Research for socially progressive teacher education programs

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Abstract

This chapter offers a conceptualization of socially progressive teacher education. It draws on three distinct, but linked ideas, namely: social progressivism as a political ideology; pedagogical progressivism as an educational movement; and social and environmental justice as ethical imperatives. In so doing, it offers a means of framing teacher education that is arguably more nuanced and complete than other alternatives, providing a means of both conceptualizing programs and enacting explicit political commitments.

Keywords: socially progressive teacher education; social progressivism; pedagogical progressivism; social justice; environmental justice.

1. Introduction

The idea of teacher education for social justice, or social justice-oriented teacher preparation, is common in both research literature and in program narratives across the globe. However, this has long been criticized as something so ill-defined that it is difficult to move beyond rhetoric and into reality. Cochran-Smith (2010) argues that 'few who write about teacher education and social justice make the underpinning political and philosophical roots explicit, and that this increases the likelihood that it [social justice] exists in name only or that it is diluted, trivialised or co-opted' (p. 445). In this chapter, I want to propose that 'socially progressive teacher education' might hold promise as an alternative, wider framing that is defensible conceptually and also capable of being applied in practice. My interest in seeking to conceptualize socially progressive teacher education is located ethically in my experience as what I would term a social justice educator, and practically in my current role as Director of Teacher Education within a university which promises 'a relentless commitment to pursuing a globally socially progressive vision' (University of Strathclyde, 2020, p. 6).

Just as my own university has made its underpinning philosophy explicit, so too argues Darling-Hammond (2006), do what she calls 'powerful teacher education programs, defined as:

> Programs that prepare teachers to teach a wide range of students successfully, including those who struggle to learn from their first days in the classroom. These are programs whose graduates are sought out by principals and superintendents because they prove consistently capable of creating successful classrooms and helping lead to lead successful schools, even in circumstances where the deck is traditionally stacked against student success' (p. 27).

Here, 'powerful' has a particular meaning: it is not simply powerful in terms of having capacity to influence, rather, that influence is specifically located in terms of a social justice agenda. So while 'effective' teacher education programs might beg the question 'effective at what?', Darling-Hammond's notion of powerful programs makes explicit the philosophical underpinning of the way she understands 'powerful', from a critical theory perspective. In the same vein, I draw on a range of research in seeking to make explicit the theoretical and philosophical underpinnings of socially progressive teacher education, whilst at the same time illuminating what this might look like in practice.

In striving to make philosophical underpinnings explicit, the chapter outlines three distinct, but linked ideas that influence how socially progressive teacher education might be understood and practiced: social progressivism as a political ideology; pedagogical progressivism as an educational movement; and social and environmental justice as ethical imperatives. The argument is founded on an acknowledgement that education in general, and teacher education in particular, cannot ever be neutral, despite some claims to the contrary.

2. Conceptualizing socially progressive teacher education

Like many terms in education, 'socially progressive teacher education' may well mean different things to different people; it is not easy to define, just as social justice-oriented teacher education is similarly 'undertheorized and vague' (Cochran-Smith et al., 2009, p. 347). The appeal to 'progress', however, is undoubtedly a persuasive one, yet progress is always a value-bound process, and one person's progress may well be another's idea of deterioration. I therefore want to draw on existing definitions of the three linked ideas mentioned above, as well as foregrounding issues of values, in

exploring how the concept of socially progressive teacher education might serve to frame the development and delivery of ethically sound, contemporary teacher education programs.

It seems that there are three broad ideas which coalesce around the concept of socially progressive teacher education, namely, social progressivism as a political movement, pedagogical progressivism as an educational movement, and social and environmental justice as ethical imperatives (Fig. 1):
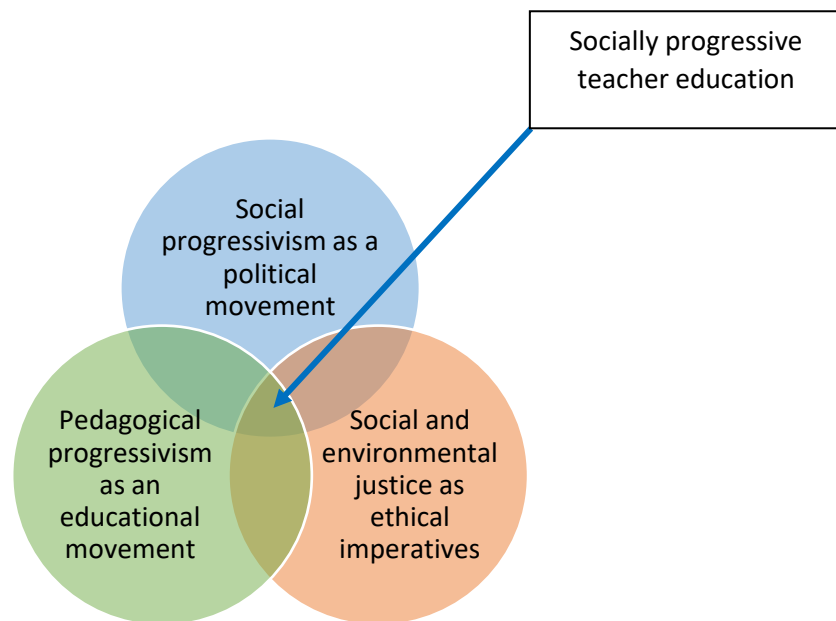

Fig. 1: Conceptualizing socially progressive teacher education – three overlapping ideas

These three ideas loom large in any discussion of socially progressive teacher education, yet in many respects they stand quite separate from each other. In this section I want to outline how each idea individually can inform thinking about socially progressive teacher education, before exploring how the three ideas might interact.

2.1 Social progressivism as a political movement

Social progressivism is commonly considered to be a political philosophy which supports social reform for the good of society at large (as opposed to for particular groups or individuals). The 'social' part of social progressivism acknowledges that change over time should be to the benefit of society, rather than simply change for change's sake. The 'progressivism' part connotes an acknowledgement that change is necessary in order to achieve social good, and that, therefore, reform is key to progressivism. This stands in opposition to social conservatism which relies on the status quo as a means of preserving what are deemed to be traditional social values.

Social progressivism rejects appeals to tradition and status quo, arguing that society should change and develop as new knowledge and understanding become available. The particular focus of socially progressive reform is in exposing root cause of things that are deemed to make aspects of society less than fair, and then to push through reform that will work against these identified barriers. There is, therefore, an innate commitment to what might be called social justice. However, it is not a

radical or critical approach to social injustice as might be advocated by social justice proponents, rather, social justice is a driving force for incremental reform; it serves as a compass for decision-making.

Social progressivism does not locate its interest in any one particular cause, rather, it is about moving towards reform in a range of areas, with the common theme being that of improvements in society through challenging out-moded attitudes and practices particularly in relation to gender, race identity and power. Crucially, to be socially progressive means to be able to develop and changes one's own attitudes over time in light of new knowledge. This has clear implications for teacher education: it acknowledges explicitly the impossibility of an initial teacher education experience which could prepare a teacher for their whole career. Instead, it suggests an initial teacher education experience which prepares a teacher to be a career-long professional learner. Logically, then, it follows that part of socially progressive initial teacher education must be about supporting teacher candidates to be able to know how to continue their own learning, and to make autonomous choices about what and when to learn. This stands in direct contrast to what Freire (1970) calls the 'banking model of education', where the teacher 'deposits' knowledge into the student, thereby rendering the student agency-less 'in which the scope of action allowed to the students extends only as far as receiving, filling, and sorting the deposits' (p. 72). So, socially progressive teacher education requires a range of different types of knowledge, and the requisite skills of critical analysis and synthesis in order to make judicious choices about the rigour and appropriateness of what might be presented as 'knowledge'.

While social progressivism relies on reform based on new knowledge, there is an inherent danger that such new knowledge, or evidence, might be adopted uncritically. For example, the current focus on 'what works', particularly prominent in England, with the concomitant growth in the promotion of randomized controlled trials (RCTs) runs the risk of only certain types of new knowledge being deemed reliable. While there remains considerable debate to be had about the relative merits of RCTs over other more qualitative research (Connelly et al., 2018), the fact remains that 'knowledge' itself is not neutral, nor equally rigorous and reliable in its creation, and that socially progressive teacher education needs to support pre-service teachers to develop strong research literacy, particularly as consumers of research.

Key to social progressivism is that new insights should lead to structural and cultural reform that supports a fairer society: it is not sufficient simply to know that things might not be working in everyone's interests, or that certain groups are disadvantaged by particular practices, rather this new knowledge should lead to reform. Thinking about this in terms of teacher education it is possible to see how reform to the structures and governance of professional regulation might be used to work for the common good. However, governance of teacher education, which in Scotland is shared by the Scottish Government, the university sector and the General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS), is notoriously bureaucratic and conservative (Hulme & Kennedy, 2016). The homogenous nature of teacher education programs, all of which are university-based, and all of which are accredited by the GTCS following a fairly prescriptive set of criteria (GTCS, 2019a; GTCS, 2019b), means that responding to new knowledge or insights and amending programs accordingly is very difficult, except in relation to minor tweaks. While the existence of these sets of governance procedures arguably serves to maintain teacher education quality in Scotland (Hamilton, 2018), it can also result in teacher education programs having to make significant compromises in order to satisfy particular rules (Kennedy, 2018).

While Scotland's teacher education is governed centrally and is university-led (MacDonald & Rae, 2018), in other countries, for example nearby England, there is much more of an appeal to market-

led governance and school-led initial teacher education. Mincu and Davies (2021) argue that the system in England is governed by a complex interaction of markets, networks and hierarchies, but these national systems of governance do not work in vacuums; it is important to recognize the increasingly powerful influence of global politics on national systems. For example, Cobb & Couch (2018) argue that the OECD's move to assessing 'global competence' in PISA has had a significant impact on initial teacher education, serving to provide what they call 'global pedagogic governance' (p. 41). What Cobb & Couch (ibid.) go on to propose is that pre-service teachers should be exposed to thinking about globalisation, and how broader influences impact on schooling, and indeed on teacher education. This knowledge and understanding, they argue, 'can provide pre-service teachers with the capacity to identify, and the ability to resist and transform, changes to education policy, structures and curricula' (p. 43). Thus, it seems fair to suggest that the centrality of a critical appreciation of new knowledge that is bound up with social progressivism, arguably requires teacher education students to develop skills of critical consumption of research together with an appreciation of the world beyond their immediate domain.

In summarising the relationship between social progressivism as a political ideology, and socially progressive teacher education, there seem to be a number of key messages:

- The ultimate aim of social progressivism is to facilitate a fairer and more equal society;
- Our understanding of the barriers to achieving this aim, and the potential solutions at our disposal, develop over time, and therefore new knowledge and insights are central to driving socially progressive action;
- This focus on action is enacted through progressive and incremental reform which does not give time to sentimental appeal to tradition;
- In order to understand the potential contribution of new understanding to reform in teaching and teacher education, both teacher educators and pre-service teachers must develop their skills in critical literacy, particularly pertaining to the consumption of research;
- Socially progressive teacher education progams should eschew the 'banking' notion of education and instead seek to empower teacher candidates as lifelong professional learners.

2.2 Pedagogical progressivism as an educational movement

It seems natural when confronted with the term socially progressive teacher education to think about the educational movement called 'progressivism'. In this section I want to explore how some of the key tenets of pedagogical progressivism might help us to define socially progressive teacher education, but also to consider perhaps where some of the challenges might be in terms of mapping these two ideas on top of each other.

It is important, first, to be clear about what pedagogical progressivism is. Labree (2005), writing from a US perspective, distinguishes usefully between what he terms 'administrative progressivism', that is, the reform of structures and organization, and 'pedagogical progressivism'. He summarizes pedagogical progressivism succinctly, saying that 'In the shorthand of educational jargon this adds up to 'child-centred instruction', 'discovery learning' and 'learning how to learn' (Labree, 2005, p. 277). These elements, which draw deeply on the work of John Dewey, will be very familiar to educators in Scotland (and elsewhere), being the philosophical tenets of the current iteration of curriculum in Scotland (Thorburn, 2017). However, these ideas tend to be applied to the education of school pupils, rather than of teachers, or other professionals, perhaps due to the prescriptive nature of governance associated with professional education, as discussed earlier.

We might also wish to consider the extent to which pedagogical progressivism actually exists in practice, as opposed to merely in policy or academic texts. For example, Labree (2005) contends that while pedagogical progressivism might dominate education discourse in the US, it has yet to make significant impact on the classroom:

> Instruction in American schools is overwhelmingly teacher-centered; classroom management is the teacher's top priority; traditional school subjects dominate the curriculum; textbooks and teacher talk are the primary means of delivering this curriculum; learning consists of recalling what texts and teachers say; and tests measure how much of this students have learned. (p. 278)

This issue of differences between rhetoric and reality are not, however, confined to the US. Some time ago, Hartley (1987) provided an articulate analysis of some of the reasons why progressive, child-centred curriculum policies of the 60s and 80s were never fully enacted in Scotland, citing as one reason, the economic imperatives which held dear to more traditional knowledge-focused understandings of children's learning. Similar to Labree (2005), Hartley (1987) too points to research which suggested that 'the backlash against progressivism was largely misplaced: the schools had, throughout the period, remained places where didactic pedagogy had prevailed.' (Hartley, 1987, p. 119). Hartley (ibid.) went on to argue that progressivism requires a particular cultural and economic climate in order to thrive. It is therefore not enough for educationists to believe that progressive ideals provide the best way for children and young people to learn; educational philosophies and approaches do not exist in a vacuum and their successful integration into practice requires a favourable wider social, economic and, importantly, political context.

There are many critiques of the extent to which the discourse of pedagogical progressivism can be translated into practice, but there are also more fundamental philosophical critiques over its desirability. Such critiques centre on the debate between valuing educational process over product, the role and the place of subject or disciplinary knowledge in education vis-à-vis interdisciplinary or place-based approaches (Webber & Miller, 2016). These arguments, while usually situated within the school education context, can also be applied to teacher education.

Concerning the argument that the progressivist emphasis on skills fails to value disciplinary knowledge, Ashman (2017) argues that there is little evidence that generic capacities to solve problems can be applied in all contexts, rather he argues that 'the same person can think critically about an area where she possesses expertise and yet fail to think critically in an area where she lacks expertise' (no page number). This leads us to consider the merits of interdisciplinary learning, defined as integrating 'knowledge derived from different disciplines to construct new perspectives on a particular problem or scenario' (Stentoft, 2017, p. 53). Disciplinary knowledge is important in this context, and Stentoft (2017, p. 53) argues that the integration of disciplinary knowledge 'may lead to new disciplinary insights'. So, rather than watering down disciplinary knowledge, an interdisciplinary approach not only relies on discrete disciplinary knowledge but also has the capacity to elevate it to new heights. It seems reasonable to argue then that the potential criticism of pedagogical progressivism undervaluing disciplinary knowledge is not a well-founded position where a balance of disciplinary and interdisciplinary can be achieved.

There have also been concerns raised over the potential for the learner-centred nature of progressive education, with its emphasis on self-directed learning, to result in an over-emphasis on the individual at the expense of the collective, thereby failing to live up to its emancipatory promise (Servant-Miklos & Noordegraaf-Eelens, 2019). However, pedagogical progressivism is not always entirely positioned as an individualistic philosophy, and its emphasis on problem-solving in context

suggests a need to work collaboratively with others. However, when juxtaposed alongside socially progressive political ideology and a concomitant emphasis on social and environmental justice, the focus on self-directed learning can be seen within the wider social context as opposed to something that is entirely individualistic and insular. Indeed, when seen as part of this three-pronged conceptualization, it seems that pedagogical progressivism has much to offer in terms of guiding a pedagogical approach that fits with socially progressive teacher education.

2.3 Social and environmental justice as ethical imperatives

If we agree that social progressivism focuses on the use of new knowledge and understanding to support reform for the purpose of social good, then there is a need to interrogate what might be meant by 'social good'. While it is difficult to see what arguments could be brought to bear against aspiring to do social good, the term itself is arguably rather vague, and, in common with the discussion around purposes of education, is open to multiple interpretations of what constitutes 'good'. Social good arguably attends to both human and environmental concerns, given that these are inextricably linked. It therefore makes sense that, notwithstanding the challenges in coming to agreed definitions and conceptualizations, social and environmental justice would feature as ethical imperatives within socially progressive teacher education.

A commitment to social justice is written into the aims of pretty much every teacher education program across the developed world, but the ambiguity of the concept increases the likelihood that it exists in the rhetoric only, and not in reality (Cochran-Smith et al., 2009). One of the difficulties here is that the term can be understood in many different ways, and this is not always fully explored and articulated across the development and delivery of teacher education programs. For example, social justice can be understood in terms of the redistribution of goods and resources, with a focus principally on economic concerns, and/or it can be understood as an issue of recognition (Fraser, 2000), which tends to focus on cognition struggles (Benjamin & Emejulu, 2012) rather than economic concerns. However, much of the conceptual work focusing on the recognition aspect of social justice tends to focus on the recognition of under-represented or minoritized groups, arguably sometimes missing the need for recognition of the individual, as highlighted by Fleming (2016) in his work on transformative learning theory. Fleming (2016, p. 6), drawing on Honneth, argues that 'the struggle for recognition drives social change', thereby suggesting a link between social progressivism and the politics of recognition.

Notwithstanding the challenges in defining social justice, and articulating that conceptualization in program development, what is abundantly clear in the literature is that social justice cannot be taught effectively through discrete inputs, rather it has to permeate the program as a whole, through both on-campus and field-based elements (Cochran-Smith et al., 2009). Unfortunately, however, while research on social justice teacher education is a growing field, it has so far failed to make a significant impact on policy due to its fragmented and often small-scale nature (Mills & Ballantyne, 2016). This is of concern when we consider the earlier discussion around the fairly inflexible and centralised governance of teacher education, and the concomitant challenges in seeking to progress social reform.

Darling-Hammond (2010) proposes that while activities in teacher preparation, such as fieldwork in diverse contexts and specific targeted readings, are important to the development of pre-service teachers socially just practice, they are insufficient in themselves. Rather, she calls for 'a coherent and intellectual approach to the preparation of teachers that acknowledges social and political contexts in which teaching, learning schooling, and ideas about justice have been located

historically as well as acknowledging the tensions among competing goals ' (p. 447). There is also some evidence to suggest that where programs seek to develop pre-service teachers' conceptual understanding, this work is best located within the specific classroom context for which they are preparing (Mills & Ballantyne, 2016).

As Millsand& Ballantyne (2016) point out, though, much of the literature on teacher education for social justice focuses on changing the beliefs of pre-service teachers, 'and "blame" is, therefore, placed on the students for any deficiencies noted, rather than critically exploring the pedagogies and philosophies espoused by teacher educators' (p. 275). Goodwin and Darity (2019), however, argue that we need to go beyond teacher educators 'espousing', and move instead to 'enacting social justice in their own teaching and teacher educator practice' (p. 64). This, they argue, requires a concentrated focus on understanding what teacher educators need to know, thereby returning to fundamental underpinnings of social progressivism relating to the need to draw on knowledge in order to progress reform for social good.

Despite the plethora of writing which explicates concepts of social justice, and the smaller body of literature which interrogates social justice practice in teacher education, there somehow remains a chasm between theoretical understanding in the literature and the capacity to apply that theory systematically to practice in teacher education. Mills and Ballantyne (2016) point out that 'much research in the field of social justice and teacher education focuses on an understanding of beliefs of preservice teachers and/or teacher educators, with limited exploration into what programs that prepare preservice teachers to engage with student diversity in socially just ways might look like in practice' (p. 263). While it is, of course, important to understand teachers' beliefs, this understanding needs to be put to use in terms of shaping and researching teacher education programs that make a difference. Aronson et al. (2020) contribute towards addressing this gap in understanding by identifying a number of specific theoretical perspectives that they have drawn on in their own program development work, namely: critical pedagogy; democratic education; critical race theory and critical whiteness studies; critical disability studies; and feminist theories. Importantly, they identify collectively, as a group of teacher educators, how they actually use these perspectives to inform practice; they claim to:

> 1) Engage in self-reflection/praxis to promote ongoing contemplation and self-checking of personal biases and limited understandings based on our positionalities;
> (2) Teach common theory vocabulary, language, and concepts throughout our courses so that students are scaffolded into higher learning;
> (3) Engage theory and language into practice through assignments, projects, and outside classroom experiences;
> (4) Emphasize how stereotyping and lack of critical understandings about the educational experiences of students of color can perpetuate structural inequalities in society.
>
> (Aronson et al., 2020, p. 27)

This seems to be a very helpful set of ideas for moving things forwards in a coherent way, although what is not so clear is how a group of colleagues might come to agreement about the key theoretical perspectives that they wish to base their program on. This part of the process is something that would be helpful to explore more explicitly.

Closely linked to social justice is the idea of environmental justice, another concept which evades clear and easy definition. It is defined by the US Environmental Protection Agency as 'the fair

treatment and meaningful involvement of all people, regardless of race, color, national origin, or income, with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies' (https://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice), while the UK-based Environmental Justice Foundation talks about 'protect[ing] the natural environment and the people and wildlife that depend on it' (www.ejfoundation.org). In Scotland, meanwhile, the discourse focuses on 'learning for sustainability', a concept linked to, but not entirely consistent with, environmental justice. Scotland hosts a 'regional centre of excellence' as part of a global network focusing on education for sustainable development, linked to UNESCO's international Sustainable Development Goals. Here, at the national centre, learning for sustainability is described as 'the umbrella term for sustainable development education, outdoor learning, global citizenship and social welfare' (https://learningforsustainabilityscotland.org).   Sustainability also features as a key aspect of the professional standards, described as 'understanding and valuing environment, culture and heritage, developing a sense of place and belonging to the local, national and global community. It also means having a deep connection to the natural world and understanding the significance of the choices we make - now and in the future' (GTCS, 2021, p. 3). This expectation in the professional standards sits alongside 'professional values' and 'leadership' as aspects which permeate each of the standards comprising the career-long suite. So the emphasis on sustainability in Scotland appears perhaps more environmentally-focused than justice-focused in terms of the discourse, but the links between these two perspectives are clear, as explored below. More fundamentally. However, Christie et al. (2019) suggest that learning for sustainability as a concept, while entrenched in the policy discourse in Scotland, is not widely understood by teachers or teacher educators.

There is, it seems, a continuum of definitions that run from being mostly planet-focused on the one hand, to a mixture of planet and people-focused on the other. Regardless of the definition we adopt, there is clearly a link between social and environmental justice, something more explicitly addressed in the social work education literature (Teixeira & Krings, 2015; Beltrán, Hacker & Begun, 2016; Fogel et al., 2016; Erikson, 2018) than in the general literature on teacher education at present, perhaps due to the more targeted focus of social work provision, whereas teaching provision is universal. Here it is acknowledged explicitly that those most likely to be marginalized in society are also more likely to bear the brunt of environmental problems, and that part of the solution is to adopt a much more overt place-based approach, which 'emphasizes "hands-on, real-world learning experiences", increases students' connections to their own communities, the natural world, and encourages commitment to local civic engagement' (Beltrán, Hacker & Begun, 2016, p. 498). This place-based approach engages students with real-world problems, but in so doing, challenges traditional disciplinary-based approaches to education (Webber & Miller, 2016). A commitment to environmental justice, just as with a commitment to social justice, forces us to understand and challenge forms of hegemonic and overt power which serve to disadvantage some and privilege others.

In summary, whilst acknowledging the challenges in defining social and environmental justice, and in incorporating these perspectives in teacher education programs, it is clearly possible to agree a common set of theoretical perspectives upon which to base program design, development and delivery. This is necessary, as Goodwin and Darity (2019) stress, in order to ensure that teacher educator knowledge is appropriate for the job of educating for social justice. This, in turn, links to the imperative of accessing and acting upon new knowledge and insight inherent in social progressivism

3.   **Towards a working definition of socially progressive teacher education**

This chapter argues that socially progressive teacher education can be unpacked and understood by drawing on three key ideas of social progressivism, pedagogical progressivism and social/environmental justice. The foregoing discussion discusses each of these in turn, drawing out their relevance for teacher education. While these discussions touch on the links between the three ideas, this section aims to consider in more depth how key principles in the three ideas might integrate to inform both understanding of, and practice in, socially progressive teacher education. Table 1 below summarizes key principles underpinning each of the three ideas:

Social progressivism as a political ideology	Pedagogical progressivism as an educational movement	Social and environmental justice as ethical imperatives
Belief in reform as a means of pursuing social good. Reform based on ever-evolving understanding of society as a result of new knowledge/emerging insights. Considering both local and global insights from new knowledge. Being open to changing attitudes and practices in light of new knowledge. Having the capacity to interpret and critique knowledge, leading to understanding of research which can inform future practice (reform).	Learner-centred approach, starting from what the learner already knows and has experienced. Learner-centred approach, but not individualistic. Emphasis on discovery and problem-based learning. Includes secure disciplinary knowledge which can then be drawn on in interdisciplinary ways. Inculcates awareness and deeper understanding of one's own thinking and learning: metacognition.	Importance of conceptual understanding of social and environmental justice (on the part of both teacher educators and pre-service teachers). Permeation rather than discrete specialist teaching. Importance of teacher educators' social justice knowledge. Connection with learners' contexts key, suggesting place-based learning approaches

Table 1: Key principles underpinning the three elements of socially progressive teacher education

The above summary of underpinning principles highlights a number of key themes prominent in socially progressive teacher education, namely:

1. That knowledge is important;
2. That context matters, and place-based approaches to learning are an important consideration;
3. That both the individual and the collective must be attended to explicitly;
4. That a commitment to social and environmental justice must be conceptualized, understood and operationalized (rather than simply appearing in the discourse around a program).

The centrality of knowledge is explicit across each of these three key ideas. In political terms, social progressivism is founded on reform as a result of new knowledge/insights. This is fundamental to teacher education both in the design and delivery of programs, and in the content of what is taught.

Knowledge is not static, and therefore socially progressive teacher education must be based on the premise that one can never know everything one will even need to know, and that to engage with new research is an important aspect of a teachers' work. Research literacy, involving the capacity to consume research in a critical and context-appropriate way is therefore fundamental.

This links to the second key theme – that context matters. It is clear that socially progressive reform cannot happen in a vacuum, and that context therefore matters. However, attention to key principles underpinning pedagogical progressivism also serve to focus the gaze on issues of place. Place-based education, with its clear alignment to interdisciplinary approaches, context-based and experiential learning, can serve to make socially progressive reform more immediately relevant. For pre-service teachers, the idea of place-based education, rather than 'placement learning' implies greater engagement with the communities in which pupils live and learn, thereby potentially requiring a re-conceptualization of the field-based element of teacher education programs. However, while Smith and Sobel's (2010) ground-breaking work on place-based education provides clear exemplification of how this approach might work in schools, translating it into teacher education is a little more challenging. In this respect, it is worth drawing on the growing body of work on community-based teacher education (Guillen & Zeichner, 2018; Yuan, 2018), which promotes pre-service student learning that engages them fully with the communities in which their pupils live and learn.

This inescapable attention to context inevitably places emphasis on working collaboratively for the collective good. However, when set against the learner-centred aspect of pedagogical progressivism, any enactment of social progressive teacher education will inevitably need to attend to a potential tension between the individual and the collective. In this regard, it is helpful to draw on learning from the literature on social justice teacher education, which emphasizes the importance of knowing oneself, and locating this knowledge in relation to others. In their own definition of social justice teaching, Aronson et al. (2020) state a commitment to promoting 'social awareness and an ongoing process of critical consciousness toward self in relation to others' (p. 23). It is clearly possible to both learner-centred and collaborative, but this requires skilled negotiation and acute awareness, and arguably starts with teacher educators modelling this way of working themselves.

While social progressivism urges us to draw on knowledge and understanding in support of the common good, it is worth drawing on Biesta's (2009, p. 35) warning that 'whilst it is always advisable to use factual information when making decisions about what ought to be done, what ought to be done can never be logically *derived* from what is.' He goes on to assert that all judgements on education are to an extent value-based, made in relation to what is deemed (often implicitly) to be desirable. However, if we simply accept that any version of 'good' is acceptable, then we run the risk of allowing social and environmental injustice to continue unchecked. Particularly in the context of education, it is important to be able to accept that somethings are innately not good, regardless of respect for other people's values and beliefs. This is where the concept of social justice, rather than the slightly more nebulous notion of social good is key. That is, the justice element implies something more tangible than simply 'good' does. In socially progressive teacher education it is crucial to delve more deeply though, and to engage in active conceptualization of what social and environmental justice mean in the specific local, national and global context in question. The key message here is that from a socially progressive perspective, decisions about reform, even if based clearly on new knowledge, should not be made without reference to context.

The drawing together of themes from across these three key ideas that inform this conceptualization of socially progressive teacher education serve to highlight overlaps between the ideas, as well as attending more explicitly to the importance of context (in its widest sense, including historical,

cultural, social, political and geographical elements). This allows a little more detail to be added to the figure presented earlier in the chapter, thereby explicating the concept of socially progressive teacher education in a little more detail, allowing inter-relationships between elements to be seen more clearly (Fig. 2):
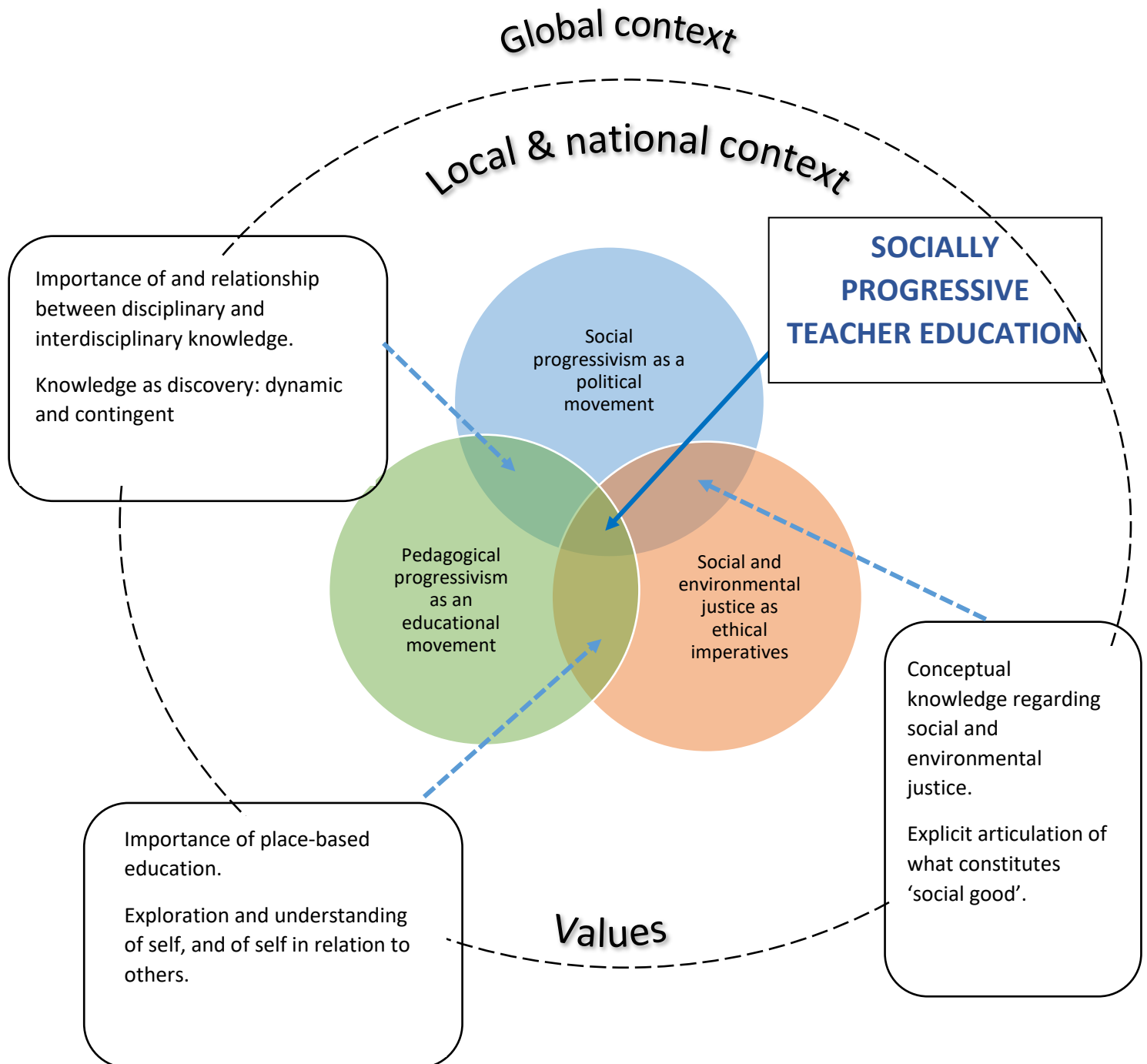

Fig. 2: *Conceptualizing socially progressive teacher education and its inter-related elements*

In summary, socially progressive teacher education draws on political, pedagogical and ethical ideas which inform both its conceptualization and operationalisation. It is underpinned by thinking on social progressivism as a political ideology, on pedagogical progressivism as an educational movement, and on social and environmental justice as ethical imperatives. This conceptualization is explicitly not neutral, rather it is driven by a desire for knowledge-informed reform which works for social good through participative and contextually-relevant approaches. Social good, from this perspective, adopts an explicit critical lens and works to identify and breakdown barriers to equity, fairness and progress.

4. In conclusion

Kohn (2008) says that 'a school that is culturally progressive is not necessarily educationally progressive', and presumably the same holds true for teacher education. That is, while the values and aspirations espoused might be socially progressive, this does not necessarily mean that the program will adopt a pedagogically progressive approach. The three prongs of the conceptualization put forward here are therefore co-dependent and all equally important. The socially progressive political ideology serves to make values explicit and to position reform in favour of social good as a key tenet. Pedagogical progressivism then serves as a blueprint for the design of the learning approaches in the teacher education program(s) prioritising learner-centred approaches and collective, place-based problem-solving. Driving all of this is an explicit privileging of social and environmental justice serving as an ethical, conceptual and practical compass.

While all of this might makes sense conceptually, the real challenge is in enacting the principles herein. This is a job bigger than university-based teacher educators alone can do, rather it will involves a collaborative and activist orientation towards genuinely socially progressive teacher education at institutional, local and national levels. Such an endeavour will require bravery and a reconfiguring of control, but ultimately, to use socially progressive teacher education as a framing for this project seems not only to be defensible from a conceptual point of view, but also provides sufficient practical framing for program designers and leaders to make a genuinely socially progressive contribution to society.

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