

TEACHING FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE IN THE HIGH SCHOOL SPANISH CLASSROOM:
PERSPECTIVES AND PRACTICES

by

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Abstract

Talk of social justice is increasingly common in the educational context of British Columbia as well as in the academic literature on education. However, specific examples of how teachers of subjects other than English and Social Studies are taking up a social justice discourse are sparse. Specifically, there is very little written on such approaches to teaching Spanish as an additional language. This exploratory research therefore aimed to understand the extent to which high school Spanish teachers in British Columbia are incorporating social justice education into their pedagogies and curricula. Through online questionnaires sent to Spanish teachers across the province, interviews with seven of these teachers, and four sets of classroom observations, the study explored perspectives on social justice education, classroom practices that evidenced a commitment to such pedagogy, and the perceived obstacles to teaching for social justice in the high school Spanish classroom.

It was found that teachers espoused a variety of definitions of social justice education but that the overwhelming majority believed in the importance of such approaches in the Spanish classroom. They evidenced an inspiring array of practices aimed at promoting social justice that could be seen as either educating *about* social justice, through curricula and classroom discussions, or *for* social justice, through democratic and anti-oppressive methodologies. It was found that many of these practices could serve to counter each of the five faces of oppression described by Young (1990): exploitation, marginalization, powerlessness, cultural imperialism, and violence. Unfortunately, many obstacles to social justice education were also noted, including a lack of support and resources. This study demonstrates that there is a strong interest in bringing social justice education into the high school Spanish classroom but that more must be done to support teachers in this endeavour.

Preface

This thesis was approved by the University of British Columbia, Office of Research Services, Behavioural Research Ethics Board. The ethics approval certificate number was H09-03524.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

The study of Spanish as an Additional Language (SAL) in Canadian high schools is growing in both popularity and importance. At the same time, there is increased demand for democratic and anti-oppressive educational practices across the curriculum. Research on this latter phenomenon has focussed mainly on English and Social Studies classrooms but has important implications for the SAL classroom as well. Social justice education, or the lack thereof, can affect learning in all pedagogical contexts, including in the language classroom where both linguistic and cultural education take place. As a language teacher, I am interested in the extent to which colleagues are taking up a social justice discourse and the ways in which they are implementing pedagogies and curricula to reflect this. This thesis summarizes the findings from an exploratory research project on social justice education in the high school Spanish classroom conducted with teachers throughout the province of British Columbia, Canada.

1.2 Background and Context

Canada has an official law of multiculturalism which is meant to promote “the understanding that multiculturalism reflects the cultural and racial diversity of Canadian society and acknowledges the freedom of all members of Canadian society to preserve, enhance and share their cultural heritage” (Government, 1985, p. 3). However, multiculturalism has been taken up in a superficial way. Diverse groups are celebrated or tolerated in what Riviere (2008) has termed “boutique multiculturalism”, but issues of racism and other forms of systemic oppression are not addressed (Bannerji, 2000; Ng, 1995a). Similarly, the Spanish language textbooks and materials recommended by the British Columbia Ministry of Education tend to

promote only surface understandings of culture in which questions of politics, history, and heterogeneity are left untouched (see Herman, 2007).

Although British Columbia is recognized as politically progressive compared to other Canadian provinces, the province faced a neoliberal shift in the 1980s and 1990s. Neoliberalism prioritizes economic growth and advocates trade liberalization, privatization, and a focus on performance standards (Larner, 2000). With the 1988 Free Trade Agreement with the United States and the 1992 North American Free Trade Agreement, “blame was laid at the school door for Canada’s lack of economic competitiveness and entrepreneurial spirit” (Coulter, 2007, p. 749). These market-driven ideologies have led to a managerial approach to education. Coulter (2007) explains the effect that neoliberal reforms had in British Columbia in the 1990s:

Schools were accused of failing to produce the kinds of workers Canada needed. Teachers were criticized for emphasizing equity and social justice goals at the expense of individual merit and the academic rigor that would bring outstanding results in national and international testing. Excellence was positioned against equity (p. 749).

These effects continue to be felt throughout the education system, including an emphasis on standardized tests as markers of both student and teacher performance.

Related to the economic- based assessment of educational programs, the focus of Spanish learning in North America is on its marketability (Leeman, 2007; Train, 2007). Although there is also a focus on literature (Leeman & Rabin, 2007; Valdés, González, López Garcia & Márquez, 2003), the practicality of using Spanish as a job skill is often promoted over an appreciation for Hispanic cultures (Leeman, 2007). This ideology is evident in the Spanish curriculum used in British Columbia at the time of the present study. When describing the rationale for learning

Spanish, the *Integrated Resource Package*¹ (IRP) states that “British Columbia’s proximity to Spanish-speaking countries and the growth of economic ties with these regions have increased the economic advantages of learning Spanish for professional and leisure opportunities” (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 2005, p. 1). It then goes on to explain three main reasons for learning Spanish, which are: (1) to expand national and international career opportunities, (2) to enhance learning of other languages, and (3) to encourage the development of positive attitudes to diverse cultures. We see that cultural awareness is last on the list of priorities and that improving the economy is number one.

In 2010, a new draft curriculum was developed for teaching French, German, Japanese, Mandarin Chinese, Punjabi, and Spanish in British Columbia called the *Additional Languages Curriculum*. This new curriculum is based on the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages*, which takes a communicative approach to language education and encourages plurilingualism (Byrnes, 2007). This appears to be a step in the right direction in terms of attitudes around language learning. However, the market-driven ideology remains clear in the new curriculum which maintains almost the exact same rationale as the 2005 curriculum: “expands national and international career opportunities” is still framed as the most important reason to learn a new language (see British Columbia Ministry of Education, 2010b, p. 1). The new curriculum will go into effect in July 2012. In this thesis, any further discussion about the IRP is referring to the 2005 version.

In addition to marketability, other ideologies around teaching and learning Spanish permeate the field. One of the most pervasive of these ideologies is the favouring of certain

¹ Integrated Resource Packages (IRPs) are provided by the British Columbia Ministry of Education for each subject area. The IRPs explain the required curriculum for each grade, suggest ideas for instruction, and provide a list of suggested learning resources for the teachers to use in their classroom (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 2010a)

varieties of the language over others (Leeman, 2007; Train, 2007; Valdés et al., 2003). Train (2007) gives a historical account of the concept of “real Spanish” which purports a standard variety based on Eurocentric beliefs that peninsular Spanish or varieties from countries with more people of European descent are more correct. With the great diversity of Spanishes that exist throughout the world, this hegemonic view of reality serves to marginalize certain groups that don’t speak the dominant variety (Train, 2007). For example, in a study conducted in university Spanish language departments, it was found that faculty and students had more or less status depending on the variety of Spanish that they spoke (Valdés et al., 2003). This brings me to a final ideological construct that pervades Spanish teaching: monolingualism. Spanish teaching faculty have been found to express a monolingual bias, favouring Spanish-only over bi- or multi-lingualism (Valdés et al., 2003). Spanish textbooks rarely speak about the other languages that are spoken in Hispanic countries, including indigenous languages (Herman, 2007).

Although neoliberal policies continue to dominate in British Columbian institutions, and harmful ideologies around Spanish teaching continue to circulate, the British Columbia Teachers Federation (BCTF) has been a strong advocate for social justice for over ten years (British Columbia Teachers Federation, 1999). This trend is mirrored in the academic literature and elsewhere. As Furman & Gruenwald (2004) explain:

Social justice has become a major concern for educational scholars and practitioners at the beginning of the 21st century. This concern is driven by many factors, including the growing diversity of Western industrialized societies and their school-age populations, the increasing awareness of the achievement and economic gaps between mainstream and ‘minoritized’ children, and the increasingly sophisticated analysis of social injustice as played out in schools (p. 47)

There has also been an increase in talk about social justice in the British Columbia Ministry of Education materials. This includes two recently-released documents that address teaching for justice: *Diversity in BC Schools: A Framework* (2004) and *Making Space: Teaching for*

Diversity and Social Justice throughout the K-12 Curriculum (2008). In addition, new courses have been added to British Columbia's roster, including *Social Justice 12*. The increase in such discourse is the Ministry's response to recent cases of activist teachers and groups taking legal action against oppressive institutional practices (Kelly, 2011; Smith, 2004). The extent to which these documents and courses will lead to positive changes in British Columbian classrooms and communities remains to be seen.

All Spanish teachers in British Columbia are provided with the Spanish IRP, but they are not completely tied down to the curriculum specifications it outlines. Teachers must meet the *Prescribed Learning Outcomes* (PLOs) for each grade but there is a continuous emphasis throughout the IRP that they have flexibility in selecting the materials, instructional strategies, and assessment instruments that they use for doing so. Individual learning styles are recognized, and there is an emphasis that a wide range of materials and strategies should be employed. Many of the PLOs are quite vague, which means that teachers can draw on a variety of resources for achieving them. For example, the only PLO for *Experiencing Creative Works* for every grade is to reflect, respond to, discuss, compare, contrast or analyze "authentic creative works from the Hispanic world" (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 2005, p. A-9). Teachers can select the creative works they choose to draw on, including those that focus on issues of justice. Although teachers have this flexibility, language programs, specifically those other than French, face limited funding, and most schools are using outdated Spanish textbooks.

In the majority of communities in British Columbia, the education system is divided between elementary schools (K-7) and secondary schools (8-12), more commonly referred to as high schools. Some communities also have middle schools for grades 6-8. Most students take an additional language until Grade 8 and many continue with language classes throughout their high

school careers. Some Canadian universities require that entrants have a Grade 11 level in an additional language which can influence students' curricular choices. Although the IRP for Spanish provides information for grades 5 through 12, in most districts it is not offered until the high school level. The IRP provides information for an introductory course in grade 9, and this is when most schools begin to offer it.

1.3 Statement of the Research Problem

The major research problem which this study aims to address is the lack of research related to social justice in the language classroom. On a local level, there has been little research that attempts to understand how teachers in British Columbia reconcile the differences between the BCTF's commitment to social justice and the neoliberal policies of the provincial government. It is not clear if teachers espouse social justice goals, and there are few examples of teacher practices that would evidence such beliefs. Research that is concerned with social justice education in British Columbian high schools has mainly focussed on English and Social Studies classrooms (e.g. Brandes & Kelly, 2004; Kelly and Brandes, 2001, 2008). To my knowledge, none has been carried out with language teachers.

On a broader level, there is very little research on social justice education in the Spanish classroom, despite a trend in the field of language acquisition to research non-cognitive influences in language learning. There has been what Block (2003) has termed a "social turn" in the field of language acquisition which recognizes that non-cognitive factors, ranging from student motivation to the political environment, influence the language learning process. This trend recognizes that inequalities exist between communicators and are reproduced in communicative interactions. Therefore, as Regan and Osborn (2008) argue, we must "address the social, cultural, political, and ideological contexts in which we teach, and in which languages are

used” (p. 138). Scholars in fields such as critical pedagogy, critical multicultural education, anti-racist education, feminist pedagogy, and queer pedagogy have begun to address some of these issues in various educational contexts. I place all of these approaches under the umbrella of social justice education. Although there have been calls for such approaches in the language classroom (e.g. Guilherme, 2002; Norton & Toohey, 2004; Reagan & Osborn, 2002), there have been very few empirical studies about social justice education in the Spanish classroom. This is especially true for the high school Spanish classroom.

1.4 Purpose of the Study and Research Questions

In this study I attempt to address the gaps in the research outlined above, hoping to contribute to the literature on social justice in the language classroom. First, I explored Spanish teachers’ perspectives on social justice education, attempting to understand their definitions of such pedagogy and whether or not it was something that these teachers felt passionate about. Second, I wanted to assess the extent to which teachers who felt strongly about social justice education were engaging in practices to reflect this in their Spanish classes. I sought out specific examples of such practices. Finally, I was curious to know how teachers were able to navigate the socio-political context in which they worked and to understand the extent to which it influenced their practice. The three main research questions were:

1. How do teachers of high school Spanish define “teaching for social justice”? Do they believe that it is an important aspect of Spanish teaching?
2. To what extent are these teachers teaching for social justice? What are some examples of practices that would reflect a belief in the importance of social justice education?
3. What do these teachers perceive as the obstacles to teaching for social justice in the Spanish classroom?

1.5 Researcher Positionality

My interest in conducting this study is greatly influenced by my own experiences as a learner of Spanish and as a social justice activist. I attended high school in Vancouver, British Columbia and had a positive experience in my Spanish classes. However, those classes did not prepare me for the realities I would see during my first trip to Latin America. I had learned about the surface features of Hispanic culture, an approach often referred to as the Four F's: Food, Fashion, Festivals and Folklore (Fox & Diaz-Greenberg, 2006). But when I visited Cuba in 2003, I faced the realities of Cuban culture, including poverty caused in part by the U.S. economic embargo, racism against indigenous Cubans and those of African descent, and sexism against women. As I had an awareness of social justice issues in general, I wasn't completely shocked, but I always felt like the Spanish classroom would have been the perfect place to address some of these issues. I had already begun to think about alternative curriculum development and educational reform when I entered a Masters program in Modern Languages Education.

During my studies, I had the honour of taking a course with Dr. Ryuko Kubota who introduced me to critical pedagogy and its relevance in the language classroom. I remember feeling a wave of excitement when I realized that there was an entire field of study that had already researched many of the issues I felt passionate about. I began to explore the potential for critical perspectives in the Spanish classroom and the potential for such practices in British Columbia. Another class, with Dr. Deirdre Kelly, introduced me to a number of issues around social justice education and policy-making which were particularly relevant to the British Columbian context. As I began to formulate my thesis proposal, I remember feeling nervous that my topic was not specific enough to language teaching – was it not better situated in the field of educational philosophy? But when I expressed my doubts to Dr. Kubota, she reminded me of the

importance of bringing together theory and practice; ideas about teaching influence the choices that teachers make in the classroom and can therefore not be separated from teaching practice.

Understanding that my own passions may not be shared by others, I aimed to explore the perspectives that Spanish teachers brought to the classroom without imposing my views on them. However, it was inevitable that my interests would influence the research methodologies and, in some cases, the results. A study on social justice education would attract certain teachers, and I have no doubt that the teachers that agreed to participate felt some connection to, or interest in, the topic. Furthermore, one questionnaire participant stated that “some of the questions are worded to elicit certain answers as the ‘correct’ answer”. Although this was not my intention, my own beliefs came through even in the wording of the questions and could, therefore, influence the results.

1.6 Organization of the Thesis

In this chapter, I have described the rising interest in SAL in Canada and the educational context of British Columbia where the current study took place. I then briefly discussed the increased recognition of the value of social justice education and the lack of research on such approaches in the Spanish classroom. Finally, I explained my research questions and my positionality as a researcher. In Chapter 2, I provide a review of the literature that is relevant to social justice in the SAL classroom, and to my theoretical framework. In Chapter 3, I explain the methodology used to conduct this study. In Chapter 4, I present the findings from my study and relate them to my theoretical framework. In Chapter 5, I summarize the thesis and discuss the limitations of the study, the implications for further research, and my personal reflections.

Chapter 2: Social Justice Education in the Spanish Classroom: A Review of the Literature

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I will discuss definitions of social justice education as well as various approaches to such pedagogy which have led to the theoretical framework guiding my research. I will also explain the importance of social justice education in the language classroom and specifically in the Spanish classroom, highlighting previous studies which have contributed to this field. Finally, I will address some issues in the investigation of teachers' beliefs and practices.

2.2 Defining Social Justice Education: Liberal and Critical Approaches

There are many different conceptions of “social justice” and what “social justice education” looks like. Traditionally, social justice has been thought of in terms of distribution of resources, which theorists have extended to include the distribution of non-material goods such as rights and power. However, philosophers such as Iris Marion Young (1990) and Nancy Fraser (2005) argue that this “distributive paradigm” is too narrow as it cannot sufficiently address institutional and social practices (see Young, 1990). My definition follows Nancy Fraser (2005) whose theory of justice involves three dimensions: the economic dimension of distribution, the political dimension of representation, and the cultural dimension of recognition. The first two dimensions can be understood as equal access to resources and equal access to democratic participation respectively. The third dimension, recognition, refers to overcoming social hierarchies based on race, religion, or other cultural factors through a process of understanding and valuing others for who they are. Fraser equates justice with parity of participation, where all

members of society are able to participate equally in social life. Thus, “overcoming injustice means dismantling institutionalized obstacles that prevent some people from participating on a par with others, as full partners in social interaction” (Fraser, 2005, p. 73). Social justice education must therefore aim to dismantle such obstacles within schools and encourage students to do so in their communities. It must provide students with a democratic environment, equality of opportunity, and anti-oppressive methodologies. I find Young’s (1990) framework for understanding oppression particularly useful in conceptualizing such methodologies. This will be discussed further in Section 2.2.2.

The above definition of social justice education stems from an ideological perspective that might be considered “critical”. Critical beliefs about social justice contrast with the dominant, “liberal” point of view which focuses on freedom from tyranny, individual rights, and equal access to resources (North, 2006). Social justice education from the liberal perspective emphasizes diversity, values students’ individuality, and focuses on changing “unjust beliefs and behaviour” (Kelly, Brandes, & Orlowski, 2003-2004, p. 42). Although these are important goals, critical beliefs look beyond the individual to societal injustices and focus on democratic and anti-oppressive practices that might bring about change on a structural and public scale.

In a study with veteran high school teachers, Kelly, Brandes, and Orlowski (2003-2004) found an array of teacher beliefs about social justice education ranging from liberal to critical². Most teachers agreed that such education involves inclusion, respect, safety, democracy, equity, social responsibility, and critical thinking. The liberal teachers advocated diversity, question-posing, and providing a range of perspectives on all topics. By providing multiple perspectives, these teachers felt that they could achieve their end goal of raising student awareness. Critical

² Their research is particularly relevant here as their interviews were conducted with teachers in Vancouver. The teachers primarily taught English or Social Studies but it is possible that some were also Spanish teachers.

teachers felt that raising awareness was important but not sufficient; they highlighted the importance of agency and encouraged their students to be actors for social change. They believed in critiquing and transforming power relations through collective work and democratic action. I advocate for a similar, critical approach to social justice education. Such pedagogy necessitates “taking a stand”, which Kelly & Brandes (2001) define as involving “(a) critical analysis of social and institutional inequities, (b) commitment to ‘principled action’ to achieve social justice [...] and (c) willingness to question one’s own understanding of social justice, in part through listening to alternative perspectives” (p. 439).

An important aspect of critical social justice education is advocating for democratic participation both inside and outside the classroom. As Brandes and Kelly (2003) note, “living in a democracy calls for civic responsibilities and, in particular, active interest and involvement in the community. Teachers play a crucial role in preparing students to take on these responsibilities” (Democratic Citizenship and Anti-Oppressive Education, para. 1). Westheimer and Kahne (2004) remind us, however, that there is a spectrum of ideas about what it means to be a “good” democratic citizen. They identify three main definitions of a “good” citizen embodied by educational programs aimed at promoting democracy: (1) the *personally responsible citizen* who is law abiding, hard-working, and helps in the community, (2) the *participatory citizen* who participates in politics and takes on leadership positions in established institutions, and (3) the *justice-oriented citizen* who engages in debating, challenging, and changing established institutions and structures that reproduce injustice. While acknowledging the importance of all of these dimensions, I advocate for programs that promote this third definition. Such programs

do not aim to impart a fixed set of truths or critiques regarding the structure of the society. Rather, they work to engage students in informed analysis and discussion

regarding social, political, and economic structures. They want students to consider collective strategies for change that challenge injustice and, when possible, address root causes of problems (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004, p. 243).

By encouraging students to think critically about problems in their communities and to be active in addressing these problems, programs that promote justice-oriented citizens have the greatest potential to transform oppressive institutions and societal practices.

Above I have provided my definition of social justice education. This definition stems from a critical ideology that emphasizes parity of participation (Fraser, 2005) and action to transform societal injustices. Such education must emphasize critical thinking and student agency. It must be anti-oppressive (Young, 1990) and based on a commitment to democracy, both by demonstrating it within the classroom as well as by encouraging students to participate democratically in wider society.

2.2.1 Critical Pedagogies

One approach to the type of education advocated above is through critical pedagogy. Supporters of critical pedagogy stress that “education should be embedded in social context and that its political nature should be explicitly recognized and endorsed” (Guilherme, 2002, p. 61). The concept of critical pedagogy was introduced by Paulo Freire. In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970), Freire stresses that education is not politically neutral and that teachers must strive to create educational settings of empowerment where students are encouraged to critically engage with their world and to act on what they see. He argues against the traditional “banking model” of education in which teachers “deposit” information and skills into students and instead calls for a dialogic, problem-posing model where students are “critical co-investigators in dialogue with the teacher” (Freire, 1970, p. 81). He stresses that “it is not our role to speak to people about our own view of the world, nor to attempt to impose that view on them, but rather to dialogue with

the people about their view and ours” (p. 96). Through this co-investigation, students can learn to name and reflect on various forms of oppression, which is the first step in overcoming them³. But Freire also highlights the importance of praxis, the process of taking action and then reflecting on it critically. In other words, he advocates a continuous cycle of dialogue and critique, action to transform oppressive realities, and critical reflection upon such actions.

Scholars have continued to build on Freire’s work, including Paul Carr (2008), Jim Cummins (2000, 2009), Henry Giroux (1994, 2001), Patricia Hinchey (2004), bell hooks⁴ (1989, 1994), Peter McLaren (1994, 2003), Ira Shor (1993), Shirley Steinberg and Joe Kincheloe (2001), and many others. Some of these scholars have also contributed to related fields such as multicultural education, feminist pedagogy, and anti-racist pedagogy which are discussed briefly later in this section. Ira Shor (1993) has explained that critical pedagogy

challenges teachers and students to empower themselves for social change, to advance democracy and equality as they advance their literacy and knowledge. [Freire’s] critical methods ask teachers and students to question existing knowledge as part of the questioning habits appropriate for citizens in a democracy [...] Freirean educators pose critical problems to students, treat them as complicated, substantial human beings, and encourage curiosity and activism about knowledge and the world (pp. 25-26)

Henry Giroux (1994, 2001) adds that curriculum is never neutral and, unless critically examined, may help to reproduce dominant ideologies which marginalize some and favour others. Peter McLaren (2003) stresses the need for teachers who understand how knowledge, language, and power operate within the education system and who are willing to engage in a pedagogy that is emancipatory for students. He stresses that although schools can be sites of socialization and indoctrination, they can also be places for empowerment and self- transformation. My own

³ Oppression here refers not only to the explicit domination of one person or group over another but also to the “injustices some groups suffer as a consequence of often unconscious assumptions and reactions of well-meaning people in ordinary interactions, media and cultural stereotypes, and structural features of bureaucratic hierarchies and market mechanisms” (Young, 1990, p. 41). This definition is discussed explicitly in Section 2.2.2.

⁴ bell hooks chooses to write her name (which is actually a pseudonym) in lower-case letters because she believes that it is the substance of her books, and not who she is, that is important (hooks, 1989)

definition of critical pedagogy is inspired by all of these authors and can be summarized thus: critical pedagogy is about a commitment to democratic and dialogic teaching practices which encourage critical reflection and action to transform societal injustices.

Critical pedagogy has paved the way for theorists to conceptualize a more equitable way of teaching. However, it has been critiqued for relying too heavily on abstract theory and for using static or simplistic definitions of concepts that postmodernists see as fluid and complex. For example, Ellsworth (1994) explains that critical pedagogy assumes that teachers and students will rely on reason and a lack of self-interest when interacting with each other. She argues, however, that “social agents are not capable of being fully rational and disinterested, and they are subjects split between the conscious and unconscious and among multiple social positionings” (Ellsworth, 1994, p. 316). The field has also been critiqued for focusing on class difference without attending to other forms of oppression. For example, feminist scholars have argued that much of the work in critical pedagogy stems from masculine and paternalistic understandings of education (see Ellsworth, 1994; Weiler, 1994; Torres & Van Heertum, 2009). Finally, Furman and Gruenewald (2004) also argue that critical pedagogy is anthropocentric and does not attend to issues of environmental injustice.

In response to these critiques, scholars have articulated ways in which to expand the general principles of critical pedagogy to meet the needs of diverse classrooms. As Stevens (n.d.) explains,

Postmodern, feminist, anti-racist, postcolonial, and queer theories have all played a role in expanding and transforming Freirean critical pedagogy, shifting its predominant focus on class to include categories such as race, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, nationality, and age. In place of the Marxist metanarrative and essentialist categories upon which Freire's vision of liberatory education relies, many contemporary critical pedagogues have adopted more postmodern, anti-essentialist conceptions of identity, language, and power, while at the same time retaining the Freirean emphasis on critique, disrupting oppressive regimes of power/knowledge, and social change (para. 3).

Fields such as feminist pedagogy, critical multicultural education, anti-racist education, and queer pedagogy share many of the central tenets of critical pedagogy while focusing on particular forms of oppression and how they affect classroom interactions. Although these fields are diverse, the common thread that unites them is that they address issues of power and inequality. As Roxana Ng (1995b) explains, they aim “to develop critical consciousness among the students/learners and to empower them [...] The long-term goal implicit in these pedagogical approaches is the belief that democratizing the classroom and empowering students will lead to changes in structures of inequality” (p. 131). Educators can and should draw on insights from all of these fields, honing in on the practices that will best suit the needs of their students. Canagarajah (2005) advocates this “tool box approach to theory” in which educators “feel free to pick and choose among the available critical theories as relevant for the diverse students, classroom, and communities we are working with” (p. 932). And bell hooks (1994) adds, “all students, not just those from marginalized groups, seem more eager to enter energetically into classroom discussion when they perceive it as pertaining directly to them” (hooks, 1994, p. 87).

The above pedagogies can be grouped into the broad category of social justice education. As Kelly and Brandes (2008) explain, *social justice education* can be used “as an umbrella term to refer to critical work on pedagogy aimed at understanding and challenging interlocking systems of oppression” (p. 51). While many teachers may feel passionate about such education in general, some do not have the theoretical knowledge provided by the specific approaches mentioned above. Therefore, in order to assess the effectiveness of social justice education, what is needed is an inclusive framework that can assess various teacher practices without confining them to one pedagogical theory or another. I believe that Iris Marion Young’s (1990) discussion

of the “five faces of oppression” can provide us with such a framework. In the following section, I discuss the applicability of Young’s framework for assessing the ways in which teachers are able to counter various forms of oppression, no matter what their theoretical background might be.

2.2.2 Iris Marion Young and the Five Faces of Oppression

All of the approaches to education described above advocate an appreciation of differences and a conscious struggle against oppression. As classrooms are becoming ever more diverse, it is not useful to focus only on one type of oppression such as sexism or racism; teaching for social justice necessitates the recognition of various forms of oppression and how they affect our students as well as the people we teach about. As Kelly (2007) notes, “all people in a country like Canada belong to, and identify with, multiple groups [...] Thus, depending on the specific context, people may find that a particular group identity places them in either a relation of privilege or oppression” (p. 8). Iris Marion Young (1990) has developed a framework for understanding oppression and how it affects multiple groups. She reveals five “faces” of oppression: exploitation, marginalization, powerlessness, cultural imperialism, and violence. Kelly (Brandes & Kelly, 2004; Kelly & Brandes, 2001, 2008; Kelly and Brooks, 2009; Kelly, 2009) has conducted a number of studies on social justice education and has reflected on how her participants worked against each of these elements⁵. Below I explain the five faces of oppression, as well as comment on ways in which Kelly has seen teachers work against them within their classrooms.

⁵ To my knowledge, no other scholars have used Young’s framework to analyze educational practices. The studies outlined here look at teacher practices and not necessarily at the effects of these practices for students. This latter point is discussed further in section 5.4.

Exploitation, the first face of oppression, refers to the “transfer of the results of the labor of one social group to benefit another” (Young, 1990, p. 49). Such benefits often include material goods and wealth, but they can also include non-tangible goods such as status and power. Factory owners, for example, hold more power than factory workers, benefit monetarily from the output of the workers, and may also receive greater respect or status in society because of the fact that they have many people working ‘under’ them. Although none of the teachers who participated in her studies spoke specifically about countering exploitation, Kelly (2009) has reflected on how some of their practices could have that effect. For example, Kelly and Brooks (2009) spoke with one teacher who created a unit on child labour for her grade 5/6 students. She taught about Iqbal Masih, a 12-year-old activist from Pakistan who has demonstrated children’s ability to ‘make a difference’, in this case through direct involvement in the struggle against the exploitation of other children. Kelly (2009) also speaks of educational resources developed by an organization called *CoDevelopment Canada*, including one which focuses on child labour and another which addresses economic inequalities caused by globalized trade. These resources could be used in the high school classroom as a means to discuss and counter exploitation in a variety of contexts.

Marginalization refers to the exclusion of certain categories of people from participation in political, economic, or social life. For example, despite improvements over time, it is still more difficult today for women, people of colour, the old, the disabled, and people with indigenous heritage to find jobs than it is for white males. Kelly (2007) has seen teachers counter marginalization by selecting materials that focus on injustice in history as well as those that highlight the perspectives of marginalized groups. Kelly and Brandes (2008) also note instances of teachers attempting to counter the marginalization of students who speak English as

an additional language (EAL). For example, some teachers used textbooks written specifically for EAL learners which “motivated EAL and non-EAL students alike to speak out, because it continually linked historical events and themes to current-day student concerns” (Kelly & Brandes, 2008, p. 62). Others worked at drawing EAL students into class discussions by inviting them to share experiences from their countries of origin. Jim Cummins (2000, 2009) has written extensively about the importance of encouraging such participation as well as multi-lingualism, looking at other languages and cultures as assets rather than burdens. Cummins and colleagues (2005) highlight the importance of multi-language *identity texts*. For such texts, students are asked to write, or otherwise create, work that touches on a topic of interest to them or of relevance to their lives. Encouraging them to do so in their first language, as well as in English, allows them to demonstrate their literacy skills and a wide-range of other abilities. The effects have included improved literacy skills but also “the flow of knowledge, ideas, and feelings between home and school and across languages” (Cummins et al., 2005, p. 7); these students’ voices are no longer marginalized just because of weaker English skills.

Powerlessness refers to those who “do not regularly participate in making decisions that affect the conditions of their lives and actions” (Young, 1990, p. 56). Those in non-professional jobs, for example, do not have the education opportunities, autonomy at work, the ability to make creative judgments at work, and the respect outside of work that professionals do. In addition, various groups of people such as the young, the old, and the disabled have many of their decisions made for them by others. In conventional schooling, students generally have little say in what or how they learn; many teachers preach democracy in the real world but take an authoritative stance inside the classroom. Kelly (2007) notes a number of ways that she has seen teachers attempt to counter powerlessness in their classrooms, including:

a) questioning, and prompting their students to question, the ‘all knowing teacher’ image; (b) involving students in the setting and weighting of assessment criteria; (c) encouraging students to construct conflicting and contradictory meanings of texts; (d) working with students to produce their own meaningful artifacts; and (e) legitimating young people’s (sometimes inchoate) resistance to their relative powerlessness in school and beyond (p. 11).

Teachers felt that these practices helped to develop a sense of agency in their students, a key component in the struggle against powerlessness.

Those who face *cultural imperialism* “experience how the dominant meanings of a society render the particular perspective of one’s own group invisible at the same time as they stereotype one’s group and mark it out as the Other” (Young, 1990, p. 59). The dominant group’s culture is established as the norm for society against which all other groups are judged. In many cases these groups are stereotyped and seen as something “other” than the norm. Additionally, when Young refers to cultural imperialism also rendering non-dominant groups *invisible*, she means that the non-dominant group’s perspectives are not recognized in wider society. A clear example of this is that many North American social studies textbooks present history from the perspective of European colonizers, highlighting their victories while ignoring the perspectives of indigenous peoples whose lives were destroyed by such “victories”. British Columbia teachers have been found to work against cultural imperialism by drawing students’ attention to omissions in their textbooks, discussing the reasons for such omissions, and bringing in Aboriginal or other marginalized perspectives (Kelly, 2007; Brandes & Kelly, 2003).

The final face of oppression that Young names is *violence*. Violence here refers to the fact that many people live in fear of unprovoked violence simply because they belong to a particular social group and that often such attacks are tolerated, or at least not heavily punished. Violence can mean physical harm but also includes harassment, stigmatizing, and degrading of any kind. For example, there have been recent cases of both verbal and physical attacks on

members of downtown Vancouver's gay community (see Crawford, 2010). Kelly (2007) found that many teachers she worked with had countered such violence by addressing, discussing, and refusing to tolerate homophobic or racist slurs and other demeaning language in their classrooms. Others focused on cooperative learning, aiming to cultivate "communication across differences" (Brandes & Kelly, 2003, Teaching for democratic citizenship, para. 1). Teachers in a study by Kelly and Brandes (2008) also noted that some students faced violence because they were graded lower than other students. These teachers attempted to counter this form of violence by using alternative assessment practices, such as portfolios, where students were directly involved in the process.

The above framework helps to clarify the various forms of oppression and to demonstrate how we might work against them. It is important to note that while some of the above examples include teaching *about* oppression, such as in the case of the unit on child exploitation, the majority go a step further to counter oppressive teaching and institutional practices, for example by being inclusive of all students and by practicing democracy in the classroom. Kevin Kumashiro (2000, 2004) reminds us that anti-oppressive education is about more than just learning about different people and cultures; it includes learning about ourselves and our institutions and the problems within them. These problems are complex and situated and therefore implementing only one strategy for dealing with them will never be sufficient. Teachers dedicated to anti-oppressive education will have general goals in mind but must treat each lesson as a new opportunity in the ongoing struggle for personal, institutional, and societal transformation. Because each educational context is unique, it is important to have a framework that can both attend to these differences while at the same time demonstrating the common links between them. I believe that Young (1990) provides us with such a framework, and I have

therefore used the five faces of oppression model to analyze the practices described by the participants in my study. This analysis can be found in section 4.3.2.

2.3 Social Justice Education in the Spanish Classroom

Dedicated scholars have devised frameworks for social justice education that can apply to any classroom. In *Rethinking our Classrooms*, Bigelow, Harvey, Karp and Miller (2001) argue that in order to teach for equity and justice, curriculum and classroom practice must be grounded in the lives of our students. These practices must also be critical, multicultural, participatory, and activist. With a similar vision, in *Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice*, Adams, Bell and Griffin (2007) insist that social change can only occur if students are encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning, to respect one another, to look critically at cultural images and information, and to develop the behaviours, skills and strength to make necessary changes. Both of these volumes provide an excellent starting point for any teacher committed to social justice.

There have been several calls for more critical perspectives in the field of language education (e.g. Guilherme, 2002; Norton & Toohey, 2004; Reagan & Osborn, 2002) which advocate “extending the educational space to the social, cultural, and political dynamics of language use” (Kumaravadivelu, 2006, p. 70). Scholars and practitioners in the field recognize the importance of teaching not only grammar and syntax but also the sociocultural aspects (Block, 2003; Canagarajah, 2005) and metalinguistics (Reagan & Osborn, 2002) of languages. Such knowledge includes understanding the context of language use, the relationships between language and culture, issues of language policy, critical language awareness, ideologies about language and language varieties, and many other issues. Knowledge of such issues is an important part of becoming an informed global citizen who is able to relate to and work with

others from cultural backgrounds different from their own. As Kubota, Austin, and Saito-Abbot (2003) explain:

Foreign language education will continue to be viewed as a major educational agenda in the age of globalization. At the same time, it inevitably will be situated in an increasingly more diverse society. Researchers and practitioners must shift their attention beyond apolitical appreciation and celebration of foreign culture, to critically explore issues of diversity and sociopolitical aspects of human communication, and to make foreign language education instrumental in creating greater equality (p. 22)

With growing access to international communication as well as the flow of immigrants into Canada, contact with diverse cultures is greater than ever. The language teacher has a unique role of educating students about intercultural communication (Guilherme, 2002) and therefore has the responsibility of attending to the critical issues outlined above.

Examples of critical pedagogies in the high school Spanish classroom have hardly been discussed. However, many theorists and researchers have contributed indirectly to this area. For example, bilingual educators have stressed the need for pedagogies that are inclusive of the language and culture of students from different backgrounds (Arce, 2004; Cummins, 2000, 2009) and proponents of critical discourse analysis highlight the need to examine how power, dominance and inequality are reproduced and perpetuated through learning materials (Leeman & Rabin, 2007; Prieto Ramos, 2001; Van Dijk, 2001). In addition, a few studies have been conducted on social justice education in elementary school Spanish classrooms (Arce, 2004; Goldstein, 1995; Rosenbusch, 1992), university Spanish courses (Leeman & Rabin, 2007; Mantle-Bromley & Miller, 1991; Prieto-Ramos, 2001), and in teacher-education programs for language teachers (Fox & Diaz-Greenberg, 2006). In addition, various resources have been printed and/or made available online. Below, I outline the main findings from these studies and comment on the applicability of these resources to the high school setting.

Rosenbusch (1992) revealed that instruction in elementary level language classrooms focused on global perspectives contributed to a greater awareness about critical issues amongst students. In this study, children (in grades 1-6) enrolled in a summer language program were presented with a special unit on global education. Parents, in collaboration with their children, and teachers filled out evaluation forms about the units. Although this study did not claim to have a critical agenda, the themes presented in the Spanish unit would be ideal for critical discussions about social justice issues. The students examined issues of inadequate housing and hunger in Mexico and in their own community. The unit had the children drawing, examining pictures and slides, and discussing access to housing and services in both communities. The evaluations were very positive: parents indicated that their children had gained a heightened awareness about global issues, and the teachers recognized the value and usefulness of such lessons. Because this study was interactive and was relevant to the lives of the students, it is a good example of social justice education. The Spanish unit could easily be adapted so that it is appropriate in a contemporary high school classroom.

Another study, by Arce (2004), investigated the practices of Latino bilingual teachers striving to maintain what she terms an “emancipatory” pedagogy. Following a participatory research design, Arce collaborated with novice teachers working in Spanish-English bilingual elementary schools. Through collaborative dialogues and analysis, the teachers demonstrated that using culturally bound pedagogy and teaching history from a critical perspective led to social critique and student empowerment. However, institutional resistance and lack of resources were also noted. The teachers had to investigate the hidden curriculum⁶ in standard materials in order

⁶ The “hidden curriculum” refers to the, often hegemonic, cultural and political perspectives that underlie the curriculum in any educational context. These perspectives may not be taught explicitly but are nevertheless transmitted to students through the educational materials and practices employed. For a detailed analysis of this concept, see Giroux (2001).

to overcome biases, and most created and/ or used supplementary materials. Some of these materials included alternative reading material, such as literature on Latino families, critical dialogues about a variety of topics, and guest speakers. These resources were more effective for the older grades reinforcing the idea that such practices would be valuable in high school classrooms.

Fox and Diaz-Greenberg (2006) investigated the perspective and practices of 22 teacher-candidates enrolled in the world language licensure programs at two universities in the United States. Both programs advocated critical pedagogical approaches and multicultural education. Looking at reflective essays written by the teacher-candidates, online postings based on their class discussions, and interview data from six of the participants, the authors found that the teacher-candidates were able to put the theories advocated in their programs into practice in their K-12 classrooms. Again, many felt that they needed to supplement the textbook in order to do so. One method they used was sharing memories of their own intercultural experiences and encouraging students to share theirs. They also invited people from the target culture into their classrooms, used authentic materials, and encouraged communication with students from the target culture. They advocated for embedding culture in language learning as opposed to teaching it separately. These methods could be very useful in a high school setting as they demonstrate the reality of the culture as something more than brief encounters while travelling.

Many studies highlight the importance of encouraging critical literacy and critical language awareness. These practices “aim to help students examine critically the cultural and ideological components of language phenomena, including the differing social and cultural value of different languages, language varieties, and language practices” (Leeman & Rabin, 2007, p. 307). Since literature is often the focus of language classrooms, it can be used as a springboard

for critical inquiry and discussion. At the elementary level, Goldstein (1995) demonstrates how her students were able to recognize social and economic barriers in stories and in reality, while developing literacy skills. Her class consisted of 11 first and second grade Latino students “designated as having learning disabilities” (Goldstein, 1995, p. 465) who attended a bilingual Spanish-English elementary school. Through use of children’s stories that include themes of immigration, racism, and socioeconomic status, Goldstein engaged her students in dialogue and projects that fostered critical awareness and action. At the same time, they developed vocabulary, reading, and writing skills. The students were participants in determining both the course materials and the themes for discussion. They also kept journals, and wrote stories and autobiographies as part of the literacy program. The author found that through the use of collaborative and inclusive practices, the students were able to develop both traditional and critical literacy skills. These students already spoke Spanish at home but the program could be adapted for an SAL classroom as well. Many of the same books could be used as they are level-appropriate.

Other studies on critical literacy have been conducted in the university setting. Using a famous colonial text, *Nueva Crónica y Buen Gobierno* written in 1615 by Peruvian Guaman Poma de Ayala, Leeman and Rabin (2007) give countless examples of questions that could be posed to students that would engage them in critical discussion. For example, the text lends itself to questions of who could read and write in colonial times, which can lead to a discussion of who can read and write now and what it means to be literate. Also, the text is multilingual and uses different forms when addressing different audiences. This could be used to discuss literacy as political agency, the ideologies behind language varieties, the status of minority languages in Latin America, and many other important questions. The authors make many compelling

arguments for the need for such questioning across educational contexts as well as for the use of this text in the SAL classroom. Although they write for the undergraduate Spanish teacher, these texts and methods could be used in a critical high school Spanish classroom as well.

Prieto-Ramos (2001) also shows the importance of critical literacy. He conducted a unit on critical media literacy with his undergraduate Spanish classes. The unit focused on newspaper articles about immigration to Spain. The activities involved in the unit included comprehension exercises, discussions of major themes, critical reading exercises, a debate, and a final written task. An anonymous questionnaire given to the students at the end of the unit revealed that the students had learned about immigration issues in Spain and in their own country (Ireland) and that many of them changed their attitudes as a result of the project. Many indicated a heightened awareness of ideological influences in the media, and all indicated that they were better able to grasp implicit meanings of texts through critical analysis. In addition, all of the students believed the project to be a good way to practice Spanish. This study highlights the effectiveness of using material that “hits close to home” for the students. It also demonstrates the ability of teachers to foster critical literacy in the Spanish classroom. One very important aspect of this study is that it included student feedback about the effects of the lesson. Many of the studies outlined above to not include this component, a shortcoming discussed further in section 5.3.

In addition to the academic literature, there are a number of organizations and websites that provide resources for social justice education, many of which are relevant to the high school Spanish classroom. The *Popular Education News* (popednews.org) provides a number of links to such websites. For example, the *Highlander Research and Education Centre* (highlandercentre.org) provides numerous critical education resources, including several bilingual Spanish-English resources on topics such as immigration and globalization.

Learner.org provides resources created by and for the language teacher, including a unit developed by Lori Langer de Ramirez on the “politics of art”. In this unit students examine, debate and write letters in response to visa restrictions imposed on Columbian artists by the government of Spain. Finally, *Rethinking Schools* (rethinkingschools.org) provides numerous publications and other resources for teachers dedicated to social justice.

There are also examples from Canada. The *Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives* (policyalternatives.ca) publishes a quarterly journal on education titled *Our Schools, Our Selves* with editions on feminism, anti-racism, and other aspects of social justice education. The *Teaching for Peace* website (zisman.ca/peace) was created by the Burnaby Teachers Social Justice Committee (Burnaby is a suburb of Vancouver) and was funded by the British Columbia Teacher’s Federation and the British Columbia Teachers for Peace and Global Education. The site contains an extensive list of resources, including a list of links and suggested activities created by Donna Clark, a Burnaby teacher, on social movements in Latin America. These resources provide an excellent starting point for high school Spanish teachers looking to incorporate social justice themes in their classes.

Above I have outlined many contributions to the field of social justice education in the Spanish classroom. Studies have looked at teacher education programs that focus on critical pedagogies (Arce, 2004; Fox and Diaz-Greenberg, 2006), global education (Rosenbusch, 1992), and critical language awareness (Goldstein, 1995; Leeman & Rabin, 2007; Prieto-Ramos, 2001). In addition, there are many organizations that provide online resources for social justice education which are applicable to the Spanish classroom. Despite the insights provided by these studies and websites, I have found no research on bringing social justice into the high school Spanish classroom. Therefore, I engaged in this exploratory study looking at the beliefs and

practices of teachers of Spanish in high schools across British Columbia. Before describing my study, I believe it is important to briefly discuss some issues in the investigation of teachers' beliefs and practices.

2.4 Investigating Teachers' Beliefs and Practices

Understanding teachers' beliefs is an important step in understanding their classroom practices. As Pajares (1992) explains, "the beliefs teachers hold influence their perceptions and judgements, which, in turn, affect their behaviour in the classroom" (p. 307). In addition, we will not be able to influence educational changes unless we understand teachers' current belief systems (Eisenhart, Shrum, Harding, & Cuthbert, 1988). However, it is important to clarify what we mean by *beliefs* and how we plan to measure them. Rokeach (1968) proposed that beliefs are mental propositions that have a cognitive aspect (knowledge), an affective aspect (emotion), and a behavioural aspect (leading to action). He also explains that beliefs can be descriptive, evaluative, or prescriptive. When it comes to assessing the beliefs of others, both Rokeach (1968) and Pajares (1992) caution:

Understanding beliefs [...] requires making inferences about individuals' underlying states, inferences fraught with difficulty because individuals are often unable or unwilling, for many reasons, to accurately represent their beliefs. For this reason, beliefs cannot be directly observed or measured but must be inferred from what people say, intend, and do (Pajares, 1992, p. 314).

In other words, since beliefs can only be inferred, we need to look at what individuals say that they believe, at what they say they intend to do, and at their actual behaviours.

Many of the studies outlined above used interviews with participants as a way to understand their beliefs (e.g. Fox & Diaz-Greenberg, 2006; Kelly & Brandes, 2008; Kelly, Brandes, & Orłowski, 2003-2004; Valdés et al., 2003; Westheimer & Kahne, 2004). Some also employed other methods for understanding beliefs such as reflective essays (Fox & Diaz-

Greenberg, 2006), evaluation forms (Rosenbusch, 1992), and workshops (Kelly & Brandes, 2008). Such methods proved useful in understanding what teachers say and intend. In many cases, they also involved teachers reporting on what they do in their classrooms. However, only a few of the above studies involved observation of classroom behaviours. In two studies (Goldstein, 1995; Prieto-Ramos, 2001), the investigator was also the teacher and thus reported on various classroom activities. Two others (Arce, 2004; Westheimer & Kahne, 2004) involved classroom observations as part of the research design. The inclusion of classroom observations brings greater validity to the latter sets of studies as they provide evidence that teachers are following through with what they say. The present study employed a mixed-methods approach involving questionnaires, interviews, and classroom observations in order to triangulate the data and bring greater validity to the findings. These methods are discussed further in the following chapter.

2.5 Summary

In this chapter, I have discussed definitions of social justice education and various approaches to such pedagogy. I have stressed the need for an inclusive framework for assessing whether educational programs or methods are attending to social justice issues, and I have suggested using Young's (1990) model of the five faces of oppression as a starting point. I have also outlined a number of studies that relate to social justice in the Spanish classroom. There is a lack of research that looks at such practices at the high school level, which led me to engage in the present study exploring social justice in British Columbian high school Spanish classrooms. Finally, I have also discussed some issues in the investigation of teachers' beliefs and practices. In the next chapter, I outline the methods used for the present study.

Chapter 3 – Research Design and Methodology

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I will discuss the research methodology and procedures used in this study beginning with how I gained access to the participants and a description of the research setting. I will then provide a detailed description of the participating teachers. I will also describe the procedures used for data collection and analysis. Finally, I will discuss the credibility and transferability of the research findings.

3.2 A Mixed-Methods Approach

The present study employed a mixed-methods approach including online questionnaires sent to teachers across the province of British Columbia, interviews with several teachers in the Metro Vancouver area, as well as classroom observations. This mix of quantitative and qualitative data was selected for several reasons. I wanted a large sample in order to gain insight into the collective beliefs and practices of Spanish teachers in my province. However, I was also eager to hear specific examples of classroom practice. In addition to this desire for both general and specific examples, I understood that a mix of methods would be one way to allow for triangulation of the data and, thus, enhance credibility (see section 3.8). The benefits of such an approach have been discussed in the literature. For example, Miles and Huberman (1994), drawing on many other scholars, review the reasons for using mixed-methods approaches. They stress that each method (qualitative and quantitative) can be enhanced through integration with the other.

3.3 Access

After receiving approval from the University of British Columbia's Behavioural Research Ethics Board, high school Spanish teachers were recruited for participation. In British Columbia, the superintendent of each school district must give their approval before contacting individual schools and teachers. I began by contacting the ten largest school districts in Metro Vancouver. Each district had its own procedures for obtaining approval to conduct research there which I strictly adhered to. Of these ten school districts, one informed me that they were not taking on any more research projects, and two others never replied to my request.

Once I received approval to do so, I contacted all the schools in the district by writing an email to the school principal. Please see Appendix A for a copy of this email. Many schools informed me that they did not offer Spanish as a subject, but in those schools that did offer it the majority put me in contact with their Spanish teacher/s. Once I had received email approval from the teachers to do so, I sent them another email containing detailed project information as well as the link to the questionnaire. A copy of this email can be found in Appendix B.

From the original seven school districts, I received approval from thirty five Spanish teachers. However, by the end of the first month, only twenty two questionnaires had been completed. Thus, I decided to expand my research to include smaller districts in the lower mainland as well as large districts elsewhere in the province. After gaining approval in these districts, it became clear that the sample would still be small. I therefore expanded my research sample to include all high schools where Spanish is offered in the province of British Columbia, including private schools.

Of the sixty five districts in the province, sixty agreed to participate as did twelve private schools. A total of seventy two questionnaires were sent out to Spanish teachers, and sixty two

(86.1%) were returned complete along with the attached consent form for interviews and classroom observations.

I was pleasantly surprised by the number of teachers who agreed to interviews (thirty) but decided to keep within the original proposal of five. I emailed all of the teachers who agreed to interviews and met with the first five to respond. Later, I decided to conduct two additional interviews as I was particularly interested in hearing from those two teachers. I wanted to speak to Clara⁷ because I knew of some social justice-related work that she was doing in her classroom. I wanted to speak to Mateo because I had no other male interview participants.

3.4 Setting

The participants in my study all taught Spanish at a high school level in the province of British Columbia. Some of these teachers taught in small communities, but most taught in the larger urban centres and their surrounding suburbs. The questionnaires were hosted online and, thus, the participants were able to complete them from any location where they had access to the internet.

All interviews were conducted in the teachers' classrooms after school hours with the exception of Clara who invited me to her home. Due to travel constraints, I only interviewed teachers that worked in Metro Vancouver. However, their schools were dispersed throughout a variety of neighbourhoods that differed in their populations and affluence. Vancouver and the rest of the Metro area are characterized by a multicultural population so all of the schools were diverse in terms of ethnic makeup. Isabela, Clara and Magda all worked in working class suburbs characterized by ethnic diversity and a number of refugees. Penelope and Rose worked in middle class neighbourhoods largely populated by a single, non-Caucasian ethnic group. Estelle and

⁷ All participant names are pseudonyms

Mateo worked in middle-upper class neighbourhoods with larger Caucasian populations. More details about the schools where the interview participants worked are provided in the participant descriptions in section 3.6.

3.5 Data Collection

As described in section 3.3, I gained access to British Columbian Spanish teachers by following the procedures outlined by each school district. Once I had email approval from the teachers, I sent them the link to the questionnaire. Those who also consented to an interview were contacted either through email or telephone and we arranged a meeting. With those teachers who also agreed to classroom observations, I arranged a date to come into their classes at the end of the interview. Details about the procedures undertaken during the questionnaires, interviews and classroom observations are found in the following three sections.

3.5.1 Questionnaires

The online questionnaire was hosted on Edudata, a Canadian web-survey company, and the link remained open from April 1st, 2010 to May 31st, 2010. A copy of the questionnaire can be found in Appendix C. It was developed following the guidelines outlined in Dornyei (2003), and it contained six sections. The first section of the questionnaire asked for demographic information. It asked teachers how long they had been teaching Spanish, how long they had been teaching in their current school board, and what grades they taught. It also asked about teachers' experiences in Spanish-speaking countries, their experiences with professional development programs related to social justice, their gender, and their ethnicity.

The second section asked participants to rate the extent to which they agree with statements on social justice education which included statements on democracy, socially just

curricula, the teacher's role, and teacher neutrality. These questions were adapted from a study conducted by Kelly and Brandes (2001) on teacher neutrality. They were meant to help place teachers along the continuum of beliefs about social justice which ranges from liberal to critical, as described in section 2.2. In other words, I assumed that most teachers would agree with certain statements but that only the more critical teachers would agree with others. Appendix D provides a list of these statements and indicates the classification of each as either "liberal" or "critical".

The third section had participants rate the extent to which they agree with statements about social justice in the Spanish classroom. These statements were more specific to the Spanish classroom and asked teachers about the importance of addressing particular issues in their classes. The second and third sections together were meant to provide information on teachers' definitions and beliefs.

The fourth and fifth sections asked about participants' classroom practices. The fourth section asked the teachers to indicate the extent to which they engage in practices that I equate with social justice pedagogy in general. For example, they were asked to indicate the extent to which they include students in selecting learning materials, the extent to which they seek out materials that highlight social justice issues, and the extent to which they encourage students to engage in social activism.

The fifth section had participants indicate how often they spoke about specific issues in the Spanish classroom. Such issues included environmental issues, racism, sexism, homophobia, and the treatment of indigenous peoples. There was also space for teachers to indicate other social justice-related topics that they addressed in their Spanish classes.

The last section contained general, open-ended questions. These included asking teachers how they felt overall about the importance of teaching social justice issues in the Spanish classroom, and the obstacles to doing so. At the end of the questionnaire was a consent form for interviews and classroom observations. A copy of the consent form can be found in Appendix E.

3.5.2 Interviews

The interviews were semi-structured; I had a list of fourteen questions, but I asked others as they arose. The set questions asked the teachers to describe how they came into the Spanish teaching profession, to talk about issues such as identity and teacher neutrality, to describe their beliefs and practices around social justice in the Spanish classroom, and to speak about the obstacles to teaching for social justice. A complete list of the set interview questions can be found in Appendix F.

I encouraged teachers to speak as much or as little as they felt necessary for each question and, thus, the interviews varied in length from twenty to ninety minutes. The interviews were audio-recorded and later transcribed. I also took hand-written notes of the teachers' responses during the conversation. Finally, after each interview, I conducted a brief reflection in which I noted key highlights and insights that arose from the interaction.

3.5.3 Observations

Four of the seven interview participants agreed to classroom observations: Magda, Mateo, Rose, and Penelope. I went to their classrooms on a day that we agreed upon and observed their classes for half of the day. I observed three of Penelope's classes and two classes for each of the other teachers. We tried to plan the observations so that I would be able to observe two different grade levels, although for Mateo I observed the same grade for both

classes. With all of the observations combined, I was able to observe classes at each of the grade levels for which Spanish is taught (grades 9 through 12) at least once. Table 1 displays the grades observed for each of the interview participants.

Table 1 - Grade Levels for Classes Observed

	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12	Split 11/12
Magda		1	1		
Mateo		2			
Rose	1			1	
Penelope	1		1		1
Total	2	3	2	1	1

The purpose of the observations was to verify the information gathered during the questionnaires and interviews but also to gain insight into how high school Spanish teachers operate in the classroom. In other words, I was curious about social justice pedagogy as well as classroom management strategies such as learning materials used, assessment, time management, discipline, etc. I used an observation grid to note specific instances of social justice pedagogy, and I took handwritten notes on various aspects of the classroom interactions. The observation grid can be found in Appendix G. The focus was on teachers' practices only and not on the students. Since both audio and video recordings would have captured data from the students, neither was used.

3.6 Participants

The invitation to participate in the online questionnaires was extended to all high school Spanish teachers in the province who had been teaching Spanish during the academic year in which the study was conducted. Of the seventy-two questionnaires sent across the province, forty-four were to teachers in the Metro Vancouver area. A total of sixty-two questionnaires were returned complete, a response rate of 86.1%. As the questionnaires were anonymous, it is

impossible to know where exactly these sixty-two teachers were from. However, the first section of the questionnaire asked for other demographic information for which the results are provided in the next section.

3.6.1 Questionnaire Participants

The questionnaire participants varied in background and experience. Table 2 shows the number of years teaching Spanish indicated by the questionnaire participants, and Table 3 shows the number of years teaching in their current School Boards. The similarity of these two sets of numbers indicates little movement across School Boards. Forty percent of the 62 participants had been teaching Spanish for five years or less, and seventy-six percent had been teaching it for ten years or less. Only eight percent had been teaching Spanish for over twenty years.

Table 2 - Years Teaching Spanish

Years teaching Spanish	<1 - 5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21-25	26-30	31-35
Frequency	25	22	4	6	4	0	1
Percent	40.3%	35.5%	6.5%	9.7%	6.5%	0%	1.6%

Table 3 - Years in Current School Board

Years in Current School Board	<1 - 5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21-25	26-30	31-35
Frequency	23	21	4	9	4	0	1
Percent	37.1%	33.9%	6.5%	14.5%	6.5%	0%	1.6%

Demographic information for the questionnaire participants can be found in Table 4. Seventy-nine percent of the participants were female. The majority (58%) were Caucasian, and

19% indicated that they had Hispanic heritage⁸. Thirty-seven percent of the participants had completed an academic degree beyond a Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Education. All but three had travelled to a Spanish-speaking country, and 73% indicated that they had lived in a Spanish-speaking country. Half of the participants indicated that they had attended at least one professional development conference related to social justice education.

Table 4 - Demographic Information for Questionnaire Participants

	Female	Male	Caucasian	Hispanic/ Spanish Heritage	Completed degree beyond BA/ BEd	Travelled to Spanish- speaking country	Lived in Spanish- speaking country	Attended pro-d on social justice education
Frequency	49	13	36	12	23	58	45	31
Percent	79%	21%	58.1%	19.4%	37.1%	93.5%	72.6%	50%

3.6.2 Interview and Observation Participants

The interview participants represented the overall sample quite well. Six female participants were interviewed and one male. Five of these seven were Caucasian (71%), and two were Hispanic (29%). Four (57%) had completed a graduate level degree, and six (86%) had attended at least one professional development conference related to social justice education. All of them had both travelled to and lived in Spanish speaking countries. Demographic information for the interview participants can be found in Table 5. More details about each interview

⁸ The question on ethnicity in the questionnaire was open-ended. I felt that it was appropriate to leave this question open-ended as each person defines ethnicity differently. I categorized people as Hispanic if they indicated any background from Latin America or Spain. I categorized as Caucasian any person that indicated heritage from a European country other than Spain. I also grouped those who indicated any First Nations heritage together. Many people put “Canadian” as their ethnicity; I did not categorize these people unless they also indicated a background from another country. My reason for asking about ethnicity was to reveal whether any of these groups were more likely to believe in and practice social justice education.

participant can be found in the following seven sections. Please note that the names used for participants are pseudonyms.

Table 5 - Demographic Information for Interview Participants

	Female	Male	Caucasian	Hispanic/ Spanish Heritage	Completed degree beyond BA/ BEd	Travelled to Spanish- speaking country	Lived in Spanish- speaking country	Attended pro-d on social justice education
Frequency	6	1	5	2	4	7	7	6
Percent	85.7%	14.3%	71.4%	28.6%	57.1%	100%	100%	85.7%

3.6.2.1 Magda

Magda is a Caucasian woman from a middle-class family who was in her late-thirties at the time of the study. She had completed her Bachelor of Education in elementary school education. She then accepted a teaching job in a Central American country where she learned to speak Spanish. When she returned to Canada, she was asked to teach Spanish at a high school in a suburb of Vancouver, which she accepted. The school she was working at was populated mainly by students of South Asian descent, and Magda described it as “inner-city”. She had been teaching in her school district for eight years at the time of the study and taught Spanish for grades 9 through 12 as well as Math.

3.6.2.2 Rose

Rose, a Caucasian woman in her mid-thirties, was in her first year of teaching. She had completed a Bachelor of Arts in Spanish and Latin American studies and then worked in international development for about ten years. This work had involved popular education workshops, and she had also completed a Masters in Education. Later, like Magda, she did her

teaching practicum in elementary school education but was offered a Spanish- teaching job because of her knowledge of the language. She taught grades 9 through 12 in a middle-class neighbourhood characterized by a diverse student body with a large portion of East Asian descent.

3.6.2.3 Penelope

Penelope is a Caucasian woman who was in her late thirties. She had been teaching for ten years, for seven of which she taught Spanish. She had completed a Bachelor of Arts in Spanish and a Bachelor of Education in elementary school education. She worked in various Elementary school and other positions for four years before transitioning into full time Spanish teaching. She taught grades 9 through 12 in a middle class suburb with a student body of mainly East Asian descent. She described the school as “conservative” and allocating limited funds to the Spanish program. Some of her classes were split classes with students from two different grade levels.

3.6.2.4 Isabela

Isabela is a Mexican-Canadian woman who was in her late twenties. She had her Bachelor of Education and had been teaching for four years, although this was her first full-time contract. She spoke of her love of languages as her reason for teaching as well as her desire to share her culture. She had spent her youth living in both Canada and Mexico. She worked in an ethnically diverse working class suburb. Her school had a large Spanish-speaking population, including a number of refugees.

3.6.2.5 Estelle

Estelle had been teaching since 1976 and at her current school since 1998. She is from Argentina and was in her early fifties at the time of the study. She has a background in social work, including work in multicultural family support services and as a representative for immigrant women. She also has a Masters of Arts. Although she had also originally completed her teaching degree in elementary school education, her first teaching job in Canada was at a high school that was looking for a teacher who would have the knowledge and skills necessary for working with a Spanish-speaking immigrant group. Her current job was in an affluent neighbourhood with a student body that was diverse but with more Caucasian students than the schools described above. She taught Spanish for grades 10 through 12.

3.6.2.6 Mateo

Mateo, a Caucasian man, also taught in an affluent community with a larger Caucasian student body. He was in his mid-thirties and had been teaching for eight years, for six of which he taught Spanish. He described his family background as middle class and full of teachers and activists. Before coming into the teaching profession, he had worked in international development and had a Masters degree in Theory and Practice of Human Rights. His work had taken him to Latin America on several occasions. He currently taught Spanish for grades 10 and 11, and he was also teaching Social Justice 12.

3.6.2.7 Clara

Clara, a Caucasian woman, was in her early fifties but had only been teaching for ten years. She had done Spanish and Latin American studies as minors during her undergraduate degree and then spent many years working in solidarity with various Latin American

communities and refugees. Later she did a Masters degree in Community Education and worked as a Community School Coordinator. At age forty, she returned to school to do her teaching certificate in Social Studies and Art. Like many of the other teachers, however, she was offered a job teaching Spanish, which she accepted. She taught grades 9 through 12 in an ethnically diverse working class suburb.

3.7 Data Analysis

Data analysis occurred in four stages. In the first stage, statistical analyses were carried out on the questionnaire data. The Edudata survey tool allows the user to download the questionnaire results into an Excel file which can then be uploaded to various programs for statistical analyses. Using the SPSS program, descriptive statistics were calculated for the quantitative questionnaire items. Frequencies were calculated for all items as well as group frequencies by gender, ethnicity, and reasons for travel to Spanish countries.

The second stage of analysis, which overlapped with the first stage, involved reflective note-taking which took place during and immediately after the interviews and the classroom observations. These notes included key highlights of the two processes as well as my own reflections and insights. I noted results as well as preliminary conclusions about what they might mean which I referred to during the later stages of analysis.

In the third stage, I conducted a thematic analysis of the various qualitative data gathered. These data included the open-ended questionnaire items as well as the interview data. The open-ended questionnaire items were transferred into a Word document and coded both for frequency of answers and themes. The interviews were transcribed using the Express Scribe program and then coded for themes. Some of these themes had been anticipated and formed the basis for the interview questions such as those that centered on teacher identity and teacher neutrality. Others

were revealed using an inductive approach in which categories are allowed to emerge from the data rather than being imposed by the researcher (Palys & Atchison, 2008). For example, many teachers spoke about raising students' awareness of global issues in their answers to the open-ended question about the importance of social justice issues in the Spanish classroom. From this, I concluded that these teachers define education for global citizenry as an important aspect of social justice education. Samples of the thematic analysis can be found in Appendix H and Appendix I.

In following with my theoretical framework outlined in Chapter 2, the final stage of data analysis was carried out using the model of oppression outlined by Young (1990). I looked at how various classroom practices described by the participants may serve to counter each of the five faces of oppression. It is from these findings that I generated the discussion in Section 4.3 and its sub-sections.

3.7.1 Theory of the Interview

Recent literature has pointed to a need for reflexivity surrounding the interview process. Until now, there has been a tendency for analysts to take interviewee's words as the truth without reflecting on how they might be influenced by the interviewer (Holstein & Gubrium, 2004). Authors such as Roulston (2010) and Talmy (2010) argue instead that both language and context influence each other and therefore cannot be separated at the point of analysis. From such a standpoint, "data do not speak for themselves; analysis centers on how meaning is negotiated, [how] knowledge is co-constructed, and [how the] interview is locally accomplished" (Talmy, 2010, p. 8). A number of discourse analytic approaches would lend themselves for looking at data from such a perspective. My main objective with this research was to conduct a thematic

analysis, but I recognize the co-constructed nature of the interviews and believe that, with more funding, a more in-depth discourse analysis would be both appropriate and revealing.

3.8 Credibility and Transferability of the Data

The credibility of the study was achieved through triangulation of the data. Triangulation is defined as confirming each finding “by showing that independent measures of it agree with it” (Miles & Huberman, 1994). By using questionnaires, interviews, and classroom observations, method triangulation and data triangulation were both achieved; all data could be either confirmed or contrasted by the findings from each of the other methods. In this way, the credibility of the data was enhanced.

The study was conducted with teachers across the province of British Columbia. Although these participants varied in terms of location (both urban and rural) and other demographic variables (see section 3.6), the fact that it is a relatively small sample from a specific region of the world means that transferring, or generalizing, the results to other groups of teachers should be carried out with caution. Above, I have attempted to outline in as much detail as possible the setting, the participants, and the method undertaken in order for other researchers to assess the applicability of the findings to other groups of teachers.

Chapter 4 – Results and Discussion

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I present the findings from my study as well as a discussion for each set of findings. The chapter is divided into three main sections based on my three research questions which pertained to (1) teachers' definitions of, and beliefs about, social justice education, (2) teachers' practices related to social justice, and (3) the obstacles to teaching for social justice. In the first section, I discuss participants' definitions and beliefs separately. In the second section, I analyze how these teachers' practices may help to counter each of the five faces of oppression described by Young (1990) which I discussed in section 2.2.2. The final section looks at the obstacles to teaching for social justice in the Spanish classroom and also contains a short subsection on supports. Throughout the chapter I draw on the results from the questionnaires, interviews, and classroom observations. Unless otherwise specified, frequencies are based on the questionnaire results. Whenever I refer to an interview or observation participant, I use their pseudonym. Quotes which are not attributed to a specific person are drawn from the open-ended items on the questionnaires.

4.2 Results for Question 1: Definitions and Beliefs

My first research question asked how participants defined teaching for social justice and whether or not they felt it was important in the Spanish classroom. In order to understand participants' definitions, the questionnaire contained statements about various facets of social justice education for which the teachers were to rate the extent to which they agreed. These items are briefly described in section 3.5.1 and can also be found in Appendix C. The percentage frequencies of answers given for these items can be found in Appendix J. In addition to these

statements, I also asked the interview participants directly for their definitions of social justice education (see Appendix F). To understand teachers' beliefs, the questionnaire contained a short list of statements about the importance of social justice education for which they rated the extent to which they agreed. The percentage frequencies for answers given to these items can also be found in Appendix J. In addition, one of the open-ended questions on the questionnaire and one of the interview questions asked whether the teachers believed it was important to teach about social justice in their classes and why. From the above mentioned items, the participants' definitions of social justice education and their beliefs about its importance were assessed. Below I present their definitions and beliefs in separate sections, followed by a discussion section which addresses both.

4.2.1 Definitions of Social Justice Education

For all of the questionnaire items related to defining social justice education, except the one on neutrality, it was found over 90% of the teachers at least somewhat agreed (see Appendix J). They agreed that in a democratic classroom individual voices are respected, harmful slurs are addressed, social movements are taught about, and students are encouraged to engage in collective problem solving. They also agreed that a socially just curriculum is based on students' inquiries into issues, encourages students to take action, includes marginalized perspectives, and encourages students to discuss perspectives that are missing from the learning materials. Finally, they agreed that the teacher's role contributes to both students' individual potential as well as to social movements that can help transform societal inequalities. As participants were simply agreeing or disagreeing, it was not possible to infer their actual definitions of social justice education from these statements. The interviews were more revealing in this regard and are discussed later in the section.

While few teachers disagreed with any of the statements, excluding those on neutrality, it was overall easier for them to strongly agree with the liberal statements (see Appendix D). For example, for the section on democracy over 74% of the teachers strongly agreed with the two liberal statements whereas less than 54% strongly agreed with the two critical statements. Furthermore, participants were less likely to strongly agree with the statement, “A socially just curriculum is based on students’ inquires into issues” than any other statement. A student-centered curriculum, one that is based on students’ interests and queries, is part of a critical approach to education (Freire, 1970). Such an approach advocates that students be active participants in making choices about the learning process, rather than passive receptacles of information deemed important by the teacher, administration, or governing body. This point is discussed further in section 4.2.5. The fact that many teachers seemed to resist a student-centered approach indicates a tendency toward more liberal views on education.

During analysis, I hoped to place the participants into either a liberal or a critical group (see section 2.2 for a discussion of this division and Appendix D for questionnaire statements considered liberal and critical). However, since the majority of teachers at least somewhat agreed with almost all of the statements, such a division was not possible. I attempted other methods for arriving at this division, for example by deeming those who disagreed that the teacher’s role is to remain neutral as critical. According to this division, only 8.1% of participants fell into the critical camp. Although this percentage is quite low, it may be the case that only a small group take a critical approach to education. However, this is not to say that the other 90% never do so. Kelly, Brandes, and Orłowski (2003-2004) warn against treating the liberal-critical division as a dichotomy, noting that people may espouse more liberal or more critical views depending on the

context. The interviews proved a richer source of information for understanding the participants' political standpoints.

I asked the interview participants directly for their definitions of social justice education, and they provided varied responses that could be seen as ranging from liberal to critical. Magda and Isabela defined social justice education as talking about oppression and social justice issues, or as Isabela put it, “broader issues like more global, deep impact sort of things [...] talking about immigration or talking about poverty or talking about corruption in the system”. This idea of discussing social justice issues as an end in itself might be considered a liberal view. Estelle and Penelope took it a step further indicating the importance of reflecting on and discussing power imbalances. Rose, Mateo, and Clara agreed that discussing such issues was important but also felt that social justice education was about the “implicit things that you bring to your teaching” (Rose). This focus on classroom practices, as opposed to discussion topics, might be considered a more critical view. These three spoke about encouraging students to work together and to build community. They also spoke of empowerment, highlighting that they attempt to give the students as much power in the classroom as possible. Mateo spoke extensively about the importance of fostering an inclusive environment while at the same time encouraging self-awareness, critical thinking, and action outside the classroom.

The statements on teacher neutrality provided a wide range of answers, which echoes previous studies (e.g. Kelly & Brandes, 2001). In fact, the answers to these statements were more widely dispersed than any other item on the questionnaire. Table 6 displays the results for these statements. The responses given for these two items were not the inverse of each other; many teachers somewhat agreed or somewhat disagreed with both statements. However, there was

certainly a stronger tendency to agree with the first statement, indicating that most of the participants believe that teacher neutrality is an important classroom practice.

Table 6 – Percentage Frequencies for Answers Given to Question on Neutrality

	Strongly agree	Agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
15. The teacher’s role is:						
a) To present a variety of opinions and perspectives on a given topic while remaining as neutral as possible	29.0	30.6	30.6	4.8	3.2	
b) Not neutral. It is connected either to reproducing societal injustices or transforming them.	6.5	25.8	24.2	19.4	12.9	4.8

The issue of neutrality, however, elicited some interesting comments in the open-ended questionnaire items. For example, one participant wrote “I think it is important to present all sides of a story and try to remain neutral, but I also think that if I can show the more 'socially just' response to an issue, I would offer my opinion”. Another wrote:

Neutral is a tricky word. I believe my opinion is important (and cannot be separated from my identity as an educator), but not necessarily expressing it directly – it is more important to help students develop their own opinions while taking a clear stance against prejudice.

Here we see that while some teachers value neutrality, it does not override their belief in asserting certain opinions.

The interview participants also had mixed feelings about teacher neutrality. Although they all agreed that their identity influenced their teaching practices, their opinions on the ability and desirability to remain neutral varied. Isabela and Magda said that teacher neutrality was desirable but that they found it challenging. Magda indicated that she used questioning to help students think differently about certain topics rather than assert her own opinion while Isabela admitted that she sometimes gave her own opinion, adding that maybe she was “too passionate” sometimes. The remaining interview participants all felt that teacher neutrality was impossible.

However, they stressed that it is important to ask questions, provide an open space for debate, and to promote critical thinking amongst the students. Mateo and Clara both spoke of the danger of claiming neutrality. Mateo said that “one of the most powerful forms of bias is what you don’t say,” adding, “It’s the power of omission,” and Clara felt that claiming neutrality is “a kind of lying”. These last points are shared by critical educators and are discussed further in section 4.2.5.

Despite a range in definitions, many teachers, both on the questionnaires and in the interviews, noted that social justice should be part of a holistic education, not restricted to the Spanish classroom. Teachers stated that social justice issues should be taught “in all high school classrooms” and “not in isolation”. Clara said “it’s just part of being a responsible educator”. Thus, in addition to the above-mentioned components of social justice education, some teachers defined such pedagogical practice as an overarching goal not specific to any particular subject.

4.2.2 Summary of Teachers’ Definitions

Consistent with the academic literature, high school Spanish teachers in British Columbia indicated a range of definitions of social justice education. The majority agreed with statements on the questionnaire that defined various elements of social justice education. These elements include respecting individual voices, addressing oppressive comments made by students, teaching about social movements, discussing various forms of oppression, engaging students in collective problem-solving, bringing in the perspectives of marginalized groups, and encouraging students to take action outside of the classroom. The participants also highlighted the need for more holistic approaches to such education that extend beyond individual classrooms to permeate the entire curriculum.

An attempt was made to divide teachers into those who held liberal beliefs about social justice education and those who held more critical beliefs (as discussed in section 2.2). It was found that such a division was not possible but that there was a tendency to agree more strongly with questionnaire statements that evidenced a liberal view. The interview participants indicated varied definitions which ranged from liberal beliefs that talking about social justice issues was enough to raise students' awareness, to more critical beliefs in anti-oppressive classroom practices and encouraging action outside the classroom. The issue of teacher neutrality provided a wide range of responses on both the questionnaire and in the interviews, demonstrating a resistance in many cases to take a political stand in the classroom.

4.2.3 Beliefs about the Importance of Social Justice Education

Most participants believed that social justice education was relevant in the Spanish classroom. One section of the questionnaire asked teachers to rate the extent to which they agreed with statements on the importance of teaching particular issues. These included the importance of teaching general social justice issues, race issues, gender issues, historical and political issues, and about the disparity of wealth throughout the world. The frequencies of answers to these items can be found in Appendix J. Over 80% at least somewhat agreed with all of these statements. One open-ended question asked teachers "Overall, do you believe that it is important to address social justice issues in the high school Spanish classroom? Why or why not?" Only one person responded "no", and the majority answered a strong "yes", that these issues are important. All of the interview participants felt it was important as well.

Many reasons were given as to why social justice education is important in the Spanish classroom, including increasing student interest in learning, developing students' critical thinking skills, building connections, and encouraging empathy. Rose and Mateo also spoke of the

importance of modeling the behaviours teachers would like to see in their students. However, the three most common reasons were that teaching about social justice is linked to (1) teaching about culture, (2) teaching about reality, and (3) teaching about global citizenship. I discuss each of these points below.

One of the main reasons given for the importance of teaching about social justice issues was that it is connected to teaching about Hispanic culture. It is important to note the problematic idea that culture can be easily taught. We are able to discuss the surface features of culture, what Fox and Diaz-Greenberg (2006) refer to as the four F's: food, fashion, festivals, and folklore. However, these features are manifestation of much deeper phenomena, including attitudes, values, and traditions which must also be explored if one is to develop a genuine understanding of culture (Byram & Guilherme, 2000). That aside, many teachers in the present study connected social justice and cultural education. Magda placed teaching social justice “under the umbrella of cultural experience,” and others mentioned how a discussion of cultural features can lead to a discussion of social justice issues. For example, one teacher said that “in discussing or illustrating culture and cultural differences and similarities, social justice issues can come up”.

Some teachers explained how teaching about social justice brings culture into the classroom, which is important for students' understanding of the Hispanic world. For example, one participant stated that “it is very important to address social justice issues in the high school classroom. It brings the culture of the Spanish speaking world into the classroom. It makes the language more relevant, and helps bring context”. Another said that “it helps them to have a better understanding of their culture and other cultures, their differences and similarities”. Others emphasized the strong connection between cultural issues and justice issues. For example, “it is important to address social justice issues because the language represents a country and its

culture, and social justice is a part of culture”. This last point brings us to an important fact: culture cannot be separated from history or from socio-political realities. Many teachers spoke to this, emphasizing the importance of teaching social justice issues as a means of teaching about the realities of the Spanish-speaking world.

The most common reason teachers gave for the importance of including social justice issues in the Spanish classroom was that it was part of understanding the social, historical, economic, and/ or political realities of Hispanic peoples and countries. For example, one questionnaire participant stated that languages “cannot be taught in a vacuum” and another that “culture is so much more than yummy ethnic food!!” Many echoed this last comment, emphasizing the importance of dispelling stereotypes and moving, in Mateo’s words, “beyond the Club Meds”. Another questionnaire participant put it plainly when she said that “an informed understanding of Spanish language and culture demands [that] students have some awareness of the historical and contemporary realities of injustice in Latin America and Spain”.

Many teachers emphasized that the histories of Spain and Latin America have been characterized by struggles for social justice. One questionnaire participant stated that “Latin America is an ideal place to study social movements”. Another made a stronger statement:

It would be impossible to teach Spanish without also engaging students in discussion about social justice, but more importantly, social injustice. In learning a language one must learn about culture. Latin American culture has evolved through a series of injustices, all of which began with the arrival of the Spanish to the "New World".

Others spoke about teaching their students to understand Hispanic peoples, both across and within national borders. For example, one teacher stated that “there are many refugees from Central and South America living in B.C. and I think that students should be aware of these groups and the issues surrounding them”. In addition to understanding local groups or comparing

with foreign groups, many teachers also emphasized a need to teach about the connections between their students and Hispanic communities around the globe.

A final major reason given for teaching about social justice in the Spanish classroom was that it is part of educating for global citizenship. A number of teachers spoke about opening their students' eyes to the world. Many questionnaire respondents literally used the phrase "open their eyes" while others mentioned "awareness" and "exposure". This idea was also reflected in statements such as "it is important to discuss these issues so that students are aware of the world beyond their community" and "I want my students to be better informed citizens of the world."

Other teachers spoke specifically about the connections between their students' lifestyles and the Hispanic world. For example, one teacher made the following statement:

One of my main goals as a second language teacher is to help students understand the importance of global issues and appreciating their connection to the global community. I always tell my students that traveling will open their hearts and minds, and will also help them understand how their own lives/ life-styles contribute to the positive and negative influences North Americans have in the world.

Others echoed similar thoughts by emphasizing the need for their students to understand where consumer products come from and how they get to Canada. This is clear in statements such as "students need to know that their lifestyles and buying habits can affect the lives of workers in developing nations" and "our actions here in Canada often affect their lives (drinking coffee, buying products) even if we don't realize it". Overall, there were a large number of teachers who emphasized this type of education for global citizenship as a motivation for teaching about social justice.

All of these reasons for bringing social justice education into the Spanish classroom indicate that teachers are aware of the importance of moving beyond a focus on grammar to include discussions of cultural, political, and other phenomenon related to language use and

context. This finding is in line with the general trend in the field of language acquisition to focus more on social aspects of language learning (Block, 2003). It also indicates that, although teachers may not be familiar with the academic literature on critical language pedagogies, they recognize that they have a responsibility to educate their students for the intercultural communication and understanding.

4.2.4 Summary of Teachers' Beliefs

The majority of the teachers believed in the importance of incorporating social justice education into their Spanish classes. They gave a number of reasons for this, including links with teaching about culture, teaching about social and political realities, and educating for global citizenship. Many felt that it would be impossible to teach about Hispanic culture without touching on issues of social justice. Additionally, they felt that discussing such issues helped to raise awareness about global issues. Most of these teachers have some connections with the Spanish-speaking world, and part of their motivation for teaching Spanish is to help their students move beyond simple grammar concepts to develop an appreciation for diverse people and cultures both within and outside national borders.

4.2.5 Discussion about Teachers' Definitions and Beliefs

Although teachers agreed with the majority of questionnaire statements related to social justice education (see Appendix J), there was a tendency to agree more strongly with those that indicated a liberal approach to education (see section 2.2 and Appendix D). Kelly, Brandes, and Orłowski (2003-2004) explain that teachers who espouse liberal views on education believe in students' individual potential, promote the inclusion of multiple perspectives, advocate respect and inclusion, and believe that raising student awareness is the end goal. Those with more

critical beliefs agree with these practices but recognize that injustice must be challenged through social critique, collective work, and transformative action both inside and outside the classroom. The latter approach cannot be realized without promoting student agency and without recognizing the impossibility of teacher neutrality. Both of these ideas were resisted by participants in the present study.

Participants resisted the idea of a student-centered curriculum, which indicates that some may find it difficult to break out of the traditional teacher role. But teachers who are committed to democratic classroom practices will have to move away from the traditional student-teacher relationship. Freire (1970) emphasizes that education is a process in which teachers and students are co-investigators, jointly responsible for their learning. He believes that “the more active an attitude men and women take in regard to the exploration of their thematics⁹, the more they deepen their critical awareness of reality and, in spelling out those thematics, take possession of that reality” (Freire, 1970, p. 106). Intellectual growth, in this sense, must come from within the students themselves; the teacher plays a supportive role while the students are encouraged to take responsibility for their learning. Although most participants did agree with statements on the questionnaire that I viewed as “critical” (see Appendix D), there may be a disconnect between these beliefs and actual classroom practice. More must be done to encourage teachers to take the extra steps to make their classrooms democratic spaces for critical inquiry.

As discussed in section 4.2.1, the importance of teacher neutrality was also a point of debate. The recognition that all classroom decisions are political decisions is hard for many teachers to accept. This is another issue with which teachers passionate about social justice education must come to terms. Advocates of critical pedagogies explain that all decisions are

⁹ According to Freire (1970), people understand the world through a series of “generative themes” which provide the general structure through which they perceive the world (for a lengthier discussion of this concept see Freire, 1970, chapter 3).

influenced by our identities and politics; the materials we choose to use and the issues we choose to raise (or remain silent on) are political decisions. Paul R. Carr (2008) stresses that “teachers must understand that they are not neutral, that insisting on such a stance only reinforces normative values that privilege white, male, middle-class, European origin, heterosexual, Christian hegemony” (p. 84). He also reminds us that “not acting to implement social justice is a political decision, as is the priority placed on purchasing computers or developing an anti-bullying policy” (Carr, 2008, p. 90). Admitting that we are not neutral does not mean that we must always voice our opinions as teachers, but it does mean that we must consciously reflect on how our identities and beliefs influence our practices.

Despite resistance to issues such as a student-centered curriculum and the political nature of teaching, most of the teachers believed in the importance of social justice education in the Spanish classroom. They gave many reasons for this, including links with teaching about cultural, social, and political realities and educating for global citizenship. These beliefs are consistent with the academic literature that advocates social justice education in the language classroom. There has been a general trend in the field of language education to focus on social issues (Block, 2003), and many scholars highlight the importance of critical intercultural education which moves beyond a surface level understanding of culture (e.g. Fox & Diaz-Greenberg, 2006; Guilherme, 2002; Kubota, Austin & Saito-Abbot, 2003). Although teachers evidenced a liberal understanding of social justice education, many do advocate for the goals of what might be considered a more critical approach to pedagogy. This is also evidenced in the teachers’ practices, which are discussed in the next section.

4.3 Results for Question 2: Teacher Practices

For the second research question, I sought out examples of social justice education in the Spanish classroom. There are both explicit and implicit ways to engage in social justice education. Explicitly, we can teach *about* social justice through discussions of topics such as racism, sexism, environmental issues, homophobia, etc. However, we can also implicitly teach *for* social justice by promoting democracy, equality, cooperation, student leadership, action outside the classroom, etc. In the following sections, I demonstrate how participants taught both *about* and *for* social justice. I begin by presenting some of the social justice topics raised by teachers and then analyze how various classroom practices mentioned by participants can serve to counter the five faces of oppression described by Young (1990).

4.3.1 Talking about Social Justice

One section of the questionnaire asked teachers to indicate how many times they discussed particular social justice issues during the (then current) academic year. Appendix J displays the list of issues as they were displayed on the questionnaire and the percentage of teachers who indicated each of the four frequencies offered. For all of the issues except homophobia, over 60% indicated speaking of them a few times or often, and less than 20% indicated never speaking about them. With the exception of a few cases, it was not the same people consistently indicating “a few times” or “often”, which signifies a diverse interest and dedication to these issues.

Overall, the responses to this section of the questionnaire were congruent with the section that asked teachers to indicate their beliefs about the importance of teaching various social justice issues. For example, 75.8% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with the

statement “it is important to teach about race issues while teaching Spanish,” and 77.5% indicated that they spoke about racism a few times or often during the academic year. The same consistency was true for gender issues, historical and political issues, and the disparity of wealth.

Over 45% indicated speaking often of historical events and issues, which is not surprising as learning a language often involves learning about the history of the countries where that language is spoken. In addition, many of the Spanish textbooks in use in the B.C. school system include cultural and historical articles or anecdotes about Spanish-speaking countries. Nevertheless, this is an encouraging statistic in line with teachers’ beliefs about the importance of teaching about the realities of the Hispanic world. Furthermore, discussing historical events and issues is often a first step in countering various forms of oppression as a historical understanding is often necessary for understanding contemporary injustices.

Approximately half of the respondents indicated speaking a few times about both gender roles and sexism. However, the respondents were less likely to indicate that they often spoke about sexism than they were about gender roles and more likely to indicate never speaking of sexism than of gender roles. This indicates a tendency to speak about the different roles that men and women play without analyzing why these roles are different, which may be problematic. I discuss this issue further in section 4.3.4. Only 3.2% of respondents indicated speaking often about homophobia, and 37.1% (the majority in this case) indicated never speaking of it. These numbers are significantly different than for the other issues and will also be discussed in section 4.3.4.

At the end of the list of issues on the questionnaire, there was also space for teachers to add any other issues related to social justice that they thought were important to teach. Nine teachers responded to this section, and the issues they mentioned included social justice

movements, globalization, migration and immigration, free trade, gangs, the struggle for land rights, and community or volunteer involvement. Interview participants also spoke about some of these issues.

4.3.2 Countering the Five Faces of Oppression

I now move into a discussion about how various participant practices can serve to counter the five faces of oppression described by Young (1990): *exploitation, marginalization, powerlessness, cultural imperialism, and violence*. Such an analysis has proven useful for Deirdre Kelly and her colleagues (Brandes & Kelly, 2004; Kelly & Brandes, 2001, 2008; Kelly and Brooks, 2009; Kelly, 2009) in understanding anti-oppressive classroom practices. To my knowledge, no other scholars have used this framework for analyzing teacher practices. It is important to note that although each of these forms of oppression is discussed separately here, many of the practices described below can actually work against more than one. It should also be noted that I have selected only a few examples of countering each form of oppression but that there are many other methods for doing so; the practices outlined below are examples rather than prescriptions.

4.3.2.1 Exploitation

As discussed in section 4.2.3, many teachers felt that teaching about the social, historical, and political realities of the Spanish-speaking world was an important part of teaching the language. In addition, many teachers also felt it was important to teach about the connections between their students and the Spanish-speaking world by discussing how lifestyle and consumption choices can affect workers all around the world. Making these connections is one way that teachers can counter the first face of oppression, *exploitation*. Indeed, 62.9% of the

questionnaire participants indicated that they sometimes or often discuss the root causes of the disparity of wealth between and within countries (see Appendix J). This would necessitate a discussion of the exploitation of resources and labour capacities of developing regions of the world by more advanced regions.

Rose, Clara, and Mateo all mentioned having discussions with their students about colonization and its continued effects in Latin America. The history of exploitation in the Americas began with colonization when Europeans claimed vast regions of the world as their own and forced the local people into submission. Despite contemporary independence from European rule, the racial hierarchy imposed during colonial times persists today with those of European descent enjoying greater wealth and status than those with indigenous heritage. In addition, contemporary free trade agreements, such as the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), have led to dependence by many Latin American nations on their northern “partners”. Free Trade Agreements force nations to remove trade tariffs, which usually means an influx of cheap agricultural products from the more developed nations involved. This is the case with NAFTA, which has displaced millions of rural, Mexican farmers who cannot compete with the low prices. They are forced to work for very low wages on factory farms, often for international companies, or are driven to the United States in search of work (Holt-Giménez & Peabody, 2008).

A number of participants indicated discussing issues of resource and food security, globalization, and free trade. For example, one questionnaire participant mentioned discussing “the effects of free trade on poorer countries in Latin America”. Clara spoke of taking her students into the school garden to discuss where food comes from and issues of food security. Mateo has his students work on a “historical conflicts” project in which each student or group

must select one historical conflict from Latin America to present to the class. The students have discussed colonization, independence movements, and contemporary social movements. The students then participate in a symposium in which they discuss what these conflicts have in common. Often, they find that income disparity and distribution of resources are key components in all of the conflicts. Engaging students in this type of discussion can lead to an understanding of how the labour of some is exploited for the benefit of others.

Participants mentioned other topics that could lend themselves to a conversation about exploitation. For example, Mateo, Clara, and Penelope all spoke about discussing sexism with their students, which could lead to a discussion on the exploitation of women. Mateo spoke specifically about how machismo, or male chauvinism, has been a “huge setback for women and men in Latin America”. Finally, I observed Penelope using a dream she had written that involved living in a green city when teaching the past tense. She also referenced a fable that the students would be looking at which taught a lesson on over-consumption. Both of these stories could be an excellent starting point for discussing issues of consumption habits and resource exploitation.

4.3.2.2 Marginalization

One way that teachers can work against *marginalization* is by addressing omissions in the curriculum. Often, curricular materials do not include discussions of social justice issues or the perspectives of marginalized groups such as indigenous peoples, women, and the disabled. On the questionnaire, almost 70% of participants indicated that they sometimes or often seek out materials that address social justice issues to use in their classes and 62.9% indicated that they sometimes or often seek out materials that focus on the perspectives of marginalized groups (see Appendix J). The interview participants gave a number of examples of using such curricula, including Clara, who gave various examples of Aboriginal content she has used in her classes,

and Rose, who had a Guatemalan exile speak to her class. I also observed Mateo using the song *Clandestino* by Manu Chao to launch into a discussion about why some people must live clandestine lives. One line of the song mentions being a “fanstasma en la ciudad”, a “ghost in the city”, which led to a conversation about what it might be like to be deprived of the pleasures and freedoms most of his students enjoy.

Some students belong to marginalized groups and/ or are marginalized by their peers in the school setting (Cummins, 2000, 2009; Giroux, 1994). Racism, sexism, ableism, discrimination based on immigration status or language, and other forms of prejudice can affect classroom dynamics (Brandes & Kelly, 2004). Teachers dedicated to promoting social justice will have to reflect on how they can provide an inclusive space intolerant of such forms of discrimination. Almost all of the interview participants spoke of attempting to create an inclusive environment where students were encouraged to work together cooperatively and where all student voices were heard and respected. Penelope said that she tried to “build a classroom where it becomes safe to express who you are,” and Rose highlighted the use of cooperative group activities. Mateo also spoke extensively about the fact that we are social beings and that “we’re supposed to be with each other.” He emphasized creating a fun and interactive classroom where the students could get to know one another and come together as equals.

4.3.2.3 Powerlessness

Kelly and Brandes (2008) argue that “conventional schooling has been organized in ways that allow young people little say in what and how they learn” (p. 62). However, they note a number of ways in which teachers have attempted to work against their students’ *powerlessness*, including more democratic classroom practices. Most teachers in the present study agreed with

the statements on democracy in the questionnaire and, as noted in the previous section, many indicated the importance of an inclusive classroom environment. This was echoed in the practice section of the questionnaire in which 95.1% of teachers indicated that they sometimes or often encourage their students to share stories from their communities and experiences (see Appendix J). I observed Magda, Penelope, and Rose using activities where students included their own stories and perspectives. For example, Penelope had her students fill out bingo cards with their favourite activities, and Rose's classroom displayed family trees which her students had created earlier in the year.

Involving students' perspectives and promoting inclusion is the first step towards a democratic classroom and to countering student powerlessness, but is not sufficient. A truly democratic classroom would also encourage student input into the nature of their learning, including their involvement in the selection of learning materials and assessment criteria. On the questionnaire, almost 40% of participants indicated that they sometimes or often involve their students in the selection of learning materials (see Appendix J). I observed Penelope allowing her students to select the topics they wanted to review and Rose including her students in developing the parameters for an upcoming project. In addition to direct involvement in their selection, it is also important to make the learning materials relevant to the lives of the students. For example, one questionnaire participant has her students write a "personal reaction" essay to the movies that they watch, and Rose's students were going to be creating rap songs about their lives. Clara engages her students in hands-on projects, such as working in the school garden, and she also spoke about projects on famous Latin Americans selected by her students. These practices might be categorized under two methods described by Kelly (2007) to counter

powerlessness: “encouraging students to construct conflicting and contradictory meanings of texts” and “working with students to produce their own meaningful artifacts” (p. 11).

The above mentioned practices are encouraging, but Kelly and Brandes (2008) note that students’ “relative powerlessness is nowhere more evident than in conventional grading practices, which train students to look to their teacher (or some externally imposed standard) as the final arbiter of the quality of their own thinking, work, and potential” (p. 63). I was happy to find that almost 60% of the questionnaire participants said that they sometimes or often involve students in determining assessment criteria (see Appendix J). In addition, some of the interview participants indicated promoting leadership and self-direction among their students. None spoke specifically about the ways in which they do this, but I did observe Rose including her students in selecting the assessment criteria for an upcoming project.

Another way to counter student powerlessness is to promote student leadership and highlight their ability to make the changes they want to see. Rose and Mateo spoke of encouraging their students to take responsibility for their learning, and Clara mentioned that she was no longer using the textbook, which I feel demonstrates to the students that they do not always need to stay within their school’s prescribed parameters. I also observed how Magda has her students come to the board to act as the “teacher”. In this way, each student is responsible for educating his or her peers and is given a chance to demonstrate their leadership abilities. Isabela spoke of how some of her students had taken on the organization of a fundraising campaign for an orphanage in Honduras after watching a documentary about immigration. In general, teaching about social justice issues and movements can demonstrate the ability for people to make changes in the world around them. As one questionnaire participant noted, social justice

education is important because it can show students that “they have a voice, and sometimes it’s worth standing up for what you believe”.

Finally, these discussions can also be a starting point for students to engage in social activism, such as the involvement of Isabela’s students in the fundraising campaign. In another example, a questionnaire participant has accompanied her students on a house-building project in Mexico. She wrote about the importance of helping her students make connections to, and build solidarity with, the global community and also stated that it is

rewarding to see the growth and the change in students who have experienced, even if for a short time, the lives of others in a less privileged part of the world. One of the great things about teaching teenagers is that they can become so passionate about social causes.

Through this project, this teacher demonstrates the potential for real change in the real world.

This is a key component to social justice education as it directly links theory and practice. On the questionnaire, 58.1% of teachers indicated that they sometimes encourage students to engage in social activism, and another 4.8% said that they often do so (see Appendix J). Some also gave examples. One questionnaire participant has her students do a group project in which students must “undertake a volunteer project of their own, plan it, implement a bilingual campaign in the school or community, track the outcome and write an essay on their reflections and observations”.

Many of the interview participants spoke of involving their students in justice-related projects. Both Isabela’s and Magda’s students were involved in fundraising campaigns at their schools. Estelle also spoke extensively about engaging her students in justice-related activities around the school, whether or not they were specifically related to Spanish. For example, she took her students to a voluntary assembly on climate change and to an assembly organized by *Free the Children*. She did not view her classroom in isolation from the rest of the school and

stressed: “Just because I do not address certain issues directly, that does not mean they do not get addressed [...] If I do not have the time, ideas, and/or energy to organize certain events, I support the teachers or students who are doing them.”

4.3.2.4 Cultural Imperialism

The most common way that teachers expressed working against *cultural imperialism* was through discussing and challenging stereotypes about Hispanic people. For example, Isabela was passionate about wanting to dispel stereotypes that her students held such as the belief “that everyone looks like a Mexican and we all wear ponchos”. She also spoke of specific conversations where her students asked “why do all Mexicans jump the border?” and “why are they always trying to climb the fence?” She used the opportunity to discuss issues of poverty, migration, and the myth of the American dream. Similarly, over four fifths (83.8%) of the questionnaire participants indicated that they sometimes or often discuss and challenge assumptions and stereotypes found in Spanish learning materials¹⁰ (see Appendix J). This is important for at least two reasons. First, it indicates that teachers are aware of such stereotypes and encourage their students to be as well. Second, it demonstrates that teachers can be socially just even when the materials are not; by speaking up about the realities of the Spanish-speaking world, which are not found in the textbook, teachers are demonstrating the importance of standing up for justice where none can be found.

Participants indicated a number of ways in which they challenged stereotypes, the majority through using materials that depict Hispanic people more realistically. One questionnaire participant said she began each unit with a “country opener”, describing a Spanish-

¹⁰ Most teachers did not indicate specific examples of such stereotypes. However, one questionnaire participant did mention that she had stopped using the textbook because of stereotypes such as “the boy always asks the girl out” and “the indigenous culture is always talked about in the past tense”.

speaking country, discussing historical events and famous people. She said that this “provides lots of jumping points for discussion” and spoke of including video clips and news stories as well. Another method, which was repeated many times, was the use of films that depict the real lives of Hispanic people instead of simply reinforcing stereotypes. For example, Mateo emphasized seeking out documentaries or “socially inspired films” such as *Frida* or *The Motorcycle Diaries*. In addition to depicting Latin American realities, these films often touch on social justice issues as well. In another example, some teachers mentioned the film *El Norte*, which tells the story of two indigenous youths on a difficult journey to the United States from Guatemala, where they face political and ethnic persecution. Five of the interview participants indicated using such films as a way to teach about social justice.

In addition to movies, many teachers use other art forms, such as paintings or music, as a means to educate about social justice issues. One teacher highlighted the relevance of music as a resource for teaching social justice when she said that “music and songs by popular artists are an easy way to approach issues such as poverty and other social issues”. Four of the interview participants spoke of using poetry, art, music and/ or dance as a way to teach about social justice, and Penelope asserted that bringing in such materials is “the most effective way, actually, to approach social justice.” Isabela used the short article about, and pictures by, Diego Rivera and other muralists from Mexico found in the textbook to launch into a discussion about why these artists started doing the murals and what their messages were¹¹. If teachers are able to take these extra steps, promoting an understanding of people, culture, and histories that goes beyond the surface level, such materials and practices can help to counter cultural imperialism.

¹¹ In the 1920s and 1930s, these muralists used Indigenous and Marxist themes to depict injustices in Mexican history and to promote socialist values.

Another way to counter stereotypes is by connecting students with people from the Spanish-speaking community. A number of teachers mentioned bringing guest speakers from Latin America or Spanish-speaking students from within the school. Clara has her students interview a Spanish speaker from the community. Ethnographic interviews such as these have been shown to promote openness toward culture as they demonstrate the relevance of the language in the students' community (Bateman, 2002). Other teachers were able to travel with students to Latin America to engage in hands-on projects, such as the house-building project described above. Penelope had taken her students to do volunteer work in Guatemala and Mateo had gone on several trips to Cuba with his students. Many other teachers expressed a desire to take their students on such trips.

4.3.2.5 Violence

Many teachers indicated that they encouraged students to think about privilege. Just over 82% of teachers indicated that they sometimes or often encourage their students to think about who is privileged/ disadvantaged in the Spanish-speaking world, and 71% indicated that they sometimes or often encourage students to think about who is privileged/ disadvantaged in their own communities (see Appendix J). Discussions such as these are important in countering all of the five faces of oppression described by Young (1990), including systemic *violence*. By addressing privilege, teachers can help their students understand the disadvantages faced by different groups, which may help foster compassion and curb some forms of violence. As one questionnaire participant put it, "it can help students view their peers in a different light if they know about hardships they may have endured. It can help students cultivate empathy and tolerance for other groups."

The most common way that I saw the interview and observation participants counter violence in their classrooms was by addressing racist, homophobic, and other negative comments made by their students. In addition to challenging stereotypes about Hispanic peoples, as described in the previous section, most of the teachers also spoke about having no tolerance for verbal or physical attacks in their classrooms. Estelle, Mateo, and Rose all spoke specifically about addressing negative comments and having “zero tolerance for any kind of mocking” (Mateo). I observed Rose address a sexist comment made by a student in one of her classes and explain the inappropriateness of the word “retarded” used by a student in another class. In both cases, she drew the attention of the class to the comment, explained that the statements perpetuated negative stereotypes, and emphasized the need for each student to make a conscious effort to work against such prejudice. Starting with small classroom interactions such as these, teachers can launch into discussions about how these forms of discrimination can also lead to more systemic forms of violence. Kelly and Brooks (2009) emphasize the importance of not only explaining how these remarks are hurtful in the moment but also “naming a specific form of oppression or spending more time prompting students to reflect critically on hurtful language” (p. 211). They also stress that teachers do not have to wait for such teachable moments but can introduce such topics themselves through stories, art, and other curricula.

Although the participants did not speak specifically about attempting to counter systemic violence, many of the discussions mentioned throughout the previous sections could also serve to do so. For example, discussions about why some Latin Americans come to the United States or Canada illegally may help to curb negative stereotypes about immigrants and feelings such as “they are stealing our jobs”. Instead, these discussions may help to foster tolerance and compassion leading to reduced instances of violence.

4.3.3 Summary of Teacher Practices

The teachers who participated in this study employ an inspiring range of practices to teach either *about* or *for* social justice in their Spanish classes. They speak with their students *about* social justice topics such as environmental issues, historical and political issues, immigration and migration issues, globalization, poverty, racism, and many more. This finding is consistent with teachers' beliefs about the importance of teaching for social justice which included links with teaching cultural, political, and global realities. Some topics, however, proved more controversial than others such as the discussion of sexism and especially the discussion of homophobia.

Despite avoiding some controversial issues, the participants teach *for* social justice by engaging in various practices that may serve to counter each of the five faces of oppression outlined by Young (1990). Teachers evidenced educating about *exploitation* through the discussion of topics such as colonization, free trade, and consumption patterns. They countered *marginalization* in the learning materials by bringing in resources that focused on perspectives absent in the regular curriculum, and in their classrooms by creating inclusive spaces where prejudice was not tolerated. Student *powerlessness* was countered through the inclusion of students in making curricular choices and by encouraging students to take on leadership roles both inside and outside the classroom. The participants attempted to counter *cultural imperialism* by challenging negative stereotypes about Hispanic peoples and encouraging their students to build connections with people from diverse backgrounds. Finally, they worked against systemic *violence* by discussing power and privilege and by addressing prejudice and intolerance in the classroom.

4.3.4 Discussion about Teacher Practices

Although participants engage in many practices that evidence social justice education, some issues proved more controversial than others. For example, teachers were more likely to indicate discussing gender roles than sexism. Simply describing gender roles may serve to reinforce sexist stereotypes. Instead, a more critical analysis of why these roles are divided in such a way would be one approach to countering several of the faces of oppression described by Young (1990). Very often, women are subjected to *exploitation* through the “transfer of the fruits of material labor to men and transfer of nurturing and sexual energies to men” (Young, 1990, p. 50). In some communities women also face *marginalization*, being excluded from participation in certain jobs, politics, or other aspects of social life. Some also face *powerlessness* when it comes to making decisions about their lives, and others live in fear of *violence*, including rape. A discussion of these issues would be an important step in countering the many forms of oppression faced by women all over the world.

Another issue was that most teachers indicated that they did not speak about homophobia in their classes. Although homophobia continues to be a problem around the world, including in the Spanish-speaking world (Vinter, 2010), Spanish textbooks in use in British Columbia make no mention of it, and many teachers seem unwilling to raise it as a topic. One teacher expressed in the open-ended questions that she doesn’t “think discussing homosexual issues in the Spanish classroom is the right place [...] it would detract from the linguistic and cultural components of a language course”. However, I would argue that raising homophobia as an issue is, in fact, one of the “cultural components” of a Spanish class and may be discussed in various teachable moments. For example, Rose mentioned speaking about homophobia after showing the movie *Quinceañera* in which one character has been thrown out of his house because he is gay. In

addition to speaking directly about homophobia affecting people from Spanish-speaking communities, it can also be addressed in any classroom when teachers refuse to tolerate homophobic slurs or choose to participate in anti-homophobia campaigns. For example, Estelle indicated dressing up for “pink day”, an event organized at her school to promote awareness about, and prevention of, homophobia.

Despite some resistance to discussing more “controversial” issues such as sexism and homophobia, the participants do engage in many classroom practices that may be seen as anti-oppressive. Above I have explained how many of these practices may serve to counter the various forms of oppression described by Young (1990). An important point to note is that many of the materials (such as movies) and experiences (such as acts of charity) discussed above can also perpetuate stereotypes if students are not encouraged to critically analyze what they see and do. For example, the comments about Mexicans as border-jumpers made in Isabela’s class prompted her to seek out a documentary about immigration to show in her class. After discussing the film and issues of poverty, the class appeared to have a more sympathetic view to the struggles that many face in Latin America, and some students got involved in a fundraising campaign to help an orphanage in Honduras. However, some of these students may walk away from that experience believing that all Latin Americans are poor and need help from people in “developed” nations such as Canada. It is essential that teachers engage their students in an analysis of materials and experiences in order to encourage a more nuanced and critical understanding of cultural, ideological, and other phenomena.

In fact, Isabela does engage her students in such an analysis. In subsequent personal communications with Isabela, she explained that she shows her class a PowerPoint presentation with images from “all sides of Mexico”: a typical food market and a Wal-Mart, an elite private

school and a rundown rural school, a luxurious dream-home and a shanty-town, and many other images. The class discusses each image, and issues of class and privilege are raised. She explains how “class difference can [also] be perceived through accent and word choice” and gives examples. Such presentations and discussions are exactly the kind of practices I would suggest for teachers who wish to avoid the perpetuation of stereotypes. By encouraging students to reflect on multiple and complex aspects of culture and society, essentialization can be avoided and more nuanced understandings may develop.

Without further investigation, particularly of the experiences of the students themselves, it is not possible to assess the effectiveness of these practices. However, they certainly indicate that many of these teachers are both aware of and passionate about the goals of social justice education. Unfortunately, participants also face a number of obstacles to employing socially just classroom practices which are discussed in the next section.

4.4 Results for Question 3: Obstacle and Supports

The final research question asked about the obstacles to teaching for social justice in the Spanish classroom. Many obstacles to teaching for social justice were mentioned throughout the questionnaires and interviews. One of the open-ended questions asked teachers directly about the obstacles to teaching about social justice, as did one of the interview questions. Only two questionnaire participants said that they did not see any obstacles. I did not ask the teachers directly to speak about the supports for social justice education, but a few were mentioned as well. The next section outlines the major obstacles to teaching for social justice and is followed by a brief section on supports.

4.4.1 Obstacles

The obstacle to teaching about social justice that participants spoke of most was time. This includes time to prepare lessons around social justice issues as well as time to implement them in class. As these issues are not seen to be part of the regular curriculum (another obstacle which was cited frequently) most teachers felt that any talk about social justice would need to be added on to the already long list of learning objectives. Responses to the questionnaire item about obstacles included, “time - to set up and get into a social justice issue when there's all the language learning to squeeze in” and, “incorporating the topic into classroom time without giving up too much time away from the regular curriculum.” Over half of the teachers who responded to the open-ended questions included time as an obstacle, and six of the seven interview participants mentioned it.

The second most frequently cited obstacle to teaching about social justice was a lack of resources. Three quarters (75.4%) of participants either somewhat disagreed, disagreed, or strongly disagreed that the textbook and other ministry-supported materials they used highlighted social justice issues (see Appendix J). Although participants indicated that their textbooks had cultural components and could be used as a starting point for discussing social justice issues, the majority found the books outdated and full of stereotypes. One questionnaire participant stated that “with limited budgets a lot of schools cannot afford new textbooks/resources. I no longer use the textbooks my school owns. I believe they further stereotypes.” Speaking of the textbook, Isabela noted that “the teacher has to be willing to go five hundred more steps” if they want to engage their students in meaningful discussions about social justice or related issues. The most common textbooks in use at the time of the study were from the twenty-year-old *¡Dime!* series, which Mateo referred to as the “Walt Disney World of Hispanic culture and countries”. Rose

added that “even the way that Spanish is taught in this book is not the most updated way that you’re supposed to teach a language”.

Teachers who want to teach about social justice feel that they need to use or develop outside resources. However, as noted above, they do not have time to do this. Additionally, they do not have money to purchase ready-made materials. As one questionnaire participant stated “anything I may wish to focus on has to be supplemented. This takes extra time and often money of which Spanish teachers have very little”. With limited funding (another obstacle), most were not expecting new textbooks soon. Furthermore, as Spanish is usually a one- or two- teacher department in B.C. schools, some teachers indicated that they felt it was more difficult to get funding for their departments. As Penelope explains, “I have to pretty much go and beg for resources individually even though other departments can work together as a full team”.

Another frequently mentioned obstacle was the language ability of the students. Many of the participants stressed that the goal of their classes was to teach students to speak the Spanish language and that students lacked the skills to discuss social justice issues. One teacher commented that it would not be realistic “to expect students to be able to express their thoughts/beliefs about social justice issues in Spanish unless they are native speakers and have the vocabulary/grammatical skills to do so”. Another said that “including more time for social justice issues takes away from the actual language-learning process.” Mateo agreed that there was a language limitation, and Estelle felt that her students would be frustrated if a lot of English was spoken in the class. Thus, in addition to time and resources, teachers felt that the students’ language level impeded their ability to discuss social justice issues.

A final obstacle that was mentioned with frequency was the students’ interest and background knowledge. As one teacher put it, “many students come into the course just looking

for a ‘fiesta.’ Hearing about social justice issues feels like too much of a bummer”. Rose and Mateo indicated the importance of making learning fun and of making sure the students enjoy the language. Estelle also noted that many students with behavioural or learning difficulties take Spanish because of problems in other classes and not because they really want to learn. Others noted a “lack of student interest in what is happening in other parts of the world”. This lack of interest in global issues was often mentioned in conjunction with a lack of background knowledge on the part of the students. For example, one questionnaire participant stated that “Students living in politically and socially stable Canada have no concept that there are socially and economically disadvantaged people in the world. They find it hard to relate to the problems that are facing these groups.” Not all teachers felt this way, as I will discuss in the next section on supports, but comments such as this one point to a lack of confidence in the ability of students to connect with social justice issues.

A number of other obstacles were also mentioned throughout the questionnaires and interviews such as a lack of funding, lack of support from colleagues and administrators, limited access to technology, oppressive beliefs and practices in society at large, and a lack of collaboration between teachers. Mateo raised many interesting points about problems within the structure of the education system. Citing Sir Ken Robinson, he noted that the current system of education was created during the industrial revolution and that its main purpose is to produce workers. He felt that this was negatively influencing student creativity and interest in learning. He also spoke of the difficulty of balancing what the school or society expects from an accepted teacher and fighting to change the school system. He noted that many teachers probably feel a lack of confidence in teaching for social justice as most teachers, including him, did not grow up with such education and have not been trained in it.

Other teachers also mentioned a lack of knowledge on their part. Many participants feel that they do not have the background information to be teaching about social justice issues and that “the task feels overwhelming”. Teachers such as Mateo and Clara said that they could sympathize with other teachers who probably did not have the same background in social justice as they did. Isabela asked “how far do I take it? How deep do I go? How much do they need to know?” In addition, there are not many professional development opportunities related to teaching for social justice.

Finally, some teachers commented that they had a hard time finding balance. Most teachers already have a heavy workload so incorporating new ideas into their pedagogies is an added burden. As one teacher put it, “I am so overwhelmed by my teaching and family responsibilities that I am nervous to take on such a big organizational task myself”. This final comment highlights a need for collaboration between teachers which has been discussed elsewhere (e.g. Arce, 2004) and which I discuss further in section 5.4.

4.4.2 Supports

In addition to the obstacles mentioned above, a few teachers also spoke of supports for teaching about and for social justice. In contrast to those who mentioned lack of student interest as an obstacle, some teachers said that their students can relate to such issues and are quite curious about them. One teacher said that his students “seem to be really interested in learning about Latin America and are generally very sympathetic to the problems faced by indigenous peoples living there”.

In addition to using their textbooks as a jumping off point for discussing social justice, teachers also spoke of good resources for doing so. Magda, for example, said that as long as she had the time, she could find enough resources. Others, such as Rose and Penelope, spoke of

online resources (but lamented the fact that they didn't always have internet access in their classrooms). One quarter (24.6%) of participants somewhat agreed, agreed, or strongly agreed that the ministry-supported materials highlight social justice issues, and one teacher said that the *Avancemos 3* textbook, used in some schools, is a good resource for looking at social activism “with units on community involvement and the environment”.

Some teachers, such as Estelle, feel supported by their schools, and others spoke of the freedom they felt they had within their classrooms. As discussed in section 1.2, teachers are not tied down to the particular textbook or suggestions given by the ministry. They have freedom to use whichever materials or activities they choose, as long as their students meet the *Prescribed Learning Outcomes* at the end of the year.

4.4.3 Summary of Obstacles and Supports

Although the Spanish teachers in my study felt passionate about social justice, they faced many obstacles to bringing this passion into the classroom. The greatest obstacles included time, resources, and the students' language ability. Others included a lack of interest on the part of the students, a lack of background knowledge on the part of the teachers, a lack of financial and moral support, and the inability to balance social justice education with other curricular goals. Although I did not ask them directly, some teachers also spoke of supports for incorporating social justice into their classes, which included student curiosity, available resources, and supportive school environments.

4.4.4 Discussion about Obstacles and Supports

The majority of the obstacles mentioned by teachers, including time to implement social justice lessons and resources for doing so, indicate a tendency for teachers to associate social

justice education with talking *about* social justice issues. This may have to do with the wording of the questionnaire which asked “what are the obstacles to *addressing social justice issues* [emphasis added] when teaching Spanish?” This point is discussed further in section 5.3.

However, I have found through personal experience that this is a common understanding of social justice education. But it is perhaps more important to look at how we are teaching, rather than what we are teaching about. Most teachers would agree that they value democracy, multiculturalism, and doing their best to counter various forms of oppression in society. In Rose’s words, “it’s always important that if you believe in those values that they’re reflected in how you teach”.

I had hoped that teachers would discuss the political and ideological context in which they worked. As discussed in section 1.2, neoliberal ideologies are pervasive in British Columbian institutions, and I had assumed that some teachers would see this as an obstacle to bringing social justice education into their classrooms. Some teachers did mention a lack of support, but most did not elaborate further on this point. One questionnaire participant put “minimal support (administrative, collegial)” as an obstacle, and Penelope said that “it would be nicer if social justice could be better understood and better promoted at a school level”. These comments point to the fact that although social justice is promoted in the teacher union and Ministry of Education materials, it has yet to be taken up as a serious curricular and methodological goal at the school level. Mateo elaborated on this further. He spoke of teachers being limited by the “power from above” and, as discussed in section 4.4.1, the problem of working in a school system whose primary aim is to train students for jobs. Further investigation into how British Columbia teachers who are passionate about social justice education navigate

the social, political, and ideological context in which they work is needed. This point is discussed further in section 5.4.

4.5 Summary of Results

Above I have outlined how the Spanish teachers in my study defined teaching for social justice, their beliefs about the importance of social justice in the Spanish classroom, various practices these teachers employ to teach both about and for social justice, and the obstacles to teaching for social justice. One questionnaire participant stated that

the Spanish class offers a host of opportunities for seizing the teachable moment to address questions that arise naturally about gender, colonialism, racism, inequities of wealth, and use and abuse of environmental resources - and any other topic teachers and students wish to address. That's the beauty of teaching language.

I believe that the results from the present study demonstrate exactly this. Despite the obstacles, teachers have found numerous methods for addressing social justice in their classrooms both as a topic of discussion and as a guiding principle in their pedagogies. In the following chapter, I summarize these findings and discuss how they might influence both teachers and researchers.

Chapter 5 – Limitations, Implications, and Conclusions

5.1 Introduction

In British Columbian high schools, students are increasingly choosing Spanish for additional language study. At the same time, recent years have seen calls in both the academic literature as well as in the British Columbia Ministry of Education materials to bring a focus on social justice into the curriculum. This includes discussing social justice issues with students but also engaging in democratic and anti-oppressive classroom practices. Despite a connection between language study and issues such as diversity, multiculturalism, and globalization, there have been few studies that investigate social justice education in the language classroom. There have been no studies that address social justice in the high school Spanish classroom. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to explore the perspectives and practices of high school Spanish teachers with regards to social justice education.

5.2 Summary of Findings

Three research questions guided this study and can be summarized as investigating 1) high school Spanish teachers' definitions of, and beliefs about, social justice education, 2) the practices that these teachers engage in that evidence social justice education, and 3) the obstacles to teaching for social justice in the high school Spanish classroom. In order to answer these questions, online questionnaires were sent to teachers across the province of British Columbia (62 were returned complete), seven interviews were conducted with Spanish teachers in the Metro Vancouver area, and classroom observations were carried out with four of the interview participants. This mixed-methods approach was used in order to triangulate the data (see Miles & Huberman, 1994).

With regards to the first research question, high school Spanish teachers in British Columbia indicated a range of definitions of social justice education. The majority agreed with statements on the questionnaire related to socially just classroom practices which included notions of inclusion, respect, collective work, discussing marginalized perspectives, and taking action outside the classroom. However, teachers agreed more strongly with statements that indicated a liberal approach to education, as opposed to a critical approach (see section 2.2). Two key elements of critical pedagogy are the recognition that teacher neutrality is impossible and valuing a student-centered approach to education. Both of these elements were resisted by the participants. Despite this overall tendency, it was not possible to neatly divide teachers into a liberal and a critical group, reaffirming the overall finding that these teachers hold a range of definitions of social justice education.

Overall, the participants felt that social justice education was important in the Spanish classroom, and they provided several reasons for this. The three most common reasons were that 1) teaching about social justice is related to teaching about culture, 2) it is important to teach about social and political realities in the Hispanic world, and 3) such practices are part of educating for global citizenship. All of these reasons relate to the fact that language education comes hand in hand with education about diversity and globalization. In contemporary society, students must be prepared for interactions with people from a variety of backgrounds, and the language classroom provides a perfect platform for engaging in such education.

The second research question aimed to explore social justice practice in the Spanish classroom. It was found that participants engaged in an impressive number of practices that can be seen as either educating *about* social justice, through curricula and classroom discussions, or educating *for* social justice, through democratic and anti-oppressive methodologies. Participants

indicated teaching about social justice through discussions of topics such as racism, sexism, historical and political events, poverty, the treatment of indigenous people, immigration and migration, social movements, and many other issues. However, they were less likely to address homophobia than any other social justice issue which indicates that this topic continues to be considered “controversial” in the classroom. The participants indicated teaching for social justice through addressing prejudice in their classrooms and schools, challenging negative stereotypes of Hispanic peoples, engaging in democratic classroom practices such as including students in the selection of assessment criteria, and encouraging student leadership both inside and outside the classroom. I analyzed teacher practices using a framework elaborated by the philosopher Iris Marion Young (1990) which looks at the “five faces of oppression”: exploitation, marginalization, powerlessness, cultural imperialism, and violence. Although the teachers themselves did not explicitly relate their practices to this framework, I demonstrate in section 4.3.2 how many of their practices could serve to counter each of these forms of oppression.

Finally, the third research question asked about the obstacles to teaching for social justice in the Spanish classroom. Unfortunately, there are many such obstacles. The three most common obstacles were a lack of time (both to prepare and implement social justice lessons), a lack of resources that address social justice issues, and the language level of the students. With regards to the latter, many teachers felt that their students had not reached a level of spoken Spanish sufficient for discussing social justice issues. Other obstacles included a lack of interest on the part of the students and a lack of background knowledge on the part of the teachers. What many of these obstacles indicate is the fact that, despite the wide variety of practices described above, many teachers continue to associate social justice education with talking *about* the issues.

Teachers did not mention many obstacles to teaching *for* social justice, but this may have to do with the wording on the questionnaire, an issue discussed in the next section.

5.3 Limitations of the Study

There were inevitably some limitations to my study. The first limitation has to do with the wording on the questionnaire. My intention was to look not only at social justice topics raised in the Spanish classroom, but also at anti-oppressive and democratic teaching practices.

Although the questionnaire included statements about the latter type of practices, two of the open-ended items referred to “addressing social justice issues” which most teachers interpreted as talking *about* social justice topics. Thus, most teachers spoke specifically about the importance of, and obstacles to, discussing social justice in their classes and not about anti-oppressive or democratic practices. During the interviews, I asked for definitions of “social justice education” and spoke of “teaching for social justice,” and therefore the interviewees were more likely to comment on the types of practices I was looking to investigate. The combination of data from both the questionnaire and interviews helped to mediate this problem.

A second limitation was that the questionnaire items may have been too general. In the feedback section, one teacher said “it was hard to answer some questions because I have different answers based on age. I bring up certain topics with certain grades because it is either applicable to the material they are learning and/or appropriate for the age group”. Another teacher said that different groups of students interact differently and that social justice practices in the classroom could work for some but not others. During the interviews and classroom observations, I was better able to understand how some of these dynamics affect classroom practices. Although the questionnaires were used in order to reach a wider range of teachers, a

more in depth understanding might have been gained from a greater focus on the interviews and observations.

A final, and perhaps the greatest, limitation was time. As discussed in section 3.7.1, I would have liked to conduct a more in-depth discourse analysis of the data from my study. However, due to a lack of funding, I was only able to conduct a more surface-level content analysis, drawing out the major themes and patterns from the data. Discourse analysis would have allowed for a greater understanding of the context and ideologies that influence the participants, as well as reflections on how my own position affected the interview process (Talmy, 2010). I would have also liked to conduct more classroom observations. Spending only one half-day with each of the interview participants who agreed to have me in their classrooms was not enough time to gain a deep understanding of the classroom dynamics. Both the students and the teachers were probably quite aware of my presence and may not have acted as they always do. More time to get to know the classroom environment and the teachers' practices would certainly have been revealing. Finally, I would have liked time to work with interested teachers on bringing social justice education into their classrooms. There is a great need for more collaboration and action-oriented research projects, which I will discuss in the next section.

5.4 Suggestions for Further Research

More studies on social justice education in the language classroom are needed. Despite calls for critical approaches to language teaching, there have been few studies that demonstrate the potential for such practices. There is also a need to look at high school and elementary school classrooms as much of the current literature comes from the university level. Social justice education should not be left until students have already been through ten or more years of education; such practices should permeate the curriculum from day one. In fact, British

Columbia Ministry of Education materials such as *Making Spaces: Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice throughout the K-12 Curriculum* (2008) advocate just this. However, there have been no studies that assess the extent to which these documents have influenced teaching in British Columbia. In the current study, I investigated the perspectives of high school Spanish teachers and found that most were interested in, and many passionate about, social justice goals for their classrooms. However, they lamented the lack of resources and support for such education. It is necessary to provide studies that demonstrate the value and success of language programs that espouse social justice values so that they might influence language education policy. As mentioned in the previous chapter, it would also be relevant to investigate how teachers navigate the apparent contradictions between dominant, neoliberal ideologies and increasing calls for social justice education.

There is also a need for greater collaboration between researchers and teachers. Many of the participants in my study indicated a desire to collaborate with other teachers, educational scholars, and policy makers. One questionnaire participant said “I need to collaborate with other teachers in the province. [It] would be great to have a weekend conference of some sort,” and another said “I would be very interested in working towards creating a curriculum that joined the Spanish language with cultural issues and social justice”. It appears that there is a high amount of interest in working towards a more critical Spanish language program but that teachers feel isolated in this endeavour. In order to affect policy, studies demonstrating the effectiveness of such pedagogy are needed. I believe that participatory action research would be well suited to this type of investigation. In participatory action research, researchers and participants come together to “critically discuss, reflect and act on the problems being investigated” (Arce, 2004, p. 233). They work together to solve a problem or implement a program and then reflect on its

effectiveness. I would be very interested in undertaking a study on implementing social justice education with a group of interested Spanish teachers.

Finally, in order to assess the effectiveness of critical language programs, it will also be necessary to dialogue with students. The teachers in my study evidenced an inspiring array of methods for teaching about and for social justice in their classrooms, but further investigation would certainly be necessary in order to understand the outcomes of such methods from the point of view of the students. Are students more aware of problems in society as a result of classroom discussions about social justice issues? Are they more aware of how their own actions affect the lives of others? Are they inspired to take on leadership roles outside the classroom and get involved in social action? Do they better understand the importance of democracy? These are just a few questions that might guide a study on the effectiveness of social justice pedagogy and curricula from the perspective of students.

5.5 Closing Remarks

I view this exploratory study as part of a conversation that has only recently begun about social justice in the language classroom. In my attempt to contribute to the field of critical language education, I have found that high school Spanish teachers in British Columbia are passionate about social justice. They engage in numerous practices that bring social justice into the classroom, both as a topic of discussion and as an underlying theory that guides their practice. However, there is a great need to support these teachers in both endeavours; many feel isolated in their attempts to make their classroom environments spaces for collaborative inquiry and transformative action. The conversation must now turn to looking at ways in which we might realize the goals of social justice education in the Spanish classroom and beyond. As outlined above, more research is needed in this field including studies that evidence effective social

justice pedagogy, and that might influence educational policy. We also need to provide teachers with opportunities for inquiry and collaboration. Without such support, social justice methodologies will continue to be applied in a haphazard way which may do little to transform the education system or the experiences of students.

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Appendices

Appendix A – Email to School Principals

Hello <insert principal's name here>,

My name is Nicki Benson and I am a M.A. student at UBC. I have been granted permission by the <insert district name here> School District to conduct research with Spanish teachers in <insert district name here> secondary schools. The project is titled *Teaching for Social Justice in the High School Spanish Classroom: Perspectives and Practices* and it is up to each school and each teacher to decide whether or not they would like to participate. Please take a moment to review the abstract below in order to assess whether or not your school and teachers would like to participate.

Abstract: Promoting social justice in the classroom has become a priority for the British Columbia Ministry of Education as evidenced in the publication of *Making Space: Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice throughout the K-12 Curriculum* (2008). However, specific examples of how teachers are taking up a social justice discourse are sparse. This exploratory research therefore aims to understand the extent to which high school Spanish teachers are promoting a social justice agenda and the obstacles they face to implementing such pedagogy. Through online questionnaires with Spanish teachers from all over the lower mainland, as well as interviews and classroom observations with approximately five of these teachers, I hope to gain and share valuable insight into their collective perspectives and practices. I predict that many Spanish teachers will be interested in implementing a social justice agenda but will not have the time or resources to supplement the curriculum. I therefore aim to understand what resources these teachers would like to see with the intention of creating them in the future.

Please let me know if you have any questions or would like further information.

Thank you for considering participation in this project,

Nicki Benson

Appendix B – Email to Teachers

Hello <insert teacher's name here>,

We are writing to you because you have agreed to participate in the research project titled *Teaching for Social Justice in the High School Spanish Classroom: Perspectives and Practices*. The project begins with an online questionnaire found at the following link: <insert link here>. We also hope to conduct interviews and classroom observations with some teachers.

The study is being conducted by two researchers: Dr. Monique Bournot-Trites, University of British Columbia, Department of Language and Literacy Education, and Nicole Benson, University of British Columbia, Department of Language and Literacy Education. This research is part of Nicole's graduate degree and will be included in her MA thesis. The findings from the research may also be published in a scholarly journal.

The project is described in detail below:

Purpose

There are three main goals of this research: (1) to gain insight into high school Spanish teachers' understandings of social justice, (2) to reveal the extent to which these teachers are teaching for social justice, and (3) to understand the supports for and obstacles to teaching for social justice.

Study Overview

Social justice has become a buzzword in the British Columbian educational context. The Ministry of Education has recently released a document entitled *Making Space: Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice throughout the K-12 Curriculum* (2008) and added *Social Justice 12* to the roster of available high school courses. But whether these events represent an actual transformation in practice remains to be seen. Although much has been written about teaching for social justice, particularly in the fields of critical pedagogy and critical multicultural education, the academic literature reveals uneven progress in this regard. In particular, there is very little written on how Spanish teachers are teaching for social justice. As one investigator, Nicole, is a Spanish teacher herself, we are interested in the extent to which her colleagues are taking up a social justice discourse and the ways in which they are implementing pedagogies and curricula to reflect this. We are also interested in revealing the obstacles to putting such ideas into practice. Through questionnaires with teachers from all over the province, as well as interviews and observations with approximately five teachers, our aim is to learn more about your perspectives and practices regarding these issues.

Study Procedures

Teachers are asked to complete the questionnaire found at the following link: <insert link here>. The questionnaire should take approximately twenty minutes to complete. If you complete the questionnaire, you are thereby consenting to the anonymous use of your responses for our research on social justice in the high school Spanish classroom.

At the end of the questionnaire is a consent form for interviews and classroom observations. If you complete the consent form, a researcher will contact you and a convenient time for the interview and observation will be agreed upon. The interview will take approximately one hour and will be audio recorded and later transcribed. The classroom observation, which will take place during your regularly scheduled classes, will not be recorded and only hand-written notes will be taken by the observing researcher. Since the focus of the observations is on the practices of the teacher only, it is not necessary to collect consent forms from parents/guardians and assent forms from the students.

Potential Risks

There is no significant risk to participating in this study. To ensure that misrepresentation has not occurred, the researchers will verify their analysis and findings with all interview participants prior to any publication/ public report about the completed study.

Potential Benefits

This study can benefit teachers of high school Spanish who wish to engage in socially just practices. It will provide them with valuable feedback and insight about their collective perspectives and practices and may reveal ways in which fellow teachers are overcoming obstacles to teaching for social justice. In addition, Nicole is hoping to use the insights gained during this study to inform the development of Spanish learning materials that promote social justice. These materials could benefit all high school Spanish teachers.

Confidentiality

Copies of the questionnaires, the audio tapes from the interviews, the transcripts of the interview data and the classroom observation notes will all be kept in a locked filing cabinet at UBC for at least five years. Computer files containing the questionnaire data and interview transcripts will be kept confidential though a security code known only to the researchers and will be saved for at least five years.

The questionnaire is hosted by Edudata, a Canadian websurvey company which is subject to Canadian privacy laws. Edudata servers record the incoming IP addresses of the computer that you use to access the survey but no connection is made between your data and your computer's IP address. The privacy policy for Edudata can be found at the following link:

<http://edudata.educ.ubc.ca/home/privacy.htm>.

To preserve confidentiality, pseudonyms and general geographic descriptors (e.g. a Vancouver high school) will be used in any publications instead of your real names and the specific school names. Participation in the study is entirely voluntary and participants may withdraw at any time or choose not to answer some of the questionnaire or interview questions without jeopardy to their work position.

Contact for information about study:

If you have any questions or wish to further discuss the research project, please feel free to call or send an e-mail to one of the investigators.

Contact for concerns about the right of research subjects:

You can also contact the Research Subject Information Line in the UBC Office of Research Services at 604-822-8595/ RSIL@ors.ubc.ca if you have any concerns about your rights or treatment as a research participant.

For your records, please keep a copy of this email and print a copy of the consent form at the end of the online questionnaire. Please complete the questionnaire and consent form by May 15th.

We thank you very much for your support in this study.

Sincerely,

Monique Bournot-Trites & Nicole Benson

Appendix C – Questionnaire

This questionnaire will allow us to find out to what extent social justice issues are being incorporated into Spanish language pedagogies and curricula.

It contains 27 questions divided into 4 sections. Consent forms for interviews and observations are at the end of the questionnaire.

Please respond to these questions in a manner that truly reflects your opinions. Your answers will be kept confidential.

PLEASE NOTE: If you complete this questionnaire, you are thereby consenting to the anonymous use of your responses for research on teaching for social justice in the high school Spanish classroom.

Thank you for your collaboration!

SECTION I: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Please check or type your answer in the space provided:

1. How many years have you been teaching Spanish?
2. How many years have you been working for your current school board?
3. What grade(s) do you teach? *(please check all that apply)* 8 9 10 11 12
4. What is your highest level of education?
5. Are you from a Spanish-speaking country? Yes No
6. Have you ever lived in a Spanish-speaking country? Yes No
7. Have you ever traveled to a Spanish-speaking country? Yes No
8. If you answered yes to number 6, please indicate the reason(s) for your travels:
 - Pleasure
 - Study
 - Work
 - Other (please specify):
9. Have you every participated in any professional development conferences related to social justice education? No Yes, once Yes, more than once
10. What is your gender? Male Female
11. What is your ethnicity?

SECTION II: BELIEFS

For questions 12-15, please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statements by checking the appropriate response.

6 Strongly agree 5 Agree 4 Somewhat agree 3 Somewhat disagree 2 Disagree 1 Strongly disagree

12. Supporting democracy in the classroom involves:

- a. Respecting individual voices 6 5 4 3 2 1
- b. Addressing racial, homophobic, sexist and other slurs in the classroom 6 5 4 3 2 1
- c. Teaching about historical and contemporary social movements to challenge oppressions 6 5 4 3 2 1
- d. Engaging students in collective problem- solving 6 5 4 3 2 1

13. A socially just curriculum:

- a. is based on students' inquiries into issues 6 5 4 3 2 1
- b. encourages students to take action on various issues and giving them opportunities to do so 6 5 4 3 2 1
- c. includes the perspectives of marginalized groups 6 5 4 3 2 1
- d. encourages students to brainstorm about why marginalized groups' perspectives are missing from standard texts 6 5 4 3 2 1

14. Teachers' work can contribute in essential ways to:

- a. the development of students' individual potential 6 5 4 3 2 1
- b. social movements aimed at the transformation of society's fundamental inequalities 6 5 4 3 2 1

15. The teacher's role is:

- a. To present a variety of opinions and perspectives on a given topic while remaining as neutral as possible 6 5 4 3 2 1
- b. Not neutral. It is connected either to reproducing societal injustices or transforming them 6 5 4 3 2 1

For the remaining questions, please note:

- * All questions refer to the high school Spanish classroom.
- * Whenever 'the Spanish-speaking world' is mentioned, this refers to Spain and Latin America but also to other countries where Spanish is spoken such as The United States and the Philippines

For questions 16-21 please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statements by checking the appropriate response.

6 Strongly agree 5 Agree 4 Somewhat agree 3 Somewhat disagree 2 Disagree 1 Strongly disagree

- 16.** It is important to teach about social justice issues when teaching Spanish
 6 5 4 3 2 1
- 17.** The textbooks and other ministry-supported materials I use in my classroom highlight social justice issues
 6 5 4 3 2 1
- 18.** It is important to teach about race issues (multiculturalism, race relations, racism, etc) when teaching Spanish.
 6 5 4 3 2 1
- 19.** It is important to teach about gender issues (gender in/equality, sexual exploitation, violence against women, etc) when teaching Spanish
 6 5 4 3 2 1
- 20.** It is important to teach about the disparity of wealth throughout the world when teaching Spanish
 6 5 4 3 2 1
- 21.** It is important to teach about historical and political issues when teaching Spanish (for example colonialism in the Americas, dictatorships, socialist movements, etc)
 6 5 4 3 2 1

SECTION III: PRACTICES

For questions 22 and 23, please indicate the extent to which you engage in the stated practices by checking the appropriate response.

- 22.** Please indicate the extent to which you engage in the following practices. Do you:
- a.** Involve students in the selection of learning materials
 Often Sometimes Rarely Never
 - b.** Involve students in determining assessment criteria
 Often Sometimes Rarely Never
 - c.** Encourage students to share stories from their communities and experiences
 Often Sometimes Rarely Never
 - d.** Encourage students to engage in social activism
 Often Sometimes Rarely Never

- e.** Seek out materials that address social justice issues to use in your classes
 Often Sometimes Rarely Never
- f.** Seek out materials that spotlight perspectives of marginalized groups (indigenous, women, disabled, etc)
 Often Sometimes Rarely Never
- g.** Discuss and challenge the assumptions and stereotypes found in Spanish learning materials
 Often Sometimes Rarely Never
- h.** Encourage students to think about who is privileged/ disadvantaged in the Spanish-speaking world
 Often Sometimes Rarely Never
- i.** Encourage students to think about who is privileged/ disadvantaged in their own communities
 Often Sometimes Rarely Never
- j.** Discuss the root causes of the disparity of wealth between and within countries
 Often Sometimes Rarely Never

23. During this academic year, how often have you discussed the following issues in your Spanish classes?

- | | | | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| a. Environmental issues | <input type="checkbox"/> Never | <input type="checkbox"/> Once | <input type="checkbox"/> A few times | <input type="checkbox"/> Often |
| b. Gender roles | <input type="checkbox"/> Never | <input type="checkbox"/> Once | <input type="checkbox"/> A few times | <input type="checkbox"/> Often |
| c. Historical events/ issues | <input type="checkbox"/> Never | <input type="checkbox"/> Once | <input type="checkbox"/> A few times | <input type="checkbox"/> Often |
| d. Homophobia | <input type="checkbox"/> Never | <input type="checkbox"/> Once | <input type="checkbox"/> A few times | <input type="checkbox"/> Often |
| e. Political events/ issues | <input type="checkbox"/> Never | <input type="checkbox"/> Once | <input type="checkbox"/> A few times | <input type="checkbox"/> Often |
| f. Poverty | <input type="checkbox"/> Never | <input type="checkbox"/> Once | <input type="checkbox"/> A few times | <input type="checkbox"/> Often |
| g. Racism | <input type="checkbox"/> Never | <input type="checkbox"/> Once | <input type="checkbox"/> A few times | <input type="checkbox"/> Often |
| h. Sexism | <input type="checkbox"/> Never | <input type="checkbox"/> Once | <input type="checkbox"/> A few times | <input type="checkbox"/> Often |
| i. The treatment of indigenous peoples | <input type="checkbox"/> Never | <input type="checkbox"/> Once | <input type="checkbox"/> A few times | <input type="checkbox"/> Often |
| j. The cultural traditions of non-dominant groups | <input type="checkbox"/> Never | <input type="checkbox"/> Once | <input type="checkbox"/> A few times | <input type="checkbox"/> Often |
| k. Other (please specify): | | | | |

SECTION IV: OPEN-ENDED

For questions 24-27 please write as much or as little as you want.

- 24.** Overall, do you believe that it is important to address social justice issues in the high school Spanish classroom? Why or why not?
- 25.** What are the obstacles to addressing social justice issues when teaching Spanish?
- 26.** Do you have anything else you would like to add about teaching for social justice in the Spanish classroom?
- 27.** Do you have any comments, questions or other feedback regarding this survey?

Appendix D – Liberal and Critical Questionnaire Items

Question Number	Question Details	Liberal	Critical
	Supporting democracy in the classroom involves:		
12a	Respecting individual voices	X	
12b	Addressing racial, homophobic, sexist, and other slurs	X	
12c	teaching about historical and contemporary social movements to challenge oppressions		X
12d	engaging students in collective problem-solving		X
	A socially just curriculum:		
13a	is based on students' inquiries into issues		X
13b	encouraging them to take appropriate action and giving them opportunities to do so		X
13c	includes the perspectives of marginalized groups	X	
13d	encourages students to brainstorm about why marginalized groups' perspectives are missing from standard texts	X	
	Teachers' work can contribute in essential ways to:		
14a	the development of students' individual potential	X	
14b	social movements aimed at the transformation of society's fundamental inequalities		X
	The teacher's role is:		
15a	to present a variety of opinions and perspectives on a given topic while remaining as neutral as possible	X	
15b	not neutral. It is connected either to reproducing societal injustices or transforming them		X

Appendix E – Statement of Informed Consent

Thank you very much for participating in this questionnaire! We are also hoping to conduct interviews and classroom observations with several teachers about facets of social justice in the high school Spanish classroom.

- Do you consent to participate in an interview? Yes No
If yes, in what language would you prefer to do the interview? English Spanish
Do you consent to participate in classroom observations? Yes No

If you consent to either interviews or observations, please fill out your contact information below. This information will be kept entirely confidential. Please also print a copy of this page for your records.

Your participation in the study is voluntary and you may refuse to participate or withdraw from the study at any time.

Providing your information below indicates that you have read and understand the letter regarding the project entitled “Teaching for social justice in the high school Spanish classroom: Perspectives and practices”, that you have kept a copy of both that letter and this consent form for your records and that you consent to participate further in this study.

Name _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Preferred mode of contact Phone Email

If you have any questions about the interviews and observations, please feel free to contact one of the investigators.

If you have any concerns about your treatment or rights as a research subject, you may contact the Research Subject Information Line in the UBC Office of Research Services at 604-822-8598 or if long distance e-mail to RSIL@ors.ubc.ca.

If you do not wish to participate in interviews or classroom observations, please leave this information blank and continue to the next screen.

Appendix F – Interview Questions

1. How did you come into the Spanish teaching profession?
2. Briefly describe your experiences in Spanish-speaking countries
3. What is your understanding of the term ‘social justice education’?
4. Do you think it is important to teach for social justice when teaching Spanish? Why or why not?
5. Do you think teacher neutrality is possible and/ or desirable? Why or why not?
6. How do you feel that your identity (your gender, race, social class, sexual orientation, etc) has influenced your teaching practice?
7. How do you feel you promote social justice in your classroom?
8. What are the obstacles to teaching for social justice in the Spanish classroom?
9. Do you believe that the ministry-recommended materials encourage teaching for social justice? In what ways?
10. Do you believe that these materials can be used as a starting point for teaching for social justice? In what ways?
11. Do you bring in your own materials that incorporate social justice issues? Please describe them
12. Do you know about the new draft curriculum for language education in BC schools that is modeled on the Common European Framework of References for Languages? If so, do you think this will have an affect your abilities to promote social justice in the Spanish classroom? In what ways?
13. Do you have anything else you would like to add about teaching for social justice in the high school Spanish classroom?
14. Do you have any questions or feedback regarding this interview or this research project?

Appendix G – Observation Grid

Teacher:

Grade:

Materials:

Language topics discussed:

General timeline:

Practice:	Occurrence:	Comments:
- Evidence that students have been included in selection of learning materials and/or assessment criteria		
- Use of materials that address social justice issues		
- Use of materials that spotlight the perspectives of marginalized groups		
- Discuss and challenge assumptions made in textbooks		
- Discussion of who is privileged/ disadvantaged in Spanish-speaking or home communities		
- Social justice issues discussed (racism, sexism, homophobia, poverty, etc)		
- Encourages students to share stories from their communities and experiences		
- Encourages students to be agents for social change		

Appendix H – Sample Coding of Open-Ended Questionnaire Item

25. What are the obstacles to addressing social justice issues when teaching Spanish?

Response

Resources, especially at an appropriate level. Funding for the resources (such as videos, books, etc)

Comment [NB1]: Resources

Comment [NB2]: Funding

Maturity level of the students. When I was answering the survey questions, most of the times when I answered that I have mentioned the items "a few times" it related to my senior classes - grade 11 or 12 students. Time - to set up and get into a social justice issue when there's all the language learning to squeeze in.

Comment [NB3]: Maturity

Comment [NB4]: Time

The ministry guidelines and teaching resources

Comment [NB5]: Curriculum

Comment [NB6]: Resources

Incorporating the topic into classroom time without giving up too much time away from the regular curriculum

Comment [NB7]: Curriculum

lack of resources
minimal support (administrative, collegial)
fear of recrimination

Comment [NB8]: Resources

Comment [NB9]: Support

Getting through the curriculum

Comment [NB10]: Curriculum

Lack of current materials addressing social justice issues.

Comment [NB11]: Resources

Simply keeping the students interested in learning the language.

Comment [NB12]: Student interest

Getting through the textbook and finding time to incorporate social justice issues into the curriculum. Also, being mindful about the amount of English that is spoken (e.g. to discuss social justice issues). I have not yet found an effective way to combine address social justice issues with learning and practicing language structures (aside from expanding vocab)

Comment [NB13]: Curriculum

Comment [NB14]: Time

Comment [NB15]: Language

Comment [NB16]: Balance

Time

Comment [NB17]: Time

Students lack of spanish language skills

Comment [NB18]: Language

At the high-school level grammar becomes a very large part of the curriculum. It is difficult to find time in the Spanish 11 course particularly, to explore issues outside of the grammatical context. I make the effort to show the documentary "Run For your Life", and one additional film in class during the semester. The only other thing I have thought of doing is offering bonus points for students who stay behind to watch a Latin American foreign film, as a way for them to expand their understanding of a less privileged life and the social justice issues involved.

Comment [NB19]: Curriculum

Comment [NB20]: Time

Appendix I – Sample Coding of Interviews

Interview transcript legend

Symbol	Meaning
...	Pause
.....	Long pause
-	Self stop, change of direction
^	Upward inflection
[]	Sound muffled – not sure if word correct
CAPTIALS	Emphasis on word
<i>(italics)</i>	Actions (laughing, coughing, etc)
<i>Italics</i>	Spanish word or title of book, movie, etc

Nicole: So, what do you feel are the obstacles for teaching for social justice in the Spanish classroom?

Penelope: *(half-laugh)* Um... well, I guess my – in my ideal world, I would be part of a **team** of people who had many of the same goals – that we would have ACCESS to... **resources** and... uh, which, you know range from everything from books or technology or, um, you know, resource people, um, who could HELP us[^]. AND... that... we could FOCUS on it without – I, I just feel that the job is so COMPLICATED that, you know, I'm having to worry about do I have a computer that works? *(laughs)* you know? Or like, “ok, I have to borrow books from” – you know, you know wh-what I did when I came back from the theatre, I'm doing that ALL the time so it's almost like I feel that in my ROLE as a Spanish teacher and as a language teacher it's really **complicated**. And, I DO feel like it's more complicated because, for example, with **BUDGETING** I have to pretty much go and BEG for resources individually even though other departments can work together as a full team and, um, are able to, you know, send ONE person in that capacity and it depends on the department, they might not... you know, the budget committee which I'm a member of, but might even say “oh! You know, that's about the same as what you asked for last year, that's ok” you know, so, um... I, I guess **TIME**. Like if it's going to be about developing new things and doing new things, time AND... yeah, I think those would be the main things.

Comment [NB1]: Collaboration

Comment [NB2]: Resources

Comment [NB3]: Balance

Comment [NB4]: Funding

Comment [NB5]: Time

Appendix J – Percentage Frequencies for Answers Given to Questionnaire Items 12-23

	Strongly agree	Agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
12. Supporting democracy in the classroom involves:						
a) Respecting individual voices	74.2	17.7	6.5		1.6	
b) Addressing racial, homophobic, sexist and other slurs in the classroom	82.3	16.1	1.6			
c) Teaching about historical and contemporary social movements to challenge oppressions	46.8	35.5	11.3	1.6	1.6	
d) Engaging students in collective problem- solving	53.2	25.8	14.5	1.6	3.2	
13. A socially just curriculum:						
a) is based on students’ inquiries into issues	21.0	35.5	37.1	1.6	4.8	
b) encourages students to take action on various issues and giving them opportunities to do so	37.1	40.3	17.7		3.2	
c) includes the perspectives of marginalized groups	59.7	32.3	3.2		3.2	
d) encourages students to brainstorm about why marginalized groups’ perspectives are missing from standard texts	41.9	40.3	14.5	1.6	1.6	
14. Teachers’ work can contribute in essential ways to:						
a) the development of students’ individual potential	75.8	21.0	1.6			
b) social movements aimed at the transformation of society’s fundamental inequalities	46.8	32.3	14.5	1.6	3.2	

	Strongly agree	Agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
15. The teacher's role is:						
a) To present a variety of opinions and perspectives on a given topic while remaining as neutral as possible	29.0	30.6	30.6	4.8	3.2	
b) Not neutral. It is connected either to reproducing societal injustices or transforming them.	6.5	25.8	24.2	19.4	12.9	4.8
16. It is important to teach about social justice issues when teaching Spanish	32.3	45.2	17.7	3.2	1.6	
17. The textbooks and other ministry-supported materials I use in my classroom highlight social justice issues	1.6	6.5	16.1	27.4	27.4	21.0
18. It is important to teach about race issues (multiculturalism, race relations, racism, etc) when teaching Spanish	25.8	50.0	17.7	3.2	3.2	
19. It is important to teach about gender issues (gender in/equality, sexual exploitation, violence against women, etc) when teaching Spanish	22.6	33.9	25.8	8.1	9.7	
20. It is important to teach about the disparity of wealth throughout the world when teaching Spanish	33.9	48.4	9.7	3.2	4.8	
21. It is important to teach about historical and political issues when teaching Spanish (for example colonialism in the Americas, dictatorships, socialist movements, etc)	43.5	35.5	16.1		3.2	1.6

	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
22. Please indicate the extent to which you engage in the following practices. Do you:				
a) Involve students in the selection of learning materials	3.2	35.5	50.0	11.3
b) Involve students in determining assessment criteria	8.1	50.0	33.9	8.1
c) Encourage students to share stories from their communities and experiences	67.7	27.4	1.6	3.2
d) Encourage students to engage in social activism	4.8	58.1	27.4	9.7
e) Seek out materials that address social justice issues to use in your classes	17.7	50.0	25.8	6.5
f) Seek out materials that spotlight perspectives of marginalized groups (indigenous, women, disabled, etc)	17.7	45.2	29.0	8.1
g) Discuss and challenge the assumptions and stereotypes found in Spanish learning materials	41.9	41.9	11.3	3.2
h) Encourage students to think about who is privileged/ disadvantaged in the Spanish- speaking world	32.3	50.0	12.9	4.8
i) Encourage students to think about who is privileged/ disadvantaged in their own communities	25.8	45.2	25.8	3.2
j) Discuss the root causes of the disparity of wealth between and within countries	21.0	41.9	30.6	6.5

	Often	A few times	Once	Never
23. During this academic year, how often have you discussed the following issues in your Spanish classes?				
a) Environmental issues	25.8	51.6	8.1	12.9
b) Gender roles	24.2	51.6	9.7	12.9
c) Historical events/ issues	45.2	48.4	1.6	3.2
d) Homophobia	3.2	33.9	24.2	37.1
e) Political events/ issues	29.0	54.8	8.1	6.5
f) Poverty	29.0	53.2	6.5	8.1
g) Racism	19.4	58.1	12.9	8.1
h) Sexism	16.1	46.8	17.7	17.7
i) The treatment of indigenous peoples	30.6	37.1	11.3	19.4
j) The cultural traditions of non-dominant groups	29.0	43.5	12.9	11.3