**Inquiry Draft: 450b**

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**Question:** What teaching strategies can I use to promote social justice in and outside the classroom to build a positive classroom community?

**Rationale:** The rationale for this inquiry project arises from the idea that I have always been passionate about the issues surrounding social justice such as: marginalized youth, discrimination against LGBTQ community and their allies, and racial discrimination. These issues all mean a lot to me on a personal level and I would like to inquire ways in which I can help promote respectful places of growth, understanding and progress that are representative of a positive community setting. My question is significant to me for a number of reasons. Firstly, stories of injustice to students (particularly in the school and classrooms), tragic events based on discrimination , and bullying against students based on race, sexual orientation, and gender hit close to home. I want to promote equality, kindness, and respect to create a positive classroom community in which knowledge can thrive. I think it is significant to others because people gain a sense of responsibility towards social justice, and it creates a safe environment. I expect to find, hopefully, ways in which I can encourage social justice to students, what strategies I can use to implement responsibility of assessing these issues to students. As well as, how it can promote literacy among these issues and effective communication strategies and how I can incorporate these issues of social justice into the curriculum, subject/topic at hand. As well as, how I can reach out to students with varying ideas towards social justice, and be able to break down some barriers of misunderstanding surrounding those issues.

**Relevant Terms:**

Social Justice: Social Justice relates to equal distribution of wealth and opportunities within a society. It is meant to advocate for fairness of all, and empower those who are marginalized.

Equality & Equity: Often can be misinterpreted as the same thing. Equality relates to a state of everyone being equal, and equity relates to aiding those who are oppressed or marginalized to receive what they need in life.

LGBTQQA: Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Trans-gender, Questioning, Queer, and Allies. Sometimes intersex, asexual and pansexual can be included in this acronym. These all must be defined separately, as well as misconceptions debunked around many other terms.

**Annotated Bibliography:**

**Adams, M. (1997). Teaching for diversity and social justice: A sourcebook. New York, NY: Routledge.**

This is an extremely helpful source in providing a working framework for aiding in the understanding of social justice, and analyzing multiple forms of oppression. This source provides two imperative factors: first, a conceptualized interpretation and an interdisciplinary approach to social justice. Secondly, it provides very practically, experiential principles to help students understand the systematic processes of oppression both in broader social contexts, as well as in their personal lives. This book appeals to me in the way that they realistically approach the issues and state that the goal as social justice educators is to help people "analyze dehumanizing sociopolitical processes". Another imperative goal is to get students to begin to think about their individual position in this systematic socialized oppressiveness, so that proactive and alternate approaches can be taken.

**Bigelow, Bill et al. “Introduction: Creating Classrooms for Equity and Social Justice”. (n.d.). *Rethinking Schools*. Vol.1.** [**http://www.rethinkingschools.org/publication/roc1/rocintro.shtml**](http://www.rethinkingschools.org/publication/roc1/rocintro.shtml)

This article provides effective insight towards restructuring the classrooms for equity and social justice. The author suggests the current stats elf education creates boredom, pessimism and thus ineffective learning. The author highlights key points to consider while advocating and incorporating a social justice perspective. The focus is on rethinking the classroom, and he author showed changes in curriculum should be: grounded in the lives of our students (related to their interest and their needs). The author states curricula changes should be focused on: students being critical (talking back, and questioning), as well as multicultural, anti-racist, and pro-justice. This is imperative in a constantly changing world and environment, for students to adopt a critical mind frame. The author also highlights the importance of students as "visionaries". This is a crucial component to advocating for social justice. This source will be extremely useful in offering insight towards curricula changes, and this source can be looked at in comparison with the Ministry PLOs. This entire series of Magazines “Rethinking Schools” is extremely helpful in my analysis. There are recent articles (vol.29, No.1) titled “Black Like Me” and “Dear White Teacher” that discuss the recent events that are unfolding in Missouri. The magazine series is a creative, analytical, and deeply profound source for my analysis relating to many current issues.

**DeJean, W. (2008). Picture This: Using Photography to Conceptualize Social Justice. *Multicultural Perspectives*, *10*(2), 105-109.**

This was an excellent source as it displayed a different way to analyze the issues of social justice. It combined creativity and perspectives to collaboratively define many, and various existing social justice issues. This was an excellent way to conceptualize social justice in an abstract way, and could be used as an assignment or project within the classroom to advocate for social justice. The project was designed from California State University in a social justice course and was designed for students to take photographs which represented an issue surrounding social justice. Social justice was represented in various ways with various pictures, such as: a picture of a staircase representing social justice as fairness, or a picture of two people holding hands, representing social justice as unity. The project does a great job in analyzing the key points, and presenting them in a creative way. This can be useful to use in a high school classroom setting, as a way to promote thinking of equality, and social justice as a concept.

**Dyson, A. (2010). Primary and Secondary Education – Social Justice Issues in School Age Education. Community Focused Schools. University of Manchester, UK. Elsevier Ltd, 255-263**

This source focused on the building of a positive community, through a social justice lens. It is beneficial in providing various methods of incorporating social justice within the classroom, as well as outside of the classroom. This source highlights leadership opportunities and explains the necessity for students to be involved in a positive community outside of the classroom as well as within the classroom context. It highlights new styles of government and leadership within the school structure and system to make a meaningful change. The source shows various evidence to support community-based schools.

**Hern, Matt. (2010). Stay Solid! A Radical Handbook for Youth. The Purple Thistle Centre.**

This source is a more radical approach to many of the issues surrounding schools and students today. The Purple Thistle Centre, located in downtown Vancouver offers extensive programs for students to encourage involvement outside of the classroom regarding issues of: race and class. It serves as a mediator to creatively and effectively engage students in social justice outside of the classroom. The Purple Thistle Centre offers various community projects and creative assignments to engage students in social justice issues.

**“Making Space” Retrieved from:** [**www.bced.gov.bc.ca/irp/pdfs/making\_space/mkg\_spc\_intr.pdf**](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/irp/pdfs/making_space/mkg_spc_intr.pdf)**. November 13, 2014.**

This source can be used as a basis for incorporating social justice, and methods of this process in the classroom. Although, it is ultimately quite short and ambiguous, as most policy often is, it will provide the current systematic processes surrounding social justice and classroom community that currently exist in British Columbia.

**“Social Justice 12 Resource Package” Retrieved from:** [**http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/irp/pdfs/social\_studies/2008socialjustice12.pdf**](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/irp/pdfs/social_studies/2008socialjustice12.pdf)**. December 1, 2014.**

The Social Justice 12 course can be explored in greater depth to analyze its effectiveness. Social Justice is not restricted to a course, it is a life-long necessity for all members within a community to collaboratively function and contribute in a democratic manner. It is excellent this is provided, and should be encouraged further, in all courses. The source shows a basis, at the local level of provincial progress represented through IRPs to instill change, yet these should be incorporated throughout.

**Social Justice Video Resources. Retrieved from:** [**https://www.bctf.ca/SocialJustice.aspx?id=21294#poverty**](https://www.bctf.ca/SocialJustice.aspx?id=21294#poverty)**. December 3, 2014**

The BCTF provides an extensive amount of video resources which cover a range of social justice issues. The topics covered include: Antipoverty (a growing issue and concern in B.C., with child poverty rates increasing), Antiracism (a growing concern throughout North America, especially with recent events in Missouri), Child Labour, Environment and Sustainability, LGBTQ (and QA), Peace and Global Education, and Status of Women. The videos are short, well defined and delve into a various amount of issues. These videos can be shown to students, and to everyone to inform about the prevalent issues affecting our society today. Included in the video resources is a diversity project that is done throughout B.C. schools with students of various ages. This is called “Racism. Stop it! National Video Competition”. Many schools have received winning titles due to students’ creative video approach to a multitude of issues including: Templeton, David Thomson, and Killarney. This should be a competition encouraged throughout more schools and in more districts, as it relates to issues of social justice and can creatively engage B.C. students to think about these issues and address them towards making a change.

Videos are taken from a variety of sources, including: “Child Poverty is a Serious Problem”, taken from: [**http://www.firstcallbc.org/cpanimation.html**](http://www.firstcallbc.org/cpanimation.html)**.** December 3, 2014

**“Teaching Tolerance”: A Project of the Southern Poverty Law Centre. Retrieved from:** [**http://www.tolerance.org/classroom-resources**](http://www.tolerance.org/classroom-resources)**. December 3, 2014.**

This source provides resources for incorporating social justice into the classroom. The source provides various, and extensive activities students can do in the classroom, as well as various lesson plans teachers can adapt and implement. Some of the resources and foci include: Critical Media Literacy, Gender and Sex, Race, Appearance, and Family. Some of the lesson plan titles that can be incorporated are examples such as: “Mass Incarceration as a form of Racialized Social Control”, and “Dismantling Racial Castle”. These lessons take an imperative and interesting approach to directly attempting to tackle the immense issues residing through our societal contexts.

**Van Meeteren, B. D. (2013). Looking for Social Studies...and Finding a Democratic Community in the Classroom. *Social Studies And The Young Learner*, *25*(3), 27-31**

This is an interesting source and relates to a first grade teacher in Iowa, whom discovered she was doing something extremely common that happens in the education sector, and that was “keeping the students busy”, without having an emphasis on why they were doing a particular activity. The study shows, a common misconception and that is, that learning is directly correlated to teaching. The article articulates well and analyzes the democratic process required in and outside the classroom to create interest, and collaboration in learning. This is common, and imperative to have purpose to each activity. The classroom was reshaped, and different governing methods were took place to allow students to assert “a voice within themselves”. This is a great example of a positive community building experience starting at a young age.

Works Cited:

Adams, M. (1997). Teaching for diversity and social justice: A sourcebook. New York, NY: Routledge.

Bigelow, Bill et al. “Introduction: Creating Classrooms for Equity and Social Justice”. (n.d.). Rethinking Schools. Vol.1.[http://www.rethinkingschools.org/publication/roc1/rocintro.shtml](http://www.rethinkingschools.org/publication/roc1/rocintro.shtml%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)

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“Teaching Tolerance”: A Project of the Southern Poverty Law Centre. Retrieved from:[http://www.tolerance.org/classroom-resources](http://www.tolerance.org/classroom-resources%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank). December 3, 2014.

Van Meeteren, B. D. (2013). Looking for Social Studies...and Finding a Democratic Community in the Classroom. Social Studies And The Young Learner, 25(3), 27-31

**Additional Sources:**

These sources can be analyzed if more emphasis is needed as a theoretical framework, or more practical examples of inquiry based forms of implementing social justice such as the example at PENN University.

Solomon, R. P., & Sekayi, D. (2007). *Urban Teacher Education and Teaching: Innovative Practices for Diversity and Social Justice*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

International Encyclopedia of education 3rd edition volume 6, editors in chief Penelope Peterson. (n.d.).

PENN University, New York :inquiry based critical analysis towards social justice teaching and teaching for social justice. Retrieved from: <http://www.urbanedjournal.org/node/147>. November 13, 2014.