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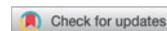
Equity Issues in Teaching and Teacher Education

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ABSTRACT
Concerns about creating greater equity in education are often projected outside of teaching. Yet the creation by teachers of more equitable and inclusive educational experiences and opportunities can play an important part in wider struggles for social justice. We argue that equity must become a central dimension of teacher education to challenge the complex ways that insidious inequalities are reproduced in and through educational frameworks and practices.

Introduction

This paper has been developed from our contribution to the Global Learning Equity Network, established by Professor John Fischetti as part of his creative vision for rethinking teaching and learning in contemporary societies with an "equity lens." This provides rich opportunities to collaboratively explore the possibilities for learning equity within and across institutional spaces that are too often characterized by complex social and cultural inequalities. As the director and co-director of the Centre of Excellence for Equity in Higher Education (CEEHE), the imperative to explore such possibilities across the spectrum of education is central to our work. Our starting point is that equity is a crucial dimension for reconceptualizing teaching and learning in the 21st century across different and diverse social contexts. In our paper, we will show why this is imperative and why an embedded and integrated approach to equity is so crucial. We begin by setting out where we are situated in debates about "learning equity." We are both sociologists of education. Geoff Whitty maintains a strong focus on educational policy and its relation to equity issues and teacher education. Examples of his work include an analysis of how class privilege and family advantage operate in education, often in ways that are complex and subtle and that require attention to multilayered contexts and relations, including the ways family, parental influences, and schooling entwine to form and produce educational and wider social inequalities (Power, Edwards, Whitty, & Wigfall, 2003; Whitty, 2002; Whitty, 2016). Penny Jane Burke's expertise is in the critical sociology of higher education. She is particularly interested in teaching in higher education and the ways that pedagogical practices, relations, and contexts shape inequalities in and outside of HE (e.g., Burke, 2012; Burke, 2015; Burke, Crozier, & Misiaszek, 2017). We are both deeply committed to fostering practices that support more equitable educational spaces across the spectrum of teaching experiences and contexts.

In analyzing the Australian context, it is important to note that we are both relative newcomers to Australia and are "learning equity" ourselves in a context in which we are both quite unfamiliar. Our body of work has largely been embedded in the British context, and although we have both been active members of international networks across the sociology of education, it is important to acknowledge that the British field has most significantly shaped our intellectual journeys. However, we also suggest that

there are many similar challenges for equity work in Australia and Britain, and we are carefully mapping those similarities and differences as we learn more about the specificities of the Australian context (e.g., Burke, Bennet, Burgess, Gray, & Southgate, 2016; Whitty & Clements, 2015). We also recognize that there are many differences across Australia to consider and analyze—for example, differences across states, regions, and localities. Of course, the same is true for Britain, a context in which education policy has been devolved, and there are significant differences across England, Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland. We draw on research from these two countries (Australia and the UK), but also from elsewhere, especially two other countries—China and the USA—with which we are familiar.

We draw on this wider literature and analysis to make sense of the range of equity issues in teaching and teacher education, specifically in the context of policy changes in New South Wales, Australia (where we are located). Focusing on access, participation, and curriculum concerns, we begin by paying particular attention to the impact of the changes to entry in initial teacher education (ITE), which we argue carries significant consequences for equity, including its often-problematic relation to concerns about "quality." The policy changes we examine include the articulation in key documents of the concern to raise academic standards at the level of the individual entrant. Our intention is to bring critical attention to the problematic emphasis on the "quality" of the *individual* rather than the quality of educational provision and indeed educational considerations more broadly, drawing on insights from the sociology of education. We suggest that there is a flawed connection being made that by focusing on the "quality" of the individual entrant, the quality and status of teaching will be raised. This tends to *individualize* notions of "quality" rather than opening up spaces to explore what constitutes *quality teacher education* and indeed *quality education*.

Education plays a crucial role in growing levels of inequality, poverty, marginalization, and oppression that characterize many different and diverse societies in the world. Even in high-income countries where children have near-universal access to education, the gap between rich and poor is growing. In relation to access to higher education, Gloria Ladson-Billings (2016) tells us that in the U.S. context, according to the Root Cause report entitled *College Access and Success* (2010), in 2007, 76% of students from high-income families obtained a bachelor's degree by age 24, compared to only 10% of students from low-income families. Ladson-Billings (2016) further explains that more than 30% of African Americans and Latinos with a high school grade point average of 3.5 (out of 4) go to community colleges, compared to 22% of whites with the same GPA. Among students who score in the top half of test score distributions in the nation's high schools and attend college, 51% of white students get a BA or higher, compared with 34% of African American students and 32% of Latino students.

At the Centre of Excellence for Equity in Higher Education at the University of Newcastle, we are centrally concerned with a wide range of equity issues regarding access, participation, and curriculum. We recognize that equity issues in higher education are closely linked to those in education more generally. The inequalities that Ladson-Billings cites relate to students who have been relatively successful in the compulsory phases of education. These build on systematic inequalities that emerge between groups at much earlier stages of the education system and often before children even enter it. We therefore welcome the opportunity to be involved in the wider Global Learning Equity Network to which this issue of the *Peabody Journal of Education* is related. We also recognize the crucial importance of paying close attention to teaching as part of a broader project to challenge inequalities throughout the education system, and we therefore focus in this paper on equity issues in the selection and education of teachers in initial teacher education (ITE).

It is too often the case that questions of equity are seen as outside teaching and indeed outside the curriculum. Equity is often seen as reducible to ensuring that all have access to education to meet their individual potential. This understanding of what equity is needs to be deconstructed because it carries with it numerous problematic assumptions, both about what *education* is and also what *potential* is (Burke, 2012). Education is increasingly being reduced to market-oriented principles and values with a focus on the accumulation of transferable skills that prepare individuals for paid work (Williams, 2012). We argue for a much broader conceptualization of education that pays attention to relational aspects of our social lives and the ways that this is interconnected with questions of equity and social justice.

Sociological considerations

The sociology of education has shown over a range of different (mainly Westernized) contexts how education can act as a vehicle of socioeconomic reproduction, preparing individuals for their "place" in the labor market. This includes, for example, Paul Willis's (1981) classic ethnography on "Learning to Labour," in which he shows how education prepares working-class "lads" to enter working-class jobs in the British context. However, the ways education reproduces social inequalities changes over space and time, so we need research that provides insights into how this takes place, often in insidious and subtle ways. Inequalities are produced at both material levels and symbolic levels, having wide-reaching and significant impact on individuals, families, communities, and societies (Fraser, 1997). We also know that education can serve as a transformative space, and through education, we can create the conditions of possibility for social justice and transformation (Freire, 1996). However, this is not a straightforward process and requires detailed and fine-tuned attention to the complex workings of inequality. Teachers must be part of this process and thus must have access to education that enables them to develop such levels of understanding (Burke, 2012).

This includes moving beyond a focus on *individual* potential and capability (for example, those policies that lock us into a focus on the "quality" of the entrant) to critique taken-for-granted assumptions about "potential" and "capability"—how these might be identified, recognized, and assessed, as well as what counts as "potential" and "capability" (Burke et al., 2016). A broader concept of "potential" in which difference is valued would be a step toward creating greater equity in and through education (Barnett, 2011; Burke & McManus, 2009; Gillborn & Youdell, 2000). Teachers play a key role in reproducing problematic assumptions about "potential" and "capability" but also have the capacity to transform constructions of potential, enabling their students to imagine new possibilities, selves, futures, and indeed societies (Chawla & Rodriguez, 2007). The homogenization of "potential" and "capability" along narrowly constructed systems inevitably produces inequalities and can ultimately exclude those from marginalized communities from participating in creating more socially just, and thus more peaceful, societies (Freire, 1996).

Equity issues are embedded in teaching, whether or not we acknowledge this. Indeed, we want to expose the ways that teaching is profoundly caught up with subtle processes of inequality that only become visible once a broader concept of teaching is put to work. Teaching and teachers are situated in social contexts in which power plays out in complex ways—in relation to structural inequalities (of class, disability, ethnicity, gender, nationality, race, sexuality, and so forth) but also in relation to more shifting and fluid inequalities that play out at the symbolic and cultural levels (for example, in ways that construct who "has" potential). The notion that teaching is relational is central to understanding the relationship between teaching and (in)equity and to developing equitable social justice frameworks for teaching and teachers.

This approach brings to light complex power relations that are located in social and cultural histories (Gore, 1993; Luke & Gore, 1992). Teaching and learning are deeply connected in pedagogical relations and histories; teaching is always context-bound (Ellsworth, 1992). Shaped by dimensions of time/space, or "timescapes" (Adam, 2004), teaching is tied in with our complex relations to time and space, which are different according to our intersecting and shifting positionalities in timescapes (Bennett & Burke, 2017). Subjective formations—the identities and sensibilities of what it is to be a teacher that the teacher brings to her/his teaching practices and that are produced through wider social discourses and practices—shape processes of be(com)ing a teacher (Burke, 2002; Burke, 2012). Teaching is directly related to epistemological contestations, to the politics of difference, and in relation to curriculum and knowledge in schooling and in ITE (Apple, 2013), which constructs authority and the process of "knowing." Teaching is institutionalized, which means it is constrained by certain institutional expectations, regulations, procedures, systems, and so forth. Teaching is also subject to (shifting) local, national, and international policy agendas, which shape and reshape the landscape of teaching and the ways that teachers are positioned (Burke & Jackson, 2007).

Teachers themselves are located in unequal relations of power and difference (Burke, Crozier, & Misiaszek, 2017). Teachers are subjectively positioned across and within institutional, national, and global debates, assumptions, discourses, and practices. Teachers are regulated by such social, institutional, and cultural forces (Burke, Crozier, & Misiaszek, 2017). Teachers form their identities through the discourses of teaching and being a teacher. This shapes their understanding of the purpose of being a teacher and their relationship to their students. Teachers bring their values, assumptions, and judgments to play in the fields in which they operate as "teachers" (which in itself is open to contestation). Teachers' identities are relational and are tied to power—a range of factors form their position of authority and power including the context of the school and their position in the school, but also other social factors including differences of ethnicity, gender, sexuality, social and economic background, age, and other intersections that are tied to relations of inequality and the politics of difference (Weedon, 1999).

All of these points apply to those teaching in higher education (including teacher educators), student teachers, and teachers in schools. These points are deeply challenging to assumptions about the "effective teacher" and the "quality entrant," and bring questions of equity that are below the surface into sharper relief. If we individualize the problem of raising the status and quality of teaching, we quickly lose sight of the ways that teaching and education are profoundly tied in with complex social, cultural, and epistemological inequalities (Zipin & Brennan, 2006).

The global evidence suggests there are some key points in the cycle of teacher recruitment, retention, and performance where equity considerations are crucial. As in the consideration of equity more broadly, pursuing equity in teacher education and teaching has redistributional, recognitional, and representational aspects (Fraser, 1997; Fraser, 2003), which are intertwined. Lack of recognition within the education system has generally been systematically linked to socioeconomic injustices (Whitty, Power, & Halpin, 1998) but is also linked to gender and race (Burke, 2012; Burke, Crozier, & Misiaszek, 2017). Various writers (e.g., Cochran-Smith, 2010; Jiang, 2013) have pointed to the importance of multiple and intertwined inequalities at play in education wherein distribution, recognition, and representation are regarded as fundamental aspects of social justice in teacher education as elsewhere. They need to be addressed by distinctive but linked strategies of change. Here we focus on these aspects of equity mainly in relation to the selection criteria for entry to teaching and debates about who should become a teacher, but we go on to point to further equity issues in the initial and continuing education and training of those who are selected.

Equity issues in selection for teaching

Misrecognition often plays out in choice-making and selection processes, in subtle yet powerful ways to re/produce social exclusions and inequalities. Gore, Barron, Holmes, and Smith (2016) remind us that "the press to ensure that teaching attracts the best and the brightest has constructed a 'powerful narrative of teachers and teacher education as not good enough, manifest in countless reviews of teacher education,' not only in Australia but around the world" (p. 529). However, they report on a study that suggests that, in Australia at least, the underlying premise of the dominant policy narrative that teaching is not currently attractive to "the brightest and the best" is itself flawed. They found "a high level of interest in teaching that is widespread among students across the range of demographic and educational variables that were investigated" (p. 541). Yet the dominant narrative is in danger of suggesting to those who do not have the characteristics fitting the current definition of "brightest and best" that they will no longer be welcome as teachers. This is disturbing for a number of reasons. First, as Gore, Barron, Holmes, and Smith (2016) point out, "the idea that academic achievement should be a key concern in the selection of teachers … rests on flimsy evidence of a relationship between such achievement and success as a teacher" (p. 544). Certainly, it should not be the only consideration. Gore, Barron, Holmes, and Smith (2016) go on to cite authors who contend that "cultural diversity is a paramount concern in the selection of teacher candidates, so that the workforce reflects the heterogeneity of cultural backgrounds in society more broadly" (e.g., Bireda & Chait, 2011; Poloma, 2014).

Second, even if we accept that more teachers with high academic achievement are needed, particularly to ensure that students from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds have at least as well-qualified teachers as others, we have to recognize that the inequity of the current educational

system means that there will be a bias in the selection system against those from backgrounds whose past achievement is limited but whose potential might even be greater (Zipin & Brennan, 2006).

Third, the proxies being employed to identify those who will be permitted to teach are often crude and inappropriate. In Australia, the changes to teaching entry requirements currently being implemented carry significant consequences for equity. The changes focus on raising academic standards at the level of the individual entrant. The emphasis has shifted to the "quality" of the individual entrant rather than the quality of ITE and indeed the quality of education more broadly. There seems to be a flawed connection being made that by focusing on the "quality" of the individual entrant, the quality and status of teaching will be raised. This not only problematically individualizes notions of "quality," but it diminishes our engagement with key questions such as what *constitutes* quality teacher education? And what do we mean by "quality" in different educational contexts and in relation to creating equitable educational opportunities for diverse students? By locating quality only at the level of individual entrants, broader questions of what quality means educationally and pedagogically are neglected. Furthermore, it is important to pay attention to the crucial interconnections between "quality" and "equity." If ITE programs fail to engage teaching staff and student teachers with the challenges of creating greater equity in and through both teacher education *and* schooling, can this still be considered as providing high-quality ITE? Finally, there seems to be a lack of consideration of how changes in ITE selections and admissions might impact on questions of equity—both in terms of *who* gains entry to ITE but also in terms of *how* teaching is being conceptualized and what is seen as constituting "effective teaching."

In "Great Teaching, Inspired Learning" (2013), the NSW government sets out the new requirements for admissions to undergraduate teaching programs. This includes the "need to meet increased academic standards" with a minimum standard of three Band 5[1] HSC (Higher School Certificate) results. The HSC results are used to calculate a rank order of students, which is called the Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR). The report that formed the basis of the changes to the admissions process of ITE pointed out that:

> Available research indicates that while ATAR may be a good predictor of success for students entering university with strong secondary school performance, *[ATAR] loses predictive capability for those entering university with lower scores, as many students with average or comparatively low senior secondary results also do well once at university*. Significantly, the research also noted that, while rankings are clearly a very good predictor of performance in engineering, agriculture and science, *the relationship is low for education*. (Action Now, Classroom Ready Teachers—Report of the Teacher Education Ministerial Advisory Group (TEMAG), released February 13, 2015, emphasis added)

Despite this claim, current and proposed changes to the system place a key emphasis on the need to select entrants with high ATAR scores or those holding other such indicators of "academic capability." State and federal ministers and accreditation regulators are continuing to consider entrance and exit requirements based on an ongoing deficit assumption that too many students lacking "academic capability" are applying, matriculating, and graduating from teacher education in Australia. Yet, measuring academic capability through mechanisms such as ATAR has been critiqued as not recognizing the interconnections between social location, familial habitus and influences, contested discourses of "capability" within particular disciplinary and institutional contexts, unequal access to educational opportunities and resources, and the ways that ranking systems conceal such complexities (see, e.g., Burke et al., 2016; Gillborn & Youdell, 2000). As Whitty, Hayton, and Tang explain:

> Bourdieu (1986) has highlighted the role of social and cultural capital in enabling and restricting engagement with education. He used the term "cultural capital" to mean forms of privilege, specifically in terms of education and broader cultural taste, passed down through families. In studies of contemporary education, it is often used when considering how affluent parents "play the system" and get their children into the most prestigious secondary schools. The combination of well-informed, educated parents, high achieving schools and a peer group with similar expectations tends to result in higher attainment. Alongside that is social capital, which crucially includes social networks that can be drawn upon to perpetuate privilege. (Whitty, Hayton, & Tang, 2016)

In terms of what the policy changes to selection of candidates might mean for who gains entry to ITE, we predict that such changes will have a direct impact on equity based long-standing patterns of unequal

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[1] Higher School Certificate marks are divided into six bands, with Band 5 being the equivalent of 80–89 marks and the top Band 6 being the equivalent of 90–100 marks.

academic achievement tied to social advantage and disadvantage. That is, this will most certainly disadvantage and exclude many students from the Australian-identified equity target groups (students from low socioeconomic status backgrounds, indigenous students, students with disabilities, students from remote/rural backgrounds, non-English speaking backgrounds), who for a range of complex social and educational reasons often do not achieve high ATAR scores or other indicators of academic capability. Indeed, as a large body of research shows, lower levels of academic achievement are tied to the reproduction of social inequalities through schooling processes and structures as well as wider social structures that reproduce privilege and disadvantage (e.g., Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977; Gillborn & Youdell, 2000; Karabel, 2005; Reay, 2001).

There is also a strong focus on literacy and numeracy levels for entrants and graduates of ITE. However, the discussion of literacy and numeracy is often narrowly framed and tends to reduce literacy and numeracy to skills that can be straightforwardly tested and measured to predict who might become an "effective teacher." This is not to dispute the importance of teachers developing strong literacy and numeracy skills so that they are then able to support their students, but to point out that we also need teachers who have a breadth and depth of understanding and sensitivity to the different, multiple, and contextual literacy and numeracy practices students engage in, which contributes to working with them in equitable, reflexive, and empathetic ways (Zipin & Brennan, 2006).

A large body of research and theory across different national and cultural contexts highlights how literacies and numeracies are not simply sets of skills that we acquire, but are social practices tied to context, culture, and power (Kress, 1995; Kress, 2003; Stein, 2008; Street, 2004). The hegemony of particular literacy and numeracy practices in schooling can thus be marginalizing for those who are familiar with other forms of literacy and numeracy practices at play in their communities, families, and local contexts. An Australian report explicitly references requirements for ITE entrants to have personal literacy and numeracy levels equivalent to the top 30% of the population (Action Now, Classroom Ready Teachers—Report of the Teacher Education Ministerial Advisory Group (TEMAG) released February 13, 2015). The relationship between the requirements and reference to a particular proportion of the population raises an important equity question—which social groups might be able to meet those requirements on entry? Further, there are tensions between state requirements of entrants and broader concerns about equity. There needs to be more careful consideration of the implications of imposing particular entry requirements, both in terms of who gains access to ITE but also how teachers might develop knowledge and understanding of the different literacy, numeracy, and other cultural practices students bring into the classroom. How might they develop the pedagogical knowledge and expertise to both provide access to literacy and numeracy practices that carry validity and power in formal curricula *and also* avoid (unwittingly) denigrating the literacy and numeracy practices associated with historically marginalized communities and groups?

Zipin and Brennan (2006) identify why it is so important to bring students from underrepresented backgrounds into teaching:

> Even if we could raise the status of the teaching profession sufficiently to fill most pre-service places with those embodying elite cultural capital, this would not be desirable since lack of social-cultural familiarity makes it hard for many to empathise and pedagogically engage with learners from "other" social positions. We need teachers with experience in the lifeworld knowledge and hidden injuries of those who come to school with "less advantaged" habitus—but we need such teachers to have literacy and pedagogic capacities to enable their students to succeed academically. (p. 340)

They explore this in regard to pedagogical relations and practices within ITE to address such dilemmas. We will now focus on equity issues beyond selection, exploring issues in the participation and retention of ITE students.

Equity issues in the participation and retention of ITE students

Equity in initial teacher education is more than gaining entry to a program of study but also must address questions of *participation*. We draw on Fraser's multidimensional framework of "parity of participation" to explore this (Fraser, 2003). Parity of participation requires access to the means and resources (such

as books, Internet, costs of course, and so forth) in order to develop "participation" in ways that a person might be recognized as a legitimate participant (student teacher). However, participation is more complex than simply having access to financial and material resources or cultural and social capital, as important as these are. Nancy Fraser sheds light on the ways that misrecognition and misrepresentation deeply undermine *parity of participation* within educational contexts. Processes of misrecognition involve the institutional values and judgments that are imposed on individual students in ways that effectively exclude her/him from parity of participation. In order to benefit from parity of participation, the student must be *recognized* and have *access to representation* as a fully valued member of the community (Burke, Crozier, & Misiaszek, 2017, p. 31). Drawing on Fraser's concept of "parity of participation" pushes the field of equity in higher education beyond peripheral and/or remedial forms of support, which have been critiqued by researchers in the UK context as utilitarian (Jones & Thomas, 2005) and unable to address questions of complex and intersecting inequalities and differences (Burke, 2012). A social justice focus on participation places attention on the shifting and dynamic cultures, practices, and values that produce inclusion and exclusion across intersecting social and cultural differences. It also demands close attention to pedagogical relations of power and inequalities in the processes of forming a sense of personhood (Skeggs, 2004) and in the context of becoming a teacher.

International research emphasizes the imperative of institutional rather than individualistic approaches to equity in teacher education. For example, when exploring the English and Greek contexts, Kaldi and Griffiths (2013) argue that institutional influences, such as strong support by school-based mentors, are key to the participation and retention of students from underrepresented backgrounds. The flexibility of institutional structures to recognize the range of commitments students might have beyond their program of study is also important to retaining students from underrepresented backgrounds.

Drawing on international literature on the "retention and attrition" of students in higher education and a small-scale study of undergraduate teacher education programs at an institution in Sydney, Maher and Macallister (2013) argue that the Australian government's commitment to increase participation by students from low-SES backgrounds and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent can only be achieved if institutions adopt a "multi-layered approach" and facilitate "multiple forms of student mentoring support" (p. 72). In also stressing the role of significant investment, they point to "the increased social capital when these students are successful and the enormous damage done to self-esteem when they are not" (p. 72).

Zipin and Brennan (2006) "explore ties between pre-service student literacies, teacher education, power and social justice" (p. 334). Earlier we discussed the dangers of a narrow conception of literacy and numeracy in candidate selection for teacher education. Zipin and Brennan (2006) point to the ways that teacher educators must exercise critical reflexivity in their pedagogical engagement with student teachers once they have gained entry to ITE:

> It is vital that we view our students' struggles with "standard" literacies through critically reflexive lenses, avoiding naturalistic judgments; and that we seek pedagogic means to engage and build upon the literacy inheritances our students embody. We need both to make educative use of our students' familiar literacies and to help them develop capacities in the structurally dominant literacies they need to be effective teachers—indeed, to be socially just teachers when working with students who do not inherit power-elite literacies from their families but who need them to succeed academically. (p. 336)

Taking a social justice approach to examining the complex ethical dilemmas teacher educators face in teaching their students, they argue for three key pedagogical elements:

> One: respect the centrality of home/community literacies in students' lives by making substantive use of them in intellectually challenging curricular work and pedagogic communication. Two: enable learning of culturally dominant literacies through scaffolding methods which make their codes explicit in contrast with codes of familiar literacy, and practicable through meaningful contextual use. Three: stage these contrasts in ways that enable students to see the socially constructed "nature" of different ways of being literate, and the cultural–historical arbitrariness by which some people's ways acquire "dominant capital" power over other people's. (p. 346)

These three elements of respect, enabling learning, and engaging students with the socially constructed nature of literacy practices in relation to power are crucial in thinking through questions of equity beyond individualistic discourses. Such elements extend to questions of power, knowledge, and curriculum, bringing to light the importance of exploring the interconnections between equity, pedagogy, and curriculum.

Equity issues in the ITE curriculum

Equity must be explicitly embedded in teacher education, not only in questions about who gains entry to ITE and who successfully completes the training, but also in terms of how equity itself is embedded in the ITE curriculum. This requires greater attention to the question of epistemic access, which includes three major characteristics. First, the forms of knowledge that are included in the curriculum (what/whose knowledge is included/excluded). Second, the forms of pedagogy that provide access to forms of knowledge that carry social power and esteem. Third, the relationship between education, knowledge, power and the ways teaching and teachers are crucial in the wider processes of social justice and social transformation.

Indigenous knowledge is a core example of the contestation over what constitutes knowledge within higher education curricula. In the Australian context, steps have been taken to include indigenous knowledge within university curricula (Williamson & Dalal, 2007), although implementation tends to be piecemeal and tokenistic, even if well-intentioned (Page, Trudgett, & Bodkin-Andrews, 2016). Further, much of the task falls onto the shoulders of indigenous academics, in part because of the failure of white academics to recognize the deeply embedded colonial frameworks within higher education and schooling (McLaughlin & Whatman, 2007). The decolonizing of knowledge hence requires a "recognition of and challenge to colonial forms of knowledge, pedagogical strategies, and research methodologies" (McLaughlin & Whatman, 2007), as indigenous knowledge taught through the framework of colonization continues to reproduce the inequalities it intends to dismantle (Hart, 2003; Nakata, 2002). Indigenous knowledge cannot be merely imported into the Western system of knowledge, but requires a careful exploration of the ontological, epistemological, and practical implications of its inclusion as a form of knowledge (Nakata, 2007).

Although teachers themselves and the marginalized communities they serve need recognition of their own knowledges, for both epistemic and motivational reasons, it is also important to acknowledge the sociological significance of what are currently defined as "powerful" knowledges. While subjecting to critical scrutiny the criteria by which some knowledge, and some people's knowledge, is accorded higher status within the education system than others, we also need to ensure that all students have access to what counts as educational knowledge and has currency in the employment market.

One of the UK's leading sociologists of education, Michael Young (1971), together with his associates (e.g., Gorbutt, 1972; Keddie, 1973), seemed once to argue that what counted as educational knowledge was merely the "knowledge of the powerful" and that equity would best be served by valuing instead alternative knowledges associated with marginalized cultures and/or the experiential knowledge that children bring to school. However, for a number of years now, Young (2008) and Young and Lambert (2014) have argued that we need to "bring knowledge back in" to the school curriculum. He uses the term "powerful knowledge" to characterize the sort of subject-based knowledge that has, in his view, too often been hollowed out of the school curriculum in recent years, especially for disadvantaged students, thereby denying them access to knowledge that has currency for access to higher education and the employment market.

These arguments also have implications for the professional preparation of teachers. Although he has said little directly about teacher education, Young's broader critique of vocational and professional education is nevertheless relevant. He takes issue with a tendency in the past 30 years or so to move away from the idea that preparation for the professions requires initiation into received public forms of knowledge developed in the academy and toward attaching greater value to transdisciplinary and applied knowledges developed in non-university contexts, including the workplace and the community. He has therefore questioned the shift away from what Bernstein calls "singulars" (pure disciplines) and

even from "regions" (multi- and interdisciplinary applied fields like medicine and education) to "generic" forms of knowledge that are constructed and distributed outside of disciplinary traditions.

As a result, Young and Muller (2014) and Young and Muller (2016) are critical of Gibbons, Limoges, and Nowotny's (1994) work on Mode 2 knowledge (this refers to applied knowledge) and that of Schon (1983) and others, who place "reflective practice" at the heart of professional education. He sees these as examples of horizontal discourses that lack the structure of disciplines and treat knowledge as infinitely pliable for different local and context-dependent purposes. Hordern (2016), who takes a similar position, even implies that they somehow constitute "fake" knowledge that lacks the "inherent value" of disciplinary knowledge forms (p. 367). This charge resonates with Bernstein's view that connections between the world of practice and the inherent structures of disciplined knowledge get lost in "generic modes" (e.g., through a focus on "core" or "functional" skills). This, in turn, can make such knowledge open to manipulation by governments and employers and potentially destroy the identities and autonomy that professionals traditionally acquire through immersion in disciplinary knowledge. Consequently, moves in educational policy and practice that seem on the surface to encourage more inclusivity can also be exclusionary.

However, even if the arguments for a knowledge-led approach to schooling are accepted, there is no reason why the same design principles should necessarily be applied to professional education. Furthermore, there are questions about in what sense "powerful professional knowledge" is "powerful." Traditionally, professional knowledge has often been merely esoteric knowledge that distinguishes its possessors from others, rather than knowledge with greater predictive power or greater practical efficacy. Professional knowledge is certainly an area where Young's (1971) earlier critique of the school curriculum as reflecting and protecting the "knowledge of the powerful" could be applied.

Clegg (2016)—who is herself sympathetic to the social realist position of Young and Muller (2014), Young and Muller (2016), Wheelahan (2010), and Wheelahan (2013)—suggests that their Bernsteinian roots nevertheless blind them to the importance of "regional knowledge" in two senses: one drawn from the earlier-mentioned Bernsteinian sense of knowledge regions, the other referring to knowledge generated outside the academy and indeed outside the "global north." Clegg (2016) points to the "contextual nature of professional practice." Although she is critical of "voice discourses" in some respects, she also insists that new actors and social movements "can and do challenge academic knowledge" beyond the academy (p. 457). In Australia, for instance, teacher education programs should include relevant indigenous knowledges.

Currently, in our view, the key challenge in professional fields is to establish precisely how disciplinary knowledge, which may indeed be epistemologically strong but also culturally biased, articulates with other knowledge forms and how it can thereby have an impact on practice. Thus, there is a crucial pedagogical element to this. How can disciplinary knowledge and other external knowledges, including those that are currently marginalized, be brought together with professionals' reflective practice and practical theorizing in professional arenas to produce really powerful professional knowledge and learning? As Maton (2014) puts it, powerful knowledge "comprises not one kind of knowledge but rather mastery of how different knowledges are brought together and changed" (p. 181).

The complexity of teacher education reform

We have identified a number of ways in which equity needs to be embedded in teacher education. The process of doing this along any one social justice dimension, let alone all three (redistribution, recognition, and representation), is extremely challenging. It becomes even more challenging when we bring into consideration the insights of critical scholars who draw on concepts of intersectionality (that social inequalities and differences are complex and intersecting formations) and embodiment (that social inequalities work at the subjective and affective levels of emotion and lived and embodied experiences) (e.g., Burke, 2012; Crenshaw, 1989; McNay, 2008; Mirza, 2013).

In China, Jiang (2013) traces how various reform initiatives involve both distributional and recognition elements that are intertwined. These reforms seek both to "provide equitable access to excellent

Table 1. Distribution and recognition.

Reform initiatives	"Distribution": Provide equitable access to excellent teachers for all students	"Recognition": Build respect and recognition of social diversity on behalf of justice in classroom teaching
Admission and preservice teacher training for teacher candidates: Free teacher education	Diverse teacher candidates required to teach in rural areas after graduation	Train teacher candidates to be committed to social equity and justice
Student teaching: *Dinggang* internship	Student teaching in low-income rural schools for one semester	Strategies to support student teachers' understanding of the local community and learning to teach disadvantaged students, with mentor teachers that model advocacy stance
New teacher recruitment: *Tegang* teaching positions	More teachers from diverse social and academic backgrounds with financial support from the government	Induction programs that effectively help new teachers become aware of institutional inequalities and establish democracy in classrooms
In-service teacher professional development: *Guopei Plan* (national professional development programs for rural teachers)	Rural schoolteachers attend professional development workshops, with much time and funded support	Practice-based inquiry and reflection about teaching diverse student groups

After Jiang (2013).

teachers for all students" and to "build respect and recognition of social diversity on behalf of justice in classroom teaching" (p. 160). In Table 1, Jiang lists some of the strategies adopted.

Jiang identifies challenges in China on both dimensions, often linked to the difficulty faced even by committed teachers in confronting wider societal inequalities and cultural assumptions. Indeed, as happens with some of the Western "fast-track" teaching reforms, there is a tendency for those novice teachers who can return to less challenging contexts to do so. Fighting inequities within education cannot be left to "heroic" individuals or cadres as is sometimes implied in the rhetoric of reform of organizations such as Teach for America. Rather, it must be embedded into the frameworks of teacher education programs, with attention to the "redistribution of educational resources" as well as the "effort to cultivate the 'recognition' and reflexivity the teacher needs to promote meaningful learning for all students" (Jiang, 2013, p. 171). Holding these imperatives together also requires nuanced approaches that work against "fixing" categories of equity. Narrow categories undermine students' "relational connection with the people around" them and place them "in sealed boxes" (Chawla & Rodriguez, 2007, p. 704). Equity requires an understanding of how social and cultural inequalities are produced through intersecting differences—for example, age, class, ethnicity, gender, geographic location, religion, and sexuality (e.g., Mirza, 2009, Mirza, 2013; Nelson, Stahl, & Wallace, 2015).

Teacher education reform (like widening participation more broadly) has to be linked to broader struggles for social justice in order to engage the complex dynamics of equity. Only transformative policies, in the realms of recognition, redistribution, and representation, can move beyond superficial remedies and address the underlying sources of inequality (Burke, 2012; Whitty, Power, & Halpin, 1998). This requires critical reflexivity and praxis-based approaches that provide teacher educators and student teachers with the framework to consider the complexities of equity issues in relation to selection processes, pedagogies, curriculum, and epistemic access. Drawing together the multiple aspects of social justice is challenging to individual practitioners but also with regard to broader questions about what counts as "quality" in teaching and teacher education. These are questions, however, that require close attention beyond individual recruitment and retention at the institutional and systemic level (Maton, 2014; Maton, 2014).

Conclusion

The Global Learning Network is underpinned by certain values that many of us will share in relation to broader social justice imperatives. This includes the value of creating educational structures, processes,

and strategies that disrupt, rather than reproduce, persistent patterns of inequality across social differences. In this spirit, the Centre of Excellence for Equity in Higher Education (CEEHE) is deeply committed to developing educational spaces for social justice and equity through bringing together research, theory, and practice (Burke, 2012). We are working across different pedagogical and research communities to draw together knowledge, wisdom, and insight from different disciplinary contexts and different cultural and professional perspectives of equity work. Our aim is to create nuanced methodologies, pedagogies, and practices that are sensitive to the multiple layers, contexts, and challenges that characterize the field of equity in education, including ITE. We therefore embrace the opportunity of the Global Learning Equity Network and welcome the energy and vision that brings together collective insight and creativity.

Acknowledgments

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