized the spectrum of the oppressive nature in broader cultural contexts.

#### **E. Multicultural educators as social activists for social justice**

Multicultural educators' pedagogical practices were grounded on social justice and culturally relevant pedagogy. They understood the gaps between mainstream and marginal cultures as a critical framework in understanding the socially unjust reality. In the face of challenges in teaching for social justice, they demonstrated

“(1) thorough *knowledge* about the cultural values, learning styles, historical legacies, contributions, and achievements of different ethnic groups; (2) the *courage* to stop blaming the victims of school failure and to admit that something is seriously wrong with existing educational system; (3) the *will* to confront prevailing educational cannons and convictions, and to rethink traditional assumptions of cultural universality and/or neutrality in teaching and learning; (4) the *skills* to act productively in translating knowledge and sensitivity about cultural diversity into pedagogical practices; and (5) the *tenacity* to relentlessly pursue comprehensive and high-level performance for children who are currently underachieving in schools” (Gay, 2000, p. 44).

My study supports the literature on characteristics of

multicultural social justice pedagogy. My teachers' pedagogies are student-centered, collaborative, experiential, intellectual, critical, multicultural, and activist (Wade, 2004; Biglow et al., 1994).

## **VII. Implications for Multicultural Education in Korea**

A solid understanding of social injustice is critical in multicultural education. Multicultural education should not cover social justice issues under the veil of ignorance, but it needs to address structural violence hidden in diversity. Multicultural education is not just to accumulate pieces of facts and information on diversity or people from multicultural backgrounds, but it deals with experiential and empathic knowledge of social injustice attached to cultural diversity, emotional feelings from experiencing social injustice, perceptual idea on the concept of social justice, and social activism as a form of resistance to the socially unjust reality.

American contexts of multicultural education cannot be applicable directly to the Korean context. In this regard I agree with Hong's(2008) concern about the fact that Korean educators tend to depend heavily on theories of multicultural education developed in Western societies. However, as Mo & Hwang's(2007) study reveals that social studies teachers feel unprepared for implementing multicultural education in their classrooms, there needs to be constructive discussions for helping Korean educators to be prepared for justice-oriented multicultural education. For this reason I think this study of exemplary multicultural educators in U.S. can provide significant implications for Korean multicultural education and teacher preparation programs. Based on my study with multicultural educators who focus on social justice issues in their pedagogical practice, I propose ideas on teacher preparation for multicultural education in Korea.

First, multicultural education in Korea need to focuses on empirical knowledge of social injustice that includes experiential and empathic knowledge. Experience and empathy are vital in

understanding issues of diversity and social justice. It is necessary that multicultural educators experience the otherness through and beyond their own experiences. Without understanding power relations and structural violence in a multicultural and diverse society, knowledge of diversity can never be fully appreciated. Teacher educators need to provide in-service and pre-service teachers with opportunities to work with people from multicultural backgrounds and work in multicultural contexts. Bringing diversity into teacher education programs is essential because the majority of the teacher population comes from the mainstream culture. Service learning can provide the opportunities that pre-service teachers have essential border crossing experiences.

Second, multicultural education in Korea needs to center on the affective domains. It should not exclude feelings such as pain, anger, discomfort, guilt, and responsibility. The feelings are not just psychologically analyzable emotions, but socio-moral-critical questions attached to social justice and multiculturalism. The feelings are catalysts for understanding social injustices and social action for justice. By prioritizing the experiences and the feelings of people from social margins, teachers can prioritize marginalized voices of the oppressed in their curriculum. Only with a solid understanding of social injustice teachers can deal with emotional complexities expressed by people from multicultural backgrounds. Teacher educators need to help in-service and pre-service teachers understand the roots of anger and discomfort from historical and everyday contexts of social injustice. Without knowing how to deal with their own feelings from social injustice, they might not be able to help students deal with the feelings of pain, anger, discomfort and guilt. At the same time, pre-service teachers need to acknowledge any potential prejudices and privileges in formal settings such as in the classroom. Teachers need to create a socially just classroom environment and develop a socially just curriculum in which all cultural groups of people are represented. Multicultural education is a deconstructive moral formation for a socially just society.

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