

Becoming a Teacher of Diversity and Social Justice: Influences, Purpose, and the Classroom

S. Terezia Orosz

California State University East Bay

SW 6959: Year-long Research Project Pilot Course

Instructor: Prof. Sarah Taylor

Spring Quarter: June 9, 2014

Abstract

This study highlights interviews with CSUEB professors on the subject of diversity and social justice (DSJ) in university teaching. The purpose of this project is to explore the knowledge and methods of experienced teachers of DSJ in different disciplines. The objective of the interviews is to examine (a) what factors influenced them to become DSJ teachers, (b) how they characterize their purpose, and (c) stories about how they include DSJ content. The investigator interviewed seven professors representing five departments (Biology, Sociology, Engineering, Dance and Kinesiology) using a semi-structured interview guide. Findings showed that professors were influenced by early personal experiences and awareness of oppression, privilege, religion, and family values. They also referenced the significant impact of their own student experiences as undergraduate and graduate students. Professors described their efforts in the classroom in student engagement, critical reflection, awareness of bias, and the unique experience of teaching at a university with as diverse a student body as CSUEB.

Introduction

One of the most vital ways to create social change and to support diverse, underserved, and vulnerable populations is through education. This is true for education in both K-12 and higher education, but this study will focus mostly on higher education. In this author's opinion, diversity and social justice (DSJ) in higher education affects not just the students themselves, but also family systems, community systems, and larger social changes. Having a college degree can mean having power in our society either to uphold the current systems of oppression that exist, or to make changes. At a university with students who are mostly from privileged backgrounds, DSJ pedagogy can instill values of equality, justice, and social change perspectives in students who might not otherwise be exposed to these views. At universities that serve students from diverse and underprivileged backgrounds, DSJ pedagogy is an opportunity to support students who have traditionally been excluded from higher education.

This study takes place at California State University East Bay (CSUEB) in Hayward, CA, a state university with a diverse student body. According to CSUEB data from 2013, the undergraduate student body is less than 1% Native American, 26% Asian or Pacific Islander, 11% African American, 26% Hispanic, 20% White, 6% mixed race, 7% international students, and 4% unknown race or ethnicity (CSUEB, 2013). College Portrait (2013) data also states that 45% of students are low-income students. Many of CSUEB are the first in their families to attend college. Many come from families struggling with problems associated with poverty, immigration issues, housing, racism, and other systems of oppression. Some students themselves are homeless. This data shows that CSUEB students represent underserved, diverse, and vulnerable populations. Additionally CSUEB students are at high risk for not graduating. According to College Portrait data from 2013, only 82% of CSUEB who started school in 2007

had graduated or were still enrolled in school six years later. In this setting a commitment to DSJ concepts takes on a unique standpoint, as it is an imperative part of social change to support this population of students to succeed in college.

Increasing the amount of diversity and social justice pedagogy at CSUEB serves two main purposes. First, teaching for DSJ impacts students. It creates an environment where students from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds might all feel more comfortable and have their points of view respected. It breaks with the dominant Eurocentric paradigm of education and teaches students to value knowledge from a more diverse range of sources. Students who feel more comfortable that their diversity is respected are more likely to be successful and to have their needs met. Second, teaching for DSJ can impact larger society. DSJ pedagogy teaches values of equality, justice, and critical thought that empower students to disrupt the normative order of society and work for social change.

This project seeks to explore the experiences of CSUEB professors who are already teaching using DSJ content or pedagogy practices. This study looks at factors that influenced these professors, their goals or purpose, and their approach to DSJ teaching. It is an investigation intended to gather information that will be shared through the CSUEB DSJ Teaching Guide website. It will offer inspiration and resources for professors interested in including more DSJ practices in their classes. It will also examine ways to motivate students and faculty toward DSJ practices.

Literature Review

The literature on teaching for diversity and social justice explores a broad range of themes. This study highlights the topics of defining diversity and social justice in the classroom, cultural competency, critically reflective teaching, bias in the classroom, and student

engagement. The literature shows that two of the main categories for examining teaching DSJ are content and methods. It is possible to have class content that examines diversity or social justice issues, but using methods that do not reflect social justice process such as inclusion and student empowerment. It is also possible to use social justice teaching methods, such as student-designed projects, about content not directly related to diversity or social justice.

Definition of Diversity and Social Justice Teaching

Diversity and social justice are terms that sometimes appear in university mission statements, job descriptions, program development, activist work, and much more. It is not always clear that there is a common understanding of what these terms mean. Some definitions consider diversity and social justice to primarily refer to race and ethnicity. Broader definitions define it to include gender, country of origin, religion, social class, sexual orientation, and ability. This study will use the definition found in the book *Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice*, a sourcebook for theory and curriculum. Its authors write:

The goal of 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 institution and communities of which they are part. (Adams, Bell, and Griffin, 2007, p. 2)

Cultural Competency

Intercultural competency is described as a new basic skill that all college students should be learning. “Developing the ability to communicate and interact effectively in diverse groups and settings is commonly articulated as a fundamental priority for higher education in the twenty-first century.” (Lee, Williams, and Kilaberia, 2012, p. 202). A growing body of research

has shown that fostering positive peer interactions in the classroom increases students' cultural competency (Bowman, 2010). According to Bowman (2010), this competency is considered in categories of awareness, knowledge, and behavior. A single course cannot teach cultural competency. It is learned through multiple courses and methodologies (Bowman, 2010).

The term "culturally responsive teaching" has been written about extensively by education scholar Geneva Gay (2013). Gay (2002) describes culturally responsive teaching as a combination of developing a cultural diversity knowledge base, designing culturally relevant curricula, demonstrating cultural caring, building a learning community, cross-cultural communications, and cultural congruity in classroom instruction. Cultural characteristics of the students should provide criteria for instructional strategies. She writes that culture is deeply embedded in any teaching, including subjects such as math and science in which teachers often think culture is not relevant. Gay gives the example of "protocols for participation in discourse" (2002, p. 111). She describes how mainstream schooling teaches a passive-receptive style of participation in which students listen, and only talk when given permission by the teacher. Gay contrasts this with the communication styles of most ethnic communities of color in the U.S that have a more active, participatory style in which listeners give feedback and commentary while listening. Speakers expect commentary from their audience, and it is viewed as participation, not interruption. According to Gay (2002), the mainstream communication style can squash the intellectual engagement of students of color. Awareness of this type of cultural characteristic in communication is one way to become a culturally responsive teacher.

Becoming a Critically Reflective Teacher

Critical reflection refers to the practice of self-reflection, examining ones personal beliefs, assumptions, and judgments, and ongoing analysis of the impacts of teaching practices

(Larrivee, 2000). It is common for teachers to rely on the methods that were used in classrooms when they were students. A critically reflective teacher gives conscious consideration to the ethical implications of classroom practices. This involves continuous evaluation of teaching practice, and modification of curriculum and methods over time. Smith (2011) writes about the use of critical reflection in the healthcare field, and the importance of its inclusion in the teaching process. Smith emphasizes that critical thinking is not just an abstract skills, but something that can be taught as a concrete practice through reflection activities and writing. Keddie (2006) gives the example of critical reflection in terms of the underlying normative gender assumptions driving much of traditional pedagogy. The literature covers many areas of critical reflection, all of which demonstrate improved outcomes for students when their teachers are engaged in this process.

Bias in the Classroom

Research on microaggressions have shown that prejudice, discrimination, and stereotypes are relatively common on university campuses. According to Boysen (2012), 40% of teachers and 50% of students report an incident involving bias in the past year before they were surveyed. The term *microaggressions* is used to refer to the subtle nature of some incidents, in contrast to overt use of derogatory terms or discriminatory statements. Research shows evidence that students wish teachers would respond to these types of incidents, and to lead classroom discussion about them instead of ignoring them. Some teachers may not perceive all incidents of microaggression. Boysen (2012) describes evidence that older, male teachers are less likely to report incidents of bias than younger, female teachers. The ability to notice microaggressions can be connected back to critical reflection, and the practice of building awareness of our individual beliefs, assumptions, and biases.

Another important area to examine bias in academia is in the underrepresentation of women and people of color as university instructors. According to the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (2010), 60% of university full professors are White males. When all instructors are considered, including associate professors, assistant professors, instructors, lecturers and other faculty, 43% are White men, 57% are men of any race, and 32% are White women. This same data set shows that 4% are Hispanic men and women, 5% are Black men and women, 8% are Asian or Pacific Islander men and women, less than 1% are Native American, and 3% are international (U.S. Department of Education, 2010). A recent field experiment by Milkman, Akinola, and Chugh (2014) showed bias early on in the doctoral application process. Emails from fictional prospective doctoral students were sent to 6,548 tenure track professors across 109 disciplines requesting a meeting. Emails from White men received a higher response rate than women or people of color. This was also true for professors who were women or people of color themselves; a higher response rate for white males was still present (Milkman, Akinola, and Chugh, 2014). This study reveals an apparent biased lack of support and mentoring for women and people of color to advance in academia at the doctoral level.

Student Engagement

Student engagement can be considered from the perspective of student performance, and institutional performance. A large portion of the literature examines institutional performance, or more specifically the methodology for teachers to actively engage students. A report by the National Research Council (2003) on student engagement states that student engagement increases when students are empowered to direct their own learning, to select tasks, and make meaning for themselves. There are many aspects of student engagement, but the three considered

here can be summarized in the shorthand “I can, I want, I belong” (P. Dove, personal communication, April 10, 2014). The first involves the students’ belief in their own capacity to accomplish a task. For many college students, particularly students who might be entering college with academic challenges, this belief that they are capable of doing the work asked of them is critical. The second part, I want, involves students’ interest in the topic, or a feeling that it is relevant for them. This can also be described as culturally relevant or culturally responsive teaching (Rychly and Graves, 2012). The third part, I belong, refers to students feeling of fitting in as part of the community. This connects to the value of inclusive learning environments, where students’ different backgrounds and perspectives are accepted (Clayton-Pedersen, O’Neill, and McTighe Musil, 2009).

Research Design and Methods

Research Design and Questions

The central research purpose of this project is to study the process of diversity and social justice teaching at CSUEB through interviews with instructors, and to develop a theory about their background and influences, their purpose, and their approach. This study uses grounded theory methods because they are best suited to this type of qualitative study aimed at generating or discovering a theory about DSJ teaching (Creswell, 2013). Interviewees were chosen through purposive sampling based on their experience teaching DSJ, in order to discover more about their teaching process and provide a framework for further research. The findings will also be used to support the development of a Diversity and Social Justice Teaching Guide on the California State University East Bay website. These interviews will provide a deeper understanding of methods and promising practices to promote diversity and social justice in teaching. This project seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. What are some of the factors that influence people to become DSJ teachers?
2. How do professors describe their goals and purpose in DSJ teaching?
3. How do professors approach DSJ teaching, what methods do they use?

Participant Recruitment

The University's Institutional Review Board approved this study in February 2014. Seven CSUEB instructors were recruited to participate in 30-minute interviews. This study used a purposive sampling approach, and chose instructors based on their ability to contribute to a theory of teaching for diversity and social justice. A purposive sample can be based on judgmental knowledge of the population, and participants are selected due to a particular attribute that they might possess. In this case the instructors chosen are known to be teachers of diversity and social justice, and are not necessarily representative of instructors overall at CSUEB. Their unique knowledge of teaching for diversity and social justice is useful to answer these research questions, to explore how instructors become teachers of DSJ, what their influences are, what their purpose is, and what methods they use in the classroom. CSUEB is an excellent setting to conduct this research because many professors here already demonstrate experience and innovation in teaching DSJ. Instructors were selected from the 85 syllabi collected for analysis in the DSJ PEIL Planning Grant from 2012-2013 (Beck, Fong, Taylor, Wong, Kimball, Le, Marcus, and Chang, 2013). They were chosen for their exemplary syllabi containing diversity and social justice content. Members of the project advisory board were also recruited for interviews. A sample of the recruitment email is included in Appendix A. Participants included instructors from the departments of Sociology, Dance, Biology, Engineering, and Kinesiology.

There is some risk to the participants of these interviews. For professors that choose to allow their interviews to be public, it is possible that colleagues or university administrators could penalize them in some way based on a response to their comments. Their statements might be misunderstood, or used against them in some unforeseen way. Professors who speak about their challenges, or even share about mistakes they have made in the past are at risk for judgment or other consequences.

Interview Procedure

Instructors were interviewed in their offices on campus. The interviews were audio recorded or video taped according to the instructor's preference. Instructors were given the choice of keeping their responses confidential, or allowing them to be shared publicly. Consent forms are shown in Appendices C, D, and E, and include an option for video or audio taping. Edited clips will be posted for use on the DSJ Teaching Guide website. Instructors were asked open-ended questions about their evolution as a DSJ teacher, the use of DSJ content in their classes, and their successes and challenges as teachers. The interview guide was piloted through testing questions with colleagues who teach DSJ. Four different drafts of the interview guide were considered. The final interview guide is included in Appendix B. Interviews were professionally transcribed to ensure accuracy.

Open-ended interview questions were written with the intent to discover information about the interviewee's process without overly influencing their answers. Open-ended questions allow interviewees to bring in topics that are important to them that the interviewer might not have otherwise considered (Webber, 2006). The entire interview guide is included in Appendix B.

The main three questions asked were:

1. Describe your evolution as a teacher of DSJ.

2. In the syllabus you submitted to our study last year, we found _____. Can you tell us more about that?
3. Describe a success and a challenge you have experienced in teaching DSJ.

Data Analysis

After the interviews were transcribed, I read through the data and engaged in the process of memoing concepts that appeared interesting. I created a framework based on the data, my own experiences, and what is in the literature. My qualitative analysis approach was influenced by the grounded theory theme analysis described in studies by Jackson (2012), Webber (2006), and Yalli and Albrithen (2011). Webber's article about feminist pedagogies in the undergraduate classroom in particular influenced my research design choices. Webber describes this use of interviews as a widely accepted practice by feminist scholars (2006). These studies show a detailed description of themes found in their interviews. I developed a codebook, identifying common themes in the interviews. I attempted to validate the codes through an inter-rater reliability test with a peer using the computer program Dedoose, and arrived at a score of 0.59 agreement. Once all the interviews were coded, I continued to look at themes, and found subthemes. I considered the possible meanings of the themes identified, and shared the data with a peer reader to verify. Some codes were adjusted according to the Dedoose inter-rater reliability test results, and the suggestions of the peer reader.

Findings

After coding and analysis, participant responses have been divided into four themes: 1) Personal influences and background, 2) teaching goals and methods, 3) CSUEB is special, teaching at a diverse university, and 4) teaching DSJ in STEM subjects.

Personal Influences and Background

When asked to describe their evolution as a teacher of DSJ, most participants began speaking about their childhood and background. They named factors such as family and religious values, exposure to DSJ in college, and personal experience of oppression and awareness of privilege. None of the participants chose one precise moment as the most important, but instead described a series of experiences and influences that led them to become teachers of diversity and social justice.

Family and religious values of social justice. Two of the participants described growing up in families with social justice values. One participant described their experiences in the '70s during the civil rights movement as a major influence. She said her family was political, and engaged in advocacy to make life better for people in our society. The second participant spoke about going to protests and political events as a child, and the influence this had on his political awareness. Three of the participants referenced religious values of justice and equality as a formative part of their youth.

Exposure to diversity and social justice in college. The majority of the participants described their experiences in college, both as an undergraduate and graduate student, as a formative part of their path to become DSJ teachers. An engineering professor described taking elective courses in Chicano studies, Asian American studies, and Philosophy and how those courses helped him become a more well-rounded person. Another professor talked about his awareness of racism as a young person. He described his first year of college living with an African-American roommate and getting to know a completely different view on things like music and other influences. He went on to speak about one of his first undergraduate classes, "Starting to talk about power and putting names to things, it really resonated with me a lot."

Personal experiences of oppression and privilege. Most participants described an awareness of ways they had experienced oppression, or moments when they became aware of privilege. One professor described her experience as a teenager volunteering in a nearby school for the deaf. There she became aware of “political issues around language and inclusion and culture, and what some people would describe as disability.” Another professor described her awareness of oppression from a young age:

I guess it’s always been part of my being. I could even go further back into my own experiences as a non-conforming gendered person and the awareness of power. Forms of inclusion and exclusion were apparent to me probably when I was five or six. So it’s always been part of how I see the world.

DSJ Teaching Goals and Methods

Participants spoke about their goals and methods and teaching DSJ in many different ways. They described the importance of student engagement and empowerment, teaching about theory by using real life examples, awareness of bias, and critical thinking.

Student engagement/empowerment. The majority of participants mentioned issues of student engagement. A few described the challenges of getting undergraduate students to be interested in class, and to dedicate enough time to their school work. One participant stated:

The biggest challenges are that I think there are too many students that don’t put enough time into classes. I know that there’s different reasons for that. Some of which are good and some of which are sometimes strategies of avoidance where they’re not letting themselves really buy into this. Right? Which I think is unfortunate.

Most participants also spoke about the effort they put into making class interesting and relevant for students to motivate student engagement. Professors described hands-on projects, and student

designed projects where they could choose the topic of their work. One professor recommended that creation of lab time in the humanities and social science courses, so that students could have the experience of applying the theory of what they are learning to cool projects.

Combine theory with real life. Making class content relevant to students is another part of student engagement. One professor described how teaching about theories such as Marxism, but using it as an analysis of the recent financial crisis and dealing with a larger system. Another professor spoke about using the Occupy Movement and other real life examples to engage students in understanding theory behind social inequality. A dance professor described student projects where they could analyze contemporary dance moves seen currently in dance clubs.

Awareness of bias and critical thinking. Participants spoke about the importance of being aware of their bias in the classroom. One professor stated:

We all do it. We're part of the culture. We carry certain things that we have to consciously work on undoing. I was teaching theory, and I had a paper. I had them put their names at the end of the paper, because I didn't want to be biased. I was trying to avoid bias. So I graded the paper, and it was a D. It was a theory paper. The student was Chinese, and I'm like, "Oh, how is that possible?" I thought, "Oh wait a minute. I have a stereotype."

Participants also spoke about student bias, and ways to be good facilitators of discussion so that students would have the opportunity to examine their own assumptions and prejudices. One participant stated:

My goal is to get them to question, to think critically, and to ask questions that sort of disrupt the normative order, and to do the hard work that has to be done...to be committed

to develop their social justice spirit so that they're willing to do the work that it takes to really makes change in the world.

CSUEB is Special: Teaching and Learning at a Diverse University

Many interviewees spoke about the unique aspects of teaching at CSUEB. Participants referenced the depth of learning to be experienced in a diverse classroom, where students could share and learn from each other's knowledge. "Just the act of working together with a diverse group of people...I think is very beneficial." Beyond describing the diversity of the students, participants spoke about students' open-mindedness:

And then I had some prejudices about a place that was this diverse ethnically and with so many people coming from traditional cultures or, and being the first person in college in their family, and things like that I thought that there might be a lot of acceptance for different race identities, but not necessarily different gender identities or sexual orientations. And I found kind of the opposite, that just an incredible amount of acceptance and openness...so many people who have been marginalized and disenfranchised have gathered here. So there's a real openness that has touched me a lot.

Teaching DSJ in STEM Subjects

Two participants from science departments spoke about the ways that they bring diversity and social justice into their classes. An engineering professor described giving students projects that include tasks such as supplying refugee camps and internally displaced persons. He stated, "I teach engineering and I don't want to produce engineers that are thinking only about money and the technological aspects of it. I want them to realize they exist in a society." A biology professor went even further to describe her view on how easily DSJ can be incorporated into science:

People have always come to me and said, "Gosh, it must be really hard as a biologist to incorporate issues of social justice and diversity into your classes." And I've actually seen it as it's not even an evolution. It's always been part of who I am and it's been the easiest thing to do because science actually lends itself to inclusion and inclusion is synonymous with social justice because when you're inclusive then you go into things and you see things as all under one umbrella.

This professor went on to describe her research about intersex people, and its use in a legal brief as evidence to overturn Proposition 8, a California proposition against gay marriage.

Discussion

Personal Background

Personal background appears in the literature as an important influence on teaching for DSJ. Gay writes about the impacts of her ethnic, racial, and cultural identity as an African American. She writes

I know from personal experiences the transformative benefits of culturally responsive teaching, and the devastating effects of perpetual failure due to educational irrelevance and ineffectiveness...I am neither apologetic for these autobiographical nuances in my scholarship, nor do I pretend they do not exist. While I do not always make these declarations explicit, their presence is not difficult to discern. I am not unique in writing (and teaching) through my filters of identity and affiliation. This is a common occurrence among scholars of cultural diversity and for classroom teachers in general (Gay, G, 2013, p. 53)

Gay goes on to describe how her personal influences are always part of her teaching, and are incorporated into her style and content.

Participants' description of their evolution as a teacher for DSJ fit with the idea that many of them would have been influenced towards political consciousness at a young age. Quite a few participants stated that they could not pinpoint a time when they became interested in DSJ, but described it as something more elusive that was part of their being as long as they could remember. For many, this young consciousness was enhanced once they attended college. As seen in the findings, courses and teachers put words to concepts they were already considering, but might not have otherwise understood within a larger framework of systems of oppression.

At least half of the participants who described having political consciousness at a young age stated that this consciousness expanded to cover more issues once they reached college. One participant spoke about her early experiences of growing up working class, and an early awareness of class issues. She later learned about gender issues, and problems of inequality and discrimination against women. It was not until she was exposed to certain discourses in college that she began to connect her experiences to issues of race and ethnicity, to consider the privilege she held as a white person, and how these systems of oppression are connected. At least two other participants described a similar phenomenon of expansion of their awareness and understanding in college. This points toward the importance of college education as a site of shaping and teaching DSJ values and concepts to young adults. Although there was less literature that considered the factors that went into the formation of a teacher for diversity and social justice, this finding underscores what the literature says about the importance of diversity and social justice in higher education.

Teaching Goals and Methods

Culturally responsive teaching and bias. Interviewees described their teaching in a manner that echoes the literature on bias and culturally responsive teaching. They shared stories

about recognizing stereotypes they might hold, and being reflective of bias. Some interviewees mentioned how they seek to modify their teaching according to the cultural characteristics of their students, similar to the manner described by Gay (2002). One example of this is the dance instructor who encouraged students to analyze contemporary dance moves. Although interviewees did not describe the specific example named by Gay around differences in classroom communication, they referenced their awareness of communication patterns and seeking to engage students in ways that are relevant to them.

Student engagement. Multiple professors described “student engagement” as a problem from different perspectives. Two interviewees’ answers focused on the difficulty of getting students engaged, and referred to the problem as the students’ lack of academic commitment. Interviewees also referenced issues of remediation that are higher than average at CSUEB in correlation with the higher number of students of color. Gay (2013) writes about how it is important for educators to maintain a strengths-based approach, and to not overly focus on the academic struggles of students of color. She writes:

Culturally responsive teaching is grounded in some beliefs that are fundamentally different from most of those that govern how educational programs and practices historically have been designed for underachieving students of color. It is an equal educational opportunity initiative that accepts differences among ethnic groups, individuals, and cultures as normative to the human condition and valuable to societal and personal development. It foregrounds the positive learning possibilities of marginalized students and their heritage groups instead of belaboring their problems and pathologies (Gay, 2013, p. 50).

Three interviewees talked about the creative ways they engage student interest, and put the responsibility more on themselves as the teacher to engage the students in relevant ways. There were multiple references to hands-on activities and student-directed learning. This reflects much of what is in the literature around student engagement. For example, Gibson (2011) writes about the success of a student-designed syllabus in which students selected from a list of learning goals and assignment options, and designated due dates. In comparison to another class on the same subject, attendance was better in the student-directed course. One interviewee in this study discussed a similar attempt to give students control over the classroom in a specific course. She described it as challenging because it was a new way to learn, and students took some time to adjust. This type of change in teaching and learning methods requires support and training for both the students and teachers.

CSUEB is Special: Teaching at a Diverse University

From these interviews, it appears that teaching at a university with a diverse student body is different from teaching a more homogeneous population. Teaching for DSJ is important in both settings, but the characteristics of it are different. This perspective can also be seen in the literature on engaging diversity in college classrooms. In a diverse classroom, students benefit from the opportunity to practice listening and learning from unique perspectives and experiences, and to foster intercultural competencies (Lee, Williams, and Kilaberia, 2012).

Strengths and Limitations

The strengths of this study included access to excellent professors who are already teaching for DSJ in creative ways. Participants in the interviews were eager to support the project, and appeared pleased and willing to share their experiences. They chose to speak about

topics that would not have occurred to me to ask about, creating rich data in the process. Some of the limitations were the limited amount of time I had to conduct the interviews, and the small number of interviews. With more time, I could have interviewed more professors. I also could have done pre-interviews, and possibly adjusted the questions to be more focused on a specific interesting area from those first interviews. Interviews with professors in more academic disciplines also would have provided a stronger breadth of data with which to discover a theory. Lastly, the online data analysis program Dedoose had a breakdown and deleted all of the initial coding I had completed, and therefore had to redo. This likely diminished the quality of analysis and discussion that would have otherwise been possible.

Conclusion

An important lesson learned in this project was the connection between diversity and social justice pedagogy and social work practice. Both teachers and social workers have the opportunity to work with underserved, vulnerable populations. There are similar characteristics in these fields. Cultural competency in social work and culturally responsive teaching both emphasize the value of acknowledging and respecting differences. The social work concept of a “strengths-based approach” can be identified as equally important in teaching “underachieving” students of color. This project also examined student engagement and student-directed learning, which is similar to self-determination and a consumer-oriented model of engaging students and clients in their own process.

Implications for future research include how to foster a commitment to diversity and social justice in professors who have not had personal experiences similar to the ones described by the participants. Future research could look at the connection to child and youth development and how to engage young people around issues of diversity and social justice. More specifically,

there is room for additional research into the area of faculty bias described in the study by Milkman, Akinola, and Chugh (2014), and ways to engage and support more women and people of color to be in higher levels of academia. A second area of future research could examine the distinctions between teaching at a diverse university with an underrepresented population, and teaching at a university with more privileged students.

A third area for future research includes examining the effectiveness of specific teaching methods, such as student-directed learning. While there is some current evidence of its usefulness, a wider base of resources would make it easier to share the methods with teachers. It would also be useful to study how to encourage and train teachers to use these newer methods. Implications for policy include funding additional research and training for teachers to learn about and implement DSJ teaching methods.

This project will have a small but significant impact as part of the new Diversity and Social Justice Teaching Guide on the CSUEB website. Clips of interviews in audio and video format will be posted on the website, with descriptions of their content. The results of the study will also be shared on this same page and is part of a growing conversation and program creation at CSUEB about DSJ. Students who are interested in the topic will benefit by learning more about their professors' personal influences and purpose. Other professors will learn more about the methods of their colleagues, and hopefully benefit from hearing stories of how to respond to difficult classroom situations. In particular it can add to the discussion of how to incorporate DSJ in STEM subjects by increasing the resources possible in this area. People can listen to the clips, and then navigate to the resources part of the website to learn more about a particular topic of interest in their department.

This project was only an initial investigation into the resources available through interviews with CSUEB professors. It uncovered the richness of experience, commitment and knowledge already present at this school. Many instructors mentioned lack of funding as a major impediment to increasing their capacity to teach for diversity and social justice. With more support and resources to support teaching for diversity and social justice, students at CSUEB that represent diverse, underserved, and vulnerable populations would be able to benefit from the innovative strategies of current education scholars. It is the hope that this project will serve to support future efforts to increase access to diversity and social justice pedagogies at CSUEB.

References

- Bay, U., & Macfarlane, S. (2011). Teaching Critical Reflection: A Tool for Transformative Learning in Social Work?. *Social Work Education, 30*(7), 745-758.

doi:10.1080/02615479.2010.516429

Beck, J., Fong, C., Taylor, S., Wong, R. Kimball, D.J., Le, T., Marcus, I., & Chang, P. (2013). Programmatic Excellence and Innovation in Learning White Paper. California State University East Bay.

Boysen, G. A. (2012). Teacher and Student Perceptions of Microaggressions in College Classrooms. *College Teaching*, 60(3), 122-129.

doi:10.1080/87567555.2012.654831

Bowman, N. A. (2010). Assessing learning and development among diverse college students. In S. Herzog (Ed.), Special Issue: Diversity and Educational Benefits (pp. 53 – 71). New Directions in Institutional Research, 145. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

doi:10.1002/ir.322.

California State University East Bay. (2013). *Overall Headcount Enrollment Profile (data file)*.

Retrieved from <http://www.csueastbay.edu/ira/tables/FallHeadcountEnrollment/Fall.Headcount.Enrollment.1-1.html>

College Portrait, (2013). *California State University East Bay Student Data*. Retrieved March 20, 2014 from <http://www.collegeportraits.org/CA/CSUEB/characteristics>

Clayton-Pedersen, A. R., O'Neill, N., & McTighe Musil, C. (2009). Making excellence inclusive: A framework for embedding diversity and inclusion into college and universities' academic excellence mission. Washington, DC: Association of American Colleges and Universities.

Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*. Los Angeles: SAGE Publications.

Gay, G. (2002). Preparing for Culturally Responsive Teaching. *Journal of Teacher Education*.

53(2), 106-116.

Gay, G. (2013). Teaching To and Through Cultural Diversity. *Curriculum Inquiry*, 43(1), 48-70.

doi:10.1111/curi.12002

Gibson, L. (2011). Student-Directed Learning: An Exercise in Student Engagement. *College*

Teaching, 59(3), 95-101. doi:10.1080/87567555.2010.550957

Hedrick, B., Dizen, M., Collins, K., Evans, J., & Grayson, T. (2010). Perceptions of College

Students with and without Disabilities and Effects of STEM and Non-STEM Enrollment

on Student Engagement and Institutional Involvement. *Journal Of Postsecondary*

Education And Disability, 23(2), 129-136.

Hytten, K., & Bettez, S. C. (2011). Understanding Education for Social Justice. *Educational*

Foundations, 25(1-2), 7-24.

Jackson, K. (2012). Living the Multiracial Experience: Shifting Racial Expressions, Resisting

Race, and Seeking Community. *Qualitative Social Work*, 11(1), 42-60.

doi:10.1177/1473325010375646

Keddie, A. (2006). Pedagogies and Critical Reflection: Key Understandings for Transformative

Gender Justice. *Gender And Education*, 18(1), 99-114.

Larrivee, B. (2000). Transforming Teaching Practice: becoming the critically reflective

teacher. *Reflective Practice*, 1(3), 293-307. doi:10.1080/14623940020025561

Lee, A., Williams, R., & Kilaberia, R. (2012). Engaging Diversity in First-Year College

Classrooms. *Innovative Higher Education*, 37(3), 199-213. doi:10.1007/s10755-011-

9195-7

Milkman, K.L., Akinola, M., & Chugh, D. (2014). What Happens Before? A Field

- Experiment Exploring How Pay and Representation Differentially Shape Bias on the Pathway into Organizations. Available at SSRN: <http://ssrn.com/abstract=2063742> or <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2063742>
- Morley, C. (2008). Teaching Critical Practice: Resisting Structural Domination through Critical Reflection. *Social Work Education*, 27(4), 407-421. doi:10.1080/02615470701379925
- National Research Council. (2003) *Engaging Schools: Fostering High School Students' Motivation to Learn*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press.
- Rabikowska, M. (2009). The Ethical Foundation of Critical Pedagogy in Contemporary Academia: (Self)-Reflection and Complicity in the Process of Teaching. *Pedagogy, Culture And Society*, 17(2), 237-249.
- Rychly, L., & Graves, E. (2012). Teacher Characteristics for Culturally Responsive Pedagogy. *Multicultural Perspectives*, 14(1), 44-49.
- Smith, E. (2011). Teaching Critical Reflection. *Teaching In Higher Education*, 16(2), 211-223.
- U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2010). *Full-time instructional faculty in degree-granting institutions, by race/ethnicity, sex, and academic rank: Fall 2005, fall 2007, and fall 2009*. Retrieved from http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d10/tables/dt10_260.asp.
- Webber, M. (2006). Transgressive pedagogies? Exploring the difficult realities of enacting feminist pedagogies in undergraduate classrooms in a Canadian university. *Studies In Higher Education*, 31(4), 453-467.
- Yalli, N., & Albrithen, A. (2011). The Perceptions of the Personal and Professional Factors Influencing Social Workers in Saudi Hospitals: A Qualitative Analysis. *Social Work In Health Care*, 50(10), 845-862. doi:10.1080/00981389.2011.595478

Appendix A: Recruitment Email

Dear _____,

You are invited to participate in a brief interview about your role as faculty in diversity and social justice (DSJ) teaching. You have been chosen because your syllabus submitted to the DSJ

Planning Project funded with a PEIL Planning Grant in 2012-2013 contained exemplary content. In our analysis, we saw interesting content or an interesting approach or attitude. **The objective of this interview is to explore how you see your role in DSJ education, and what personal and professional experiences and supports have been useful for you.**

Your interview may be used in the development of the DSJ Pedagogy Guide website, which is being developed as part of one of the 2013-14 PEIL Implementation Grants. **We encourage you to participate so that you may share your story and inspire faculty at CSUEB and elsewhere to further develop their DSJ teaching.**

The interview will last approximately 30 minutes, and will take place at a time and location convenient to you. The interviewer will either be a Master of Social Work student (Terezia Orosz or Serom Kim) working as a research assistant on our project or one of the co-investigators (Rose Wong, Assistant Professor in Social Work).

With your permission, the interview will be audio or video recorded. You will have the option at the end of the interview to confirm whether you authorize the use of your audio, video or transcribed written text of the interview in the DSJ Pedagogy Guide website, or if you would prefer that your interview content remain confidential and used only for study by the research team.

Please respond by *Wednesday, March 12, 2014* if you are interested, or if you would like more information. Our goal is to complete interviews within the next month (i.e., up through first two weeks of Spring quarter).

If you have any questions about the research or would like more information before deciding whether to participate, please contact Dr. Rose Wong, Co-PI & DSJ Teaching Guide Lead, at rose.wong@csueastbay.edu or Terezia Orosz, Research Assistant, Responsible for Faculty Interviews, at tereziaoroszl@gmail.com.

Sincerely,
Terezia Orosz
Research Assistant, Responsible for Faculty Interviews
DSJ Pedagogy Guide Project

Appendix B: Interview Guide

Opening Script:

Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed, we really appreciate your participation. I'm _____ a research assistant for the development of the DSJ Pedagogy Guide. This

interview is completely voluntary, and you do not have to answer any questions you do not want to answer. It will take about 30 minutes.

(If syllabi submission) We have asked to interview you because of the exemplary DSJ-content/quality found in your syllabus submitted to the DSJ Planning Project funded with a PEIL Planning Grant in 2012-2013. The aim of the interview is learn about how you carry that out, what is your aim, and how you set the tone in a classroom. The goal is also to know about your view of how your background and life/social/professional experiences have influenced your view of and approach to DSJ in education.

(If Advisory Board member) We have asked to interview you because you are on the Advisory Board for the Diversity and Social Justice PEIL Implementation Project. The aim of the interview is learn about how you teach DSJ, what is your aim, and how you set the tone in a classroom. The goal is also to know about your view of how your background and life/social/professional experiences have influenced your view of and approach to DSJ in education.

With your consent, this interview will be audio or video recorded. You may choose whether you would like to keep the recording confidential, or consent to its use in the DSJ Pedagogy Guide. These are likely to be products of your work that the research team identifies as exemplary. Let's take a few moments to go over the informed consent and release forms.

Go over consent and release forms, give option for audio or video recording.

Do you have any questions before we begin?

4. Describe your evolution as a teacher of DSJ.

Probes:

What has inspired you personally and professionally?
 Personal, family, social or political events and factors that contribute?
 What has brought you here?
 What has supported you to teach DSJ?
 Aims and goals?
 How did you come to see it that way?

5. **(Omit if advisory board member)** In the syllabus you submitted to our study last year, we found _____. Can you tell us more about that?

Probes:

What was that like for you?
 How decide to include that?
 What are you trying to achieve?
 How do students respond?

6. Describe a success and a challenge you have experienced in teaching DSJ.

Probes:

- a. What was that like for you?
- b. Students, colleagues, institutional (response, support, challenges)?
- c. What do you find rewarding about teaching DSJ?

- d. What has been your greatest learning/realization about DSJ?

**Appendix C: Written Consent to Participate in the DSJ Pedagogy Guide
or Self-Evaluation Interview
California State University East Bay**

Informed Consent to Participate in a Research Study
EVALUATION OF THE DIVERSITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE (DSJ) PILOT PROGRAM

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

The purpose of this research study is to evaluate the process and outcomes of the *Diversity and Social Justice (DSJ) Pilot Program*. The Principal Investigator, Sarah Taylor, is an Assistant Professor at California State University East Bay. You are being asked to participate in an interview because you submitted a course syllabi with exemplary DSJ content, you are a member of the *DSJ Pilot Program Advisory Board*, or you are a member of our core project team.

PROCEDURES

If you agree to participate in this research study, the following will occur:

- You will be interviewed for up to thirty minutes.
- The interview will be audio taped to ensure accuracy in reporting your statements.
- With your explicit permission, the interview will be video-recorded.
- The interview will take place at a time and location convenient to you.
- The researcher may contact you later to clarify your interview answers for approximately fifteen minutes.
- You will have the option at the end of the interview to confirm whether you authorize posting to the web guide your audio, video or written text only, or not at all. You will authorize whether or not this will be posted.
- The interviewer will be a master's level student working as a research assistant, or one of the co-investigators on the PEIL project.
- Total time commitment will be forty-five minutes.

RISKS

There is a risk of loss of privacy. Only the research team will have access to the research data. There is a risk of discomfort or anxiety due to the nature of the questions asked; however, the participant can answer only those questions he/she chooses to answer, and can stop participation in the research at any time.

D. CONFIDENTIALITY

The research data will be kept in a password-protected program, and only the research team will have access to the data. Findings will be reported in aggregate as much as possible, e.g. "Some instructors interviewed on this project felt that..."

If we would like to share information that identifies you, we will request explicit permission from you before disseminating it. These are likely to be audio, video, or text excerpts of your interview that the research team identifies as exemplary. You will have the option at the end of the interview to confirm whether you authorize posting to the web guide your audio, video or written text only, or not at all. You will authorize whether or not this will be posted.

All materials, including audio and video documents, will be retained for two years following the conclusion of the study, to allow us sufficient time to analyze this rich data. Two years after the study has ended, all materials containing identifying information will be destroyed, unless you give us explicit permission to continue using the materials. For example, we may wish to show a video of your interview in the DSJ Pedagogy Guide. We will only do so with your explicit permission.

E. DIRECT BENEFITS

There will be no direct benefits to you. It is hoped that this evaluation will contribute to development and expansion of diversity and social justice learning opportunities on our campus and in other universities, which may benefit students and faculty in the future.

F. COSTS

There will be no cost to you for participating in this research.

G. COMPENSATION

There will be no compensation for participating in this research.

H. QUESTIONS

If you have any further questions about the study, you may contact the researcher by email at sarah.taylor@csueastbay.edu or phone at (510) 885-2155.

Questions about your rights as a study participant, or comments or complaints about the study, may also be addressed to the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs at (510) 885-4212.

I. CONSENT

You have been given a copy of this consent form to keep.

PARTICIPATION IN THIS RESEARCH IS VOLUNTARY. You are free to decline to participate in this research study, or to withdraw your participation at any point, without penalty. Your decision whether or not to participate in this research study will have no influence on your present or future status at California State University East Bay.

Signature _____
 Research Participant

Date: _____

Signature _____
 Researcher

Date: _____

Audio Release Form

As part of this project, we will be making an audio recording of you during your interview. Please indicate what uses of these materials you are willing to permit, by putting your initials next to the uses you agree to, and signing the form at the end. This choice is completely up to you. We will only use the audio recordings in ways that you agree to.

1. _____ The audio recordings can be studied by the research team for use in the research project.
2. _____ The audio recordings can be transcribed, and directly quoted for publications, the web guide, conferences, public presentations and meetings.
3. _____ The audio recordings can be used for scientific publications.
4. _____ The audio recordings can be shown at scientific conferences or meetings.
5. _____ The audio recordings can be shown in classrooms to college students.
6. _____ The audio recordings can be shown in public presentations to non-scientific groups.
7. _____ The audio recordings can be used on television or the audio portion can be used on radio.
8. _____ The audio recordings can be posted to a web site.

I have read the above descriptions and give my consent for the use of the audio recordings as indicated by my initials above.

Name _____

(Signature)

(Date)

Appendix E: Video Recordings Release Form
California State University East Bay
EVALUATION OF THE DIVERSITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE (DSJ) PILOT PROGRAM
DSJ Pedagogy Guide Component

Video Release Form

With your permission, we will be making a video recording of you during your interview. Please indicate what uses of these materials you are willing to permit, by putting your initials next to the uses you agree to, and signing the form at the end. This choice is completely up to you. We will only use the video recordings in ways that you agree to.

1. _____ The video recordings can be studied by the research team for use in the research project.
2. _____ The video recordings can be transcribed, and directly quoted for publications, the web guide, conferences, public presentations and meetings.
3. _____ The video recordings can be used for scientific publications.
4. _____ The video recordings can be shown at scientific conferences or meetings.
5. _____ The video recordings can be shown in classrooms to college students.
6. _____ The video recordings can be shown in public presentations to non-scientific groups.
7. _____ The video recordings can be used on television or the audio portion can be used on radio.
8. _____ The video recordings can be posted to a web site.

I have read the above descriptions and give my consent for the use of the video recordings as indicated by my initials above.

Name _____

(Signature)

(Date)