I present the findings of a study with course developers, principals, teachers, and community members in British Columbia (BC), Canada, regarding their views of the course Social Justice 12. Introduced in 2008, the senior, elective course involves students in exploring a number of contemporary issues in society and aims to develop citizens who actively work to address social injustices. The course includes some potentially controversial content, such as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered (LGBT) materials, which has been actively opposed by some community members. This negative reaction has had some damaging effects on teachers who teach the course. After describing the course and the study’s research methodology, the findings are presented. These findings include a review of the relations between course implementation and school contexts and a discussion of the complexity of issues-based instruction in relation to varied ideological positionings between teachers, principals, and community members. I conclude with recommendations that aim to strengthen education in and for a democracy.

Key words: social studies instruction, issues-based learning, curriculum reform, Social Justice 12, Progressivism, inclusive education

Introduction

Social Justice 12 is a British Columbian (BC) course with a colorful history. It developed as a result of challenges to school programs by some parents who were successful in banning certain family life books due to their inclusion of same sex couples. In response, a local activist couple, Peter and Murray Corren, appealed to the BC Human Rights Tribunal, arguing the Ministry of Education discriminated against same sex couples. The Tribunal accepted the case, but before it was heard, the Ministry agreed to amend curricula to be more inclusive. As a result, Social Justice 12 was developed (Vancouver Sun, 2006).

The course takes a post modern, social justice (equity-oriented) and issues-based approach to the study of contemporary social topics and is divided into three sections: (1) defining social justice; (2) recognizing and analysing social injustice; and (3) moving towards a more socially just world. Students explore the relations between values, contexts, perspectives, power and inequalities. They develop research and critical thinking skills as multiple points of view on issues are introduced, their own situated values are explored, and behaviours that foster social justice and develop action plans are considered.

The course has been subject to varying views. After briefly reviewing the rationale for issues-based education, I present findings that explore the opinions of various groups’ (principals, teachers, developers and community members and parents). I conclude with a discussion of the connections between the course’s content and education in and for democracy.

Literature Review

Since social studies was developed, varied conceptions of it have been articulated (Broom & Evans, 2012; Evans, 2004). These conceptions provide a useful categorization
heuristic: (a) a traditionalist conception of social studies as the learning of factual knowledge; (b) a “New Social Studies” conception that grounds social studies in Bruner’s Structure of Disciplines theory; (c) a progressivist (Deweyian) conception that views social studies as an integrated discipline based in experiences which fosters a continually-growing democracy; and (d) an issues-based approach that aims to remake a more socially just world. The latter approach problematizes knowledge as it considers power inequalities to be inherent in institutions and discourses (Freire, 2000; Foucault, 1980) and aims to develop students’ critical thinking and social engagement. This fourth orientation underlies the Social Justice 12 course. Several contemporary scholars both within the social studies area (including Hess, 2009; Kahne & Westheimer, 2006; Zevin, 2000) and generally within the field of education (including Post-Modern thinkers such as Freire, Foucault, and McLaren) have advocated this problem (or issues)-based education with the aim of developing students’ social conscience.

Study Methodology
Public school principals in British Columbia were asked to fill out a brief, emailed survey (Appendix One) and to invite teachers who teach the course to participate in the study. To broaden data collection methods, principals were also provided with the opportunity to be interviewed. Course developers were specifically invited (due to their limited numbers) and community members were randomly invited to participate through emails.

All participants received the interview schedules ahead of time. Interviews were anonymized and were recorded using point form, written notes to increase participants’ comfort levels and be consistent with grounded theory (Glaser, 1992; Strauss, 1987). Participants were asked to review the interviewer’s notes at the end of the interviews and to read the final paper in order to ensure their ideas were presented accurately. Findings were analysed using a grounded theory approach: participants’ answers were coded, grouped into themes, and then interpreted (Glaser, 1992; Strauss, 1987).

Study Limitations
Only four districts (of more than ten) took part. This was partly due to labor relation issues, but may also be related to other factors such as lack of time or interest in participating in research. In addition, few BC schools offer the course. The researcher does not claim the study is representative of all the points of view related to the course. The study, however, does provide “thick” descriptions of multiple perspectives and illustrates that the course itself is an “issue” subject to contested perspectives (Geertz, 1983). As the researcher, I understand that all findings are interpreted through various ideological lenses. I place the analysis within a critical pedagogy lens, in which knowledge is considered to be socially and culturally constructed, power is inherent in all relationships, and multiple voices, critical thinking and social justice are valued.

Findings

Course Developers
Participants’ Roles
One course developer was her school’s Gay Straight Alliance sponsor and a member of the Pride Education Network. She indicated that she found the latter group to be an amazing group to work with. She explained that the course’s development began when varied community
members were invited by a government officer to brainstorm curricular topics. Murray and Peter Corren were present on the first day. As some disagreements arose, the developer facilitated a sharing session that allowed participants to address their differences. She realized that no one was representing gay rights and felt this area should be included as individuals were suffering discrimination due to their sexual orientations.

The small curriculum development committee was comprised of eight practicing teachers who were chosen due to their interests in social justice, individuals familiar with human rights in general, one government official, and two curriculum publishers. They met twice to establish the objectives of the course. Next, they selected resources and were each given two sections of the curriculum to develop. The curriculum team was reported to have collaborated well. They met again to review resources and then piloted the course.

**Reasons for Getting Involved**

The first developer, who lived through the Women’s Civil Rights movement, supports helping individuals subject to discrimination. She values justice and respect and believes that the Human Rights Code protects everyone. The second developer is passionate about Social Justice and planned to develop a Global Issues course on global and contemporary studies when given the opportunity to participate.

**Developers’ Philosophies of Education**

The first developer believes education should challenge students to think about their experiences, class materials, and what the truth is. Students should question constantly, conduct research, listen to others and themselves, consider the relations between different people and varying perspectives, and develop their skills. The second developer values complex learning environments and making connections. She aims to develop students’ abilities to think and their inner and outer learning. Inner learning connects individuals with themselves and is tied to identity. It relates to how students see themselves, and how they are changed by what they learn. Outer learning is associated with the curriculum and general connections made to the content studied.

**General Reaction to the Course**

The first developer heard students enjoy the course. She was also familiar with opposition to the course by groups who are resistant to the Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgendered (LGBT) materials, which she related to traditionalist parents who fear that learning LGBT content will negatively influence children’s developing sexual identities. She stated that the Minister of Education initially was hesitant to sign off on the course due to some public protest around the LGBT content, but she and another curriculum developer stated they would not sign their names on the curriculum unless the unit was included. The Minister then signed the course. The developer felt, as the course had its foundations in the Corren’s human rights case on discrimination against gays, not including the LGBT material removed the course’s rationale (Vancouver Sun, 2006). Students, she argued, need personal contact with varied types of people and to consider how people fit in and what “normal” means in order to develop open-mindedness and empathy. The second developer has received no negative parental feedback. She initially sent home course outlines requiring parents’ signatures, but she has not seen a need to continue this practice. She asks students to discuss issues with their parents. Students are positive about this task and state that their parents are interested in and able to discuss the issues. Lack of parental complaints may be related to the urban context of the school and to her teaching style.
She fosters student understanding by studying various stakeholders’ perspectives. She has seen one teacher criticized for teaching the course in a more provocative, advocacy-centred manner.

**Course Strengths and Drawbacks**

The first developer thinks teachers have flexibility in designing their classes to meet students’ needs. She appreciates that the course engages students in exploring social justice, self-reflection and action. The shortcomings of the course include limited resources, possible motivational issues as there is no final exam, and the open nature of the course which makes planning challenging. The second developer values the course’s focus on the contemporary world, the inclusion of varied materials, and opportunities to foster critical thinking and personalized learning.

**Re-designing the Course**

While generally happy with the course, the first developer would add to the resources available and consider how to address possible motivational issues. The second developer feels the class is taught too late in students’ programs and is too content-heavy. Students also have little knowledge of Human Rights content. She thinks all students would benefit from taking the course.

**Summary of Course Developers’ Perspectives**

The developers stated that the curriculum committee worked collaboratively to develop the course. They shared similar beliefs regarding the value of the course for promoting understanding of multiple points of view and empowering students. Both recognized similar challenges related to the open nature of the course (also a strength), and limited resources.

**Principals’ Answers**

**The Socio-cultural and Economic Characteristics of Schools**

One high school with 1350 students is located in a wealthy, desirable neighbourhood with a mixed demographic. Students aim to attend university and study the sciences. About 30 to 40% of the students immigrated less than five years ago, and 1/3 of the students are in a special Arts program. The administration thinks the course fits into the school’s local and global community focus.

Another large school is an urban, middle-to-affluent class school. Parents are generally in business and want their children to study business or science. Seventy percent have a Chinese background, and many have Christian and conservative upbringings. The school culture aims to develop care and respect. The school offers Social Justice 12 as a teacher advocated for it. According to the school principal, the course has seen increasing student registrations despite its elective status as students like the teacher, who has a strong social consciousness and makes the course engaging.

The third school is smaller and multicultural, with over 22 spoken languages represented. It has a high immigrant, English as a Second Language (ESL) population and some inner city school characteristics. Most parents work and value education, and students are hardworking. The school does not offer the class due to expected limited enrolment, lack of a trained teacher, and a perceived lack of student interest. The administrator also felt offering the course would take resources away from other classes. Most of the students concentrate on academics and achieving their grade 12 credentials. At a parent information night, the parents focused on
identifying graduation requirements related to university entrance into mathematics and science programs. Concern about content was not an expressed reason. Parents were described as being supportive of the school, and homophobia was stated to not be an issue. The principal described how two boys openly danced a slow dance together without any negative reaction as an example of tolerance in the school community.

**General Reaction**

All principals described the students as being enthusiastic about the course. This may be a skewed representation, as the course is optional: the voices of students who choose not to take the class are missing. Students continue to enroll in the class (in increasing numbers in most cases). Students, occasionally, are put off because the course is challenging, and they tend to associate elective courses with easier courses. Parents have been supportive. One principal mentioned that parents tend to be satisfied with their children’s school if it is academically successful as measured in public rankings. Only one school had a parental complaint concerning the teaching of controversial materials. The principal replied there was a need for anti-gay education as homophobia was one of the last bastions of discrimination in Canada’s public space. There was a need to build social acceptance, and bullying was often linked to sexual orientation. Principals portrayed the teachers as working effectively to manage possible controversy. They were responsible to the parents, prepared lessons carefully, and informed students and parents of controversial content first. Students were allowed to opt out of specific content. At all schools, teachers were described as not trying to influence or shape students’ beliefs but rather as stimulating inquiry and thought. Principals thought that the course expanded students’ local and global awareness. It enabled students to work actively as citizens—to participate in the community in order address social inequities—through personalized and active learning.

**What Could be Changed**

The principals left the course in the teachers’ hands. One principal stated some students did not want to take an “off track” course when their schedules were loaded with the classes they needed to graduate. Students additionally felt pressure from their parents to focus on university admission requirements. The principal argued for a greater societal valuing of the humanities and suggested that legislation or incentives could be used to increase liberal arts options and their social value.

**Other General Comments**

Three schools located in wealthier urban areas with multicultural students (particularly Chinese) did not offer the course due to the school’s demographics and the students’ focus on university entrance programs. Another school with more inner city characteristics did not offer the course due to expected low enrolment and lack of a possible teacher.

**Summary of Principals’ Findings**

Schools offering Social Justice 12 did so due to advocacy most often by a teacher or counsellor (or sometimes a student). These schools were larger schools in richer neighborhoods whose students were focused on university entrance programs. The course and the teachers appeared to be liked by students, and the schools had not had much (if any) negative parental reaction. Schools not offering the course were smaller and were found in less wealthy neighbourhoods.
Teachers’ Answers

Teaching the Course
Teachers chose to teach Social Justice 12. Many came from activist backgrounds that stimulated their interest in social justice. Teachers found the course exciting and challenging, as it gave them freedom to choose the materials and activities they wanted to use. Teachers, however, had to be comfortable with risk taking and open lesson design. They began the course by building a positive classroom environment and trust due to the content’s controversial nature. They discussed class safety and built team spirit. Some developed rules such as: all voices are respected, the idea and not the person is attacked, do not be afraid of other points of view, and explore the truth claims of arguments. Taking time to develop relationships with students at the emotional level promoted community and engagement.

Teachers developed their students’ open-mindedness through exploring values, beliefs and multiple points of view. Students studied the meanings of social justice and then studied a social justice issue, such as racism, war, or privilege, in depth. Students also explored empowerment and conflict resolution. Teachers used authentic and formative-based assessments and self-assessment rubrics.

The world was used as a living text: teachers drew from multiple information sources to motivate students to consider multiple points of view. Varied interactive activities, such as role plays, developed empathy. Methods included timed ethical dilemmas, group presentations, guest speakers from community groups, documentaries, games and simulations, letter writing, journal writing (reflection was considered to be fundamental to understanding), discussions, and debates. Teachers aimed to develop critical thinking abilities through inquiry-based learning. Some students designed and implemented their own research studies. They collected data and tried out a number of data analysis techniques. Then, they developed action plans. Some students implemented their plans and wrote journal entries on their experiences.

Many teachers engaged students in exploring local social injustices through field trips. Students, for instance, explored poverty by going to Vancouver’s downtown Eastside soup kitchens or community housing developments. Homeless people shared their stories. Students learned the complex meanings of poverty and that the issue is present in local communities. Another teacher used themes such as human trafficking, to connect local and global contexts. Some students developed their leadership skills through organizing classroom experiences in the community. Other teachers used a service or community learning pedagogy (Broom and Bai, 2011), as volunteer experiences were viewed to be an effective way of developing community-mindedness and empathy. Thus, all the interviewed teachers used methods based in best practices in Education literature.

Teachers’ philosophies illustrated the “reconstructionist” orientation (Evans, 2004). They aimed to create compassionate, empowered, and critical thinkers who work actively to strengthen democracy, through addressing social injustices.

General Reaction

Students
Teachers have received positive feedback from students on anonymous course evaluations. Students like their teachers and enjoy the living nature of the issues studied, learning
about social justice, and the activity-based learning approaches. Teachers also stated that some students felt apprehensive about some class content. If students found materials difficult, teachers always gave them the option of leaving the class. This initial feeling of being uncomfortable, however, often led students to transformative ways of thinking. For example, one student’s father carried a huge amount of guilt as a result of his own father committing suicide. It affected his relationship with his son. When the teacher invited a speaker on First Nations residential schools, the son was able to gain some understanding of his family’s history. He shared this knowledge with his father, and father and son were able to change their relationship. They called the teacher to say thank you.

**Parents**

Teachers have not received parental complaints about the course, despite the locations of some of the schools in conservative, immigrant communities where there has been advocacy against some of course content. This is most likely related to: (1) how the teachers instruct the course in a balanced manner, (2) how they inform the parents about the course by sending letters home on the issues to be studied, (3) having parents who understand issues-based instruction, and (4) having a supportive administration. One teacher was in a district that had had parent advocacy against the course, although none of this advocacy has been directed at her specifically. The school was located in a neighborhood with many new immigrants and was the only school that was “under-achieving” on standardized tests. In the district generally, a right wing, religious group of parents heatedly advocated against an anti-homophobia policy at a school board meeting. This advocacy engendered a culture of fear that constrained teaching complex social issues. Fear increased barriers between groups.

**Strengths and Weaknesses**

The class develops students’ communication and inquiry skills. It promotes critical thinking, awareness, and open-mindedness. Students explore areas of personal interest and take part in real world experiences that engage them in learning about the larger community. The course, however, is content heavy. In addition, some teachers want fewer limitations imposed by school structures and more flexibility to engage in learning outside of the classroom. For the teacher in the district that suffered parental reaction, transparency and open and respectful dialogue communication with parents was important. Parents should be helped to understand the course.

**Re-designing the Course**

One teacher would design the course more closely around an inquiry-based model. Another teacher requested a budget for speakers and activities. A third teacher recommended having Social Justice 11 and 12 classes due to the amount of content to be covered.

**Summary of Teachers’ Findings**

Teachers valued the class for promoting critical thinking and used a rich variety of student-centred methods. They appreciated administrative support and their ability to make the choice to teach the class. Parents were generally described as supportive. Schools having no parent reaction against the course had parents who were sometimes conservative and religious, but not religiously fundamentalist. The latter group has been associated with advocacy against the course in some parts of BC.
Parent and Community Members’ Comments

Background Information

Community members, the first two of whom were also parents, worked in business, science, or technology fields. Some had connections to the military or were politically active. All placed themselves on the right side of the political spectrum.

Views of the Purpose of Education

For the first interviewee, education involves teaching students varied life skills such as mathematics and problem solving skills. Education promotes thinking, analysis, and the development of confidence. Universities educate the mind. For the second interviewee, education is learning to learn and learning from experiences. For the third interviewee, education develops a lifelong love of learning and also promotes healthy social interaction, positive interpersonal relationships, and community engagement.

What Individuals Know of the Course

The first interviewee was initially unfamiliar with the course. He carried out research on it. The second interviewee had heard of the course, although not by name, through publicity regarding the Corren case and parental action. He also carried out further research. The third interviewee learned about the course from the information sent by the researcher.

Course Strengths and Weaknesses

The first interviewee thought that the course’s topics were important. He saw a need for a course that explored racial discrimination, but voiced concerns that the course was the purview of one activist group that had pushed its agenda on others. He felt the gay community had monopolized the curriculum and that LGBT content should not dominate as it was just one of many issues in contemporary society, and society had already made large steps forward in addressing discrimination related to sexual orientation. The second interviewee felt the content of the course was already taught in BC schools and by parents. As an elective course, only those students who wanted to study the content further would take the class, and he was not sure whether these students should receive course credit. He also opposed the class’s foundation in a special interest group. He raised questions about education, such as who chooses what is considered “right” to teach and who has final authority over children’s minds. For him, parents hold final authority over their children’s education. The third interviewee liked the course. She stated that developing community-mindedness was important and thought the course created awareness of how to identify social injustice, developed students’ ethical frameworks, and promoted inclusion. She appreciated how the course explored social justice and aimed to empower students. She agreed with students constructing new knowledge and thinking for themselves. She recalled seeing social injustice as a child (racism) but not having the framework to understand or reason through it. In her view, students should learn what tools they can draw on, where to turn for guidance and what steps they can follow to address social issues.

Advocacy Against the Course

The first interviewee would not consider advocacy against the course unless one issue monopolized the course. The second interviewee would get involved in advocacy against the course through political means if it affected him personally. The third interviewee would not get involved in advocacy against the course. She stated that someone who would be closed-
minded and part of the problem and that this was most likely associated with religious dogmatism.

Re-designing the Course

The first interviewee would add some contemporary Canadian social justice issues, such as bullying and understanding and accommodating new immigrants without losing basic Canadian values and providing them with equal job opportunities. The second interviewee viewed education from Kindergarten to Grade 12 as providing a basis of knowledge for drawing conclusions. He was opposed to schools inserting conclusions in children’s minds ahead of their parents, which he considered to be indoctrination. If he were redesigning the course, he would get rid of the word homophobia. He commented that the state has no place in the bedroom, and distinguished between public versus private content. He would remove the course as it is currently being taught. He considered that what the course generally aimed to teach, such as respect, was already being taught: children growing up in Canada are already living, experiencing and coming to understand multiple cultures. He believed that education through the disciplines would naturally introduce students to critical thinking and varying points of view. The third interviewee recommended that social justice education include tools that help students manage their emotions constructively as well as develop students’ reasoning abilities. She thought individuals were free to have their own lifestyles. She also stated that many individuals do not understand how Canada’s political system works and how individuals have power to bring change through political action.

Summary of Community Members’ Findings

Two community members voiced concerns about the course being the purview of one special interest group. The third interviewee supported the course. Community members’ varied views illustrate the ideological, complex and contested nature of schooling.

Discussion

The Relations Between Context, Advocacy, and Teaching

Some BC schools offer the potentially controversial Social Justice 12 course after advocacy and when there is an interested teacher available to teach the course and a supportive administration. The course is offered in some larger, middle class, and multicultural communities where it has not been subject to adverse parent reaction. The teacher in the district that has suffered negative parent advocacy taught in a multicultural, urban school. This school did not rank as well as other schools on public school ratings based on criteria such as exam scores. That is, it had inner city school characteristics, such as lower student achievements. Parent advocacy against the course fostered a climate of fear. The teacher’s practice was constrained as she feared recrimination and felt pressure to alter what and how she taught. This removed her perceived professional autonomy and affected school and classroom atmospheres and student learning. If the sentiment is found in other schools, it could mean that controversial issues may not be taught.

Multiple Perspectives

Social Justice 12 is itself an issue, in the sense that it is subject to varying perspectives. Course developers, teachers, and principals interviewed here were positive about the course and
illustrated a “reconstructionist” orientation. One question for further study is how common this perspective is. Perhaps teachers who have varied perspectives may not be as enthusiastic about the course. Earlier research has found that: (1) teachers may be uncomfortable using social justice pedagogies in their classrooms (Darling & Wright, 2004; Kahne & Westheimer, 2006; Shields & Ramsay, 2004) and (2) many social studies teachers focus on more traditionalist teaching methods, such as fact, textbook, lecture-based teaching, due to philosophical or contextual factors (Broom, 2012).

Community members illustrated the greatest diversity of perspectives. They also raised a number of questions about who has power to initiate the development of new courses, is advocacy on the part of one group a “special interest” positioning, and who has the ultimate authority to determine what children learn in schools (parents or schools). One community member asked how to address advocacy by the religious right, a special interest group, against some course content.

**Differences of Opinion**

Divergent perspectives over education are grounded in varying philosophies, social positions, and contexts. Some community members articulated more conservative views of the roles of schools, while many teachers articulated progressivist beliefs. These differing perspectives can lead to disagreements over what occurs in schools and have long roots (Dewey, 1938, for example). A second area of ideological disagreement is over who has the final right to determine students’ values and beliefs. For some community members who were parents, the final right was theirs. For some teachers the right was theirs. The major area over which there was disagreement with parents was LGBT content. Some community members felt that the course itself was biased as it was initiated from a special interest group’s human rights case. They viewed the course as having an ideological agenda in which teachers pushed students to adopt particular stances. The teachers in this study did not experience direct parental reaction to their teaching of the course. This may be related to the teachers’ careful use of pedagogical strategies and openness.

**Conclusion**

Recently, the author attended a public class framed around a controversial issue. The instructor began by stating she aimed to develop critical thinking through presenting multiple perspectives embedded in open, respectful, and democratic conversations. The class seemed promising. As the lesson unfolded, it became clear the instructor had one particular agenda and that she framed her class activities carefully in order to support her pre-determined ideological position. The teacher’s implicit position of power reinforced what was given currency as being “the truth.” Some students disengaged from the lesson and stopped participating as they realized that their perspectives were not validated. In the end, the class demonstrated how a teacher can structure class activities to present one ideological positioning. Some parents might feel uncomfortable with such teaching.

Thus, two issues to emerge from this study relate to who has authority to determine what students believe (parents or schools and teachers) and to the meanings of and relations between special interest groups and schooling. One way of managing these together is through an education that does not push an ideological position on students. Educators ought to foster
critical thinking skills by presenting multiple points of view and illustrating the strengths and weaknesses of varied positions, as the effective teachers in this study did. To repair the damage, fear and barriers created in one community, parents and teachers can embrace democratic processes and come to participate in open and respectful discussions—“complicated conversations” (Pinar, 2008)—on their varied points of view in order to come to a space of agreement.

The meaning and role of “special interest positions” also needs exploration. Are LGBT and religious advocacy special interest positions or human rights issues? Both are listed on the Charter of Rights and Freedoms (Government of Canada, 1982), so what happens when listed freedoms clash? All groups ought to be invited to discuss these questions. Due to their ideological positions, however, some individuals may be unwilling to embrace an open process of dialogue. Is this what a special interest position means? This study raises further questions regarding how varied positions can be negotiated in complex, pluralistic democracies.

References

**Web-Based References**


**Appendix One**

**Survey Tools**

**Research Tool: Survey Questions for Principals**

1. Please briefly describe the socio-cultural and economic characteristics of the school environment. (Possible categories to consider include: the cultural makeup of the student body, ethic mix, types of parental employment, percentage of new immigrants, a description of the general economic class of the students, and other notable characteristics of the student body and of the local community around the school.)

2. Does your school offer Social Justice 12 as a course option?
   - [ ] Yes
   - [ ] No

3. If no, please choose the answers that best explain why you don’t offer the course:
   - [ ] Limited enrolment
   - [ ] Perceived lack of interest among students
   - [ ] Lack of funds
   - [ ] Lack of trained teachers
   - [ ] Concern about content
   - [ ] Lack of knowledge about the course
   - [ ] Concern about parental reaction
   - [ ] Other

If you choose other, please explain briefly:
4. If yes, please briefly explain what the general student and parental reaction to the course has been:

5. Please briefly explain what you see as the strengths and drawbacks of the course:

6. If you were re-designing this course, please describe what you would change about it:

Appendix Two

Interview Schedule for Course Developers

1. Please explain your role in the development of Social Justice 12.

2. Can you describe some of the reasons you got involved in the development of this course?

3. How would you summarize your philosophy of education?

4. Briefly explain what the general student and parental reaction to the course has been:

5. Please briefly explain what you see as the strengths and drawbacks of the course:

6. If you were re-designing this course, what would you change about it?
Appendix Three
Interview Schedule for Teachers
1. Please explain why you are teaching this course (eg. Assigned/choice...).

2. Can you describe some of the methods and approaches you use to teach this course?

3. How would you summarize your philosophy of education?

4. Briefly explain what the general student and parental reaction to the course has been:

5. Please briefly explain what you see as the strengths and drawbacks of the course:

6. If you were re-designing this course, what would you change about it?

Appendix Four
Interview Schedule for Parents/Community Members
1. Could you provide me with a little background on yourself?

2. How would you summarize your views of the purpose of education?

3. Please explain what you have heard of the course called Social Justice 12.

4. Briefly explain which elements of the course you are opposed to and why:
5. Can you describe some of the reasons you got involved in advocacy against some of the content of this course? What procedures did you use?

6. If you were re-designing this course, what would you change about it? Why?

Author’s Biography

Catherine Broom is an Assistant Professor at the University of British Columbia, Okanagan. She has more than 17 years of high school and university teaching experience. She publishes on the history of modern schooling; critical thinking; social studies history, methods, and philosophies; and local and global citizenship. Email: Catherine.broom@ubc.ca