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Narrative Reconsiderations of Teaching as Negotiated Curriculum for Social Justice and Equity

Candace Schlein[1]*, *Dianne Smith*[2] and *Charles Oakley*[1]

[1] Division of Teacher Education and Curriculum Studies, School of Education, University of Missouri-Kansas City, Kansas City, MO, United States, [2] Division of Educational Leadership and Policy Foundations, School of Education, University of Missouri-Kansas City, Kansas City, MO, United States

Curriculum is negotiated in intricate ways through various forms of interactions between teachers and students, among students, or via acts of mentoring. Attending to the details of the experiences and interactions of such negotiations within the construct of narrative deliberation may prove to be illuminating in terms of understanding top-down and bottom-up influences on teaching and learning. In this article, we discuss the findings of a narrative inquiry into Education professors' experiences of these forms of curricular interaction in higher education. We underscore socially just and equitable curriculum development through engagement with teacher education students. We further reflect on mentoring as an outgrowth of teaching that might serve to sustain curriculum negotiation from an equity and social justice vantage.

Keywords: teaching, teacher education, equity, social justice, narrative

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***Correspondence:**
Candace Schlein
schleinc@umkc.edu

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INTRODUCTION

Curriculum embeds and is embedded in context. Curriculum is further negotiated in intricate ways through various forms of interactions between teachers and students, among students, or via acts of mentoring. Attending to the details of the experiences and interactions of such negotiations within the construct of narrative deliberation may prove to be illuminating in terms of understanding top-down and bottom-up influences on teaching and learning.

We undertake this vantage that curriculum is negotiated in intricate ways through interactions between teachers and students. We root our work on issues of social justice and equity in curriculum and mentoring within particular experiences (Schwab, 1969) that enable us to shift between curriculum landscapes that centralize theories and those that explore students' and teachers' experiences of diversity (Clandinin et al., 2006). Our perspective joins together theories of culturally sensitive teaching (Ladson-Billings, 1992, 2001; Ladson-Billings and Brown, 2008) with a contextualized and fluid perspective on social justice and equity in curriculum (He et al., 2013).

In this article, we discuss the findings of a narrative inquiry into Education professors' experiences of curricular interaction in higher education to shed light on some of the ways that a curriculum is negotiated. We underscore socially just and equitable curriculum development through engagement with teacher education students. We further reflect on mentoring as an outgrowth of teaching that might serve to sustain curriculum negotiation from an equity and social justice vantage.

BACKGROUND

This is a narrative inquiry that has been conducted in the context of the United States, where there are differences in educational policies and curriculum standards from state to state. The

specific locale for curriculum engagement and inquiry of this study is pertinent for two specific reasons: the racial and ethnic narratives of our urban and university communities and the urban mission orientation of our professional environment. Kansas City has been noted as a persistently segregated city that is marked by pre K−12 schools with student populations that are comprised largely of children of color. Efforts to forcefully desegregate the schools surrounding the university have resulted in large population shifts, whereby White families have often moved to the suburbs or sought private schooling options (Gotham, 2002). Our study is rooted within this contextual environment, with its specific history of White privilege and the underrepresentation and oppression of African American students as outlined above.

Our institution is situated in the inner city, and it has adopted an urban–serving mission. The most recent available geographic diversity data highlight that the university is largely seen as an institute of higher education that serves the two states of Missouri and Kansas that straddle the local catchment area. A total of 40% of students identified as "international, mixed race, or a member of a minority group (UMKC, 2019). In comparison K-12 student demographics for Kansas City Public Schools (KCPS) are: 57% Black, 28% Hispanic, 9% White, and 6% Other (Kansas City Public Schools, 2019).

The faculty and staff members at the School of Education have been involved in a variety of endeavors to be of service to the urban community. These activities include course and program curriculum redesign to enhance a culturally responsive perspective, the strengthening of ties with nearby schools, and participating in ongoing discussion regarding interpretations of educator preparation and development with an urban focus. The School of Education supports a nearby child development center, and it also runs an Institute for Urban Education, community counseling and assessment services, and an urban education research center. The faculty at the School of Education mirrors the student demographics of the university at large, which is not ethnically and racially aligned with the students in local pre K-12 schools.

Working within this context has brought to the forefront questions for us regarding equity and social justice as we shape and experience the curriculum alongside students as situated within these possible contextual and cultural tensions. These curricular complexities, which we will discuss from the vantage of our data below, seemed to stem from differences between the racial composition of faculty members and teacher education students in relation to students in the local K-12 schools. Another nuance of these professional challenges is possible divergent experiences of faculty and students concerning diversity and/or differences in understanding of the need for social justice and equity across curricular interactions.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Curriculum research that is contextualized and experiential formed the basis for our thinking about this inquiry. This included attending to literature that centralizes teachers and their experiences within the curriculum. Moreover, we amalgamated a focus on particular and individual conceptions and experiences of diversity in curricular engagement within this study. Therefore, we reviewed literature on culturally focused experiential research that undertakes a narrative stance on inquiry into various curricular experiences pertaining to diversity and/or multicultural education.

Contextual and Experiential Curriculum

We began with a contextual outlook on curriculum–making and curriculum inquiry in response to Schwab's (1969, 1983) recommendation for curriculum work that closely relates to and stems from the world of practice. Importantly, Schwab (1962) argued that all curriculum thought and curriculum work necessarily accounts for the commonplaces of the teacher, the student, the subject matter, and the milieu. Taken together, these commonplaces form what he referred to as the particular in curriculum.

Schwab's theory of the curricular commonplaces established for us a rationale for examining instances of curriculum as they are experienced among specific teachers and students and while interacting with directed learning materials and activities. Dewey (1938) reinforced for us a perspective on connections between learning and experience. We thus examined a body of curriculum research that highlights school and classroom experiences (Schubert and Ayers, 1992; Ross, 2004). This turn to the exploration of the details of education as experience and "life in classrooms" was further supported by Jackson (1990), who claimed that attention to mundane details of teacher-student interactions were important, and Schubert (Schubert, 2008b) asserted that otherwise a sense of taken-for-grantedness might become rooted in teachers' practices and students' "experienced curriculum."

Jackson (1990) highlighted how when aspects of life in classrooms are not seen, power structures and struggles can occur. If left unchecked, these may result in what he coined as a "hidden curriculum." We attended to possible moments of taken-for-grantedness within our study to shed light on possible, if unintended, messages of power, and inequity that might underscore our own teaching. This aided us in drawing attention to the potential establishment of a hidden curriculum, which could have lasting negative consequences, especially among students of color and those in urban areas.

We also consulted with literature on curriculum and teacher agency as a foundation for informing our own work. Connelly and Clandinin (1988) highlighted the teacher as the prime curriculum maker, and we undertook a perspective in our work of the centralization of teachers to planning and enacting the curriculum (Craig and Ross, 2008). Schlein and Schwartz's (2015) work further considered the "teacher as curriculum" as a paradigm for curriculum research and practice. Importantly, this work underlines how teachers directly steer the curriculum while engaging with students about learning materials. We therefore incorporated into this study the consideration of our own experiences alongside those of our students and then reflected together on each other's experiences in the classroom with our

students to add layered meaning to our stances as teachers in relation to our students (Greene, 1973).

Culturally Focused Experiential Research

Greene (1995, 2017) reminded us of the need to move back and forth between casting the lens on our students and classrooms, and stepping back to understand broader theories and trends. Consequently, theories of multicultural education (Gay, 1995; Banks and McGee Banks, 2004) and urban education (Kincheloe et al., 2007) were significant to our thinking about our exploration of curriculum. Additionally, our efforts at shaping and examining the curriculum were guided by the concept of culturally relevant teaching and learning (Ladson-Billings, 1992, 2001; Ladson-Billings and Brown, 2008). These theories were important for underpinning our understanding of some of the tensions that may exist in diverse schools and some of the suggested ways to best educate teachers to support learning among students of color. Knowledge of these theories helped us in approaching the literature base on culturally focused experiential research.

We explored this body of research while also attending specifically to works that cast a lens on the particular by studying life in urban classrooms (Gussin Paley, 2000; Schultz, 2008) in attending to the specific context of our inquiry. Narrative-oriented inquiries into some of the complexities of language learning and/or of immigration and settlement (Cisneros, 1984; Igoa, 1995; Carger, 1996; He, 2002; Eng, 2008; Schlein, 2018) were influential for our own work. Narrative inquiries into multicultural education and educational issues of diversity (Phillion, 2002; Clandinin et al., 2006; Schlein and Chan, 2006; Chan, 2007, 2009; Chan and Schlein, 2010) were also highly important for grounding our study from thematic and methodological stances.

We outlined above some of the narrative and experientially based literature that supports this study. Our research embeds and is embedded in the discourse of diversity in education that is represented within this set of literature. We also acknowledge in our work research that highlights the great value of attending to students' experiential narratives (Chan, 2007; He et al., 2008; Ross and Chan, 2008). We therefore included in our investigative efforts students' voiced experiences of equity and social justice within teaching and/or mentoring curricular interactions to add a multi-faceted dimension to the study that accounts for the prime curriculum stakeholders of teachers and students. We also included within our study close attention to experiences of curricular tensions (Giroux, 1992).

METHODS

Within our inquiry, we attempted to make sense of our experiences of curriculum engagement while attempting to incorporate a vision of educational equity and social justice. Specifically, we shed light on our interactions with our students via transformative class discussions. We further included consideration of the capacity of mentoring to serve as an outgrowth of teaching. In particular, we reflected on how mentoring may be useful for making sense of difficult classroom discussions and for bringing clarity to professional practice that is aimed at equity and social justice. It was intended through our investigative activities that we collected data while also focusing on mentoring and growth.

Researcher Positioning

This article reflects research that was conducted by two university professors in consultation with one advanced doctoral student. Candace and Dianne teach pre-service teachers, in-service educators, and educational leaders who are enrolled in undergraduate and graduate programs in a mid–sized School of Education that is located in Kansas City, Missouri. Candace teaches courses in the Division of Teacher Education and Curriculum Studies. During the impetus of this writing, Dianne was teaching with the Division of Educational Leadership, Policy, and Foundations. Charles is an Interdisciplinary Ph.D. student in the disciplines of Curriculum and Instruction and Educational Leadership and Policy Foundations.

Dianne was assigned to be a professional mentor for Candace when she joined the faculty as a new Assistant Professor. Candace is a White educator from Canada, who has experienced teaching English in Japan. She moved to the United States for her position in curriculum studies at our institution. Dianne describes herself as a southern Black woman who was recruited to teach curriculum theory, curriculum development, and social foundations of education as a faculty member at our School of Education. From the outset, it was within a mentoring capacity that we began to meet formally for mentorship appointments. Over time and via mentoring conversations where Dianne guided Candace on her developing practices, we came to recognize that we were joined in a commitment to social justice and equity in education. We also came to see that our conversations were valuable places of professional growth, not only for Candace as she learned how to live as a new Assistant Professor, but for Dianne as well, who gained new perspectives on teaching through our discussions to contribute to her many years of practice at our institution.

We anticipated that participating in reflections with each other would bring up memories of classroom interactions with students in our courses or our responses to students' written course work. In Candace's classes that are under discussion in this paper, her students completed several reflective reading responses, an annotated bibliography, and a final research report. In Dianne's class under discussion in this paper, her students' written work was comprised of journaling activities and reflective essays related to race, class, and gender. Each of our courses were seemingly enrolled by a majority of students who are White, which is consistent with the racial composition of the student population on our campus (UMKC, 2019).

The overarching themes of our inquiry arose out of our fertile conversations, and we identified our research questions as areas within which we desired to learn more. As a result, we attended to particular classroom interactions to seek out challenges and possibilities for our own professional development and to uncover ways in which our teaching might impact students in terms of curriculum negotiation that is rooted in social justice and equity. We wondered about how to focus on educational

issues of equity and social justice in meaningful and impactful ways within a historically segregated urban setting. Moreover, as we began to inquire into our practices, we further deliberated over some of the potential challenges that seemed to be presented in our curriculum work.

Charles was invited to join Candace and Dianne on this research text. He is one of Candace's mentees who had expressed an interest in understanding the intersections of diversity, social justice, teaching, and mentoring. Charles is an African American male who has expressed concern about educational mentorship among African American males.

Research Questions

Our study was guided by several broad questions: what are students' experiences with curricula that are aimed at multicultural and urban education? As teacher educators, how do our own experiential narratives position us on the landscapes of teaching and research? What are some of the challenges and possibilities of curriculum engagement in urban settings?

While our research questions outlined for us the major strands of our investigative efforts, our work was further delineated by the following set of inquiry objectives. In particular, we set out to collect stories of teaching and learning experiences stemming from a curricular perspective of equity and social justice. We also aimed to examine the relationship between intentions, goals, and outcomes in our curricular endeavors.

Research Design

Our work follows the narrative inquiry framework for research as outlined by Clandinin and Connelly (2000). This qualitative method for conducting an inquiry aided us in examining in detail our experiences of curriculum. Moreover, our study is shaped by their concept of collecting "stories of experience" (Connelly and Clandinin, 1991; Smith, 1999) as data, as we explored our own experiences and those of our students in relation to the curriculum. We aimed within our study to maintain a "state of wakefulness" (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000). A wakeful theoretical approach to collecting curriculum data honed our investigative vision to be well-aligned with our classroom lives and those of our students. In this way, we pushed ourselves to be wakeful to moments of potential tension in our curricular interactions. We also challenged ourselves to be wakeful to possibilities for recovering meaning from those storied tensions and to identify possible new re-tellings of our stories of practice.

Data Collection and Analysis

Efforts at data collection among Dianne and Candace were founded on the notion of engaging in teacher-teacher conversations (Yonemura, 1982). We initially established a research foundation through focused faculty mentoring discussions together. We were further guided by the notion of employing letters in narrative inquiry work (Ciuffetelli Parker, 2011). We reflected on our experiences and possible themes within our experiences via email exchanges as a means of carrying on a storied textual dialogue.

Dianne and Candace met at either of our offices for reflective conversations over a period of 3 months. This amounted to three 60-min face-to-face meetings for data collection. During each face-to-face meeting, Candace began by sharing experiences that she had undergone in recent classes, and in turn, we both discussed some of our current and/or past experiences with curriculum planning and implementation with a specific focus on issues related to culture and diversity. We then explored each other's experiences, with a narrowed focus on potential tensions that we have encountered with our teaching in direct connection with issues of social justice and equity. Following our reflective conversations, Candace wrote brief notes about the contents of our discussions and our ongoing reflections about our conversations.

At the end of the face-to-face meetings, Candace reviewed the notes that she had compiled based upon our in-person discussions. She then scripted an autobiographical response piece that was a re-telling of one of her teaching experiences that had been discussed during one of our in-person meetings. She emailed the written work to Dianne, who replied to the original piece with an email of further questions and comments. Candace replied to some of the comments, and following a further email from Dianne, Candace revised her story and sent it to Dianne. Dianne then reviewed the final version of that story, and in response to it she crafted an autobiographical response piece about her own experiences. We engaged in several email exchanges where we discussed possible new readings of both of our stories once they were paired together. Dianne then revised her initial story in response to Candace's comments and sent that experiential story back to Candace. In response to the new story, Candace created an autobiographical response piece that highlighted another experience of curricular engagement.

In addition, we understood our investigative efforts of curriculum negotiation related to social justice and equity to occur as relational with our students. We looked to the work of Clandinin et al. (2006) as an example of how lives of diversity are shaped between teachers, students, and researchers through and with the curriculum. As such, following our teacher-teacher conversations and the teasing out of narrative themes, we each asked former graduate students for permission to review and reflect on samples of their work. The collected samples of student work served to provide documentation of our students' viewpoints on their growth in relation to the urban curriculum within which they were immersed in our courses. It also was aimed at providing teacher education students with voicing in education (Cook-Sather, 2006), and especially within research, which can be especially hierarchical and separated from the world of practice (Savage, 2003). We reviewed the student written work for narrative themes, and it was also seen as a useful means for articulating some of our poignant experiences of teacher education, equity, and social justice in relation to the narrative themes that we had identified during our reflective conversations. The themes generated from this study were: primacy of context in curriculum negotiations; different kinds of representation; incremental and negotiated transformation; and experiences of curriculum negotiation generate new experiences of curriculum.

We understand our stories that we outline below as preliminary findings of our study, since they were initially created following reflection of our face-to-face discussions and review

of our notes. Moreover, the stories were honed in consultation with each other via reflective email exchanges. At the end of one academic semester, we then reviewed our notes and autobiographical response pieces for narrative themes. We see the narrative themes that we identified as the major investigative findings generated from our interactions. We further see these themes as touchstones for us to deliberate over as we continue to engage in our practices, interact with each other within our mentoring relationship, and develop professionally overall.

Narrative Reconstructions and Memory in Curricular Research

Importantly, although much of our focus was on narrative reconstructions of recent curriculum negotiations of social justice and equity, we also incorporated into our reflections earlier memories of curricular engagement. We included these earlier stories of teaching experiences in acknowledgment of the value of resonance in telling teaching stories (Conle, 1996). This approach is useful for following the paths and mapping the contours of narrative teaching threads back and forth. Nevertheless, we recognize that attending to past stories necessitates the reliance on memories of teaching and learning. At the same time, we recognize that teachers' accounts of teaching are often constructions of past experiences (Ben-Peretz, 1995). Shagoury Hubbard and Miller Power (2003) specifically recommend documenting memorable words on paper during classes. Then, teacher-researchers are meant to use the memorable words to jog their memories of curricular interactions for the purpose of a fuller reconstruction of events. This method is suggested in consideration of the rapid pace and general hectic nature of life in classrooms. However, we have further considered how memories of teaching experiences might be subject to modification for the purpose of shaping positive constructions. We made efforts to reflect on potential self-deception (Crites, 1979) within our narrative descriptions throughout our discussions, written work, and email exchanges. Nevertheless, we assert that all narrative accounts are interpretive constructions of previous experiences. There is thus a necessary tension that we acknowledge throughout our research methods and the findings of our study.

Ethical Considerations

This study was successfully approved with the status of Exemption for ethical review following a protocol submission to the Institutional Review Board of our university. All planned details of the study were logged within the submitted research protocol, including drafts of the Consent Letter. We replaced the names of any individuals or identifying features with pseudonyms within this inquiry. Written informed consent letters were obtained from participants for the purposes of research participation and publication. Furthermore, one author stored all data on a password-protected computer, password-protected memory sticks, and on a password-protected external hard drive. Only Candace and Dianne had access to the raw data.

RESULTS

In this section, we discuss some of our experiences with curriculum negotiation that are focused on social justice and equity with students in graduate level teacher education courses. We focus on our stories of classroom experiences and reflective responses that resonate from those curricular interactions as preliminary themes from our study. The response story below intermingles the written and verbal discourses that we engaged in along our research journey. The response story is focused on a tension that Candace experienced in one of her classes that considers issues of equity and social justice in education. The written response story below is a meaningful reconstruction of meaning of the original story following our discussion and reflection. After the story, a discussion of some of our reflective engagement is highlighted.

> When I began to teach a research practicum course at the start of my professorial career, I desired to shape the curriculum in alignment with a focus on social justice and equity in education. This course is a culminating experience for students who are enrolled in two different graduate programs, and some students in other programs also take this course for research guidance and practice. The thematic concentration on social justice and equity was fashioned following my own curricular point of view alongside the urban-serving mission of our school of education, where students are prepared to support all students toward educational success.
>
> The course included four guiding texts. I employed two different books on methods for undertaking teacher research. I also added two texts that were narratives of researching teaching practices in diverse classroom settings. My intention with adding these narrative-based research texts was to display examples for students of what research into curriculum negotiations might look like under the broad umbrella of diversity. One of these books was Igoa's (1995) "The inner world of the immigrant child." The second narrative research book that I included on the course syllabus was "Kwanzaa and Me: A teacher's story" (Gussin Paley, 1995). This book provides an account of a teacher's investigation into representation in her classroom. The author relates her experiences as a White teacher attempting to understand how best to teach her African–American students in an inner–city school. I had selected this book due to its status as an exemplar of classroom-based research and its detailed description of research methods and findings that are rooted in practice that I had deemed to be easy to understand and emulate. I also selected this book because it concentrated on issues of educational equity and racial and social representation in class. I thought it was particularly important that it was written from the vantage of a highly experienced White educator who was trying to learn about how to expand the curriculum in relation to the needs of students in her increasingly culturally and racially diverse classroom. I had thought that this book would be a relevant text that many of my own students might identify with, learn from, and use as an example to undertake their own research and teaching practices about diversity in education.
>
> On the day when we were to begin discussing our reflections on "Kwanzaa and Me: A teacher's story" (Gussin Paley, 1995), I began the lesson by asking my students what they had thought of the book. I was met with a deafening silence and blinking eyes. I breathed a sigh of relief when one student, Adam, raised

his hand and stated that he had loved the book. After that, the students began to engage in a vigorous dialogue about how to include historically underrepresented students' experiences in the classroom. Some students questioned Gussin Paley's motives for inquiring into ways to teach African American students, and one student expressed his own concerns with teaching students in urban classrooms in the future due to his stated limited knowledge of backgrounds other than his own.

After class, one student told me that he had thought that 'I must have been some crazy White girl, trying to talk about teaching African American children.' He stated that after the class was over, he could see that talking about this topic had caused a shift in the classroom. He mentioned to me that during the break, everybody seemed to be very lively, and he said that he felt as though a lot of barriers had been taken down among the students. As he left the room, he said, 'You did something good here. People are talking with each other. Really talking.' Walking out the door of the classroom, I wondered why I felt so awful.

Reflecting on this classroom situation with Dianne enabled Candace to see that she had included content in her lesson that had a focus on diversity with a lens of educational social justice and equity. She had further provided the space for dialogic interaction among her students as a means of modeling this as a curricular tool for her students to use in their own classrooms. Nevertheless, Dianne and Candace considered the ways in which Candace might have failed to take into account the context of our classroom discussion and the contextual framing of representation in the class.

Candace came to see through her email dialogues with Dianne that it was possible that her students might have read the classroom situation from the vantage of distrust or unease. Dianne suggested to Candace that she was not only a White teacher, but that she had identified herself as an immigrant from Canada, who at the time had been a relative newcomer to U.S. discussions of race and culture. Candace had further shared with her class her orientation toward multicultural education and socially just teaching through narratives of her teaching experiences and her own research program into lived educational experiences of diversity and intercultural teaching and learning, which she used as a model for the students to consult with as they prepared their own research projects. Reconstructing her experiential narrative, we could see that it is possible that the classroom conversation only advanced when Adam offered a positive opinion about the book. Adam, who is African American, may have provided agency to the dialogue. In other words, in volunteering to talk about the book, he constructed an acceptable context for negotiating the curriculum.

In our email letters to each other we became further struck by the different layers of context that seemed to play a role in this lived curricular scenario. We noted how Candace had entered the situation with a perspective of diversity and urban education that had been shaped in another country and setting of diversity. However, we discussed how this curricular vantage did not necessarily translate to the local context. Instead, she became cognizant of the need to understand and take into account the particular context of her current teaching and learning endeavors. Kansas City has a long history of racial divide and tension. As Candace continued to practice in this setting and engage in discussions with students and colleagues over time, she learned about resources on this topic and came to a fuller understanding about the persistent efforts to desegregate the local urban schools (Caruthers, 2005; Caruthers et al., 2016).

In the following narrative, Dianne articulates her reconstruction of a remembered story of her interactions with students. The written response story was constructed following the re-telling of Candace's narrative above, and after targeted reflections on that narrative related to issues of equity and social justice in teaching and teacher education. Dianne's constructed experiential narrative took place within the setting of a seminar style undergraduate course with ∼25 students.

Diversity and the Storied Self

I teach a social foundations course with an emphasis in cultural diversity and American education. The curriculum provides opportunities for students (and me) to grapple with the historical implications of race, class, gender, sexual orientation, disability, language, and religion on educational attainment in the United States. Narratives and/or stories are important for us to claim our own historical *self* and to move into a realm of knowing others' *selves*. My notion is to create one story which connects to other stories (Smith, 1999; Gay, 2000). This approach to teaching my classes leads me to a story about a white male student in the class.

Barry (pseudonym) is a gangly 6'4" white male who wanted to teach in a Catholic school because he was educated in Catholic schools. He reminded his peers and me that he is a devout believer in God and the doctrine of the Catholic Church, each class period. During the last class meeting, Barry announced the following:

Every time I see Blacks on television, I know they are crooks. I hate homosexuals and AIDS is their punishment. I hate women because all they want is power. I think there should be prayer in schools. There, I said it.

I remember that the other students looked at me for a critical response. However, I resolved to ponder Barry's narrative and try to understand his *self*. Before I could engage Barry about his story, his peers *tackled* his story with some hostility. A part of me felt relieved that the students were so passionate about their stories; not resonating with Barry's.

Sharing this lived scenario of curriculum–making in context via email discussions, we reflected on how Gay offers that "Narratives encompass both the modes of thought and texts of discourse that give shape to the realities they convey… The telling of one story is the genesis of yet other stories" (Gay, 2000, pp. 2–3). This quotation then steered our deliberation over Dianne's story in centering narratives as highly important in curricular negotiation. We reflected on how placing narratives at the forefront of understanding cultural differences and similarities might be crucial to transforming the ways in which we practice the craft of teaching and learning.

Via our email conversations, Dianne noted in an email how her narrative of curricular interaction with her student highlighted what she referred to as "the transformative intellectual in me" (Giroux, 1983). Dianne further realized during the course of our oral and written teacher conversations how

her storied experience might indicate potential contradictions at work in her own curricular beliefs. She stated in our email correspondence that:

> Gay is correct, 'The telling of one story is the genesis of yet other stories' (2000, p.3). During my interaction with Barry, I responded by eventually reminding all of the students and myself, in the heatedly charged moment, that Barry's story is his *self*. This further connected with Hook's (1994) assertion that each of us grows and develops through story; mind, body, and spirit.
>
> This idea was further grounded in the final re-telling of Dianne's story following our email discussion. Dianne added the following as a conclusion to her written response story:
>
> About five years after my encounter with Barry, I received a card from him. He thanked me for listening to him, during the heatedly charged moment, of his revelations. Barry also thanked me for helping him to reflect on his *self* and he stated that he had had an epiphany. He was a new teacher, in a Catholic school; and, he knew the importance of diversity and the storied *self*.

In response to Dianne's re-telling of her story of curriculum negotiation for equity and social justice, Candace constructed a written response story of a tension in her teaching that resonated from Dianne's final story version. In the narrative below, we showcase the final written response story of Candace's experience of curricular negotiation that includes our reflections.

> In another course that is focused on studying curriculum theory, I assigned a reading for class discussion dealing with heteronormativity in the curriculum (Thornton, 2009). The text itself does not deal directly with issues of sexuality. That day, I was surprised to acknowledge new tensions among the students as barriers were drawn on religious grounds.
>
> A few students commented that they had felt as though their religious views as Christians could not align with a discussion about the curricular representation of people who identify as members of the LGBTQ community. Richard (pseudonym) told his fellow classmates that if he had turned his back on his gay students and shut them down for being themselves, he would have lost them from the start of the academic year. Shirley (pseudonym) agreed, and argued that it was irresponsible for teachers to not accept students for who they were, since this could cause irreparable damage to the students' emotional and academic well–being. Samantha (pseudonym) countered that she desired to teach in the future in a religious school, and so she saw no further need to discuss the issue. Shirley warned her about the necessity of exploring students' needs instead of one's own needs. Then, I reminded my students to allow all opinions to be heard so that we could discuss the various angles on this topic.

Our deliberations over this story also incorporated Candace's resonating reflections on a student's reflective assignment that was based on the assigned reading. Candace related to Dianne that she had been surprised to see a response piece based on that reading. Students were given a choice in terms of which readings to base their reflective assignments on throughout the semester. Few students selected that reading. One student, who had remained in silence throughout the lesson, submitted her assignment following the class discussion. Candace then engaged in several email exchanges with the student about her assignment. Our inquiry took place in a subsequent semester. However, after Dianne discussed her story of practice, Candace contacted her own student to request permission to share the assignment with Dianne, since she was Candace's teaching mentor. The student also provided us with a consent letter to make use of her work in this research text. The following is an excerpt of that student's reading response, which contributes another layer of complexity to this story.

> I am honest to say I realize I yet have some guarded areas when dealing with homosexuality be it gay or lesbian participants. I was raised in a Christian home and these topics were always tabled before anyone could expound on the issue. The bottom line is homosexuality is just wrong, no room for discussion, in my house. It wasn't the notion, of needing to hate these individuals, but I guess since it was never addressed, how would one know how to deal with those whom had chosen this as their way of life. It wasn't this reading alone, but a compilation of reading and studying over time, which has helped me to be able to at least respect the person's wishes.
>
> When reading this article I just so happened to be watching Roots, by Alex Haley and some profound things happened in parallel to my reading. There was a scene where the son of a slave owner didn't agree with what his father was doing. He was discussing with his mother, the fact that the slaves weren't animals, they were human beings. His mother in contrast had no reference point, she had embraced the idea that the slaves were animals, so it was quite appropriate for the slaves to act as donkeys and horses and be fed like pigs from a trough instead of a table. His mother's ability to see the slaves as human beings was simply nonexistent. In comparison to my own upbringing, I neither liked nor disliked gays nor lesbians, but I also simply had no reference point to care about their rights either. I had no connection or reference point… As a future educator I wish to incorporate a parallel between the oppression of racism to exploit its silent grip through homophobia practices. This does not mean I would no longer be a Christian, this simply means, love embraces every aspect. I am command to love my neighbor and to do good and not evil. I would hope not to hide behind what is a "hidden curriculum" in education, and continue to allow the pangs of hatred to grow from ignorance. It has always cost more to not know something that it cost to know a thing.

Telling and re-telling this story of heteronormativity in the curriculum with Dianne shed light on new perceptions of this curricular interaction. Candace then began to critically unpack her stance in the classroom, as she inquired further into ways to support her students to dismantle heteronormativity in their own classrooms. In turn, she began to reconstruct and re-tell her initial story of teaching in a research practicum course that we related above. After Candace's initially negative experience with using a text that highlights a White teacher's efforts to inquire into ways of improving her support of diverse students, Candace had decided that she needed to change course texts until she had unpacked the scenario and learned more about her context. At the time, she had selected "Girls and boys: Superheroes in the doll corner" (Gussin Paley, 2014) as what she had initially perceived to be a more neutral narrative-based research text that focuses on a teacher's research into ways that girls and boys learn

and play together in a kindergarten. Our email exchanges led to a recovery of meaning of Candace's curricular interactions that showcased how her curriculum decisions for the research course were not neutral at all. Instead, Candace had seemingly shifted the focus with a text that became highlighted for her as increasingly problematic due to the limited and limiting gender narrative that was presented in that book. Candace subsequently removed that text from the course, and she has instead decided to learn more about how to negotiate difficult conversations with students to sustain curricular negotiations that are more inclusive and that model social justice and equity in teaching (Caruthers, 2006).

As we pursued our inquiry and our construction of this research text based upon our investigative findings, potential new narrative threads and new questions emerged from our work. These threads and questions centered around the notion of mentoring as an extension of social justice and equity in teaching and learning. In particular, reviewer comments pushed us to consider more fully the role of mentoring in curricular negotiation related to equity and social justice. We identified further investigative puzzles during the writing of this research text that highlighted areas for extended exploration in relation to the reviewer comments. We thus looked inward to unpack the impact of our mentoring relationship together regarding our professional development with respect to equity and social justice in teaching.

The reviewer pushed us to reflect on the dynamics of our own mentoring relationship among a Black mentor and a White mentee. The reviewer specifically challenged us that it would:

> Be appropriate to create space to discuss the dynamics of the mentor-mentee relationships (e.g. mentor as a Black woman professor with a mentee as a White professor, …) that in itself seems to have interesting implications for the theme of equity (race, power dynamics), both between the authors and the authors and their students.

Our discussion here is meant to be understood as adjacent to our inquiry. We engaged in puzzling over mentoring as an extension of teaching during the course of constructing this research text while also keeping an eye toward the social justice and equity underpinnings of our mentoring interactions.

Although we had identified significant racial tensions in our local setting of Kansas City and Kansas City schools at the start of this paper, we had not considered the ways in which race might have played a role in our engagement as co-investigators or as mentor and mentee. We wondered about whether this was an oversight or whether we had unknowingly structured framing boundaries between the realms of teaching and mentoring.

Across the course of our data collection we did not unpack the dynamics of race within our mentoring relationship, during the writing of this research text we were able to uncover some of our interactions that might intersect issues of race and mentoring. For example, on a few occasions Dianne had pointed out some of the historical racial tensions within our School of Education that had led to the creation of a Culture and Climate Team. Candace found this to be highly useful information in guiding her teaching. In turn, Candace had experienced heightened tension when she had read an early draft of the guidelines for a new mentoring program at our School of Education that specifically stated that mentees should retain the right to select the race of their mentors. Candace recognized the value of receiving guidance from Dianne, and she felt that our work pushed our transformative boundaries because we brought different perspectives to our mentoring table. We puzzled over whether Candace had also come to see mentoring, teaching, and research as intermingled and as connected with social justice and equity. She considered her vantage that such a professional perspective might then not be consistent with segregated mentoring relationships.

Thus, as we engaged in reflecting on our own mentoring relationship, we additionally looked outward to explore our mentoring of students as an extension of our teaching. For this purpose, we contacted a graduate student to include student voicing of their experiences of mentoring related to our teaching engagement. We wondered how our investigative findings and our research puzzles about our own mentoring relationship might be symmetrically related to a students' own voiced experiences of curricular mentoring interactions that have led to both moments of tension of socially just and equitable schooling and scholarly growth.

We acknowledge here that the very act of mentoring might be seen as a form of banking pedagogy (Freire, 1970). We further note that within mentoring relationships there is often a hierarchical and paternalistic stance, which must be modified as an issue of social justice and equity (Coff and Lampert, 2019). Due to this fact, we included Candace's student mentee, Charles, in this research text. Following a review of an earlier draft of this research text and conversations about teaching, mentoring, and social justice, Charles emailed an original written response work to Candace with permission to share it with Dianne. We used that written work as a base for further email dialogue with Charles, where we shared thoughts and questions. Charles then completed a final draft of his original response story.

In the following narrative excerpts of Charles' final draft of his original response story, we highlight some of Charles' thoughts about his own educational journey. His story is of much worth for unpacking elements of both teaching and mentoring. We further anticipated that including him in our discussion of mentoring and teaching would prove to be illuminating for posing new questions about curriculum negotiations of social justice and equity that might lead to new lines of research and possibly to new ways of engaging in practice in the areas of teaching and teacher education. He began his consideration of mentoring and teaching within a social justice and equity lens by defining his perspective on mentoring. Charles wrote:

Mentor derives from the literature of ancient Greece. In Homer's *The Odyssey,* Odysseus is a long way from home fighting a battle. The goddess Athena, disguised as a man, supervised, guided, advised, and protected Telemachus (Odysseus's son).

Significantly, Charles outlines how he intertwines the concept of mentoring with that of both protection and battle. We further reflected on Charles' story in relation to our previous research and mentoring discussions. In particular, we noted how

impactful it seemed to be for Charles that his teachers had ignored his educational upheaval and shifts in his schooling experiences which were central to him as a student. In this way, it seemed as though they ignored a socially just and equitable path to his education:

> I am a 59-year-old Black man. I was born in in the era of a social upheaval (1960) and the Civil Rights Movement. I was a very outgoing, fun-loving child. I never had any difficulties and did very well in my academics. I got along well with the schoolmates I interacted with and had no disciplinary problems. However, The Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals ordered The Clark Court School District to develop a mandatory desegregation plan. Therefore, what particular all-White schools did was visit all-Black schools in advance of the ruling and pick those students who would be used as test subjects to see how this would affect the white students, white parents, white teachers, and their white community.
>
> That school year was very strange for me. I often was the first student to finish assignments. It was always a competition for me. I always wanted to be finished first, and to be the best. I often had the answer to questions the teacher would ask, but my raised hand was so far back or it was hidden by the hands of others. One time I remember being so excited about answering a question about Abraham Lincoln that I sprang out of my chair to give the correct answer. I was severely scolded and sent to the principal's office. During that time, paddling in school for misbehaving was permitted, and so I faced the paddle for my learning engagement. (Charles' written response excerpt)

Charles' outlined to us his negative experiences with school bussing. He further explored how his teachers had failed to see him as a bright and energetic student. In response to this, Charles stated that he felt that he wanted to become invisible in school. It is also possible that he encountered a curriculum in school that was not inclusive and equitable, as he was left to feel like an outsider during his education:

> That experienced helped me to decide what education and school meant. I hated school as a result, and I simply went through the motions. Even in higher education, my rule was to do just enough to get by, and to make sure not to cause any trouble by keeping my mouth shut. This is a lesson that I had learned when I had been placed in a desegregated school as a test subject, and it followed me all through my adulthood. I made sure that I never caused any trouble, I worked hard, and I raised my family. I believed this was my place, and society had enforced my position in the world upon me. (Charles' written response excerpt)

Charles' story also highlights very well unexpected issues of representation. He noted that he had never had a teacher who was a mentor, which further showed that his teachers did not seem to see him in his schooling. Yet, when Candace told him that his voice was of value within an educational setting, Charles noted that he was met with a form of curricular representation that was inclusive of a diversity of voices:

> I recently attended a day-long educator professional development conference on trauma resilience and education that was given by a national leader on this topic. The guest speaker asked the masses to identify the one teacher who had made a difference in our lives and to pause and think in silence about that mentor and how the mentor had impacted us in different ways throughout our lives. Following the silent thinking period, the audience was asked to share some of our mentor experiences and our general thoughts on mentoring in terms of the themes of trauma and resilience. One by one, attendees at the conference spoke up about their elementary, junior high school, or high school teachers and how they had made a difference in their schooling and in their lives. They also discussed how these mentors were teachers who had further led them to the field of education.
>
> During this activity, I became overcome with anxiety. I felt like I was going to faint, and I was shaking as though I were in the epicenter of an earthquake. Thinking about my past schooling experiences, I came to see quite clearly that there was not one person that I could remember from my distant past who had served as a strong and positive mentor for me. In fact, there was not one teacher whose name I could remember. I quickly realized that I could not even bring to mind the faces or names of any of my K-12 school teachers.
>
> This exercise at the conference brought this to light, and the result was that I felt so embarrassed. I had an innate awareness that my lack of an educational and life direction mentor was not my fault, and yet I turned inward in confronting this situation from the stance of shame. Nevertheless, I recognized that I was also so grateful that now that I am a doctoral candidate in graduate school, I finally have a mentor who guides me, advises me, provides me with opportunities to learn and grow, and who gives me an example of how to live out an academic professional life.
>
> With this recognition, I decided to stand up and address the crowd. I related my story to the audience members, stating that the only mentor in my life was Dr. Candace Schlein, my Doctoral Supervisory Committee Chair. During the lunch break later that day, I stood with my lunch in my hand as person after person lined up and approached me with questions about my experiences and comments of admiration and support.
>
> I had initially met Dr. Schlein taking one of her curriculum courses before I had officially entered the doctoral program. During class discussions and through comments on my assignments, she repeatedly said words to me that no other instructor in my life had ever said: 'You have something special. You have a story to tell. I believe in you!' Those words had never been spoken to me before in a school setting, despite my perseverance in acquiring an advanced education. (Charles' written response excerpt)

Charles further related how he focuses on this story of representation and voicing to tell other African American students that they are of value. In these acts, he is negotiating a curriculum with and for these students through their interactions:

> . . . when I visit underserved schools. The children mob me when I come back to the schools. It is almost as if I am a movie star or a professional athlete. However, this admiration is about knowledge and compassion. I am bombarded with questions and concerns. The students want to learn, understand, and make sense of it all. They want advice about schooling, and they sometimes do not know how to ask. They want someone who understands what their world is like. They want what Dr. Schlein exhibited with me: intent, purpose, spirit, and passion. I tell them, "You have

> something special. You have a story to tell. I believe in you!" (Charles' written response excerpt)

Charles highlighted in his narrative of experiences how he had not received an educational mentor prior to negotiating the curriculum alongside Candace in her classes. He considered his own experiences in relation to greater trends in society:

> My narrative is not told without an understanding of its great deal of irony. I had both parents in my home. This is something of a rarity in African American communities today. In fact, my parents divorced when I was five-years-old, and my stepparents were just as loving. Yes, I have two sets of parents in my life. However, I did not have a mentor for education. I had a father and a stepfather; two Black, hardworking, honest men. Nevertheless, I did not have a mentor for career orientation. Their life was about survival in a world of unacceptance and inequality. Their job was to raise me and to keep me safe with the tools and knowledge that they owned. I am sure they too probably had questions, concerns, and nightmares. I hope that they also had dreams and aspirations.
>
> A mentor is someone who leads you to lead yourself. Dr. Schlein is my goddess Athena. My father(s), although great men, were in a battle far away. They grew up and then raised me during the turbulent racial times of the Civil Rights Movement and the period of school desegregation. They could not mentor me about something with which they had no idea or experience. My mentor is neither Black nor a man. The importance and complexity of this statement cannot be ignored. The fragmentation of the Black man in education is well-documented and a travesty. However, the irony here is that my direction, support, and growth comes from a non-black, non-male mentor. Athena has disguised herself as a Black man and supervised, guided, advised, and she has sometimes even protected me. Athena, or Dr. Schlein, has encouraged me to seek out the truth with intent, purpose, spirit, and passion.... The key here is it concerns a people who are behind in almost every facet of life, especially education, and especially in urban centers like Kansas City with its extensive history of school segregation and related inequitable and socially unjust schooling circumstances surrounding urban schools with predominantly African American students. (Charles' written response excerpt)

We noted how it is further possible that as Dianne and Candace learned about the generative qualities of curricular stories, such understandings might have transferred to Candace's interactions with Charles. While Charles was not a student in the specific classes that Candace had discussed in her narratives above, he did take those same courses in later years. In turn, Candace's story of teaching and learning continues to be positively impacted via her mentoring of Charles. He recently wrote her the following message in an email:

Subject: Thank you

Dr Schlein

I woke up this morning and wanted you to know how much of an inspiration you are to me... I would be here if it wasn't for you.

Well, back to school

Thank you with all my heart,

Charles Oakley

"Everything Changes with Education"

"Education Explains Everything"

This email message, as contextualized in Charles' story, is an exemplification of the culmination of Candace's efforts with teaching for social justice and equity. The quotation under Charles' signature in the email message further leaves us with hope regarding the potential for personal and societal betterment through and with education. It is not our intention here to draw findings that provide conclusive insights about the nature of mentoring or serving as a mentee. Instead, we engage in this discussion of mentoring to allow further investigative wonders to be planted.

> Moreover, in response to our discussions with Charles about the meaning of mentoring based on his initial reflections on the educational mentoring relationship that Charles had outlined, he responded in an email with the following secondary response piece:
>
> The mentoring relationship between Dr. Schlein and I is complex and layered, whereby my own experience of educational mentoring mirrors a historical and common pattern concerning African American males and the education system. Namely, there is a paucity of African American teachers, and especially African American male teachers (Allensworth et al., 2009; Pachter and Coll, 2009; Pringle et al., 2010). As well, most teachers in the United States are White, middle class females, whose background and world experiences inform the development of their psychological models about race, power, and privilege in society (Caruthers and Friend, 2016). Moreover, there is a well-documented gap in educational achievement among African American students, which is especially salient among African American male students.
>
> The most pressing question resulting from this curricular landscape then becomes how an African American male can have a mentor in education, when it is a discipline that has so few African American (male) professionals? It has been my experience that any caring educators are needed to engage in gap-filling in terms of helping students to grasp the needed tools for educational success. This gap-filling enables me to be empowered to then serve as an educational mentor to other young Black (male) students.

We envision that new lines of inquiry generating from our study and our related narrative research puzzles might pick up on the narrative theme that was uncovered across Charles' narratives to include qualitative explorations of race in mentoring. Other avenues for study might involve the intersections of voicing, gender, and race in teaching and mentoring. Differences between mentoring relationships among colleagues and those between students and teachers might also be a good place for future inquiry. It is our hope that this article and potential research stemming from this article generates ongoing discussion, dialogue, debate, and above all, curricular negotiations that are socially just and equitable so that all students will know that teachers believe in them and recognize that they have powerful perspectives.

DISCUSSION

We discussed above how our construction of narrative re-tellings of our curricular negotiations stand as preliminary research findings of our inquiry. In this section, we highlight the narrative

themes that we uncovered from among these stories. These themed findings are important for underscoring the implications of our inquiry for equity and social justice in teaching and teacher education.

The Primacy of Context in Curriculum Negotiations

The first narrative that we introduced above was about Candace's encounter in the classroom on utilizing the book "Kwanzaa and Me: A teacher's story" (Gussin Paley, 1995) in her research class. This story highlights for us a narrative thread from among our findings of the primacy of context in curriculum negotiations, and especially those concerning educational equity and social justice. We came to see through Candace's experiences how a negotiated curriculum needs to acknowledge contextual factors in order to engage in truly transformative learning experiences. A re-telling of the initial silence in the class highlighted how it might have been related to some of the historical and persisting tensions of race and schooling that have coursed through local schools and society.

Different Kinds of Curricular Representation

Within Candace's reconstructed story, we also recognized that one student had stated that by openly discussing the tensions that are extant in local schooling situations, he felt that he was enabled to have the courage to pursue research into educational diversity: "…one student expressed his own concerns with teaching students in urban classrooms in the future due to his stated limited knowledge of backgrounds other than his own." (excerpt from Candace's response story). This narrative displays a second narrative thread that we teased apart within our study of different kinds of curricular representation. Candace's lived scenario particularly raises questions about ways to collaborate with students on a curriculum that is representative of all students' backgrounds when some students do not wish to be represented, which might have been expressed with the initial silence of the students. At the same time, the student who was happy to have the door opened to this discussion might indicate how there may be positive resonating consequences in course materials about teachers who are pursuing research and teaching into social justice and equity in their practices.

Working with students to shape curriculum that is geared toward equity and social justice might require both encounters with novel ideas as well as the formation of new foundations on which to live out curriculum experiences. This curriculum experience thus presents nuanced tensions at the site of curriculum–building negotiations. It may also point out the potential need to connect the existing social and personal cultures and contexts in the curriculum as a move to shape socially just and equitable learning experiences.

Experiences of Curriculum Negotiation Generate New Experiences of Curriculum

Dianne's narrative of using storytelling in her undergraduate and graduate courses led us to consider Gay's assertion that "The telling of one story is the genesis of yet other stories" (2000, p. 3). We thought about this notion regarding our work together and also in direct connection to Dianne's interactions with her White student. This led us to identify the possible narrative thread that experiences of curriculum negotiation generate new experiences of curriculum. This notion is important for teaching and teacher education related to equity and social justice, since it reinforces the concepts of growth and transformation. Significantly, this theme reflects that growth and transformation across curricular negotiations of social justice and equity occur among both teachers and students.

Incremental and Negotiated Transformation

The story discussed directly above further displays the narrative thread of incremental and negotiated transformation, whereby Dianne's student was exposed to the seeds of new ideas that took root after extended time, reflection, and curricular practice. This theme was also underlined with Candace's story of heteronormativity in the classroom. In particular, her student, Patricia, wrote about her own learning curve about how to position her sense of equity and social justice in her professional life as a curriculum worker. Candace had wondered about why Patricia had not contributed her ideas to the class discussion, as Patricia had remained silent during our lesson that day. It seems as though her journey as a socially just and equitable teacher was building, but at the time of the class discussion, she was seemingly only comfortable with sharing her shifting perspective with her instructor. We considered how this was perhaps due to a fear of meeting with criticism from her peers about her newly growing professional stance.

Mentoring as an Extension of Social Justice and Equity in Teaching and Learning

Discussion with Charles about his experiences of mentoring and teaching has resulted in us bringing forward] several questions regarding teaching and learning as mentorship in alignment with equity and social justice. These lines of query include: what are the boundaries of teaching and mentoring? What makes a teacher become a mentor? What does it mean that Candace, who is a White female teacher, currently serves as a mentor for Charles, who is an African American male doctoral student? How does this situation follow or dismantle potential racial narratives of dominance or subjugation of knowledge in education and research? How might a narrative turn in teaching and in research allow new paths for student voicing as the foundation for equitable and socially just classrooms? We encourage readers to receive these questions as a call for further research that focuses on establishing teaching as mentoring students under the umbrella of social justice and equity.

Educational Significance

In this article, we highlighted nuanced and layered experiences of teaching and learning that focus on social justice and equity. We uncovered from among our narrative data the following

narrative themes: primacy of context in curriculum negotiations; different kinds of representation; incremental and negotiated transformation; and experiences of curriculum negotiation generate new experiences of curriculum. Through discussion of the themes as findings of our study, we shed light on potential tensions and nuanced understanding of the curriculum that is lived out in classrooms in association with social justice and equity considerations. These themes may be of much relevance for guiding the practices of teachers and teacher educators.

Furthermore, attending to the tensions of social justice and equity at the boundaries of our curriculum–building endeavors revealed how representation loomed large in our work. Interacting with our students aided us to see that students seemingly variously responded to and resisted efforts at being represented in the curriculum, and they reacted similarly when issues of representation challenged their worldviews. We see such challenges as possibilities for the negotiation of context and culture in the curriculum. Such curricular interactions might further indicate nuanced areas for understanding the development of social justice and equity in teaching and in teacher education.

This work focuses on narrative reconsiderations of negotiating curriculum for equity and social justice that builds on Schubert's (2008a) notion that curriculum theorists should approach the curriculum in terms of both particular cultures as well as a via a prevailing world culture. We displayed above our efforts to shape a curriculum that acknowledges inward, "particular" experiences and interactions of our students (Schwab, 1973, 1983) concerning their cultures, as well as incorporating broader, outward perspectives on culture of an educational outlook toward social justice and equity in our professional environment. We argue that such tensions and changes across context shape educative experiences. Moreover, we see the need for a refined vision for curriculum workers, where classrooms might be positioned as potential arenas for the intermingling of different or differing perspectives on race and class (Caruthers, 2006), ethnicity (Chan, 2003), language (Schlein and Chan, 2012), sexual orientation and heteronormativity (Thornton, 2009), and gender identification and inclusivity (Gender Spectrum, 2019), so that we may move away from a "silenced dialogue" (Delpit, 1988) and toward stories that give space for unpacking "dangerous memories" (Caruthers and Smith, 2006) to shape transforming and transformative classrooms with students as curriculum negotiation.

Within this article, we explored the curriculum through discussion of lived curricular scenarios. Consequently, this piece contributes to the pragmatic body of literature on curriculum and teaching that associates theory with practice (Schubert and Ayers, 1992; Connelly and Clandinin, 1996; Clandinin et al., 2006). There is a paucity of practical curriculum studies that add to the complexity of the theory of curriculum with respect to social justice and equity. Our work provides a nuanced exploration of culture and context in curriculum inquiry. Our study further serves as a contribution to equity and social justice in teacher education from an experiential standpoint. Importantly, this work might also inform and offer first–hand accounts of other educators and teacher educators, which can be included as a part of curricular negotiation in other classrooms.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

All datasets for this study are included in the article.

ETHICS STATEMENT

This study has an approved declaration of Exempt research from our university's institutional Review Board.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

All authors listed have made a substantial, direct and intellectual contribution to the work, and approved it for publication.

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