Social justice in teacher education can be conceptualized as being comprised of three strands: (1) supporting access for all students to high-quality, intellectually rich teaching that builds on their cultural and linguistic backgrounds; (2) preparing teachers to foster democratic engagement among young people; and (3) preparing teachers to advocate for children and youth by situating inequities within a systemic sociopolitical analysis. These strands resonate with dilemmas that Delpit (1995) discussed regarding teaching other people’s children. For communities that have been historically subordinated, gaining access to the dominant culture of power is of paramount importance. Reflected in the first strand above, teachers must be able to teach such children effectively so they can master that culture. At the same time, as the third strand suggests, the culture of power must also be critiqued, particularly for processes by which oppressive relationships are perpetuated. All of this must involve dialogue—the second strand—in which those who occupy positions of privilege, including teachers and teacher educators, learn to listen to, hear, and work with those who do not.

Although possibilities for building teacher education around social justice are rich, it is becoming increasingly difficult to enact them because the culture of power, embedded in global capitalism, is pressing away from social justice. Ironically, a history of weak relationships between teacher education and historically marginalized communities means that many communities do not see teacher educators as allies, even though teacher educators purport to serve them. After discussing global capital assaults on teacher education, I will suggest some lines of work that are urgently needed for teacher education to build alliances for social justice through collaborative relationships with historically underserved communities.

Assaults on Teacher Education and Social Justice

As a field, teacher education has never been a bastion of social justice, although many teacher educators have worked tirelessly and creatively to create strong social justice-oriented teacher education programs, and some states and accrediting agencies have had social justice requirements. But the field as a whole has always tended to be fairly traditional, mainly oriented toward preparing young White women for established missions and practices of schools. Teacher education faculty are overwhelmingly White, most having little experience teaching diverse populations (Zeichner, 2003).

Currently, teacher education and social justice are under active assault from “the parallel universe from which the business reform agenda springs” (Gelberg, 2007, p. 52). In the context of downsizing public services, the entire education enterprise has become much more firmly harnessed to serve corporate interests. “Corporatocracy,” the form oligarchy now takes, characterizes today’s political landscape. According to Perkins
Corporatocracy is a linkage of three powerful institutions that are run by a small elite whose members move “easily and often” across them: major corporations, government, and major banks (p. 26). By gradually becoming more directly connected, these linked institutions have facilitated an increasingly powerful elite in building a global empire and accelerating elite wealth accumulation (Harvey, 2005).

Corporatocracy is the institutionalization of neoliberalism, a reworking of classical liberalism. As McChesney (2001) explained, neoliberalism assumes that markets, supporting free choice, entrepreneurial competition, and personal initiative, have the best potential to solve social problems and generate wealth, particularly when unfettered by government regulations. As McLaren and Farahmandpur (2005) put it more starkly, neoliberalism refers to a corporate domination of society that supports state enforcement of the unregulated market, engages in the oppression of nonmarket forces and antimarket policies, guts free public services, eliminates social subsidies, offers limitless concessions to transnational corporations,...and permits private interests to control most of social life in the pursuit of profits for the few. (pp. 15–16)

Neoliberals have joined with conservatives to restructure the global order and increase their power over it. As Hursh (2005) explains, “influential conservative and neoliberal foundations and think tanks aim to radically transform education through market competition, choice and privatization” (p. 617). These foundations are pressing teacher education in the following ways: (1) away from social justice teacher preparation and toward preparing teachers as technicians to raise student test scores; (2) away from being linked with teacher professional knowledge and teacher quality; and (3) toward becoming shorter or by-passed altogether.

**Teacher Education as Preparation of Technicians**

Teacher education should be directly linked to K–12 schooling. At their best, teacher education programs and schools collaborate to develop high quality teaching and strengthen democratic participation (Darling-Hammond, 2006). But pressures originating in global capitalism are pushing schools away from democratic participation and even away from rich conceptions of teaching. In the process, they are pushing teacher education away as well. In response to high-stakes testing, school districts across the United States, especially those serving low-income or culturally diverse students, have adopted increasingly prescribed curricula that are aligned with state standards and tests. Much prescribed curriculum emphasizes memorization much more than critical thinking. Increasingly, in schools that serve historically underserved communities, teaching means implementing prescribed curriculum packages “with fidelity” rather than responding to students, let alone developing teacher-made curricula (Achinstein, Ogawa, & Speiglman, 2004). In this context, teacher education programs are being compelled to reduce or eliminate not only explicit social justice teacher preparation, but also learner-centered teaching in general.

Standards for teacher preparation are under pressure to reduce or eliminate reference to social justice, multicultural education, or bilingual education. For example, in 2002 Iowa replaced the requirement of a multicultural education course with more reading methods coursework. California used to offer certification for general education teachers emphasizing Culture, Language and Academic Development (CLAD) and Bilingual Education (BCLAD). California’s revised standards, however, “make clear repeatedly that the role
of teacher education is to prepare teachers to teach the state-adopted content standards using state adopted materials” (Sleeter, 2003, p. 20). The phrase “state-adopted academic content standards” appears throughout the teacher preparation standards documents, but terms such as culture, bilingual, and culturally relevant do not. To investigate the impact of this change on teacher education programs, Montaño and colleagues (2005) surveyed faculty members in 16 California teacher education programs, finding that content addressing culture and language, formerly taught in designated courses, had now been “infused” or reduced. In 2006, National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), following a complaint by the National Association of Scholars and other conservative organizations, withdrew the term social justice as a possible desirable teacher disposition. While NCATE does not explicitly discourage member institutions from incorporating social justice into teacher education programs, this move undercuts a source of support that many teacher educators had used on their own campuses.

School districts are also pressuring teacher education programs. For example, Selwyn (2005–2006), a teacher educator at Antioch College, commented that it is increasingly difficult to find classroom field placements serving low-income students that model anything except scripted teaching. Recently a colleague who has long been active in social justice teacher education told me that school principals now insist that they need teachers trained to use the highly scripted elementary reading package Open Court rather than multicultural social justice education. New teachers who resist routinized, scripted teaching in order to teach in student-centered ways are subject to being pushed out, even when their students score very well on tests (Achinstein & Ogawa, 2006).

The shift away from support for critical, multicultural, and social justice perspectives and toward technical training reinforces an ideological shift away from education as preparation for democratic participation, toward education as work preparation and nothing else. It also reflects a narrowing of how equity is to be understood, away from addressing high poverty communities’ chronic lack of basic resources, including education resources (e.g., Anyon, 2005; Berliner, 2005; Gándara, Rumberger, Maxwell-Jolly, & Callahan, 2003), and toward focusing on test scores only. Programs that build awareness of a larger view of equity disrupt attempts to directly address a much narrower, test-score driven conception of it.

**Disconnecting Teacher Education from Teacher Quality**

Teacher quality has been redefined in a way that allows teacher education to be regarded as unnecessary. Zeichner’s (2003) three conceptions of teacher quality help to clarify what has happened. A professional conception, reflected in the work of professional groups such as the National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future and the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, emphasizes teachers’ professional pedagogical knowledge base and ability to use that knowledge in the classroom. A social justice conception, reflected in the work of organizations such as the National Association for Multicultural Education, emphasizes teachers’ knowledge of and ability to use culturally responsive instructional strategies. Both conceptions link teachers’ professional pedagogical knowledge with subject matter competence.

A deregulation conception, reflected in reports by conservative think tanks such as the Fordham and Abel Foundations, emphasizes subject matter preparation only, seeing little or no professional pedagogical knowledge of value that can be learned other than through experience. This conception is supported by statistical research that correlates increases in students’ test scores with teachers’ verbal ability and the proportion of teachers in a school who hold subject matter rather than education degrees (Johnson, 2000; Monk,
No Child Left Behind made the deregulation conception law by defining a highly qualified teacher as: “one who has full state certification as a teacher (including certification through alternative routes); or passed state teacher licensing exam and holds a license in that state” (Norfolk Public Schools, n.d.). The law places a premium on teachers’ demonstrated subject matter knowledge aligned to the state’s content standards, and on teacher testing. The Bush family has long-standing ties to McGraw-Hill, one of the main corporations selling curriculum packages and tests, and thus has a vested interest in pressing toward test-based systems for judging quality (Trelease, 2006).

Shifting conceptions of teacher quality away from professional knowledge and toward traditional measures of academic content knowledge enables any agency to certify teachers as long as it tests them according to state standards. This shift elevates testing as a way of determining teacher quality over other means, reducing the significance of that which is not testable, such as racial dispositions, expectations for student learning, or ability to connect academics with culturally diverse students. Defining teacher quality through testing also ignores social justice problems connected with testing. A long history of disproportionate failure rates among teachers of color is due to a variety of factors, including biases in whose knowledge is valued on tests and whose is not (Alberts, 2002; Epstein, 2005), the arbitrariness of cutoff scores and their relationship to the racial composition of who passes and who does not (Memory, Coleman, & Watkins, 2003), and connections between testing and perception of stereotype threat (Bennett, McWhorter, & Kuykendall, 2006; Steele & Aronson, 1995). Increased testing undercuts attempts to diversify the teacher population, tacitly dismissing the value of teacher diversity (Epstein, 2005; Flippo, 2003).

In addition, testing shifts power to determine what it means to learn and teach away from educators, and toward legislatures and the corporations that produce and sell tests. Harrell and Jackson (2006), based on an analysis of science teacher testing in Texas, for example, noted that although higher education was still expected to provide content knowledge, it was “the state legislature partnered with test companies” that defined what teachers should know; the greatest beneficiary appeared to be test companies.

**Shortening Professional Teacher Education**

Assaults on teacher education have juxtaposed teachers’ content knowledge against pedagogical knowledge, arguing teachers need the former but not the latter. This, coupled with cuts in state spending on higher education, has led to a shortening of professional teacher education, reducing and in some cases squeezing out preparation for social justice.

Preservice teacher education programs had gradually lengthened from the 1970s through the early 1990s. For example, between 1973 and 1983, required semester hours for elementary teachers in general studies increased from an average of 41 to 62, and in clinical experiences from 10 to 17 (Feistritzer, 1999). During that time, programs developed more intentional series of field experiences and added coursework that reflected changes in schools, such as mainstreaming exceptional children, working with technology, and teaching diverse learners. By 1999, required semester hours in general studies for elementary teachers had dropped to 51, in clinical experiences to 15, and in professional studies from a high of 38 down to 31 (Feistritzer, 1999). Keep in mind that while teacher education was shrinking, student diversity was growing rapidly; for example, it was becoming increasingly likely that teachers would have English learners in their classrooms that they would be expected to know how to teach.

Teacher education has been shortened through several venues. One venue has been the emergence of test-based programs with minimal professional preparation and no contact...
with a college of education. The American Board for Certification of Teacher Excellence (ABCTE) program Passport to Teaching, for example, is a test-based system in which holders of a bachelor’s degree can complete certification exams online, to teach in states that accept this form of teacher certification. Teachers certified through test-based systems receive no training in any form of social justice education.

Most teachers are still certified through university-based programs, but many such programs have shrunk as colleges of education have been pressured to reduce time to degree in the wave of financial pressures on university budgets. As Jones (2003) explained, reduction in taxes coupled with rising costs of public services, in the great majority of states, has resulted in reductions of public expenditures on higher education. Cuts in teacher education programs, along with the other pressures described above, have squeezed curricular space for social justice work in teacher education. Rather than complementing methods coursework, increasingly coursework in multicultural and social justice education now competes with it. Shortened teacher preparation fits with a “trickle down” theory of teaching and learning in which what children should know is codified into standards and tests, to be delivered using materials that detail each concept and step for teaching it, and teachers need minimal preparation to deliver that content. Darling-Hammond (2006) explains, historically, “Limited training for teachers was seen as an advantage for the faithful implementation of newly designed ‘scientific’ curricula” (p. 78).

Managing Dissent through Science

It is in the interest of the corporatocracy to manage dissent while building consensus for its expansion. Science has emerged as a useful tool for this purpose. Martin (1999) pointed out that, “Because scientific knowledge is widely believed to have an authority derived from nature, undisputed scientific knowledge claims can play a powerful legitimating role” (p. 105). In several fields, the Bush administration has been charged with using science as a political tool, promoting findings that support its agenda while suppressing those that do not. Based on an examination of the administration’s political interference with science, the Government Reform Minority Office (2003) noted that misleading statements, suppressed reports, and the like benefit mainly “important supporters of the President, including social conservatives and powerful industry groups”—the corporatocracy.

In education, a drastically narrowed conception of what counts as science is being used to support education reforms and suppress dissent. Renaming what had been the Office of Educational Research and Improvement as the Institute for Education Sciences, signaled this shift. The Institute defines “scientifically based research” as involving “a randomized controlled trial or a quasi-experiment (including quasi-experiments with equating, regression discontinuity designs, and single-case designs)” (What Works Clearinghouse, 2006). Other ways of framing and conducting research, such as phenomenological research, do not count. This conception of science affirms testing as a primary measure of success, while removing from consideration a huge amount of knowledge derived through research processes other than experimental research.

This redefinition casts most social justice work as irrelevant, since the only “legitimate” question left on the table is: What teaching strategies have been found to raise student test scores, using experimental or quasi-experimental research? Using that question and research so defined, the government is then able to identify schools in which test scores have risen, highlighting those to show that neoliberal reform is working, and which “scientifically based” teaching strategies to promote. Teacher educators who question this
framing of knowledge, or who value teaching strategies that have not been validated as “scientifically based,” are then cast as impediments to school improvement. Newspaper articles that appear periodically, for example, affirm the suspicion that “those who can, do; those who can’t, teach; and those who can’t teach, train teachers.”

Teacher education has for too long, in general, failed to serve historically underserved communities well. Currently, many historically underserved communities see neoliberal reforms that focus on the achievement gap as doing more to improve education for their children than teacher educators have been doing. In a letter to Congress, over 100 African-American and Latino superintendents emphasized their support for accountability reforms that focus directly on the achievement gap, writing that underachievement of students of color and students who live in poverty “has been swept underneath overall averages for too long” (“Don’t Turn Back the Clock,” 2003). The broader sociopolitical restructuring that is occurring under corporatocracy is probably detrimental to historically underserved communities in the long run, by rapidly widening gulfs between rich and poor and dismantling public services (Harvey, 2005). If we take social justice seriously in teacher education, what can we be doing, recognizing that the landscape has become much more difficult?

Teacher Education for Social Justice

A wide repertoire of existing practices and programs illustrate ways in which teacher education can help to ensure diverse communities equitable access to quality teaching, prepare teachers to advocate for diverse children, and prepare all students for democratic participation in a diverse society. From recruiting diverse candidates who demonstrate commitment to equity, to constructing fieldwork and professional coursework to build capacity for social justice education, there are many intervention points and strategies that are supported in the research.

Below I suggest a few of these. Possibilities in teacher education for social justice work are summarized in Table 40.1. Across the top are the three social justice strands I am using in this chapter. Down the left-hand side are three areas of teacher education that will be discussed: recruitment and admission, professional coursework, and guided fieldwork.

Recruitment and Admission

Teacher education can help to ensure that all students, and particularly those in historically underserved communities, have equitable access to high quality teachers who believe in them, are committed to working with them, are convinced they have cultural and linguistic resources on which academic learning and democratic participation can be built, and know how to facilitate that learning. Although in part this is a teacher preparation challenge, it is also a recruitment and admission challenge. It is widely recognized that the demographic gap between students and teachers is large and growing. In 2004, enrollment in U.S. public schools was a little more than half White (58%), and a little under half students of color; 20% of students spoke a language other than English at home (National Center for Education Statistics, 2007). Yet, the teaching force remains about 84% White.

Although many studies have found most White teacher candidates bring deficit-oriented stereotypes and very little cross-cultural background, knowledge, and experience (Sleeter, 2008), admission to teacher education is rarely denied on the basis of unwillingness to learn to teach diverse students well. Preservice teachers of color tend to bring a
richer multicultural knowledge base than their White counterparts, and are more likely to bring a commitment and sense of urgency to multicultural teaching, social justice, and providing children of color with an academically challenging curriculum (Dee & Henkin, 2002; Knight, 2004; Rios & Montecinos, 1999; Su, 1997). Teachers who are willing to stay in challenging urban schools are more likely to be older adults who are from the community in which they are teaching, rather than young White teachers (Haberman, 1996).

It is possible for teacher education to recruit, admit, and prepare a significantly more diverse mix of prospective teachers than is currently the case. For example, the Pathways program at Armstrong Atlantic State University in Savannah, Georgia certified about 90 African-American teachers. It used a rigorous screening process to ensure that candidates (mainly paraprofessionals) were both academically and personally well-suited to teaching. The program offered candidates various forms of support through their professional preparation, reworked the teacher education course schedule to accommodate paraprofessionals’ schedules, offered its students intellectual and cultural enrichment while in the program, and built an adult-oriented support network for them (Lau, Dandy, & Hoffman, 2007). Alverno College in Milwaukee, Wisconsin recruits from city high schools and paraprofessionals, attracting an older adult student population, about 25% of whom are of color (Darling-Hammond, 2006).

Such efforts are not intended to replace White teachers with teachers of color, but rather to build a teaching force that not only looks more like today’s students, but also brings more knowledge from their communities into the profession. If teacher education seems irrelevant to many historically underserved communities, working actively with them to bring more members of such communities into teaching, via well-conceived teacher preparation programs, would be a start in making change.
Professional Coursework

Although social justice coursework should be woven through the entire professional preparation program, commonly it is added on without addressing the rest of the program as a whole. Quite often such additions are made by a small number of faculty members who have a commitment to teaching for social justice. Holistic, coherently planned programs, that thoughtfully weave multicultural and social justice coursework throughout, have much more impact on teacher candidates than single courses (Darling-Hammond, 2006; Villegas & Lucas, 2002).

Professional coursework that develops social justice begins by having teacher candidates examine their own backgrounds and experiences to identify assumptions, beliefs, and values they hold, as well as cultural contexts in which they have grown up that impact their understandings of schooling, children, and families (Feiman-Nemser, 2001). Gaining awareness of these powerful filters through which teacher candidates interpret students and teaching opens candidates to learning. Many teacher educators have teacher candidates write autobiographies or personal cultural histories (Lea, 1994) that discuss who was present and absent in communities where they grew up, core values they learned in their families, beliefs they hold about people who differ from themselves, and their conceptions of what “good teaching” looks like. For example, Kumashiro (2004) begins teaching about sexual orientation by having candidates write anonymously about how they honestly feel about issues involving sexual orientation, so that teaching can begin with their questions and concerns. As coursework then moves outward from candidates’ lives, experienced teacher educators systematically use interactive, reflective processes that continue to engage candidates in examining their beliefs and experiences in relationship to analytical frameworks and key concepts.

In professional coursework, teacher candidates can learn a sociocultural framework of learning and teaching strategies that offers equitable access to quality education for diverse learners, such as scaffolding, using instructional conversations, and differentiating instruction. As Gutiérrez and Rogoff (2003) explain, learning occurs through intellectual participation in cultural practices. The classroom is one site of cultural practice; so also are communities and homes in which children live. As teacher candidates gain understanding of language use and cultural practices that are familiar to the students, coursework can help them learn by building on the language, frames of reference, and patterns of relationships with which students are familiar.

Professional coursework focusing on multicultural democracy lays the foundation for building community in the context of diversity and developing children’s awareness of complexities of culture, difference, and equity. Teacher candidates can learn to guide students in open and constructive conversations about differences they see and experience, and help them learn to make collective decisions that balance competing interests and demands. Reading the work of theorists such as Freire (1998), Apple (1996), and Banks (2003) can prompt candidates to distinguish between democracy and the marketplace, in which the concept of “freedom” has migrated from meaning political and cultural freedom to meaning freedom to buy and make money. Rethinking Schools regularly features articles that help teacher candidates envision what it looks like to build democracy in diverse contexts. Professional coursework is most powerful when teacher candidates are diverse, and not only read about, but also experience building democratic communities in the context of diversity.

Learning to address barriers encountered by students from historically oppressed communities in schools requires teacher candidates to understand the nature of institutional discrimination. Without this understanding, teachers too often attribute students’ difficul-
ties to home or community “cultural deficiencies,” rather than to institutionalized socio-political factors that can be addressed. Andrzejewski’s (1995) comprehensive framework links macrolevel systems of oppression with local, everyday inequalities, and connects diverse forms of oppression, including racism, sexism, heterosexism, and classism. In the context of studying systems of oppression, she also has teacher candidates examine how media shape belief systems, juxtaposing social analyses embedded in alternative media with those in mainstream media. She emphasizes identifying and acting on local issues, while situating those within larger issues that require organizing in order to change.

As teacher candidates identify school and classroom barriers to equitable student learning, they can learn to construct alternative inclusive practices. For example, curricula, including state standards and textbooks, still reflect mainly the experiences and perspectives of White, middle class, heterosexual Americans, although diverse peoples are usually sprinkled throughout. In professional coursework, teacher candidates can explore the relationship between who is in curriculum and how students respond, then create multicultural curricula that teach core academic concepts through diverse groups’ experiences (Sleeter, 2005).

**Promising Practices in Guided Fieldwork**

Various forms of fieldwork throughout teacher education is essential. An extensive, carefully designed mix of field experiences can have several purposes, including: helping candidates to decide whether they actually want to teach diverse students; helping them examine their assumptions about children and teaching; exposing them to varied models of teaching; teaching them to identify the intellectual resources students bring to school; helping them gather and use data to guide instruction and to examine schools as institutions; and providing guided teaching practice. Most fieldwork in teacher education, however, encourages replication of the status quo rather than critically questioning and transforming it (Feiman-Nemser, 2001). And simply requiring an experience in a low-income or minority school is just as likely to reinforce negative stereotypes (e.g., Marx, 2000; Tiezzi & Cross, 1997; Wiggins & Follo, 1999) as to challenge them (e.g., Chance, Morris, & Rakes, 1996; Fry & McKinney, 1997; Lazar, 1998).

One promising practice that is used far too little is guided inquiry in cross-cultural community-based learning. Such fieldwork has tremendous potential for building familiarity with diverse students and adults in their lives, investigating institutional discrimination, and learning to view schooling from another point of view. In cross-cultural community-based field experiences, candidates learn how to learn in a community that is culturally different from their own, using strategies such as active listening and nonjudgmental observation. In classrooms, teacher candidates see students reacting to school, but often attribute their reactions to students’ lives outside school. By learning from their community contexts, teacher candidates can gain a much better understanding of students’ capabilities, strengths, and interests.

Field experiences can vary widely in intensity and duration. Immersion experiences involve living in another cultural context for a period of time, ranging from days or weeks (e.g., Aguilar & Pohan, 1998) to a semester (e.g., Mahan & Stachowski, 1993–1994). In less-intensive experiences (which often take the form of service learning), teacher candidates visit neighborhoods or communities where they have a role to play (such as tutoring) or a specific guided learning activity (such as interviewing senior citizens or constructing a community portrait) (Boyle-Baise, 2002). For example, teacher candidates can work in an agency such as a community center, ethnic club, church, or homeless shelter, in connection with coursework addressing culture and community. Guided inquiry activities
might explore why people come to the agency, what kinds of needs people have, what the local community is proud of, what its residents do well, what its children do when not in school, and so forth. In well-structured experiences, candidates see functioning communities and everyday cultural patterns first-hand, form relationships with people, confront stereotypes, and hear stories of lives that reflect abstractions they may have read about in textbooks.

Ultimately, this provides a basis for learning to construct culturally relevant teaching in the classroom. For example, Noordhoff and Kleinfeld’s (1993) case study of the impact of a semester-long immersion experience in a small indigenous Alaskan community demonstrated this potential. The teacher candidates lived in the community and became involved in activities such as sewing or beading groups, or local church activities. The researchers videotaped them student teaching three times over the semester, documenting their shift from teaching as telling, to teaching as engaging the children with culturally relevant knowledge connected with academic knowledge.

Guided inquiry projects can investigate patterns of discrimination in the community context that impacts on families. For instance, teacher candidates can compare the prices of gasoline and groceries in low-income and upper-income neighborhoods, then the type of transportation available to a low-income resident who might want to shop outside his or her neighborhood. Or, they might investigate availability and accessibility of medical care to immigrants who are not yet fluent in English and who live in low-income neighborhoods. The notion of institutional discrimination begins to take on substance during such investigations. Numerous case studies have found teacher candidates to question prior stereotypes and become familiar with cultural strengths and community resources they had not seen before as a result of community-based learning (e.g., Bondy & Davis, 2000; James & Haig-Brown, 2002; Melnick & Zeichner, 1996; Moule, 2004; Olmedo, 1997; Seidl & Friend, 2002).

In classrooms, teacher candidates need cooperating teachers who can support inquiry-based, democratic, social justice-oriented practice. Programs that are able to provide this support generally involve close collaboration between schools, universities, and communities. The Bilingual/Multicultural Department at Sacramento State University, for example, has produced enough graduates that it now has a deep network of cooperating teachers who understand, model, and support social justice teaching. In addition, the department has forged Professional Development School relationships with several local schools. Faculty members engage in professional development there, which improves “coherence between practices in the student teaching placements and the theory and practices highlighted in coursework” (Wong, et al., 2007).

Conclusion

Quality teacher education is a valuable public resource. However, to be a quality resource to communities that have historically had least access to excellent teaching, teacher education must be relevant. Relevance requires that teacher educators collaborate directly with such communities, and social justice demands it. In the process of collaborating with communities, teacher educators can forge strategies to recruit and prepare a more culturally and linguistically diverse cadre of teacher candidates who reflect local communities more than is currently the case. Through collaboration that is build on dialogue across communities of difference, teachers can be prepared to advocate for children and youth and to foster democratic engagement, taking into account how local inequities are embedded within systems of oppression as well as movements for action.
Neoliberalism is actively dismantling public services, including teacher education. Based on a comprehensive analysis of its track record globally, Harvey (2005) finds that “the universal tendency [is] to increase inequality and to expose the least fortunate elements in any society … to the chill winds of austerity and the dull fate of increased marginalization” (p. 118). The fate of teacher education is directly linked with fates of broad segments of the public, particularly those who can least afford the impact of massive privatization. For that reason, teacher educators must take social justice seriously.

Note
1. The original source of this phrase is unknown. The phrase appears on several websites, attributed to an unknown original source.

References


