Toward an Anti-Capitalist Teacher Education[1]

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ABSTRACT: This paper outlines the culpability of teacher education in perpetuating the neoliberal turn in education and addresses what must be done to reverse course and carve out a teacher education that is wholly committed to combating the disastrous effects of capitalist exploitation on both teachers and students. After an examination of neoliberal educational policy at both the national and global level, the author moves to teacher education to identify elements of teacher education that are currently supporting the neoliberal educational agenda. Finally, the author identifies a new vision and aim for teacher education that places a critique of capitalism at the center of teacher training as we work collectively to combat oppression, in all of its forms, and to ground the work of all teachers in an anti-oppressive (Kumashiro, 2009) pedagogy that includes anti-capitalism as a fundamental aim for all teachers and classrooms.

RESUME: Cet article montre que l'éducation rend les maîtres fautifs de favoriser un mouvement néo-libéral dans la politique de leur enseignement. On aborde dans cet article les mesures à prendre pour faire marche-arrière et ainsi refaçonner l'éducation des maîtres qui doit être entièrement consacrée à combattre les effets catastrophiques de l'exploitation capitaliste, que ce soit chez les enseignants ou chez les élèves. Après avoir analysé la politique néo-libérale dans l'enseignement sur un plan national (Etats-Unis) comme sur un plan international, l'auteur essaie de déterminer les éléments de l'éducation des maîtres qui, aujourd'hui, soutiennent le programme néo-libéral dans leur enseignement. Dans la dernière partie, l'auteur définit des nouveaux but et vision pour la formation des professeurs d'école avec, comme point central, une critique du capitalisme puisque nous menons tous la même action ; celle de combattre l'oppression sous toutes ses formes et de faire le travail en amont afin que tous les maîtres appliquent une pédagogie anti-oppressive (Kumashiro, 2009) avec l'anticapitalisme comme

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aboutissement fondamental pour tous les maîtres et dans tous leurs cours.

Introduction

We hear it daily in the news media, America's schools are failing, teachers are failing, teachers are incompetent, teachers' unions are bureaucratic and serve to thwart efforts to fire ineffective teachers, and the list goes on. *Newsweek*'s cover from March 15, 2010 shows a chalkboard behind the cover story title: "The Key to Saving American Education." On the chalkboard is written, "We must fire bad teachers" over and over again depicting a Bart Simpson-esque form of punishment. The question of what constitutes a "bad" teacher, however, has yielded an immense amount of scholarship and public debate, often reduced to student test scores and efforts to isolate the effects of individual teachers on students' achievement scores on standardized tests (Bridges, 1986). The recent documentary that captured the popular attention of the United States (U.S.) in the Fall of 2010, *Waiting for Superman*, casts teachers' unions and incompetent teachers as the villains who are preventing children in poverty from eliminating the achievement/opportunity gap. In sum, we are experiencing an unprecedented amount of anti-teacher rhetoric at a time when the global financial crisis and its aftermath is ushering in the largest cuts to education spending in recent memory.

Absent from all this discussion, however, are the voices and perspectives of teachers who in states like Wisconsin have now lost the last vestige of having a voice in educational policy at the state level with the loss of collective bargaining rights in that state for teachers (Riccardi, 2011). Similar measures are underway in many other states across the country (Simon, 2011), accelerating a trend that is applying neoliberal market-oriented approaches to education and teacher assessment (Giroux, 2004; Hardt & Negri, 2004). In essence, the U.S. education system is becoming more and more akin to the education systems set up by the World Bank across the Global South and informed by neoliberal market-oriented approaches to education (Brantlinger, 2003; Hursh, 2007; Torres, 2009). Teacher education has been culpable in supporting neoliberal schooling in that rather than resisting and articulating an alternative to neoliberalism (Bourdieu, 1998) we, as teacher educators, have been forced into defending the very idea of teacher education rather than carving out new spaces for teacher educators and teachers in public schools to combat the devastating

effects of neoliberal global capital on the vast majority of humanity.

This paper outlines the culpability of teacher education in perpetuating the neoliberal turn in education and addresses what must be done to reverse course and carve out a teacher education that is wholly committed to combating the disastrous effects of capitalist exploitation on both teachers and students. After an examination of neoliberal educational policy at both the national and global level, I turn to teacher education to identify elements of teacher education that are currently supporting the neoliberal educational agenda. Finally, I identify a new vision and aim for teacher education that places a critique of capitalism at the center of teacher training as we work collectively to combat oppression, in all of its forms, and to ground the work of all teachers in an anti-oppressive (Kumashiro, 2009) pedagogy that includes anti-capitalism as a fundamental aim for all teachers and classrooms.

Neoliberal Education and the World Bank

While much of the ongoing crisis in education since our nation's turn to neoliberalism has been empirically identified as a "manufactured crisis," (Berliner & Biddle, 1995) our current reality in public education, manufactured or not, must be understood as an ideological struggle with material consequences for both students and teachers. To understand this present educational crisis in the United States, and its links to neoliberalism, it is useful to look to the education policies of the largest neoliberal organization in the world: the World Bank. The turn to neoliberalism as the dominant economic model of the Global North is often attributed to the rise of Ronald Reagan in the United States and Margaret Thatcher in the United Kingdom (Harvey, 2005). While a sustained critique of neoliberalism and its dehumanizing effects in areas other than education is beyond the scope of this work, we must understand that neoliberalism, above all else, is concerned with applying "free market" capitalist principles to social programs in an effort to maximize profits and productivity. Neoliberalism is defined by Harvey (2005) as "a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade" (p. 2). The practice of applying "free" market-based logics to education has been well documented and critiqued (see Apple, 2001; 2006; Davidson-Harden, Kuehn, Schugurensky, & Smaller, 2009; Hill, 2009; Hursh, 2007; Kliebard, 2002; Lipman, 2011; Robertson, 2008), however, while these authors regularly contend that teachers and students cannot be reduced to the status of commodities, rarely do they extend their critiques of market-based (neoliberal) decision making in

schools to the present realities and logics of teacher education. While some research does exist on teacher education's culpability in the perpetuation of neoliberal schooling (see Apple, 2001; Kumashiro, 2010; Sleeter, 2008), these authors' valid and important critiques have not extended to demanding that teacher education move toward an explicitly anti-capitalist stance. Here, I argue that the very same policies that the U.S.-led World Bank has put in place in many other countries around the world have now come "home to roost" and are at the center of educational policy debates domestically. To demonstrate this, we can look to work in the field of international education and identify parallels in the logics of the World Bank and the current reform rhetoric of the United States.

In his work to name the current international perspectives in educational policy, Ball (1998) writes, "two complexly related policy agendas are discernible in all the heat and noise of reform. The first aims to tie education more closely to national economic interests, while the second involves a decoupling of education from direct state control" (p. 125). We can understand this first aim by listening to the ways in which national leaders talk about the needs of the capitalist economy as synonymous with the individual human needs of students (Casey, 2011). In a speech delivered on August 9, 2010 at the University of Texas at Austin, President Barack Obama told those in attendance,

> We also know that in the coming decades, a high school diploma is not going to be enough. Folks *need* a college degree. They *need* workforce training. They *need* a higher education. And so today I want to talk about the higher education strategy that we're pursuing not only to lead the world once more in college graduation rates, but to make sure our graduates are ready for a career; ready to meet the challenges of a 21st century economy (*my emphasis*, Obama, 2010).

While many may doubt this direct neoliberal connection between educational policy and pedagogy, with this particular example we find it easy to envisage teachers who tell their students that they have to complete a particular task because failure to do so will result in them failing later on economically. It is not only a conceptualization or opinion of education that its primary aim should be economic growth; it is a policy that is being lived out in classrooms everyday and supported by the highest elected official in the country.

Despite the turn to conceptualizing education and educational efficacy in national and international economic development and growth, Ball's second articulated aim for international educational policy makers is perhaps more at the heart of the current state of the neoliberal educational crisis. "Decoupling education from state control," may at first be read as a move toward localized decision making, which we would then assume would create more opportunities for teachers to engage in making curricular and pedagogical choices based on the experiences of their students and the social contexts of the schools in which they work, thus enabling the enactment of a culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1995). What we find, however, is quite the opposite, as the loss of state control is inclusive of the state-certified agents in classrooms charged with educating their students, namely teachers.

This loss of state control is typified by the creation and subsequent increase in charter schools since the 1980s. While some charter schools have been established by critical educators seeking to counter the ways in which public schools have served to further oppression, charter schools remain as a manifestation of neoliberal policy. Lipman (2011) addresses the origins of charter schools, saying that they "can be traced back to neoliberal and neoconservative agendas, particularly rollback of 'big government' and rollout of 'local control,' deregulation, and privatization" (p. 121). She goes on to address the tensions between those charter schools with progressive aims and the neoliberal ideology imbedded in the creation of such alternatives to public schools, and thus for our purposes here is worth citing at length. She writes,

> Whatever its progressive origins, the charter school strategy has been exploited and rearticulated to the interests of education entrepreneurs, venture philanthropists, investors, and corporate-style charter school chains. Charter schools have become the central vehicle to open up public education to the market, weaken teachers' unions, and eliminate whatever democratic control of public education there is (pp. 121-122).

So positioned, even those charter schools advancing anti-oppressive humanizing aims for their teachers and students are still complicit in the perpetuation of neoliberal ideology and neoliberal educational policy.

The neoliberal shift to funneling public sector dollars into private or pseudo-private educational establishments, such as charter schools,

is occurring at the very same moment as the rush toward nationalized "Common Core Standards" for P-12 education (Core Standards, 2010). These standards have been refused by some states, with critics arguing that the current statewide standards are more rigorous than those proposed by the Common Core Standards advocates. It is worth noting here, however, that on the Core Standard's webpage detailing state adoption of the standards, states that have refused to sign on are listed as "not yet adopted," signaling the presumed inevitability of nationalized curriculum in the United States.

The turn to nationalized standards can be seen as part of what Lipman (2011) has called "neoliberal accountability" in which teachers are forced to circumscribe their own curricula to national standards and have thus lost much of their agency in creating meaningful and impactful lessons that are relevant to the lives of their students in favor of a mechanistic system of accountability for all teachers. Lipman writes of this point, "It is a shift from teacher professionalism and relatively complex, socially situated notions of learning and teaching to postwelfarist [neoliberal] emphases on instrumental efficiency, effectiveness, productivity, and measurable performance" (p. 127). At the same time, with their role as part of the state, the decoupling of educational policy from state authorities means that those who are seen as agents or employees of the state (teachers) are being excluded from decisions that immediately impact them and their students. While nationalized curricula is a global norm, we are experiencing this push to standardizing education as part of the larger neoliberal project to force education to justify its efficacy based on market-based conceptions of effectiveness.

There is a kind of double-bind that teachers across the United States are currently experiencing: in the name of local control, teachers have lost control over their own curriculums and school governance. What the neoliberal rhetoric omits in its move towards "local control" is that state employees, no matter how enmeshed in their own localities, are not the intended body to formalize and actualize local control over educational policy. To draw comparisons to countries across the Global South whose teachers have faced the very same challenges for decades, "once the [World] Bank began to speak for all public educational expenditures, ipso facto, it acquired obligations over areas of education in which it was ill prepared to understand or accept responsibility" (Heyneman, 2003, p. 332). As the World Bank shifted in accordance with neoliberalism, it moved from primarily only financing vocational education up until the late 1970s, to determining the entirety of

educational systems, something that the World Bank leaders of the time admitted to having "little knowledge or experience" in (ibid.). The neoliberal educational policies of the World Bank are now being put into place by policy makers in the United States, often under the direct financing of philanthropic organizations tied to global capitalist conglomerates; most notably the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. In effect, teachers in the United States are now being blamed for the failings of the neoliberal economy and are facing even more neoliberal reforms as a result.

In Canada we find a very similar process underway, though there are important differences in the status of neoliberal education across the two countries. Davidson-Harden et. al. (2009) found that "Trends in the 1990 in particular, toward aggregate social funding cutbacks, have coincided with what may be described as a 'creeping privatization' in many sectors of public services including, notably, health and education" (p. 51). The authors go on to document various privatization efforts, such as the practice in British Columbia of charging fees to international students (Lowry, 2004) which has seen the gap between the most affluent school district in the province ($1,131 per student) and the more "rural areas and the far north of the province" ($100 per student) are being exacerbated by school districts "depending on commercial activity to supplement public funding" (p. 56). While Canada has not (yet) experienced to the same extent as the United States the full force of neoliberalization in education, for instance the charter school movement has not met nearly the same degree of acceptance, Canadian universities in particular are experiencing "increasing commercialism of both research and university operations, as well as corporate presence on university boards" (p. 58). Davidson-Harden et. al. conclude that in Canada, "the neoliberal context shows no signs of abating, and both global and regional/local initiatives to deepen these types of shifts in education policy continue apace" (p. 69).

Thus while neoliberalism is more advanced in the United States, and while there may well be more resistance to neoliberalism in particular provinces and regions (as well as other countries in the Global North, see Sahlberg (2010) for a discussion of resistance to neoliberalism in the context of Finland, for instance) Canada is experiencing a very similar trend in the commodification of teachers and students, the privatization of public goods and services, and a turn toward market-based logics in terms of school governance and finance. While this analysis will return presently to the United States, it should be stated that there is much in this discussion that is applicable to teachers and teacher educators across North America. If the trend of neoliberalism

continues to advance its course around the world, we would do well to pay special attention to the United States as (perhaps) the *most* neoliberal education system in the Global North, so as to identify cracks in the edifice and imagine ways of resisting and transforming our classrooms and schools in humanizing ways.

Neoliberal Teacher Education: Naming Our Culpability

To speak of teacher education in the United States as if it were stable, fixed, and universal would not only be factually inaccurate but would also do violence to the work of countless teacher educators across the country striving to improve their teacher education programs for the realities of schooling in our present historic moment. It is not my intention here to belittle the work of teacher educators, or to resort to blaming the whole of neoliberal educational policy on the failings of teacher education. However, if the above critique of neoliberalism in education rings true to teacher educators, we must ask ourselves to what degree our programs and our practices work either in support of or opposition to neoliberal ideology. I argue here that teacher education is culpable in the perpetuation of neoliberal education policy in at least three ways. Namely, teacher education positions P-12 students as commodities; teacher education positions teachers as technicians; and teacher education fetishizes productivity and student "achievement."

It is important, however, to make two points with regards to the arguments I develop in the remainder of this paper before proceeding. First, education for social mobility, for child-centered development, for social reconstruction, and for conformity to existing economic structures have all competed historically for space in the curriculum of U.S. schools (Kliebard, 2004; Labaree, 2006). An anti-capitalist teacher education must acknowledge this historical struggle, and remember the importance and need for students to engage with the economic realities of the society in which they live. This is especially important for students from historically (and presently) marginalized backgrounds: we must teach "the culture of power" and with it the present structures and personal skills necessary for full participation in society (Delpit, 2006). Which brings us to the second point I will ask readers to keep in mind: that teaching the culture of power as such will not transform said culture. Returning to Lisa Delpit's (2006) insights on the need to make the culture of power explicit and visible for students of color and students whose home cultures differ from the cultural norms of schools, we must not only teach the culture of power but also engage students in critically interrogating the oppressive and dehumanizing effects of our

present political reality. Thus, we must teach traditional middle and upper class ways of being with regards to such things as banking, personal finance, and credit in order to support students who would otherwise not learn such practices and thus be denied access and opportunity as a result. But this education must be accompanied by a critical interrogation of these very practices and the ways in which capitalist exploitation has degraded and dehumanized through these institutions. It is not enough to merely teach the culture of power and then assume that in doing so we have provided marginalized students with a "way out" of poverty. An anti-capitalist teacher education is essential for such an endeavor to be practiced in P-12 classrooms, and I now turn to the present realities of teacher education that prevent such a mobilization and radical transformation of pedagogical space.

Marx (1990) defined a commodity as an external object that satisfies human needs. In teacher education, we insist that all teachers hold the belief that every child is capable of learning. The purpose of this learning, however, is rarely a focus of teacher education. While it is common sense that the purpose of schooling should be student learning, when we examine what this learning is for we are left wanting if our commitments to anti-oppressive education are genuine. The recent push towards P-12 school systems preparing every student for college is a potential response; all children must learn so that they can attend college. However, this answer in and of itself does not answer why every student must attend college. The justification for such an aim is almost always the demands of the capitalist economy for more highly skilled workers to sustain economic growth, a central tenant of capitalism. Here, if we return to the above quote from President Obama, we can see the ways in which teacher education is complicit in the neoliberal notion that the needs of the capitalist economy are synonymous with the needs of students. While it is certain that students must be able to obtain some kind of employment to support themselves as adults, we must take note that the aim of such slogans as "Every Child College Ready"[2] is not in actuality a student-centered pronouncement, it is an economistic one.

Such a notion of education as preparation pervades not only P-12 schooling, but the education of future teachers as well. Yet it is in direct contrast to the work of progressive educators who for over 100 years have insisted that education and the purposes of learning must find their justification in the lives of those presently engaged in the educative act (Dewey, 1897/2010; Freire, 2000). As Dewey (1897/2010) put it, "I believe that education, therefore, is a process of living and not a preparation for future living." Inherent in the name of teacher

preparation is the notion that the educative aim of teacher education is preparation for future living, for future teaching. Further, when we examine P-12 schools' commitments to preparing students for future work as part of the capitalist economic system, we see how such perspectives prevent seeing students as living beings engaged in their world presently. Instead, we see only their future use to the productive forces, as workers, and thus we must set about molding them into ideal employees well equipped to further their employer's pursuits of endless profits at the expense of the mass of humanity. Students are reduced to the status of satisfying external economic needs, rather than their own actual human needs (Casey, 2011). Anyon (1981) found this to be the case in her study of working class schools where teachers created assignments and classroom procedures designed to instill in students the ability to follow orders and complete repetitive tasks with little critical thinking. Students thus come to be objectified as commodities, as human resources to be used in the pursuit of profit. The abuse of workers, the creation of profit for employers based on the surplus labor of their workers, applies at all levels of the capitalist economy, thus higher qualifications for more particular and specialized tasks (a college degree) changes nothing about the use and abuse by employers of their workers. Higher wages, as Marx (1990) warned, can never overcome the exploitation of laborers at any level in the economic system. Thus, teacher education's insistence on "high expectations" for all students does not challenge the existing structures of domination if those high expectations stop at the attainment of a post-secondary degree and successful employment.

Teacher education is also culpable in the perpetuation of neoliberal ideology in the ways it has increasingly come to position teachers as technicians. Christine Sleeter (2008) has documented the ways in which such pressures as high-stakes standardized testing (Hursh, 2008) and prescriptive curricula (Crocco and Costigan, 2007) have resulted in "Districts serving low-income and/or culturally diverse students tend[ing] to adopt the most controlled and scripted curricula, in which not only content but also pedagogy is specified..." (p. 1952). She notes in a footnote on this point, "Scripted curricula specify exactly what teachers should say or do, in a step-by-step fashion. Teachers using them are literally expected to teach by following a published script" (p. 1952). Sleeter sees these pressures leading to teacher education being reduced to preparing "technicians who can implement curriculum packages" (p. 1952). It becomes necessary, however, to examine further what is carried in the term *technician* and what such a conception of

teaching means in relation to neoliberalism as well as to pedagogy.

One result of the "teacher as technician" trope is the decline in teacher education of foundations of education courses and the increase of clinical practice (Kerr, Mandzek, and Raptis, 2011). While the work of Linda Darling-Hammond (2006) and others to elaborate a direction for teacher education that would link together theory and practice through course work and field experiences that support and build upon one another clearly has the potential to work against neoliberalism, we must still ask what such a project is working towards given teacher education's present liberal (if not radical) commitments. It is not necessarily the turn to clinical practice as the central element of teacher education that has led to the construction of teachers as technicians, but rather what is *represented* in such a move. Teaching imagined as a complex, partial, and inherently unknowable act (Kumashiro, 2009) might well lead one to then place more energy in apprenticeship or co-teaching models in teacher education in the hopes that such experiences will better aid prospective teachers in developing the skills necessary to be successful in the classroom. But therein lies the neoliberal influence of such a position: imagining teaching as something one can be *measurably* good at, or further that there are particular ways of teaching that produce *measurable* results with which to make decisions about efficacy.

Kevin Kumashiro (2009) warns us of the "need to problematize any effort to predetermine what it means to be a 'good' teacher. Commonsensical definitions of good teaching are often complicit with different forms of oppression" (p. 15). Imagining how teachers come to be seen as technicians thus becomes easier from this starting point. What the teacher as technician approach enables is to position teaching along side other professions as a part of the professionalization of teachers (Kumashiro, 2009). But such an approach reduces the complexity of teaching to a set of skills or best practices one can simply employ in order to attain certain (already known) results. This is precisely the dehumanizing "banking" education that Paulo Freire (2000) cautions against, because the praxis of pedagogy is reduced to an ends-based conception of the value of such an education. In other words, the "effectiveness," and thus the worth of an educator is discernable from what her students are able to produce, often reduced to standardized test scores (Hursh, 2008).

Thus, while the literal scripting of curricula has enabled the conception of the teacher as technician to further take hold, teacher education's need to justify its own efficacy by employing neoliberal logics of effectiveness and accountability reduces the pedagogical and political

work of teaching to technique and teacher education itself to a form of technology: how best to educate future teachers for set, predetermined results. Despite the immense amount of teacher education literature that argues against positioning teaching in such a way, teacher education in imagining its work as part of the professionalization of the teaching profession has participated in the neoliberalization of teaching by employing neoliberal logics to both justify as well as understand itself. While Sleeter (2008) and others (Apple, 2001; Kumashiro, 2010) are right to point out that teacher education has been under attack by private corporate interests, this attack has in fact been accelerated as teacher education programs seek to appropriate the discourses of neoliberal capitalism into their own practices and frames of understanding.

The third way that teacher education is culpable in the maintenance of neoliberal ideology in education are the ways in which it fetishizes productivity and student "achievement." Ladson-Billings (2006) has written of her own use of the term academic achievement with regards to culturally relevant pedagogy and has since come to regret using the term in her framework for anti-oppressive teaching and learning with students. She writes of the term academic achievement, "What I had in mind has nothing to do with the oppressive atmosphere of standardized tests; the wholesale retention of groups of students; scripted curricula; and the intimidation of students, teachers, and parents" (p. 34). The use of academic achievement measures has resulted in, as Lipman (2011) has argued, "a moral and political crisis in teaching as democratic and humanistic purposes of education are superseded by corporate economic goals, and one-size-fits-all standards and high stakes tests reverse equity gains of the 1960s and 1970s" (p. 128). Achievement measures have done little to address the increasing wealth gap in the United States, and as Hursh (2007) has argued, have also done little to redress the academic disparities between white students and students of color. A focus on achievement as measured by standardized tests has come to replace what Ladson-Billings (2006) has articulated as academic achievement meaning student learning. The failure of standardized tests in this regard can be seen in Kumashiro's (2009) point that, "We can never know exactly what students are learning" (p. 37). Student learning as measured by high-stakes standardized tests can only measure what students produce on that particular test, and thus there is no way that such a test could actually be a testament to everything students know. Teacher education's

fetishization of productivity is a glaring reason for why such a vulgar conception of student achievement has taken hold.

By fetishizing productivity, I mean the ways in which teacher education strives to produce "expert teachers" who can maximize student achievement. How productive a teacher is rests on how quickly she is able to move through the standards for her grade level or subject area and how well her students perform on the subsequent test. While many teacher educators reject standardized test scores as synonymous with teacher effectiveness, we are still able to find ways in which teacher education furthers neoliberal aims of productivity for teachers. In Hammerness, Darling-Hammond, Bransford, Berliner, Cochran-Smith, McDonald and Zeichner (2005), we learn from some of the most widely read and celebrated teacher researchers that "Expert teachers are able to perform a variety of activities without having to stop and think about how to do them" (p. 361). Why would we, as teacher educators seeking to engage our future teachers in deep and critical reflection on their teaching practice, to in fact make such an act of praxis a part of what it means to teach, wish to encourage them to eventually stop engaging in such work? To say that an expert teacher is one who does not actively "stop and think" is to refute critical anti-oppressive educators' insistence that it is precisely those unintentional or hidden lessons that can carry the most oppressive messages in our classrooms (Apple, 2000; Kumashiro, 2009). Yet many of these authors have written powerfully about the need for teachers to be reflexive in their practice elsewhere (see Cochran-Smith and Lytle, 1993; Darling-Hammond, 2006; Zeichner and Liston, 1996). We must then ask what use such a practice, in this formulation, is working toward in terms of its aims for teaching and learning and how neoliberalism is able to manipulate even critical teacher educators into positioning their aims and work in neoliberal ways.

The less time a teacher spends reflecting on the minute and complex details of their work in classrooms, the more time they will be able to give to their immediate task in a neoliberal education system: to maximize student achievement as measured by standardized tests. This is the fetishization of productivity in teacher education, where we encourage our future teachers to aspire to a time when they will be so skilled as teachers that they will no longer have to consider all the various ways in which their work in classrooms is potentially working in contradiction to their goals (Kumashiro, 2009; Ladson-Billings, 2006). To seek to minimize the amount of time teachers spend on things that are not considered a part of the formal curriculum utilizes a neoliberal conception of surplus value wherein those who are able to accomplish

more in less time are more valuable. This frame of thinking about schooling is what enables the notion that schooling in the United States is not "cost effective" when compared to other nations based on per-pupil spending (Guggenheim, 2010). The conception that we must maximize productivity, to make teachers able to move through content as speedily as their students' mastery of that content will allow (if not faster), pervades teacher education and neoliberal conceptions of the work of teaching.

To summarize, teacher education is complicit in the perpetuation of neoliberal ideology through its positioning of P-12 students as commodities, its conception of teachers as technicians, and its fetishization of productivity and student achievement. While these elements of teacher education could never be held collectively responsible for the onset and continual growth of the whole of neoliberalism, they are evidence of the ways in which teacher education has not lived out its commitments to positioning teaching as a part of a larger global project to usher forth a more just and equitable society for all people. As school administration becomes all the more akin to business administration (Kliebard, 2002), so does teacher education and the act of teaching become all the more akin to training workers for jobs on assembly lines. With demands for student achievement placed above demands for humanizing and impactful learning, teacher educators are able to put forth the aims of Hammerness et. al. (2005) that expert teachers are deemed expert when they are "efficient" in their classrooms. This conception of expertise is again related to Freire's (2000) notion of the banking method of education wherein students are seen as receptacles, receiving knowledge passively and later asked to return the investment in the form of performance on standardized tests. While it is impossible to divorce teacher education from our present reality, and thus impossible to escape neoliberalism completely in teacher education, we do not have to settle for neoliberal aims for teachers and teaching. In the remainder of this work, I outline a direction for teacher education to openly oppose neoliberal aims for schooling in the hopes that in so doing we can work together to combat oppression in all of its forms within our classrooms and seek to restore a vision of education that is beholden only to its democratic aims, not economistic ones.

Teacher Solidarity and Finding Our Anti-Capitalist Voice in Teacher Education

Despite the overwhelming magnitude of neoliberal educational policies and the detrimental impacts of these policies on the lives of teachers, we are at a critical moment where those of us who stand in solidarity with anti-oppressive teachers and in opposition to treating students as commodities must reclaim education and educational policy as domains that cannot be reduced to market fundamentalism. The might of the other side, however, and the unbridled power of global capitalism, will not relinquish education and maintain control over every other aspect of political economy. Our work then, as teacher educators and those who reject neoliberal educational policies as dehumanizing to both teachers and students, must be to work within and outside our classrooms to create sites of resistance (Freire, 2000). We must find space in our over-prescribed curriculums to critically interrogate the content of lessons to ask questions of who is being privileged and who is being left out (Apple, 2000). We must vocally reject the Rightist media's claims that teachers are to blame for the ongoing legacies of white supremacy (the achievement/opportunity gap) and capitalist exploitation (the Great Recession). And we cannot do so as if it is only P-12 educators who have been forced into neoliberal policies that do not support the interests of their students nor the vast majority of humanity.

To engage in such work, we must look to scholars within and beyond education who are seeking to redefine the scope and scale of our struggles for equity. Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri (2005) are such scholars, and their work toward creating an anti-capitalist global democracy is ripe with possibilities for teachers, teacher educators, and others in opposition to the neoliberal and neo-colonial educational policies of the World Bank and global capital. They write, "We refuse to accept, in any case, any vision that poses linear stages of development for political organization... We are all capable of democracy. The challenge is to organize it politically" (p. 226). While the more pragmatic amongst us would reject calls for global democracy as overly hopeful and naïve or as beyond the scope of teacher education, it is imperative that those of us who refuse to be objects to our present oppressive reality ground our work in the reality we seek to effect (Freire, 2000). This is, after all, what anti-oppressive teaching and education are meant to be ultimately, and what Paulo Freire termed "radical hope."

Teacher education can reposition its aims for students not along neoliberal lines, wherein educational efficacy will be deemed by later economic success, but rather based on the Deweyan (1897/2010) notion that educational assessment be "based in the child's [student's] fitness

for social life and reveal the place in which he can be of most service and where he can receive the most help" (p. 79). Rather than our educational aims conforming to our oppressive economic system, we can define "fitness for social life" as actively struggling toward a more just reality. We can ground our aims for our students in the "funds of knowledge" (Gonzalez and Moll, 2002) students bring with them into our classrooms and seek to validate those knowledges as we scaffold to other elements of curricula and other sites of inquiry. Teacher education can counter the economistic calls for increases in productivity by instead focusing on depth of knowledge and relevance to students' lives. This is not to say that curriculum has no importance, nor even to say that we ought not to have standards from which to base our classroom interactions on. We must reimagine standards not as signposts of mastery, but rather as guides for the self-appropriated construction of knowledge (Rogers, 1989). Student achievement would then shift from being understood in economistic terms as fit for college and thus fit for work, to a notion of student's achieving when they put their education to work in their pursuit of living a worthy life. And perhaps above all else, teacher education can make explicit that public schools in a democracy exist only for the people, not corporations and business interests.

We must make critiques of the effects of neoliberal capitalist ideology on schools a central element in teacher education. To go even further, echoing Counts' (1978) calls of more than eighty years ago that "If democracy is to survive, it must seek a new economic foundation" (p. 42), teacher education must make the abolition of capitalism a priority for work in schools, as it must be a priority for everyone seeking to end oppression in our present reality. We cannot do so based on a formulaic approach, or some kind of best methods for anti-capitalism framework. Rather, educators must develop and design, for *their* specific contexts, lessons with their students to examine and interrogate the material realities of neoliberalism and its impacts on their lives. Teachers and teacher educators must begin to name those moments when they revert to neoliberal and economistic practices in their work with students. As Kumashiro (2009) puts it, "We need to put front and center the very things we do not want in our teaching, the very things we do not even know are in our teaching" (p. 41). Calling out the ways in which teacher education is complicit with neoliberal ideology in education is an example of such a centering, and showcasing the ways in which neoliberal ideology and discourse permeates our work in classrooms must become the task of every teacher educator committed to combating

the dehumanizing impacts of neoliberalism in our classrooms and on our students.

While we must continue to offer up alternatives to neoliberal teacher education, we must not lose sight of the present urgency of those who are most negatively affected by the dehumanizing effects of market fundamentalism as it has been applied to education. We must demand that businessmen and politicians are not the true voices of teachers and students, nor are their aims in line with those who are seeking to empower their students to be agents for social change. We must advocate for democratic principles before economic ones, and waiting for the World Bank and other multi-national entities to realize their wickedness will not bring about a more equitable society. In rethinking our aims for education, we must reject the economistic move to questions of efficiency and maximizing gains from "human resources." No teacher describes their students in these terms, because these are not terms that speak to the complexity and creativity inherent in the acts of teaching and learning.

Making teacher education explicitly anti-capitalist is a critical step in countering the neoliberal assault on education, the task now is to create the space for more anti-oppressive teacher educators to be heard and to enable teachers through their programs to reclaim the power over their own lives that has been stripped away by neoliberal educational policies. More research is needed that investigates the complex ways in which neoliberalism has 'seeped in' to teacher education. Both ethnographic and documentary analysis examining neoliberal discourse in practice in teacher education, at both the classroom and programmatic level, would be especially helpful moving forward. This work cannot be accomplished by teachers and teacher educators alone, and it would be foolish to think that such a project on its own could end neoliberalism. Yet schools remain as institutions with the immense responsibility of educating young people to be participants in a democratic society. The contents of that participation do not have to be dictated by neoliberal ideology and global financial interests, and insisting that teachers' work does not have to be in support of our oppressive reality, that in fact education as the practice of freedom is imminently possible, must become the central animating belief of teacher education (hooks, 1994).

NOTES

1. Portions of this paper appeared in a talk entitled "Teacher Bashing and Power in Educational Policy: The Increasing Voicelessness of P-12 Educators in the United States" delivered at the Interdisciplinary Perspectives on International Development Conference: "Power, Participation, and Development: Who's in Control" at the University of Minnesota on April 22, 2011.

2. A slogan of the Minneapolis, Minnesota Public School District.

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