

Unpacking the Understanding of Social Justice in Higher Education From the Perspectives of Educators in Law, Health and Social Work

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Abstract

Social justice-informed pedagogy remains the bedrock for ensuring that educational programmes in higher education in South Africa are responsive to unmet learning needs and are contextualised within students' lived experiences. This paper documents the reflections of five senior academics (the authors) on how social justice can be applied to Law, Health Science, and Social Work, respectively. These academics were part of the Teaching Advancement at Universities (TAU) fellowship programme. Using Kim's Critical Reflective Inquiry Model and Nancy Fraser's concept of participatory parity, the authors interrogated the structural barriers to equitable education and the role of discipline-specific pedagogical practices in advancing or inhibiting social justice.

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Findings reveal that while social justice is a guiding principle across the identified disciplines, its implementation is inconsistent and often constrained by entrenched institutional norms and economic disparities. Legal education struggles to move beyond doctrinal teaching to cultivate critical consciousness; health sciences education largely embeds social justice in patient-centred care but overlooks the lived experiences of students; and social work education emphasises equity yet still faces structural barriers in practice-based learning.

The study highlights the necessity of embedding participatory parity in higher education and fostering an emancipatory pedagogy that moves beyond content delivery to active student engagement. The paper concludes with recommendations for higher education institutions to institutionalise social justice principles through curriculum reform, inclusive teaching strategies, and structural changes that promote equal access and participation.

Keywords: social justice, higher education, health sciences, law, social work

Résumé: La pédagogie fondée sur la justice sociale permet de garantir que les programmes éducatifs de l'enseignement supérieur en Afrique du Sud répondent aux besoins d'apprentissage non satisfaits et soient contextualisés dans les expériences des étudiants. Cet article documente les réflexions de cinq universitaires chevronnés (les auteurs) sur la manière dont la justice sociale peut être appliquée au droit, à la médecine, à l'odontologie et au travail social, respectivement. Ces universitaires faisaient partie du programme de bourses Teaching Advancement at Universities (TAU). En s'appuyant sur le modèle d'enquête critique et réfléchi de Kim et sur le concept de parité participative de Nancy Fraser, les auteurs se sont interrogés sur les obstacles structurels à une éducation équitable et sur le rôle des pratiques pédagogiques propres à chaque discipline dans la promotion ou l'inhibition de la justice sociale.

Les résultats révèlent que si la justice sociale est un principe directeur dans toutes les disciplines identifiées, sa mise en œuvre est incohérente et souvent limitée par des normes institutionnelles enracinées et des disparités économiques. L'enseignement juridique peine à dépasser l'enseignement doctrinal pour cultiver une conscience critique; l'enseignement des sciences de la santé intègre largement la justice sociale dans les soins centrés sur le patient mais néglige les expériences vécues par les étudiants; et l'enseignement du travail social met l'accent sur l'équité mais se heurte encore à des barrières structurelles dans l'apprentissage basé sur la pratique.

L'étude souligne la nécessité d'intégrer la parité participative dans l'enseignement supérieur et d'encourager une pédagogie émancipatrice qui aille au-delà de la transmission de contenus pour favoriser l'engagement actif des étudiants. Le document se termine par des recommandations à l'intention des établissements d'enseignement supérieur pour qu'ils institutionnalisent les principes de justice sociale par le biais d'une réforme des programmes, de stratégies d'enseignement inclusives et de changements structurels qui favorisent l'égalité d'accès et de participation.

Mots-clés: justice sociale, enseignement supérieur, sciences de la santé, droit, travail social

Introduction

South African social-political changes in the post-apartheid era introduced a distinct mandate for the State to develop and realise a reasonable, transparent, and effective plan to provide immediate universal and quality basic and adult education with reasonable and continuous access to higher education (HE). This plan had to consider the spatial, demographic, economic and budgetary imperatives of South Africa in light of the ever-growing demand for HE (CHE, 2007). The massification of HE may have produced the required diversification and increased student enrolment. However, contrary to expectations, this plan has arguably failed to ensure that students are treated as individuals, as required by the concept of 'dignity,' and to empower people through access to HE. (Schoole & Adeyemo, 2016). Students' subsequent upward social mobility has thus not been fully realised.

HE institutions, in turn, were required to develop a social justice-informed pedagogy for all offered programmes. Social justice in HE was accordingly introduced as an emerging equity-minded teaching and learning approach that creates environments for students who have been historically marginalised due to their race, ethnicity, gender identity, religion, or differing abilities (Achieving the Dream (ATD), 2023). However, HE institutions across South Africa inherited historical uneven student populations, staff and resource availability. Thus, the social-political environment became imperative, and the need to invest in professional training of educators in HE to emphasise a social approach to pedagogy was unavoidable.

Due to numerous challenges, it was difficult for educators to ensure a pedagogy for social justice or a socially just pedagogy (De Kadt, 2020). This challenge arose as educators, due to their disciplinary backgrounds and personal beliefs, expressed varied understandings of how to underpin a social justice framework in their pedagogy. Some educators, as a result,

focused on systemic social equality, while others emphasised the role of social justice in challenging access and equity in HE, thereby creating 'participatory parity' (Bozalek & Zembylas, 2019). This interpretation of social justice by the authors aligns with previous research findings where educators, in relation to social justice in HE, referenced social equality/inequality, discrimination, power relations, social inclusion/exclusion, a fair distribution of resources, opportunities and privileges in society; maximising students' ability to flourish; responsiveness to the particularity of students' needs and the freedom of students to pursue significant priorities (Bozalek & Zembylas, 2019). These varied perspectives on social justice influence how educators integrate social justice into their teaching and the complexity of implementing uniform pedagogical practices. A need was thus identified to illuminate the nuanced intersections between social justice and educational praxis, focusing on fostering participation and parity in the teaching and learning domains.

Social justice is an aspirational ideal wherein everyone, notwithstanding any differences and diversity based on factors such as race, gender, religion, culture, and other aspects of their identities, is treated in a dignified, equal, and fair manner. Madonsela and Lourens (2021) and Mollenkamp (2022) define social justice as just and fair access to equitable opportunities, resources, and privileges. In the context of HE, social justice means treating individuals (students) fairly and equitably, regardless of their backgrounds, and dismantling policies and practices that perpetuate inequities (McPhail, 2021). Socially just pedagogies in education have also been defined as those efforts of educators to transform policies and introduce teaching methods that advance the learning experiences and other opportunities of marginalised students and encourage and empower all students to respond to societal injustices (Bozalek & Zembylas, 2019). Davis and Steyn argue that social justice education is ultimately aimed at developing a value system wherein notions of justice, democratic values, freedom, and the suffering of others are a central concern (Davis & Steyn, 2012).

This paper evaluates the understanding and application of social justice within HE through the viewpoints of five educators (co-authors of this paper) from Law, Health, and Social Work disciplines, emphasising the importance of incorporating social justice principles in pedagogy. The educator's reflections were mainly aimed at examining and understanding the various challenges, such as access for disadvantaged students, funding, sustainability, and many more, faced by and within HE institutions. These co-authors, were part of the Teaching Advancement at Universities (TAU) Fellowship programme (cohort four) offered by Universities South Africa (USAf). This programme aimed at equipping the delegates with skills to

incorporate social justice in their pedagogy and is described in more detail later in the paper.

Contextualising Challenges in Higher Education in South Africa

The fundamental traits of the HE landscape pre-1994 included segregation and, thus, limited access to education based on race. The transition to a constitutional democracy introduced various changes in HE. Some of these changes included restructuring HE institutions to allow enrolment in HE institutions (HEI) that served all racial groups based on inclusivity, access, and representation (CHE, 2007). The Council for Higher Education (CHE) in South Africa aimed to create a system aligned with constitutional values and addressing social justice. Despite efforts to increase access to HE, disparities persist, particularly along racial and economic lines. Historically disadvantaged groups face barriers to accessing HE due to financial constraints, inadequate secondary-level preparation, and limited availability of institutions in rural areas (Zungu, 2022; Sivanath, 2020). These barriers often lead to student activism, characterised by protests and demonstrations, reflecting underlying grievances related to tuition fees, accommodation, and campus safety. These protests often disrupt academic activities and draw attention to systemic governance, representation, and student welfare challenges (Cloete & Maassen, 2015).

At various levels, HE institutions were impacted by insufficient funding, leading to compromised infrastructure, limited resources for research and development, and challenges in recruiting and retaining qualified academic staff members. The funding model often fails to adequately support the growing demand for tertiary education, exacerbating inequalities and hindering the sector's growth (Cloete & Maassen, 2015). These financial constraints are not only limited to the appointment of academic staff members but also to supporting them, influencing the administration and quality elements of the academic project. Lockett and Naicker (2019) refer to the HE system as still being dominated by the 'structural reproduction of social inequalities'.

Addressing these challenges requires holistic approaches prioritising equity, inclusivity, and quality in HE. De Kadt (2020) notes the importance of creating conditions that encourage equitable participation. It necessitates collaboration among government entities, HE institutions, civil society organisations, and other stakeholders to enact sustainable reforms and realise education's transformative potential (DHET, 2017). Ensuring and maintaining academic standards and quality assurance mechanisms are also essential. Issues such as outdated curricula, inadequate teaching and learning resources, and the need for continuous professional development

for academic staff affect the quality of education provided (Geldenhuys & Oosthuizen, 2015). Achieving meaningful transformation requires navigating complex power dynamics and entrenched structures of privilege.

HE is a dynamic and constantly evolving environment that has undergone significant changes. These ongoing shifts create challenges for academics, who must balance multiple responsibilities. To maintain quality education, academics must continually reassess their teaching and research practices, adopting creative and innovative approaches to effectively teach large classes (; Essop, 2021; Lepp et al., 2021). However, initiatives to promote inclusivity, diversity, and the recognition of indigenous knowledge systems have encountered institutional inertia, ideological tensions, and practical challenges in implementation. The efforts to transform HE and decolonise the curriculum add to the complexity of maintaining high-standard curricula. These efforts are sometimes faced with resistance and obstacles.

Teaching Advancement at Universities Fellowship Programme

The Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), aware of the challenges academics face, introduced the TAU fellowship aimed at academic scholarship to enhance teaching and learning in HE across institutions and disciplines (De Kadt, 2020). As a component of the DHET National Framework for advancing academics as university educators, the TAU fellowship programme was first introduced in 2016. The programme is funded through the University Capacity Development Programme (UCDP) as a collaborative project, and the participants are academics nominated from all public institutions of HE across South Africa.

The purpose of TAU is to contribute to transforming teaching and learning in South Africa's HE sector. It aims to improve academic skills and create a cadre of experienced senior academics to advance teaching excellence. The programme incorporates social justice as a central theme to unravel intricacies associated with the HE environment. As De Kadt (2020) outlined, the TAU programme aims to contribute to the 'positioning of upper-level academic staff, across institutions and disciplines, for more prominent leadership and change roles focused on teaching and learning in their institutional context'.

The programme participants are drawn from a range of disciplines and institutions. Nominations for participation in this programme are done competitively at the individual's institutional level. Successful nominees are expected to work collaboratively on several activities and tasks as part of the TAU fellowship, with the primary objective of solidifying the teaching and learning environment for educators and learners by challenging the

legacies of inequality from the past and advancing social justice. As part of the fellowship, enquiry groups were formed by the coordinators of the programme prior to the first meeting of the TAU residential contact sessions.

The programme was arranged with three week-long contact sessions over a period of eighteen months. During these contact sessions, keynote addresses, debates and discussions were held with the purpose of getting a deeper understanding of teaching and management in the HE sector. The formal sessions were followed up with continuous informal sessions during lunch and dinner conversations. Contact sessions allowed for the development of deeper relationships where issues within the HE context could be followed up with stimulating intellectual interactions.

The first session provided an overview of the challenges facing academics in South African HE. The second session allowed participants to continue engaging in high-level academic discussions and refining their collaborative projects. The third and final session featured key presentations on high-level conversations in the teaching and learning space, as well as discussions on learning and teaching in social justice. These sessions played a crucial role in shaping participants' perspectives on the broader HE landscape and fostering their roles as transformative leaders in academia.

The co-authors of this paper were grouped together as an enquiry group and came from different disciplines and institutions (law, health sciences and social work). One of the key objectives of the TAU programme was for delegates to reflect on social justice in and at HE institutions. The outcomes of the numerous interactions between the authors resulted in various reflections and conclusions on the issue of social justice in their teaching practices. While these reflections were intended to be part of the TAU programme, the co-authors used this opportunity to develop this paper with the purpose of sharing such experiences with the larger academic community.

Building upon De Kadt's (2020) work, this paper aims to enrich the dialogue surrounding the understanding of social justice from different disciplinary perspectives and the role of professional development in nurturing and supporting academics to become effective change agents in higher learning institutions. Quinn (2012) emphasised this outcome, indicating the need for a more theoretical approach to professional development. This emphasis stimulates intellectual curiosity and encourages a deeper exploration of the topic. Through this interdisciplinary lens, the transformative potential

is inherent in collaborative endeavours to advance equitable educational practices and promote social justice within the identified disciplines.

Theoretical Framework

In this paper, Nancy Fraser's analytical framework was used as a theoretical lens for critical theory to understand aspects of social justice that guided the authors' reflections and understanding of social justice. The three core dimensions of this framework were used, namely the economic dimension of distribution, the cultural dimension of recognition, and the added third political dimension of representation or framing (Fraser, 2007). Fraser (2007) argues that social justice is realised when individuals achieve participatory parity, meaning they can interact as peers in all spheres of social life without being hindered by economic, cultural, or political disadvantages. In the context of HE, participatory parity demands equitable access to education, recognition of diverse student identities, and inclusive institutional policies. These dimensions are central to understanding how disciplines engage with social justice and how teaching practices either foster or impede parity in participation.

Applying Fraser's (2007) concept of participatory parity to curriculum design requires not only addressing economic and structural barriers to access but also ensuring that pedagogy itself fosters active engagement and critical participation. Teaching practices must move beyond traditional content delivery to create inclusive spaces where all students, regardless of background, can participate as equals. Without structural shifts in curriculum development, such as integrating more contextually relevant material and diverse knowledge systems, social justice efforts risk remaining superficial.

While Fraser's (2007) concept of participatory parity offers a structural lens for analysing social justice in HE, additional perspectives from critical pedagogy further illuminate the role of education as a site of transformation. Freire (1970) argues that education must cultivate critical consciousness (*conscientização*), enabling students to recognise and challenge systems of oppression rather than passively absorbing knowledge. Freire's critique of the 'banking model' of education - where students are treated as empty vessels to be filled with information—resonates with contemporary critiques of traditional curriculum design in HE, which often fails to foster student agency and active participation.

Hooks (1994) extends this discussion through her concept of 'engaged pedagogy,' emphasising that teaching should be an interactive, student-centred process that acknowledges learners' lived experiences. Hooks

argues that intersectionality, recognising how race, gender, and class shape access to education, must be central to any justice-oriented pedagogy. By integrating Freirean and Hooksian perspectives, social justice in HE must move beyond policy rhetoric and structural adjustments to cultivate classrooms that empower students as co-creators of knowledge.

These three interwoven dimensions of Fraser steered many discussions and reflections during the TAU programme to understand true participation parity that extends the understanding of social justice. The economic dimension is viewed as an impediment to full participation, which is limited due to the lack of financial resources. This, along with the cultural dimension that focused on the inability to interact or engage in institutional practices based on inequality or misrecognition, and thirdly, the political dimension of representation or framing that ‘furnishes the stage on which struggles over distribution and recognition played out’ (Fraser, 2007). Using this understanding, the authors reflected on the extent to which their knowledge of implementing social justice in these identified disciplines was developed after participating in the TAU fellowship programme. These reflections and understandings of social justice could be described as cyclical and continuously developing through the joint discussions among the authors.

Freire (1970) asserts that true education is an act of liberation, where learners move from a position of passive reception to one of active transformation. In an emancipatory HE model, students are not merely taught about social justice but are empowered to interrogate, critique, and reshape the structures that perpetuate inequality. This requires disrupting traditional teaching hierarchies and creating spaces for dialogue, reflexivity, and activism.

However, the findings suggest that while social justice is embedded in various disciplinary discourses, many pedagogical approaches still reflect banking education principles—particularly in fields where professional training is seen as value-neutral (e.g., medicine and law). As Hooks (1994) argues, ‘education as the practice of freedom’ necessitates that both students and educators actively participate in creating transformative knowledge spaces. Without this commitment, social justice risks being treated as a theoretical ideal rather than a lived practice.

Research Question

How did the authors’ perspectives and understanding of social justice evolve during and after the TAU fellowship programme?

Methodological Approach

The authors used critical reflective practice as a research design to explore the nature and understanding of social justice from their discipline-specific perspectives. As illustrated earlier, these educators were part of an allocated enquiry group within the TAU programme. The TAU programme had ten enquiry groups, and these allocations were done by the TAU coordinators. Potential biases in participant selection were thus minimised as this author group was formed by the TAU programme coordinators. While the TAU programme was structured with set deliverables for each delegate, participation in this reflective study was voluntary. The source material was obtained from the authors’ individual reflective journaling during the TAU programme; whereafter, the reflections were collectively analysed to identify patterns and themes. These reflections were not limited to their current employment within a specific institution but rather encompassed their total teaching and learning experience. This approach includes intentional reflection, which is described as a means to understand a specific work situation and to explore the underlying assumptions and beliefs that facilitate or hinder service delivery, as well as identify strategies for improving the delivery of such services (Miller et al., 2020), in this case teaching and learning in HE within a social justice context. Reflection is described as an integral part of social justice teacher education (Nieto, 2006). Connors and Seifer (2008) refer to critical structured reflection as essential to high-quality learning. On the other hand, Gorski and Dalton (2020) describe reflection as the vital aspect of academic knowledge that modifies students’ worldviews and understanding of themselves.

Kim’s Critical Reflective Inquiry Model was used to guide the process of critical reflection on the primary research question of how academic educators’ perceptions evolved during and after the TAU programme. The model comprises three phases, namely: “Descriptive,” “Reflective,” and “Critical/Emancipatory” (Kim, 1999). The *descriptive phase* included depicting the individual author’s thoughts, feelings, and prior understanding and engagement with social justice theory in their respective settings (before enrolment into the TAU programme). Each author documented their initial knowledge of social justice within their disciplines, supported by literature, the extent to which it was explicitly covered in their disciplines/fields of teaching, and how this was expressed in the identified curricula.

For the *reflective phase*, reflective analysis was guided by the authors’ understanding of social justice prior to their participation in the TAU programme and how these thoughts and perspectives evolved through a nuanced understanding of social justice at both the individual and group levels. These reflections were shaped by the existing social structures,

historical imbalances in health and social care, and how the current context of HE impacts the individual's understanding of diversity in student learning and teaching. This outward exploration can activate an inward exploration in the individual, potentially enhancing identity development and identity-based agency (through the life course, interactions with others and development of one's personality) (Kawai, 2021). Thus, the reflective phase included reflecting on the situation and analysing the intentions.

The *Critical/Emancipatory phase* focused on a critique of existing practices at an individual level and across the identified disciplines, thus allowing for comparisons in discipline-based assumptions, beliefs, and personal and professional values. Here, the authors looked at how underlying assumptions, beliefs and personal and professional values impact current practices within the discipline and among the identified disciplines. This exercise further allowed the authors to engage in an 'emancipatory and change process' (Kim, 1999), meaning there were opportunities for the authors to make recommendations for improved learning and learning within HE with a stronger focus on social justice. Such recommendations included a focus on the context of learning, awareness of the barriers to change, the deeply held personal beliefs and values, and the strategies for implementing change.

Positionality Statement

As authors, the diverse academic and professional backgrounds are acknowledged, which have shaped these perspectives on social justice in HE. The interdisciplinary team consists of five senior academics from the disciplines of Medicine, Dentistry, Law, and Social Work, ranging in rank from Senior Lecturer to Professor. Coming from different cultural, ethnic, and gender identities, varied lived experiences and disciplinary insights were brought into this work. While recognising the positionality of the authors within the structures of HE, it is acknowledged that there was the commitment to critically reflecting on and challenging systemic inequities in teaching and learning. The collective engagement in the TAU programme provided an opportunity to interrogate social justice principles within the respective disciplines, fostering a deeper understanding of their role in shaping equitable and inclusive educational environments.

Drafting this article was a complex process due to the diverse viewpoints and disciplinary backgrounds of the authors. The authors approached teaching and learning through the lenses of their respective fields, shaped by their beliefs, pedagogical philosophies, and experiences. It became clear that academics from Law, Social Work, and Health Sciences approach research, writing, and teaching in fundamentally different ways. Law scholars tend

to focus on doctrinal analysis and legal reasoning, social work academics prioritise reflexivity and practice-based inquiry, while health sciences scholars often adopt empirical and evidence-based methods.

These differences inspired extensive deliberations on the conceptualisation and application of social justice within HE. The actual drafting of the article was, as a result, equally complicated due to the varied approaches to academic research and writing of each author. This process, although challenging, ultimately enriched the paper by offering a multidimensional exploration of social justice in pedagogy.

Findings

The author's reflections are presented according to Kim's Critical Reflection Inquiry Model's three phases, which are included in the different disciplines (Law, Health and Social Work). The first phase was the *descriptive* aspect of the authors' disciplinary understanding of social justice, their perspectives, and observations.

Descriptive Phase

Social Justice Perspective from Law

Within the discipline of law, unravelling different aspects of social justice with the discipline starts with the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa ("the Constitution"), which recognises inherent and individual dignity as an intrinsic feature of all humans (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, section 9). The dignity of every natural person is universally equal, and it demands that everyone, on a reciprocal basis, be treated and recognised as humans with unique traits and attributes (*S v Makwanyane* 1995 (6) BCLR 665 para 224). Dignity is a moral justification for and a basic normative foundation of other fundamental rights. It generates, identifies, informs, animates, directs, underwrites and interprets specific fundamental rights (*Dawood v Minister of Home Affairs* 2000 (3) SA 936, para 35). This directly intersects with the understanding of McPhail (2021), who outlines that social justice in the context of HE requires that individuals should be treated with dignity.

The Bill of Rights (Chapter 2 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996) included founding values of human dignity, equality and freedom aimed in part at advancing social justice. Dignity must be interpreted to reference the concept of 'social justice'. The South African Constitutional Court (CC) has defined social justice concerning the South African concept of ubuntu, which emphasises the communal nature of society and 'carries in it the ideas of humaneness, social justice, and fairness'. It further envelopes 'the key values of group solidarity, compassion, respect,

human dignity, conformity to basic norms and collective unity' (*Everfresh Market Virginia (Pty) Ltd v Shoprite Checkers (Pty) Ltd* 2012 (1) SA 256 (CC), para 71).

Social justice, therefore, demands the participation of everyone, including the most disadvantaged members of society, in all aspects of society. The government must be held to account if it fails to comply with its fundamental rights obligations. Social justice can, accordingly, be interpreted as a guiding principle, urging academics, policymakers and legal practitioners to create a more just and equitable society within the HE sector. The implication is that social justice must be incorporated into legal education. Students must be empowered to become legal practitioners committed to acting on behalf of the vulnerable, dismantling discriminatory laws and advocating for marginalised communities. Social justice perspectives must be incorporated into every aspect of teaching and research so that students can understand how legal systems may perpetuate inequality (Jabyn, 2020).

In legal education, the principle of participatory parity is crucial but often overlooked. Many students enter law school from vastly different educational backgrounds, yet legal education assumes a level playing field. This disparity affects students' ability to engage as peers in learning spaces, particularly when access to mentorship, funding, and academic resources remains uneven. True social justice in legal education would require proactive measures to ensure that marginalised students can participate on an equal footing, not just in curriculum content but also in access to professional opportunities.

Social Justice Perspective from Health Care

From a healthcare perspective, the concept of social justice, as an interdisciplinary approach that bridges various domains to equip healthcare students with the necessary social consciousness, is crucial. Social justice promotes equal access to quality healthcare for all individuals, regardless of socioeconomic status, background or race (Mailloux, 2011; Davis et al., 2020). Here, the focus is on the student's understanding of how social justice is applicable in healthcare. The student needs to recognise the different approaches the health system uses to promote justice in healthcare delivery. One example of the approach used by the public health system is the primary health care (PHC) model, which provides a vehicle for delivering health care services that are appropriate, relevant and contextualised to local unmet health needs (Behera et al., 2022).

Such an approach aims to eliminate health disparities across all racial and socio-demographic groups. At the same time, health promotion activities

are driven by the need to ensure the creation of an enabling environment for individuals and communities to make healthier choices (Caron et al., 2023; Nutbeam et al., 2021). Both PHC and health promotion approaches strive to empower individuals and communities to take control of their health. Thus, the learning environment focuses on building learners' knowledge and skills that would enable the graduate to meet the demands of the health system. Thus, the application of social justice in curricula, in this case, is limited to the actual subject content.

Another author understood the cultivation of professional values, including social justice, as an ongoing and extended journey that begins in healthcare education and continues throughout years of healthcare practice (Habibzadeh et al., 2021). This journey involves both students and educators, who play crucial roles in learning and developing professional values. Schiff et al. (2012) and Rukadikar et al. (2022) describe social justice education as an interdisciplinary approach that fosters collaboration across social, political, and biomedical domains, equipping healthcare students with the social consciousness necessary to provide competent healthcare to all community members. This collaborative effort involving all healthcare stakeholders empowers them to provide competent care while advocating for social justice within their communities.

Interdisciplinary teaching of public health principles, such as (socio-economic, cultural and political principles, global burden of disease, and environmental determinants) in basic science modules, such as physiology, needs to be established (Jacobsen et al., 2022). This approach will help students understand the significance of social health determinants and their impact on molecular physiological changes (Chamany et al., 2008). It is important to note that health inequalities significantly affect life expectancy, mortality, and morbidity statistics and, therefore, social epidemiologists have noted that social factors manifest in the physiology of a population, indicating that socio-economic challenges are reflected in an individual's physiology (Krieger 2005 and 2011; Maurizio, 2015). Understanding the epidemiology of social determinants and linking it to molecular physiology effectively introduces social justice aspects to basic sciences and fosters empathy for vulnerable members of our society (Venkatapuram & Marmot, 2009).

Transforming health professional education to equip future practitioners with the ability to consider patients' unique risk factors—within the context of socioeconomic status, social environment, and physical surroundings—requires a fundamental restructuring of curricula. This shift demands that subject experts not only rethink their content but also adopt innovative

approaches to integrating the social determinants of health into their teaching. By embedding these critical perspectives, health programmes can encourage interdisciplinary collaboration, fostering richer, more holistic learning experiences. Ultimately, this transformation will better prepare students with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to address health disparities effectively and promote equitable healthcare outcomes (Lewis et al., 2020).

Social justice ensures that people and clients accessing healthcare services are treated equally and with dignity. However, distributive justice, especially in the public healthcare sector, increases equitable access to healthcare. Ending the dilemma of unmet health needs within the healthcare services, and ensuring resources are re-distributed based on the needs of the affected population. Social justice, in this context, emphasises a patient- or client-centred approach that prioritises individual needs while addressing historical disparities in healthcare access. In healthcare education, systemic inequalities in prior education and resource availability disrupt participatory parity.

Social Justice Perspective from Social Work

Social workers are imperative in promoting social justice, as they advocate for vulnerable populations, fight against discrimination, and empower individuals to access resources and services (Braveman et al., 2011). In addition, social work education emphasises understanding systemic injustices and engages in policy analysis, community organising, and direct practice to address inequality and promote social change (Bhagwan, 2017).

In social work, social justice is not just a theoretical framework but a guiding principle that informs practice at every level (Department of Social Development (DSD), 2013). Embedded in the Framework for Social Services (2013), one of the elements of the developmental approach is a rights-based approach. This element emphasises social justice, a minimum standard of living, equitable access and equal opportunity to services and benefits, and a commitment to meeting the needs of all South Africans, particularly the most disadvantaged (DSD, 2013).

A central part of the social work curriculum is to educate social workers to recognise and challenge the structural inequalities contributing to social injustices. This is done in all the different modules in the curricula that deal with social work methods. They work with individuals, groups and communities to address poverty, discrimination, oppression, and access to resources (SACSSP, n.d.). Whether they are providing direct services, advocating for policy changes, or conducting research, social workers are

committed to promoting social justice and empowering those who are marginalised or disadvantaged.

One of the key ways social justice is prevalent in social work is through a commitment to anti-oppressive and anti-discriminatory practices (Dominelli, 2017). Social workers are trained to examine their own biases and privileges critically and to challenge discrimination and oppression in all its forms actively. This may involve advocating for the rights of specific marginalised groups, such as racial minorities, LGBTQ+ individuals, immigrants, or people with disabilities, and working to create inclusive and equitable systems and policies.

Furthermore, social workers often engage in community organising and activism to address systemic issues and promote social change. They collaborate with other professionals, community organisations, and grassroots movements to advocate for policies and practices that advance social justice and human rights (SACSSP, n.d.). Social workers play a crucial role in building more just and equitable societies by working at the micro and macro levels. Ultimately, social justice is a goal to be achieved and a guiding principle that shapes the social work profession's values, ethics, and practices.

Social work education is inherently aligned with principles of social justice, yet challenges to participatory parity persist. While the curriculum emphasises equity, students from historically marginalised backgrounds may still face institutional barriers that limit their full participation. For instance, financial constraints often prevent students from engaging in unpaid internships, which are integral to social work training. Ensuring participatory parity in social work education requires restructuring these institutional norms to guarantee equal access to experiential learning opportunities.

Assessment in social work education is a crucial mechanism to evaluate students' ability to critically engage with social justice principles. A key method is the use of case studies that require students to analyse real-world scenarios where systemic inequalities affect service users. Through structured case analysis, students demonstrate their capacity to apply social justice theories in decision-making and intervention planning.

Furthermore, reflective journaling and portfolios are integrated into coursework to encourage students to critically engage with their own biases, positionality, and ethical responsibilities in advocating for marginalised communities. Fieldwork assessments, including supervision

reports and structured evaluations, assess students' application of social justice in direct practice settings. Additionally, policy analysis assignments require students to critique existing social policies and propose reforms that enhance equity and inclusion. These assessment strategies ensure that social work graduates do not merely understand social justice in theory but are equipped to operationalise it in practice, making them effective advocates for systemic change.

During the descriptive phase, the authors individually describe their understanding of social justice embedded in their disciplines. During the next phase, joint discussions were held among the authors to reflect on a deeper understanding of social justice within each disciplinary pedagogical approach to teaching and learning. Reflections are presented according to the different disciplinary reflections. Reflective accounts are inherently subjective and may be influenced by personal biases, prior experiences and even elements of social desirability bias that may have been created during the TAU programme. Nonetheless, the authors were encouraged to review, clarify and refine their reflections to reduce potential bias.

Reflective Phase

Across disciplines, the challenges of embedding social justice in HE reflect deeper tensions identified by Freire (1970) and Hooks (1994). Traditional educational models often prioritise knowledge transmission over critical engagement, reinforcing hierarchical learning structures where students are passive recipients rather than active participants. This is particularly evident in legal education, where doctrinal approaches overshadow discussions of legal activism; in health sciences, where technical proficiency is emphasised over critical consciousness about health inequities; and in social work, where systemic barriers still undermine true emancipatory learning. By examining these disciplines through the lens of critical pedagogy, we explore how teaching can shift toward a more engaged, participatory, and justice-driven mode.

The authors' varied responses reflect a diverse understanding and nuances of social justice that is very much context-based. While each discipline engages with social justice in distinct ways, common themes emerge, particularly around the challenges of integrating participatory parity into pedagogy. The following reflections explore how these nuances shape students' learning experiences across disciplines.

Reflections From Law

The author from law maintained a more abstract and theoretical perspective, as opposed to the more contextual or philosophical understanding of social

justice articulated by other authors. The author's understanding may be explained with reference to the traditional emphasis on doctrinal learning in legal education. This outcome was also evident in the study by Davis and Steyn where academics from disciplines such as Engineering and Anthropology expressed similar views (Davis & Steyn, 2012). Social justice was initially understood as an approach to eliminating institutionalised domination and oppression and possibly referring to society's morally appropriate distribution of social benefits (and obligations). At the very least, social justice initiatives attempt to eliminate legal and otherwise conditions that produce structural inequality and exclusion. However, the imprecise nature of social justice and the lack of focus on its function during legal education complicates effective and meaningful interventions to use it as a vehicle for providing access to socially just legal education, addressing inequities, and promoting the interests of marginalised and vulnerable students. Teaching, therefore, primarily focused on the substantive law. Social justice issues were present in the learning and teaching, but their reach and impact were limited and incidental to the matters being taught. This approach was helpful as it ensured that students could find, interpret and apply the law in practice and thus navigate their future studies and professional careers. Nonetheless, legal education also incorporates several pedagogical strategies beyond pure theory to integrate social justice into legal education. These strategies include clinical legal education where students are exposed to the socio-political contexts in which laws operate through pro bono legal services under supervision, case-based interpretations of judgments that incorporate social justice issues and mock trials and moot courts, where students are required to engage with social justice arguments in a controlled, practice-based environment. Students are encouraged during moot court arguments to, apart from their doctrinal and critical analysis, also critically assess how court decisions impact marginalised groups. Social justice issues are also integrated into subjects such as constitutional law, human rights law and socio-economic rights law.

Compared to health sciences and social work, legal education presents a unique challenge: while it fundamentally deals with justice, its pedagogy often focuses on doctrine rather than fostering a critical, action-oriented approach to social justice. Unlike social work, where social justice is an explicit core principle, or health sciences, where patient equity is emphasised, law students may engage with social justice more abstractly unless exposed to clinical legal education or human rights-based courses.

Reflections From Health Care

Current reflections highlight that teaching social justice theory and practice in health science programmes is primarily content-driven. The emphasis is on helping students understand the context of applying the primary healthcare approach, the importance of patient- or client-centred care, and the responsibility to recognise and uphold the rights and dignity of those they serve. The assumption was that curricula with primary healthcare ideologies were adequate to drive a social justice agenda, given that the notion of social justice was already embedded in such approaches. Hence, the need to actively engage with elements of social justice outside of the known parameters for health care delivery was not seen as critical for teaching and learning, specifically in the basic sciences. Such engagement did not also consider the impact of learning on students' prior knowledge, preparedness, social exposure, upbringing, and innate beliefs and values. Likewise, the pre-set learning outcomes focus on the students' knowledge acquisition as the measurement scale to determine whether the student has met these learning standards. No emphasis is placed on positioning the learner within this context of person-centred healthcare delivery, nor is there any focus on how social justice should be applied to the learning context. However, a student-centred learning approach highlights the need for academics to recognise the impact of diverse socio-economic and cultural influences on learning and how this could result in students feeling marginalised or excluded from discussions that do not consider their lived experiences.

One of the authors identified social equity as one of the pillars of the primary healthcare approach, namely, inter-sectoral coordination, appropriate technology, and support mechanisms. Social equity focuses on fairness in providing health services. In contrast, social justice focuses on individual and communities' unmet health needs rather than using a utility-based approach (reaching the most significant number of people). It was clear that social justice has numerous and sometimes contradictory views. As a result, various perspectives emerged during the discussion between the authors. These divergent definitions reflect the value judgment of the person who proposes a specific interpretation. It was noted that social justice could include dimensions of culture, social inclusion, equality, and socio-economic rights. Social justice was thus a familiar concept for some of the authors. At the same time, there was also considerable discomfort about how social justice aspects could be incorporated into their teaching and curriculum ideologies.

In HE, access may appear equal, but institutions do not always effectively address underlying societal inequalities. Social justice is seen as a

principle that should be recognised and embedded across all aspects of HE institutions, with tangible evidence of social change.

Another author thought that lectures were merely an opportunity or space for teaching and learning needed for that specific subject. The author's prior view was to give information to students without necessarily letting students create change within that classroom setting. This view was inspired and adapted from how this author was taught, i.e., being fed with information and regurgitating the same information during assessments. It was noted that this practice does not allow students to apply critical thinking to the subject matter.

Social justice, in legal education and social work, has become an inherent professional obligation. In health sciences, social justice considerations are primarily patient-centred care (Cloninger et al., 2014). Social work students are explicitly taught advocacy strategies. However, medical and dental students may not always receive training on how to challenge systemic health inequalities, highlighting a gap in professional education.

Reflections From Social Work

The incorporation of a social justice pedagogy within social work is continuously emphasised to ensure that the students understand the integral elements of the Developmental Social Welfare Approach (DSWA). Otherwise, there would be a disjuncture in how theory is taught and how it should be implemented. It was, however, emphasised that this is very often an individual approach from an educator, but that there should be a stronger emphasis in the broader academy to ensure that concepts such as social justice do not get lost in theory. Embedding social justice in education would possibly ensure that it can be better integrated when graduates enter the workforce and ensure that all service users are treated in the same way that they experienced within the HE context.

Integrating social justice pedagogy in social work education is vital, especially in the South African context, where historical and structural inequalities continue to shape society. Ensuring that students deeply understand the core principles of the DSWA is crucial. Without this integration, there can be a significant gap between how social work theory is taught and how it is practically applied, potentially undermining the profession's goals. However, it is concerning that incorporating social justice in education often depends on the individual educator's commitment rather than being a consistent and intentional approach across the entire academic curriculum. This inconsistency risks marginalising critical concepts like social justice,

reducing them to theoretical discussions rather than actionable principles guiding practice.

To address this, there must be a broader, institution-wide emphasis on embedding social justice within the curriculum. When social justice is consistently and comprehensively integrated into social work education, it fosters a generation of graduates who are theoretically informed and practically equipped to apply these principles in the workforce. Such an approach ensures that service users are treated with the same dignity, equity, and respect that students experience in their HE context.

Social work education offers the most structured approach to social justice, embedding it directly into professional competencies. However, challenges persist, particularly around unpaid internships that disadvantage students from lower-income backgrounds. While law and health sciences face different barriers to integrating social justice, all three disciplines struggle with fully operationalising participatory parity in both education and professional practice.

Critical Emancipatory Phase

In pedagogic work, emancipation is often framed through the lens of Freire's critical pedagogy, where education serves as a transformative tool for both learners and educators. Freire (1970) argued that education must cultivate critical consciousness (*conscientização*), enabling individuals to recognise and challenge oppressive structures. This requires a shift from 'banking education' - where knowledge is deposited into passive students—to a participatory, co-constructive model of learning. Within the context of HE, an emancipatory approach would thus necessitate that both curriculum and teaching methodologies foster active engagement, critique, and social change. The reflections in this study reveal both successes and challenges in achieving this goal.

It was jointly agreed that social justice in HE should focus both on the content of learning and the context of learning. This realisation means that social justice should be infused into curriculum content. It was noted and questioned how these social justice concepts could be relevant for the student's overall growth and development. The inclusion of social justice should also address how educators ensure that the learning content considers the different social perspectives, worldviews, socio-cultural practices, and beliefs. This inclusion must reflect the voices of people and communities previously silenced through discriminatory practices. Additionally, it was noted that the student's context of learning must be considered, that is,

the extent to which the real world and lived experiences of students and communities are brought back into the learning environment.

Emancipatory Phase From a Law Perspective

A commitment to social justice in legal education must start with equitable access. Social justice further requires a profound understanding and appreciation of society's inequities and students' experiences. This insight demands legal education that fosters inclusion and an appreciation of the student's motivation to make a significant and continuing impact on marginalised, subordinated, and underrepresented persons in the future. Social justice issues must thus be incorporated into the curriculum so that students can understand and give effect to the proper function of social justice as a tool of justice.

Students must be encouraged to differentiate between law and justice and between what the law is and what the law could be. They must know and understand the substantive law, but should also be able to critique current law, especially where it is unjust or inadequate. They must also, despite the focus on knowledge of the law, appreciate the circumstances their potential clients will find themselves in, the impact of their decisions, and the accompanying potential ethical challenges. Legal educators, thus, should not completely separate the legal education process from the cultural and social narratives it creates. The law faculty must further ensure that the knowledge and skills taught and the research produced are accessible and valuable to the community that it serves. Legal education must thus incorporate elements that seek to address the unfair distribution of legal services and the inequitable access to legal representation by the most vulnerable. This aim can, in part, be achieved through the provision of effective pro bono legal services by the faculty and its graduates in the future. Ultimately, including social justice will enhance the learning opportunities for law students as they will be able to experience the application and benefits that the law offers from their personal experiences. Students aware of social justice issues can further appreciate the role and impact of law in society and how the law and legal institutions could be reformed to serve society better. These issues simultaneously address the community's needs by producing competent and ethically aware future legal practitioners (Ashford & McKeown, 2018).

While legal education introduces students to the concept of justice, it often falls short of fostering the critical consciousness that Freirean pedagogy envisions. Law students are trained in case law and legal reasoning, yet the curriculum does not always encourage them to interrogate how legal systems uphold structural inequities. For true emancipation, legal education

must move beyond knowledge transfer and cultivate a sense of social responsibility, equipping students to challenge unjust legal structures. Clinical legal education programmes, pro bono work, and interdisciplinary approaches may serve as avenues to promote a more transformative legal pedagogy.

Emancipatory Phase From a Health Care Perspective

Embedding social justice principles within the curriculum and translating them into transformative pedagogy practices requires a fundamental paradigm shift.

Expanding on the concept of “transformative pedagogy” in medical education from a healthcare perspective, the most effective teaching strategies for integrating social justice principles include:

- engaging students in community clinics, mobile health units, and underserved areas to expose them to health disparities first-hand;
- encouraging long-term partnerships with local communities to ensure sustainable, equity-focused interventions;
- requiring structured reflection to connect community experiences with systemic healthcare injustices;
- using real-world case studies that emphasise social determinants of health (e.g., housing instability, food insecurity, racial bias in treatment);
- presenting ethical dilemmas related to health equity, forcing students to critically engage with justice-oriented solutions;
- encouraging interdisciplinary collaboration (public health, social work, policy) to develop holistic, patient-centred care models;
- adopting Freirean methods that challenge students to question power dynamics in healthcare;
- using decolonial and intersectional approaches to examine how race, gender, disability, and socioeconomic status intersect in health outcomes;
- training faculty in anti-racist and inclusive teaching practices to ensure the curriculum actively dismantles bias rather than perpetuates it;
- teaching students to recognise how policies, institutions, and systemic forces shape health inequities; and
- integrating policy advocacy skills into the curriculum so students can engage in legislative and institutional reforms.

For one of the authors, this realisation marked a turning point: education should not merely impart knowledge but actively dismantle structural inequities. Teaching students about social justice while fostering community-driven initiatives—supported by academic institutions—ensures that education becomes a catalyst for systemic change rather than a passive transfer of information.

A commitment to equity in health sciences education is essential to equip future scientists and medical and health professionals with the skills to conduct research that directly addresses the needs of marginalised and underserved communities. One of the authors reflected on the imperative for medical students not only to develop clinical expertise but also to adopt a justice-oriented, holistic approach to patient care—one that acknowledges and addresses the broader social determinants of health. This framework moves beyond conventional medical and health sciences training, fostering a deep understanding of how systemic injustices shape patient experiences and health outcomes. By embedding this perspective into medical and health sciences education, students are empowered to advocate for and implement healthcare interventions that are inclusive, contextually relevant, and transformative.

Future healthcare professionals must critically engage with issues of social injustice, collaborate on problem-solving strategies, and integrate this awareness into their clinical practice. This approach extends beyond individual patient care to encompass structural advocacy, health equity, and meaningful community engagement. Medical and health sciences education must therefore prioritise continuous learning, reflective practice, and sustained mentorship to cultivate a generation of practitioners committed to dismantling healthcare disparities and championing social justice in all aspects of their work.

Historically, health sciences education has prioritised technical competence over the ethical imperative to address social injustices. A Freirean model of emancipation calls for a radical reimagining of this paradigm, one in which medical and dental students critically examine the societal and systemic factors that perpetuate health inequities. Only by centring participatory parity and structural transformation can health education produce professionals who are not only competent but also committed to equity, advocacy, and justice-driven healthcare for all.

Embedding social justice principles in the curriculum and bringing them to life in the classroom through well-thought-out pedagogy was a mind shift for one of the authors. The idea that students who are taught principles of

social justice and motivated to conduct student initiatives that improve the community and are supported by the academic institution makes sense. Adapting to a more equitable approach will provide the skills for basic scientists to conduct research that meets the community's needs. One of the authors reflected on the idea that medical students should not only develop the skills to assist patients facing social challenges but also adopt a holistic perspective on patient care. This approach encourages a broader educational framework that ultimately enables future healthcare professionals to consider individuals within the context of their communities, leading to more comprehensive and effective healthcare interventions. It was thus noted that this transformative approach to teaching with social justice principles will lead to a transformative practice that promotes good medical service that is inclusive to members of society from all walks of life.

Medical and health sciences students need to be more cognisant of social justice aspects in their profession, discuss collaborative problem-solving, and use the knowledge to provide quality health care for all members of society and promote health advocacy and community-based services. This should lead to the practice of social justice in clinical applications. There should be long-term, continuous learning, reflection on social awareness and a level of mentorship.

Health sciences education frequently focuses on technical competence rather than the social determinants of health and the ethical responsibility of healthcare practitioners to advocate for justice. A Freirean model of emancipation would require that medical and dental students critically engage with the societal factors influencing patient health outcomes. However, the structure of health education often prioritises clinical proficiency over critical consciousness. To achieve participatory parity and true emancipation, health sciences curricula must integrate service-learning and community-based approaches that encourage students to challenge inequities within healthcare systems and find pragmatic solutions collectively, for holistic healthcare delivery.

Emancipatory Phase From a Social Work Perspective

Likewise, social work focuses much on social justice and ensuring that all people, especially people from disadvantaged backgrounds, can have equal opportunities. Social justice is a core element in social work, but should be consciously included in the teaching and learning environment. Social justice is a key concept that forms part of the DSWA and is core to social work teaching. It is equally important to note what social justice means in the context of this teaching. When teaching at a university where students mostly come from disadvantaged communities, one needs to understand

the students' positionality, especially regarding access to resources. As an educator, one needs to continuously reflect on their own position and perception in relation to what the students bring' to the classroom. The biggest challenge is creating an environment in the class where the students can feel free to share their ideas and opinions. Thus, a social justice perspective creates a platform where students can participate equally regardless of background or origin.

Social justice in HE must consider supportive learning environments, relevant curricula, and student and educator preparedness for changes in the learning context. A supportive environment should encompass learning resources, different learning modes, infrastructure, and rapid response to sudden changes. Much has already been documented on the relevant curricula for learning, but this must also consider the need to re-examine the foundational blocks for learning. More emphasis should be placed on theory-driven learning that, in most cases, remains far removed from people's lived experiences. Hence, the theoretical underpinnings of learning must have the potential to translate into meaningful activities and tasks that enrich the learning experience.

Incorporating social justice into social work education is not merely an academic exercise but a necessary step to bridge the gap between theory and practice. It empowers future social workers to challenge and transform the systemic inequities they encounter, fostering a more just and equitable society. This holistic educational approach is essential in ensuring that social work professionals in South Africa are prepared to address the complex social issues they will face in their careers with a strong, unwavering commitment to social justice.

Social work education inherently aligns with emancipatory pedagogy, as it seeks to develop practitioners who challenge oppression and promote equity. However, institutional constraints, such as the requirement for students to complete unpaid internships, limit the extent to which social work students can fully engage in transformative practice. From a Freirean perspective, this creates a paradox: while students are trained to advocate for social justice, they may themselves be experiencing systemic exclusion due to financial barriers. Ensuring that social work education remains truly emancipatory requires structural changes that address these contradictions and enable all students to fully participate in their professional training.

Conclusions

This paper has demonstrated that while social justice principles are relevant across disciplines, their implementation in HE remains uneven and often

superficial. Drawing on Fraser's (2007) framework of participatory parity, our reflections reveal that economic barriers, cultural misrecognition, and institutionalised norms continue to hinder students from engaging as full and equal participants in their education. At the same time, Freirean perspectives on emancipation highlight the need for educators to go beyond content delivery and actively cultivate critical consciousness among students. This requires pedagogical approaches that disrupt traditional power hierarchies and encourage co-constructive learning experiences.

The broader significance of this study lies in its implications for educational transformation. If HE institutions in South Africa and beyond are to become truly inclusive, they must move beyond rhetorical commitments to social justice and embed these principles into curriculum design, assessment practices, and institutional policies. This includes rethinking funding models, ensuring equitable access to academic resources, and fostering interdisciplinary collaborations that dismantle silos between professional fields. The authors appreciate that these demands associated with social justice may be misinterpreted as creating the potential for forceful disruptive action by students, resulting in damage to property and the temporary termination of educational activities at HE institutions. The occurrences of such disruptive events are regarded as a consequence of the failure of HE institutions and students to critically engage with social justice issues in a participatory manner. The study also highlights the need for ongoing critical reflection among educators themselves. As academics, we must interrogate our positionality and the ways in which our disciplines either reinforce or challenge systemic inequities. Future research should explore how participatory parity can be practically implemented in various institutional contexts, as well as the structural changes needed to create truly emancipatory learning environments. Ultimately, achieving social justice in HE is not a finite goal but an ongoing process of engagement, resistance, and transformation. It is not enough to acknowledge disparities—there should be active efforts towards dismantling this. In doing so, the education system can progress and prepare students not only for professional success but also empower them as agents of social change.

Recommendations

From this critical reflective inquiry, the authors would like to make the following recommendations to other academics:

- 1) examine your assumptions, beliefs and values about social justice and human rights and how they influence your teaching;
- 2) explore the economic, historical, political and cultural contexts that shape the health and social issues and challenges faced by

diverse groups of students, especially those who are marginalised and vulnerable;

- 3) recognise and address the power dynamics, biases and prejudices that exist within and outside a classroom and how they affect the access, participation and outcomes of students from diverse backgrounds and needs;
- 4) seek feedback and input from students on how to improve the quality, relevance and impact of one's teaching about social justice in health sciences;
- 5) engage in continuous learning, dialogue and action to enhance one's knowledge, skills and attitudes in social justice in health sciences and contribute to advancing social justice in HE.

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