
Social justice through effective anti-racism education: a survey of pre-service teachers

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Abstract

The concern of this paper is the role of education in realising social justice through effective anti-racism education. This paper argues that there are two goals of anti-racism education: the curricular justice goal, which aims to deliver curricular justice to Aboriginal students, and the wider responsibility goal, which aims to redress the social disadvantage of Aboriginal people (defined in this paper as social injustice). I argue that if the two goals of anti-racism education were achieved, namely curricular justice and wider responsibility, education would play a significant role in the construction of a just society. On the basis of both philosophical argument and appeal to current educational policy, I argue that a necessary condition for the achievement of these goals is that teachers adopt a social justice aim of education and operate with a needs-based notion of social justice. This article describes a study examining pre-service teachers' aims of education and notions of social justice in relation to anti-racism education. The findings of the study indicate that only a small minority of the sample population of pre-service teachers satisfy the conditions necessary for the effective implementation of anti-racism education and that courses undertaken have a significant effect on students' aim of education and notion of social justice.

Introduction

It is indisputable that Australian Aboriginal people as a group suffer great social and economic disadvantage 'in both absolute terms and in comparison to that of the non-Aboriginal society' (Johnston 1991a, p 62). Aboriginal people, 'comprising just over 2 per cent of the population, are an impoverished minority' (Behrendt 2003, p 7). Beyond doubt, too, is that the notion of 'race' has no biological basis and is a social construct, which, along with corresponding notions of biological inferiority, has

been found conclusively to be false (McConnochie, Hollinsworth & Pettman 1988; Miles 1999; Conference of Education Systems Chief Executive Officers 2000).

Behrendt describes Indigenous people as 'the most socially disadvantaged group in Australian society' and 'vulnerable to discriminatory practices' (2003, p 7). Hence the relative disadvantage of Aboriginal people in relation to the distribution of goods and services can be described as the result of racism,¹ a term that carries a sense of moral wrongness or injustice.

Nagel makes explicit the principle underlying this attribution of injustice:

it is clearly unjust when a socio-economic system results in some people living under significant material and social disadvantages through no fault of their own if this could be prevented. (1987, p 85)

Education is widely recognised as an agent of social change and this is reflected in the South Australian Curriculum Standards and Accountability Framework (DECS 2001, p 7). Australian educational authorities recognise that social disadvantage has relevance to schooling. Justice for Aboriginal people, as one form of social justice, is widely seen as a goal of schooling in Australia (DECS 2001; DETE 2003; MCEETYA 2005; Conference of Education Systems Chief Executive Officers 2000) and anti-racism education provides the means for redressing such disadvantage (Rizvi and Crowley 1993).

Education for social justice in relation to Aboriginal people has two distinct goals:²

1. The curricular justice goal, which has as its objective the provision of educational opportunity and outcomes.
2. The wider responsibility goal, which focuses on educating *all* students for social justice and anti-racism through programs of anti-racism education.

The first of the two goals derives from the recognition that education is an agent of social disadvantage; limited success in education is a crucial factor in determining the conditions of many Aboriginal peoples' lives. The second goal reflects the fact that 'the greater responsibility for the task [of achieving social justice] lies with the majority society not the minorities' (Lynch 1992, p i).

The crucial part teachers' beliefs play in the implementation of educational policy is well documented (Boyd & Arnold 2000). More particularly, Boyd and

¹ Three forms of racism have been identified: individual racism, ideological racism and institutional racism. These will be spelled out later in the paper.

² Although the two goals are not always referred to explicitly as the two goals of anti-racism they are differentiated as distinct aims or outcomes by different curriculum and educational policies (see DETE 2000; MCEETYA 1995; SACSA 2001; McRae et al 2005; Conference of Education Systems Chief Executive Officers 2000).

Arnold state that ‘programmes of anti-racism education may face significant problems of implementation when there are points of disjuncture between their defining aims and teachers’ interpretation of those aims’ (Boyd & Arnold 2000, p 24). I will argue that a necessary condition for effective anti-racism education is that *teachers* hold justice for Aboriginal people, and more generally social justice, as an aim of education.

Research from the United States into pre-service teachers’ beliefs about ‘what schools are for’ (Su 1992) indicates that pre-service teachers fail to see education as fulfilling a social role, instead seeing schooling as having an almost exclusively *individual* aim, namely that of ‘helping develop [students’] interests and abilities to their full potential’. I will argue that, although individual and social aims are consistent, the aim of developing students’ interests and abilities is distinct from, and does not entail, a social justice aim of education. Given the emphasis on anti-racism education in Australia, it is important to investigate the beliefs of Australian pre-service teachers in relation to the goals and aims of education. To repeat, unless teachers understand clearly that the goal of anti-racism education is social justice for Aboriginal people, they will be unlikely to deliver effective anti-racism education.

However, the notion of social justice is a contested one. There are conflicting principles describing how benefits and burdens and goods and services should be distributed. These principles of distributive justice have been the subject of debate for more than 2500 years (Knight & Collins 2002). Each of the three main principles of distributive justice (equal-share-based, merit-based and needs-based) will be explained in the following literature review.

The needs-based notion of social justice (Rawls 1971) is widely accepted as approaching best current theory. While the concept of ‘social justice’ is generally not well defined in Australian educational policy, in the South Australian context at least the concept is described in the Department for Education, Training and Employment (DETE) policy as one of equity (DETE 2003), and is clearly in line with the needs-based notion of social justice.

I will argue, then, that unless teachers have a clear notion of social justice, and more particularly a clear needs-based notion of social justice, as an aim of education, they will be unable to teach effectively for social justice and so will be unable to deliver anti-racism education effectively. I will argue further that if teachers operate with either the ‘equal-share-based’ or ‘merit-based’ notions of social justice they will potentially perpetuate further injustices in society, including the injustices suffered by Aboriginal people. The need to investigate Australian pre-service teachers’ beliefs about the aims of education and their notions of social justice in relation to contemporary Aboriginal issues is clear.

Racism

While it is not the intention of this paper to expand upon the body of work that seeks to theorise racism, for the purposes of the argument it is necessary to define ‘racism’ in relation to anti-racism education and social justice. As discussed previously the

concept of 'race' is not a biological reference but rather a social construct (McConnochie, Hollinsworth & Pettman 1988; Miles 1999; Conference of Education Systems Chief Executive Officers 2000).

Three forms of racism have been identified. Individual racism involves personal prejudice, showing favour to one's group over another group. Ideological racism is a set of beliefs about biological as well as cultural superiority of one's group, and includes the belief that one's group has a superior way of life that is threatened by 'outsiders' (Pettman 1986; Miles 1999; McConnochie et al 1988; Partington & McCudden 1992; Troyna & Carrington 1990). The third, institutional racism, is the advantaging or disadvantaging of perceived racial and ethnic groups in the distribution of social goods and services. It operates through key institutions such as schools, through which social goods and services are provided. Institutional racism is the broadest form of racism as it includes the other forms, namely racial prejudice and racial discrimination at the individual and social/institutional level (Pettman 1986; Rizvi 1990; Miles 1999; McConnochie et al 1988; Troyna & Carrington 1990).

Wellman (1977, cited in Troyna & Carrington 1990, p 57) includes in his definition of racism the practice of defending a system that advantages or privileges a group on the basis of 'race' (Pettman 1986; Rizvi 1990; Troyna & Carrington 1990). Clearly, defence of such a system can serve to perpetuate institutional racism.

For the purposes of this paper the term 'racism' will be construed broadly to incorporate both the belief that a group is 'racially' superior to another on the basis of 'race' and related ethnicity, and the individual and social practices to which the belief gives rise, including these practices: individual prejudice and racism, differential treatment based on fear and suspicion, the disadvantaging of groups based on a perceived notion of race or related ethnicity in the distribution of social goods and services, and the defence and maintenance of the social institutions through which distribution takes place (Pettman 1986; McConnochie et al 1988; Partington & McCudden 1992; Rizvi 1990; Troyna & Carrington 1990; Wellman 1977, cited in Troyna & Carrington 1990).

Anti-racism education

For the purpose of this paper, anti-racism education is defined as education with the aim of eradicating all forms of racism (Boyd & Arnold 2000; Ng, Scane & Staton 1995; Rezai-Rashti 1995; Rizvi & Crowley 1993; Short & Carrington 1992). Anti-racism is based on the idea that racism is morally wrong. This claim has been well supported through two and a half thousand years of philosophical discussion in the West, as well as through more recent scientific evidence, is enshrined in contemporary Australian law and forms an assumption of this paper (Pettman 1986).

Boyd and Arnold emphasise the importance of educators examining institutional racism as part of anti-racism education:

[Effective anti-racism educators] do not limit their focus to the attitudes that individuals may have toward other individuals because of perceived commonalities or

difference between one another, such as those manifested in stereotypes and prejudices. Instead they insist that educators must look beneath or beyond such attributes to examine critically the *systematic, structural features* that organise life prospects of individuals differentially, oppressing some while privileging others. (2000, p 29, emphasis added)

Short and Carrington describe clearly the two discrete aims of anti-racism education. The authors claim that anti-racism education involves ‘schools playing an active role in combating racism at an individual as well as an institutional level’ (1992, p 254).

In many countries governments and education authorities have required schools to participate in various forms of either multicultural or anti-racism education. Rezai-Rashti (1995) and Boyd and Arnold (2000) describe government initiatives and educational policies in Canada; Troyna and Carrington (1990) and Short and Carrington (1992) describe the policies in the United Kingdom; and Rizvi and Crowley (1993) report on the policies in Australia. Throughout these initiatives the impetus for anti-racism education is social justice and education’s role in delivering it.

As indicated earlier, anti-racism education has two distinct goals, namely the curricular justice goal and the wider responsibility goal. These two goals are identified in DETE policy as goals of the Aboriginal studies curriculum (DETE 2000).

The need for curricular justice for Aboriginal students

Australian education authorities, in their anti-racism policies, acknowledge that the social disadvantage of Aboriginal people is relevant for education. The South Australian Department of Education and Children’s Services in its anti-racism policy

acknowledges the erosion of cultural and linguistic diversity in the South Australian community, and recognises the unique position of Aboriginal people as the original owners of the land, against whom racist practices have included genocide and cultural and linguistic destruction. (DECS 1996, p 2)

In educational terms, Aboriginal students have significantly lower outcomes than non-Aboriginal students. This is especially noticeable in literacy and numeracy outcomes (Australian Council for Education Research 1994, cited in Commonwealth of Australia 1995, p 90). The high school retention rate is lower than that of non-Aboriginal students (National Schools Statistics Collections 1988 to 1992, cited in Commonwealth of Australia 1995, p 69). This can be seen in the proportionately low number of Aboriginal students who complete their high school studies, a figure particularly relevant in South Australia as only 46 Indigenous students completed their SACE (South Australian Certificate of Education) in 1999 (Mercurio & Clayton 2001). The percentage of Indigenous people holding university degrees (13.6) is less than half of non-Indigenous Australians (34.4) (Behrendt 2003). This under-representation reveals an inequity of resources allocated to Indigenous students.

In addition, the number of Aboriginal people working in education is proportionately lower than non-Aboriginal people (ABS Census of Population and Housing 1991, cited in Commonwealth of Australia 1995, 42; see also Johnston 1991a and McRae et al 2000).

Commissioner Johnston stated in the *Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody national report* that, 'although there has been significant improvement in the last two decades, Aboriginal people are still identifiable as the most poorly educated group in Australia' (1991a, p 348). Johnston went on to point out that

poor educational participation and achievement in turn limit the capacity of Aboriginal people to make real choices about their participation in the economy more generally. A diminished educational opportunity effectively denies Aboriginal people access to the full range of resources which could help them shape their lives and communities according to their own vision and aspirations. (1991a, p 336)

Limited education is a crucial factor determining the conditions of many Aboriginal people's lives. Redressing this social injustice requires delivering better educational opportunity and outcomes and curricular justice for Aboriginal students, and this is recognised by Australian educational authorities (DETE 2003; McRae et al 2005; MCEETYA 2005; Conference of Education Systems Chief Executive Officers 2000). Education is an agent of social disadvantage. More broadly education maintains and even perpetuates social injustice by means of institutional racism in relation to Aboriginal people.

Combating racism: the wider responsibility goal (anti-racism education for all students)

Although anti-racism education aims to address the dire need for educational justice for minority students, this is not its only aim. Anti-racism education has a broader aim of redressing 'racially'-based social disadvantage or social injustice. It aims to expose every student to an education that denounces injustice in all areas of society, analyses current structures in society, and challenges and empowers students as agents in the reconstruction of a just society (Boyd & Arnold 2001; Lingard 1995; Lynch 1987).

Lynch (1987) notes that a survey of the literature shows that it is minority groups that have been the focus of anti-racism education and prejudice reduction in schools. Lynch remarks that these groups, because they are minorities, are unlikely to effect great change in the broader society, especially taking into account the socially reproductive nature of education which can serve to perpetuate the injustices on which racism, and in particular institutional racism, thrive. Lynch concludes that it is the responsibility of all members of society to eradicate discrimination and prejudice. More strongly, 'the greater responsibility for the task lies with the majority society not the minorities' (1987, p i). Sawyer sums up the point: 'schools cannot compensate for society, but they can produce individuals who "collectively" can work towards constructing a more just society' (1989, cited in Lingard 1990, p 161).

Teacher's role in implementing anti-racism education

Institutions such as schools can be racist institutions even if all the people working in them are not individually or ideologically racist (Hollinsworth 1998). Racism can be perpetuated through policy at a departmental level, whole-school level and at the classroom level, indeed in the pre-service education of teachers. Yet teachers are key agents who both direct educational policy in the classroom and implement departmental policy in schools. Even where educational policy and curriculum are explicitly anti-racist, the provision of anti-racism education depends on teachers implementing this policy and curriculum effectively.

Rizvi and Crowley (1993) state that teachers are key agents in reforming education and believe that, unless teachers have an adequate understanding of the role of education in sustaining or amending racism, the goals of anti-racism education, multiculturalism and reconciliation can not be realised. Teachers need to understand clearly that the goal of anti-racism education is social justice for Aboriginal people. Boyd and Arnold reiterate this position: 'programmes of anti-racism education may face significant problems of implementation when there are points of disjuncture between their defining aims and *teachers' interpretation* of those aims' (2000, p 24).

Lingard (1990, p 160), too, stresses in his work that educational policies are never successfully implemented from the top down and that teachers play an important role in their implementation. He argues that a crucial component of educational policy is what teachers actually do in their classrooms, for at this moment policy becomes practice. Both Rizvi and Crowley (1993) and Boyd and Arnold (2000) have indicated surprise at how little attention has been given to the investigation of teachers' beliefs in relation to anti-racism education, considering the obvious importance attached to teachers and their role in implementing anti-racism education.

Teacher education programs

While pre-service teachers bring their own values and attitudes to their university studies, in their critique of teacher education programs Rizvi and Crowley (1993) argue that to a large extent teachers develop their commonsense ideas about cultural difference and racism though during pre-service teacher education. This highlights the need to re-examine teacher education programs.

Johnston (1991b) in his recommendations stated that pre-service teachers and teachers should be imbued with the role of educating for social justice in relation to Aboriginal issues. Recommendations 295 a and c state:

All teacher training courses include courses which enable student teachers to understand that Australia has an Aboriginal history and Aboriginal viewpoints on social, cultural and historical matters, and to teach the curriculum which reflects those matters ... Aboriginal people should be involved in the training courses both at student-teacher and in-service level. (Johnston 1991b, p 322)

It seems plausible to suggest that it is in their pre-service education that teachers will develop their aims of education and notions of social justice. The University of South Australia's recent review of education makes it clear that programs that prepare educators must address these issues 'if education is to fulfill the goal of shaping a fairer society where all people are able to lead full and productive lives' (University of South Australia 2001, p 47).

Aims of education

Education, it has long been argued, should have both individual and social ends.

In the West, the argument goes back at least to Plato's Republic. This tradition identifies the social end with the development of a just democracy, so that the fundamental goal of education is seen as one of equipping individuals to function optimally as members of a just democracy. (Knight & Collins 2002, p 187)

Su (1992) has investigated pre-service teachers' beliefs about 'what schools are for', using Sironitnik's (1989, cited in Su 1992) account of the views people hold on the aims of education. These fall into four main categories: the conservative view, the progressive or child-centred view, the liberal view and the radical view. These four categories are explained by Sironitnik as follows:

1. The *conservative view*: schools should reproduce educated young people who are ready to take their place in society to help *maintain order and stability* in the social, political, and economic fabric of society.
2. The *progressive or child-centred view*: schools should concentrate on children and youth as *individuals*, helping them develop their *interests and abilities* to their full potential.
3. The *liberal view*: schools should educate young people to be aware of human conditions, social purposes, and societal concerns, and to think creatively and constructively and be willing and able to participate in *improving society* for the better.
4. The *radical view*: schools should educate young people to challenge unjust societal conditions and practices and join with others in reconstructing and *transforming* the existing social order into a more *just and equitable* society. (Sironitnik 1989: Appendix C, p 20, cited in Su 1992, p 134)

While the second of Sironitnik's positions describes the aim of education as individual development, the remaining three positions specify a social aim. For the purposes of this paper, social aims are defined as aims that focus on the good of society. Individual aims are defined as aims that focus on the good of the individual. It is important to note that individual and social aims are not exclusive. More particularly, the adoption of a social aim does not preclude the adoption of an individual aim, and the converse holds.

Su reported that the majority of pre-service teachers in the United States indicated they held an exclusively individual aim of education. That is, they believed

‘School should concentrate on children and youth as individuals, helping develop their interest and abilities to their full potential’ (Su 1992, p 140).

It is clear that the good of society can not be reduced to the sum of the good of its individual members. This is because a society amounts to more than the sum of the individuals that make it up; a society consists of its members together with the multiple relations that obtain between them. One well-known argument to show that the good of the society is not given by the sum of the good of each individual member appeals to the prisoner’s dilemma. The prisoner’s dilemma

Is a game in which a ‘cooperative’ outcome obtainable only when every player violates rational self-interest is unanimously preferred [ie results in greater total benefit] to the ‘selfish’ outcome obtained when every player adheres to rational self-interest. (Kuhn 2003, pp 3–4)

The basic structure of the prisoner’s dilemma is reflected in situations faced by larger groups, even entire societies. The structure of the ‘societal’ dilemma is represented in the so called ‘tragedy of the commons’. Again Kuhn describes this ‘tragedy’ clearly:

Each member of a group of neighbouring farmers prefers to allow his cows to graze on the commons, rather than keeping them on his or her own inadequate land, but the commons will be rendered unsuitable for grazing if it is used by more than some threshold number. (2003, p 2)

Again, the greatest overall good is obtainable only when individuals sacrifice self-interest. The good of society can not be reduced to the sum of the good of its individual members. The aim of developing all individuals to their full potential does not bring with it the goal of teaching for the good of society.

Goodlad (1979 and 1984, cited in Su 1992) worked with a different set of categories, and grouped the various goals that might be attributed to education under the following headings: academic goals; vocational goals; social, civic and cultural goals; personal goals (Goodlad 1984, pp 51–6, cited in Su 1992, pp 134–5). Su’s (1992) study subsequently filled out the academic category with the addition of the critical and independent thinking goal. Goodlad points out that the specific aims are all worthy goals and form a consistent set, and this seems plausible (Goodlad 1984, cited in Su 1992, pp 134–5). Of these specific aims, A, B and D are individual while goal C is social; that is, A, B and D work towards the good of the individual and goal C works towards the good of society. However, I have argued that, unless teachers take education to have social as well as individual goals, they will be unable to teach effectively for social justice; more particularly they will be unable to deliver effective anti-racism education.

Both Boyd and Arnold (2000) and Partington and McCudden (1992) point out the need to examine teachers’ philosophies and aims of education in relation to the aims of education prescribed in policy or by education authorities. To repeat, ‘Programmes of anti-racism education may face significance problems of implementation when there are points of disjuncture between their defining aims and teachers’ interpretation of those aims’ (Boyd & Arnold 2000, p 24).

More particularly, Boyd and Arnold argue that

Teachers who focus their thinking about education almost exclusively on what is of benefit to an individual student will find it impossible, we submit, to understand and promote the intended moral and political aims of anti-racism education programmes. (2000, p 31)

Social justice as an aim of education

Social justice is a central aim of education in Australia. In South Australia this aim is clearly stated in the South Australian Curriculum Standards and Accountability Framework (SACSA). The framework has a 'focus on equity':

The SACSA Framework reaffirms a long-held belief that education is central to the making of a fair society ... equity is made a central curriculum consideration ... In this way learners come to recognise the nature of causes of inequality, and understand that these are socially constructed and can therefore be changed through people's actions. (DECS 2001, p 7)

It is clear that the SACSA Framework uses the term 'equity' in the sense of 'fairness' or 'social justice'.

As indicated, Sirotnik (1989, cited in Su 1992) identified three social aims of education (ie aims that focus on the good of society). The first of these is the 'reproduction' or 'conservative' aim. Clearly, reproduction, while a social, rather than an individual aim, will only lead to social justice if the society being reproduced is a socially just society. It would be hard to argue that current Australian society is as just as it could be, and for a prime example of the inequities in Australia one only has to look at the position of Aboriginal people. Effective anti-racism education, then, requires teachers to adopt one of the remaining two social goals identified by Sirotnik (in Su 1992), namely:

Schools should educate young people to be aware of human conditions, social purposes, and societal concerns, and to think creatively and constructively and be willing and able to participate in *improving society* for the better

or

Schools should educate young people to challenge unjust societal conditions and practices and join with others in reconstructing and *transforming* the existing social order into a more *just* and *equitable* society. (Sironnik 1989: Appendix C, p 20, cited in Su 1992, p 134)

These social aims correspond closely with Goodlad's social goals (1984, cited in Su 1992) and will be called social justice or equity goals.

Notions of social justice

Social or distributive justice is centred on the way primary goods are distributed in society. The principles of social justice define the appropriate distribution of the benefits and burdens in society (Rawls 1971; Beauchamp 2001). Yet the notion of social justice is a contested one: a number of distinct and conflicting principles of distributive justice have been proposed. These principles, which can also be referred

to as principles of fairness or social justice (Beauchamp 2001), offer conflicting accounts of the basis on which benefits and burdens and goods and services should be distributed.

Nagel (1987) states clearly a condition of adequacy that distributive principles must satisfy: any such principle must be counted as unjust 'when people suffer disadvantages through no fault of their own, merely as a result of the ordinary operation of the socio-economic system into which they were born ... if this can be prevented' (Nagel 1987, p 81).

Principles of distributive justice fall into three main categories. Within each of these categories it is possible to identify several distinct principles that differ in detail. For the purposes of this paper, however, only three major types of principles will be discussed. These major material principles of distributive justice have been identified as the following: to each person an equal share (equal-share-based), to each person according to merit (merit-based) and to each person according to individual needs (needs-based). Common to all three theories is a minimal principle accredited to Aristotle: equals must be treated equally and unequals unequally (Beauchamp 2001). The three principles identify different individual characteristics as the qualities that warrant differential treatment. In other words, given that no two individuals are equal in all respects, the principles offer different accounts of the respects of similarity and difference that are relevant to the distribution of goods and services, benefits and burdens. It is clear that in judging both the absolute and relative disadvantage of Aboriginal people as unjust, it has been a premise of this paper that differences in perceived 'race' or related ethnicity do not warrant a differential distribution of social goods. A brief outline of the three major distributive principles follows.

Equal-share based

This notion is based on the view that people are to be judged equal in all respects, and that in accordance with this idea each person should be given the same amount and the same types of goods and services (Beauchamp 2001). In terms of educational practice the equal-share-based principle directs teachers to divide available time, energy and resources equally amongst their students. The equal-share-based principle makes it unjust to allocate more resources to those students whose basic literacy and numeracy skills are below the level required for full participation in society.

The crucial difficulty with this notion is that people begin with different social benefits and burdens; at least some of them undeserved. They are not equal in all respects, so that distributing equal bundles of social goods will result in undeserved inequalities; inequalities that, it is plausible to suggest, could be prevented through redistribution, by means such as redistributive taxation and a social welfare system (Nagel 1987).

Merit (or desert)

Merit as a notion of social justice is centred on ‘what people deserve’. It is based on the belief that the differences between individuals that are relevant to the differential distribution of social goods are the contributions individuals make to the production of social benefits (Beauchamp 2001). On this view, those who produce more social wealth deserve higher incomes. This principle has clear implications for educational practice: higher achieving students who are more likely to contribute to the social product should be rewarded with a larger allocation of educational resources. Like the equal-share-based theory, the desert principle has been subjected to substantial objections, the most important of which is that it makes economic and social benefits dependent on factors over which people have little control (including educational opportunities). Again, the result of distributing social goods on the basis of merit would be a society in which some people are significantly disadvantaged through no fault of their own. And again, it seems clear that such an outcome could be prevented through redistribution.

Individual need (needs-based)

The most plausible needs-based principle is a form of Rawlsian theory and suggests that social goods should be distributed in such a way as to ensure that the basic needs of all individuals in the society are met. This principle presupposes that all human beings are equal in this respect, namely that there are some human needs such that where they are not met an individual’s life falls short of being a good human life. As Nussbaum (1999) puts it, these basic human needs or ‘central human functional capabilities’ indicate what ‘all citizens should have, whatever else they have and pursue’ (Nussbaum 1999, pp 41–2). This needs-based principle demands redistribution of social goods where this is necessary to meet basic human needs. In educational terms this would mean allocating greater levels of educational goods and services to those students whose educational outcomes are not sufficient to allow them to participate fully in society. This Rawlsian theory is widely accepted by philosophers today as approaching best current theory, despite some acknowledged weaknesses (Beauchamp 2001).

Something like the Rawlsian principle is implicit in DETE’s *Equity statement* (2003), which states that:

The department is committed to assisting sites and services to achieve equitable outcomes, by allocating resources differentially and by providing targeted groups resources and support to learners with the greatest need. (DETE 2003, p 3)

The degree of clarity in the definition of social justice is unusual. On the whole, as has been argued, educational policy documents fail to explicitly define the terms ‘equity’ and ‘social justice’.

In educational policy documents the terms ‘equitable outcomes’ and ‘equity’ are often used interchangeably. Lingard for example defines ‘equity’ as ‘access to, performance in and more equitable outcomes from schooling’ (1995, p 5). The SACSA Framework’s statement on equity (DECS 2001) is representative of much educational policy in that the notions of ‘social justice’, ‘equity’ and ‘fairness’ are

used interchangeably and without definition. However, on the basis of the educational usage of the term 'equity' described above, it seems reasonable to interpret DETE's (2003) use of the term as referring to a needs-based notion of social justice. But this narrow use of the term 'equity' is not universal: philosophers for example often use the term synonymous with the 'class of principles of social justice'. In the interest of clarity, we will follow the philosophers' usage and use the term 'needs-based notion of social justice' to pick out the particular principle of distributive justice.

It seems clear that a needs-based notion of social justice meets Nagel's (1987) necessary condition of adequacy: the principle demands redistribution of social goods to prevent 'people living under significant material and social disadvantages through no fault of their own' (Nagel 1987, p 85).

As the previous discussion makes clear, the workings of the Australian socioeconomic system have placed Aboriginal people in this position: Aboriginal people live under 'significant material and social disadvantages' and this is 'through no fault of their own', as is captured in the term 'racism'. And it seems clear that the resources of our society are such that it is possible to redistribute social goods to meet the basic human needs of *all* its members (Nagel 1987). The needs-based principle, alone among the three material principles of social justice, has the potential to eradicate racism.

Given the important role teachers' beliefs play in the implementation of educational policy, it can be argued that effective anti-racism education depends on teachers adopting a needs-based principle of distributive justice. If, as has been argued, teachers develop their ideas about racism to a large extent during pre-service teacher education, it is important to determine the notions of social justice pre-service teachers operate with in relation to contemporary Aboriginal issues.

Methodology

The target population for this quantitative study consisted of pre-service teachers enrolled in the Bachelor of Education (Junior Primary and Primary) program, University of South Australia, Magill Campus. The convenience sample consisted of 281 participants (N=281). For comparative purposes two main cohorts within the research population were targeted: first-year pre-service teachers who had limited exposure to the education program, and third and fourth year pre-service teachers who were in the latter half of their degrees and would typically be entering teaching positions within the next two years. A sample of 160 first-year students, 100 third-year and 100 fourth-year students was selected. Numerical data were gathered using a distributed directed questionnaire.

The instrument was designed specifically for this study and includes adapted segments from other relevant studies (Goodlad 1984 and Sirotnik 1989, cited in Su 1992) and is available on request from the author. The questionnaire was designed to gather demographic data, including information on whether or not participants had undertaken (or were then undertaking) any course with an explicit social justice

focus. In addition, information was sought on participants' beliefs about the aims of primary education and junior primary education, and on the notion of social justice with which participants were operating.

Findings

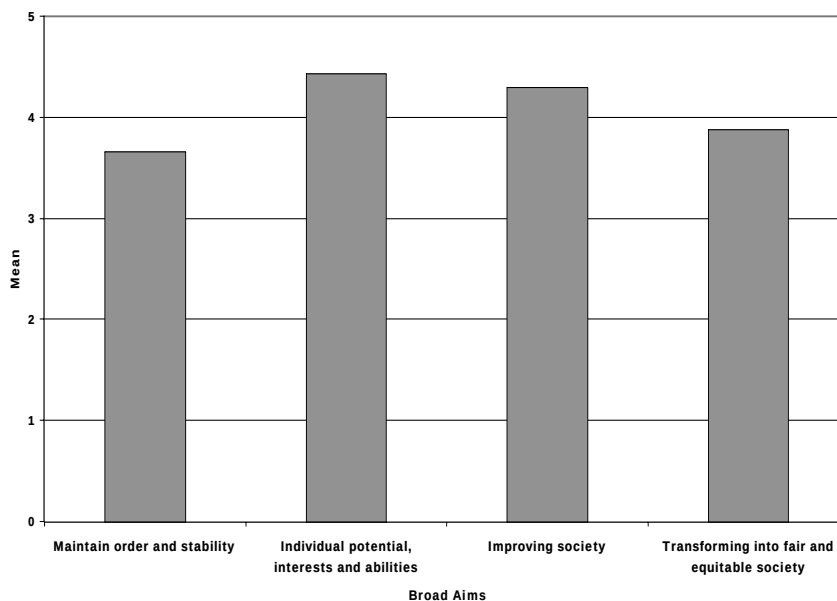
Specific aims of junior primary and primary education

Pre-service teachers (N=281) were asked to use a Likert-type scale (strongly disagree to strongly agree) to indicate the extent to which they agreed to a set of aims for junior primary and primary education, taken from Goodlad's goals of schooling (cited in Su 1992). The means indicated that the pre-service teachers sampled were in agreement with all of the aims surveyed.

Broad aims of education: beliefs about 'what schools are for'

Of the 280 respondents, the descriptive data indicated that the majority of pre-service teachers agreed that all of Sirotnik's four broad aims described in the research instrument are valid aims of education. The following question was posed: 'Pre-service teachers have beliefs about what the broad aims of education are. Please indicate to what extent you agree with the following statements about what schools are for'.

Figure 1: Broad aims of education using the agreement scale

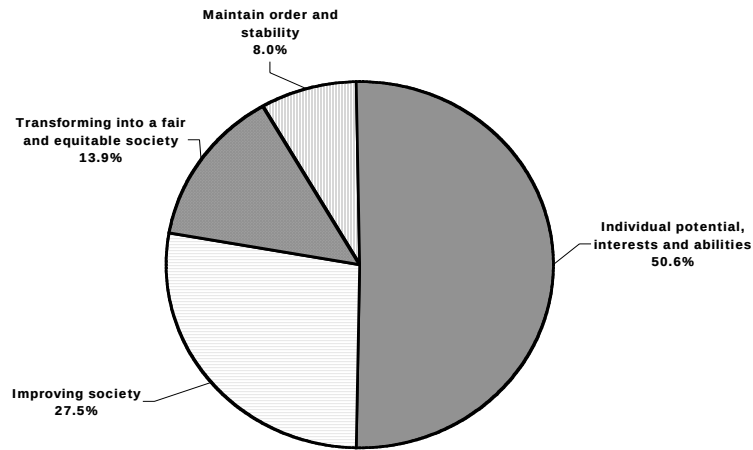


(Note: N=281. Means expressed on 5-point likert-type scale, 1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree)

Broad aim of education: forced choice

In addition to their responses to the agreement scale participants were asked to indicate which of the statements about the broad aims of education most closely represented their view on what schools are for. Respondents were asked to choose one of the four statements about the broad aims of education in a forced choice scenario. Twenty one (21) participants (8%) indicated that the broad aim ‘maintain order and stability’ most represented their view on what schools are for. One-hundred-and-thirty-three (133) of the respondents, approximately half (50.4%), believed the broad aim ‘individual interests and abilities’ to be the aim that most represented their view on what schools are for. Seventy-three (73) participants (28%) indicated that the aim that most represented their view on what schools are for is the broad aim ‘improve society’, while 37 respondents (14%) chose ‘transforming into a fair and equitable society’.

Figure 2: Forced choice broad aim of education



(Note: n=264)

The two aims ‘improving society’ and ‘transforming into a fair and equitable society’ were found to correlate significantly (r (n=280) = 0.46, p < .001). After combining the two social justice aims, a total of 110 pre-service teachers, 42 per cent of respondents, indicated having a social aim of ‘improving society’ or ‘transforming into a fair and equitable society’.

Notions of social justice

Two strong factors were identified and were labeled ‘needs-based notion of social justice’ and ‘equal share-based notion of social justice’. A reliability analysis (using SPSS) was also applied to the needs variable showing the reliability to be 0.75

(alpha). The results show the scores to have acceptable normal curve properties (Skewness = -.2, Kurtosis = .8).

The second factor to be identified in the factor analysis was labeled the equal-share-based notion of social justice. A reliability analysis was also applied to the equal-share variable showing the reliability to be 0.73 (alpha). The results show the scores to have acceptable normal curve properties (Skewness = -0.2, Kurtosis = 0.4).

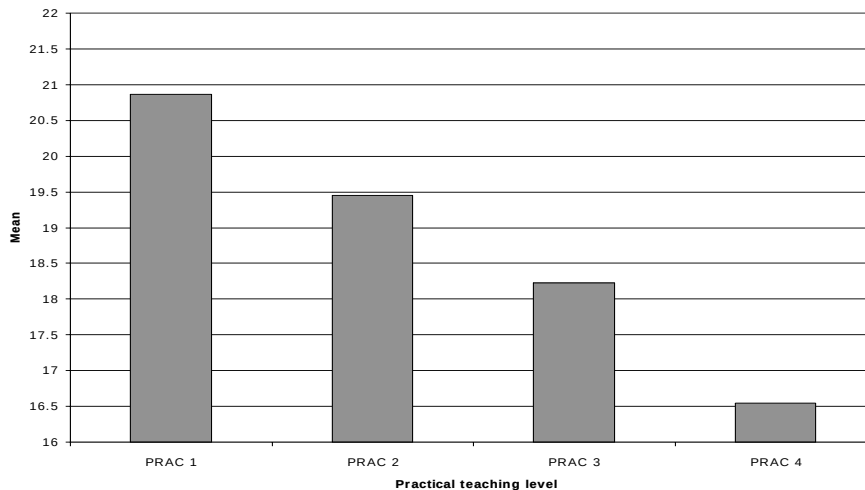
Notions of social justice variables

The needs-based notion of social justice and the equal-share-based notion of social justice were then correlated, resulting in a Pearson coefficient of -0.24 ($p < .001$). The data shows the needs variable's negative correlation with the equal-share variable. The correlation shows the significant relationship between the two variables. Therefore it is predictable that pre-service teachers who score highly on the equal-share score will have a tendency to have a low needs score.

Notions of social justice and practical teaching level

A oneway ANOVA on the equal share variable using practical teaching level as the independent variable revealed a significant effect ($F(3, 272) = 18.4, p < .001$). (Pre-service teachers participate in a practical every year and thus the practical teaching level indicates the progression through the teaching program in years.) The equal share mean score decreased with the increase of practical teaching level.

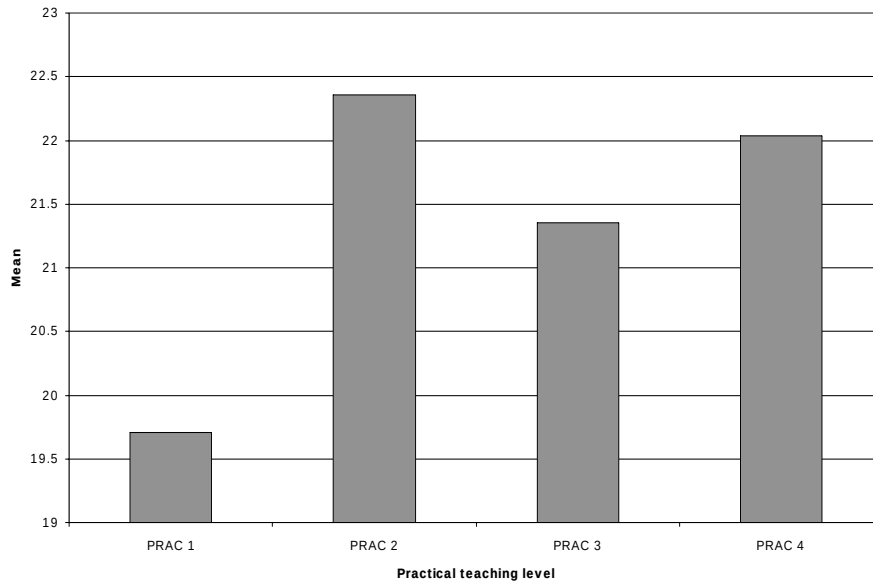
Figure 3: Equal-share-based notion of social justice and practical teaching level mean scores



(Note: $n = 276$)

A oneway ANOVA was also applied to the needs variable using practical teaching level as the independent variable, revealing a significant effect ($F(3, 268) = 5.4, p = .001$). The needs mean score increased with the increase of practical teaching level.

Figure 4: Needs-based notion of social justice and practical teaching level mean scores



(Note: $n = 272$)

Notions of social justice and courses undertaken

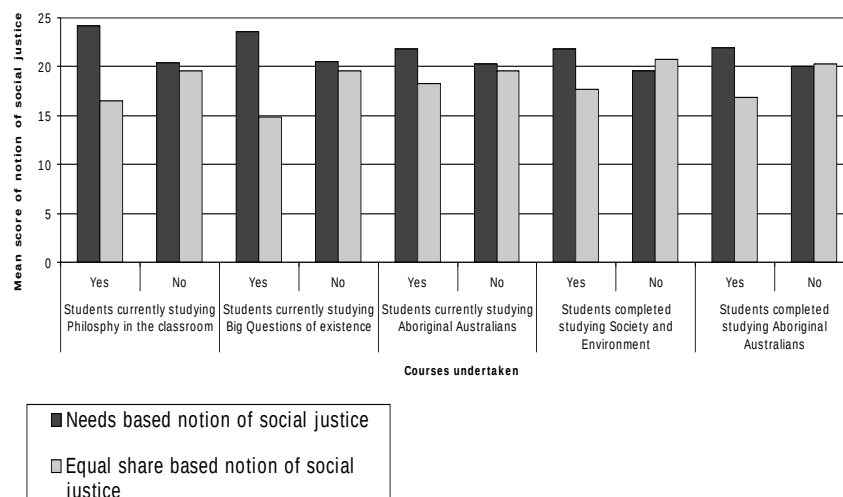
Participants were grouped as to whether or not they had undertaken previous courses within which justice was a specific focus. These variables were treated as independent variables using one-way ANOVAs with the needs and equal share factors as dependent variables.

The results showed that pre-service teachers who were at the time studying the elective courses Philosophy in the Classroom, Big Questions of Existence and the core course Aboriginal Australians had a higher needs score ($F(1, 272) = 11.0, p = .001$), ($F(1, 272) = 5.7, p = .017$) and ($F(1, 272) = 5.3, p = .023$) respectively. These pre-service teachers had a lower equal share score ($F(1, 277) = 7.3, p = .007$), ($F(1, 277) = p = .000$) and ($F(1, 277) = 4.6, p = .033$) than those who were not studying this course.

The one-way ANOVAs indicated that students who had completed the core component courses Society and Environment and Aboriginal Australians had a higher needs score ($F(1, 272) = 17.8, p = .000$) and ($F(1, 272) = 10.1, p = .002$)

and a lower equal share score ($F(1, 277) = 39.4, p = .000$) and ($F(1, 277) = 42.9, p = .000$) than those participants who had not studied these courses.

Figure 5: Comparison of needs-based and equal-share-based notions of social justice in relation to courses



Isolation of aims and notions of social justice

The data identified 110 pre-service teachers (39%) who had a social justice aim of education and a total of 105 pre-service teachers (35%) having a high score on the needs-based notion of social justice variable. A cross-tabulation of the needs variable and the 'forced choice aim of education' resulted in a total number of 48 pre-service teachers having a prominent social justice aim of education and a high rating in the needs-based notion of social justice.

Chi square tests on isolated cases and other variables

A chi square test revealed age to be a significant factor. People 20 years of age and under were more likely to be located in the low category. People 21 years of age and over were more likely to be in the high category ($2(1) 10.4, p = 0.001$).

Chi square tests also identified practical teaching level as a significant factor. PRAC 1 students were more likely to be in the low groupings than PRAC 2, PRAC 3 and PRAC 4 students ($2(1) = 8.8, p = .003$).

Chi square test PRAC levels excluding students 20 years of age and under

The chi square test performed on practical teaching level and age indicated that a marginal level of significance was obtained ($2(1) = 1.8$, $p = .09$, one tailed). This result supported the notion that the university experience (education program) shifted the anti-racism value into the 'high' bracket, even in the more 'mature age' students.

Discussion

The aim of this study was to investigate pre-service teachers' notions of social justice and aims of education in order to determine whether pre-service teachers meet one of the conditions necessary for the implementation of effective anti-racism programs in schools. Despite the obvious limitations of the research (one university, one cohort of students, inevitable gender imbalance in teacher education) the findings are suggestive.

Aims of education

It is clear that the levels of agreement of the first ten aims, when ranked in order, fall within ten percent of each other (94% to 84%). The last two aims, citizenship participation (61% agreement) and career education/vocational education (54%) attracted far lower levels of agreement, with a 23 per cent difference in the levels of agreement between the aim ranked tenth and citizenship participation, ranked eleventh. The low ranking of the vocational aim is not surprising given that there is very little vocational emphasis within junior primary and primary education, this being considered more the province of secondary schooling. Leaving aside the vocational aim, the aims Goodlad classifies as social, civic and cultural fill the bottom four positions when ranked.

Overall the findings of this study reflect Su's 1992 results. Although the published results of Su's study do not reveal the level of agreement or the mean scores for individual goals, the results showed that 'mastery of basic skills' was considered to be one of the most important aims of schooling by student teachers (1992, pp 143–5). Su's study (1992) also found that students rated the realisation of individual potential aim highly, as they did in this study. In comparison with these specific aims, Su's study showed the student teachers giving low ratings to the social, civic and cultural aims, namely citizenship participation, enculturation and the vocational goal of career preparation. These results are echoed to a large extent in the current study.

The findings in relation to the *specific* aims of junior primary and primary education are consistent with the views pre-service teachers expressed about the *broad* aims of education. The investigation into the broad aims of education held by pre-service teachers involved respondents indicating the extent of their agreement with four stated broad aims of education (Sirotnik 1989, cited in Su 1992). The four

aims of education all rendered mean scores above 3, indicating general agreement with all items.

However it is clear that the four aims do not form a consistent set. While the 'individual potential, interest and abilities' aim is consistent with each of the three social aims, two of these social aims, the social justice aims ('improving society' and 'transforming into a fair and equitable society') conflict with the third social aim, 'maintaining order and stability'. Clearly the claim that schools should produce young people prepared to help maintain social, political and economic stability is in opposition to the claim that schools should educate young people to work towards changing society for the better, towards challenging (reconstructing and transforming) the existing social order.

The percentage of agreement responses show the broad aims to hold different values across the sample population. Although 90 per cent of pre-service teachers expressed agreement with the 'improving society' aim and 94 per cent expressed agreement with the 'individual potential interests and abilities' aim, when students were asked to choose a single aim of education from the four broad aims, 133 (50.4%) students selected the 'individual potential interests and abilities' aim and only 73 (28%) chose the social aim of 'improving society'. Even when the two versions of the social justice aims are combined, only 110 (42%) pre-service teachers indicated that they saw social justice as the most important broad aim of education.

These findings are similar to those of Su's 1992 study investigating the broad aims of education held by pre-service teachers. Su found that, although students agreed with all four statements of what schools are for, the forced choice results showed the 'individual potential, interests and abilities' aim to be the most valued (56% compared to 50.4% in the current study). This was followed by the 'improve society' aim (27% in both Su's and the present study). In Su's study, however, the forced choice question delivered 13 per cent agreement with the 'maintain order and stability' aim and only 4 per cent agreement with the 'transform society' aim, whilst the reverse was true in this study where the percentages are 8 per cent and 14 per cent respectively. Perhaps this is not surprising given that the whole structure of the education system in Australia is based around individual results.

Aims of education in relation to anti-racism education

These results give cause for concern, given the pressing needs of Aboriginal people and the potential of the social justice role of anti-racism education. By judging the social goals of education (both specific and broad goals) to be of considerably less importance than individual goals (ie what schools are for), the pre-service teachers in the current study indicate a reduced potential to implement anti-racism education in schools. The earlier argument in the literature review makes it clear that unless teachers take education to have a social justice goal they will be unable to teach effectively for social justice; more particularly they will be unable to deliver effective anti-racism education.

The ‘individual potential, interests and abilities’ aim of education is clearly the prevailing aim of education held by pre-service teachers in this sample (50.6%). Pre-service teachers who hold this aim of education as their preferred aim will be less likely to effectively teach for social justice and anti-racism, because goals that serve the individual are not necessarily goals that serve society. As illustrated by the prisoner’s dilemma, the good of the society can not be reduced to the sum of the good of its individual members. In short, the aim of developing individuals to their full potential does not bring with it the goals of social justice.

Only a small percentage (8%) of pre-service teachers sampled hold the ‘maintain order and stability’ aim of education as their preferred aim. These pre-service teachers, like those who preferred the ‘individual’ aim, are unlikely to implement anti-racism education effectively. Clearly the ‘maintain order and stability’ aim would only count as a social justice aim in a society that was as just as it could be. The position of Aboriginal people in contemporary Australian society makes it clear that this is not such a society.

Notions of social justice

One hundred and five (105) or 42 per cent of pre-service teachers were found to exhibit a high level of the needs-based notion of social justice. This means that 42 per cent of the sampled pre-service teachers are operating from the premise that social goods should be distributed on the basis of need rather than on the basis of equal share, ensuring redistribution of social goods where this is necessary to meet the basic needs of all humans. This group of pre-service teachers is indicating that greater levels of educational goods and services should be allocated to those students whose educational outcomes are not sufficient to allow them to participate fully in society. The adoption of this needs-based notion of social justice is a necessary condition for the implementation of the curricular justice goal of anti-racism education. Provision of educational opportunity and outcomes, the meeting of immediate needs of Aboriginal students through an inclusive and culturally relevant curriculum, is dependent upon the adoption of this needs-based notion of social justice.

It is also clear that the needs-based notion of social justice underpins the wider responsibility goal of anti-racism education. This notion advocates the distribution of goods in such a way as to ensure that the basic needs of all individuals in the society are met. The needs principle presupposes that all humans are equal in this respect, namely that there are some human needs such that where they are not met, an individual’s life falls short of being a good human life (Nussbaum 1999; Rawls 1971). However the results indicate that more than half the sample (58%) have moderate to low levels of the needs-based notion of social justice, and the significant negative correlation between needs and equal-share notions suggests that these students are operating with high to moderate levels of the equal-share-based notion of social justice.

An equal-share-based notion of social justice fails to meet a necessary condition of adequacy for theories of social justice, namely that the theory demands

that action be taken to prevent a situation in which ‘people [live] under significant material and social disadvantages through no fault of their own’ (Nagel 1987, p 85). In general this is the situation Aboriginal people as a group find themselves in: a situation that can be characterised as one of racism.

A teacher adopting an equal-share notion of social justice could not justify the differential distribution of educational time and resources necessary to achieve the first goal of anti-racism education, the curricular justice goal. It seems that such a teacher could not promote a redistribution of social goods to the benefit of disadvantaged groups, and thus would be rendered ineffective in working towards the second goal of anti-racism education, the wider responsibility goal. As I have argued, it seems unlikely that pre-service teachers who operate with an equal-share-based notion of social justice will be able to implement programs of anti-racism education effectively.

Courses undertaken

All five significant effects are found in relation to courses offered in the second, third and fourth years of the education program. The compulsory courses Society and Environment and Aboriginal Australians are studied consecutively in second and third years, while the courses Big Questions of Existence and Philosophy in the Classroom are electives and are studied in third or fourth year. A number of explanations suggest themselves: the movement from an equal share notion of social justice to a needs-based notion might be a developmental (age) effect. Alternatively, this change could result from exposure to a succession of courses that have a social justice focus.

Pre-service teachers who have the requisite notions of social justice and aims of education in relation to anti-racism education

The findings show that 48 (17%) pre-service teachers from the sample exhibit these necessary conditions. This result shows a shift of mature age students to the effective anti-racism education group, and lends support to the idea that it is exposure to a succession of education courses with a social justice and contemporary Aboriginal issues focus rather than development (age) that is responsible for the movement from a low anti-racism value to a high anti-racism value. It may well be that a grave responsibility rests with pre-service teacher education programs, and that such programs must do more to equip their students with the capabilities to implement anti-racism education effectively.

Conclusion

A necessary condition for the achievement of the two goals of anti-racism education is that teachers operate with both a social justice aim of education and a needs-based notion of social justice.

The findings of this study give cause for concern, given the pressing need to redress the disadvantages suffered by Aboriginal people and the social justice role

that anti-racism education can play. The results of this study showed that, in judging a social justice goal of education to be considerably less important than the goal of developing individuals' interests and abilities, the pre-service teachers in the current study indicate a limited capacity to implement anti-racism education effectively in schools. This result is compounded by the further finding that less than half the sample population exhibited a high level of the needs-based notion of social justice, and finally that only 48 pre-service teachers in this study, that is 17 per cent of the sample, both exhibit high levels of needs-based social justice *and* hold a social justice aim of education. Only 17 per cent of pre-service teachers in the sample, then, satisfy the necessary condition for effective implementation of anti-racism education.

These findings are disturbing in the face of what can be seen as the potential of anti-racism education to contribute to the establishment of social justice for Aboriginal people. The findings suggest that some factors in the education course have a significant effect on the development of pre-service teachers' notions of social justice, more particularly on moving pre-service teachers' notions of social justice from an equal-share-based to a needs-based notion. Progression through the education program, and more specifically successive progression through courses in the education program that include a specific focus on social justice, have a significant effect on pre-service teachers' notions of social justice.

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