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Toward Self-Authoring a Civic Teacher Identity: Service-Learning in Teacher Education
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Article abstract

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TOWARD SELF-AUTHORING A CIVIC TEACHER IDENTITY: SERVICE-LEARNING IN TEACHER EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT. Previous scholarship has examined how teachers' civic knowledge and conceptions of citizenship influence their goals, pedagogical practices, and confidence in teaching citizenship, but few studies have probed how teacher candidates develop identities as civic educators through community service-learning projects. This case study draws upon Baxter Magolda's framework of self-authorship to investigate how teacher candidates in a Canadian university began to self-author their identities as civic educators through their experience of developing and delivering citizenship learning modules to youth through a community-based project. Our qualitative analysis of the data indicates that participating in change-oriented service-learning can lead teacher candidates to challenge their assumptions about youth engagement, increase their sense of self-efficacy as civic educators, and, to some extent, develop an awareness of self in relation to others.

VERS L'AUTODÉTERMINATION D'UNE IDENTITÉ D'ENSEIGNANT À LA CITOYENNETÉ : L'APPRENTISSAGE EN MILIEU COMMUNAUTAIRE AU SEIN DE LA FORMATION DES ENSEIGNANTS

RÉSUMÉ. Dans le passé, des projets de recherche ont étudié la façon dont les connaissances civiques et les points de vue sur la citoyenneté des enseignants influencent leurs objectifs, leurs pratiques pédagogiques et leur confiance lorsqu'ils enseignent cette matière. Or, peu d'études se sont attardées à comprendre comment les futurs enseignants développent une identité de formateurs en éducation civique en participant à des projets d'apprentissage en milieu communautaire. Cette étude de cas se base sur le cadre conceptuel d'autodétermination de Baxter Magolda. Elle analyse de quelle manière les futurs enseignants étudiant au sein des universités canadiennes ont amorcé un processus d'autodétermination de leur identité comme formateurs à la citoyenneté, en développant et en mettant en place des modules d'apprentissages civiques destinés aux jeunes dans le cadre d'un projet communautaire. Notre analyse qualitative des données indiquent que la participation dans un projet de service communautaire visant le changement peut amener les futurs enseignants à remettre en question leurs hypothèses sur l'implication des jeunes, améliorer leur sentiment d'auto-efficacité et, jusqu'à un certain point, développer une conscience d'eux-mêmes lorsqu'ils entrent en relation avec les autres.

An international study of 38 countries declared that while there was disagreement on how to best teach citizenship, there was near consensus on the importance of civic and citizenship education (Schulz, Ainley, Fraillon, Kerr, & Losito, 2010). Given the curricular mandates for citizenship education and that beginning teachers, who may not have received formal preparation to teach citizenship education, are often tasked with instructing these courses (Peterson & Knowles, 2009), it is important that teacher education programs prepare teachers before they enter future classrooms to address the challenges of civics courses, as it is called in some jurisdictions, or citizenship education. A study conducted in 2011, for example, concluded that "a majority of teachers reported students describing the teaching of Canadian political instruction as boring. Many teachers were also dissatisfied with the inadequacy of the curriculum and the listed textbooks" (Milner & Lewis, 2011, p. 142). Equally disconcerting, "[a]necdotal evidence suggests that school principals tend to treat civics as a timetable 'dumping ground,' assigning the course to inexperienced and at times, inappropriate (lacking training in social studies or history) teachers" (Milner & Lewis, 2011, p. 142). Therefore, it is important that all new teachers learn how to teach civics, even if it is not their specialization.

Previous scholarship examined how teachers' civic knowledge and conceptions of citizenship influence their goals, pedagogical practices, and confidence in teaching citizenship (Chin & Barber, 2010; Martens & Gainous, 2013; Reimer & McLean, 2009). Few studies, however, have investigated how teacher candidates develop identities to teach citizenship, particularly through community service-learning projects. While studies have examined the potential of experiential learning, including service-learning, to promote the development of political knowledge, democratic capacity, commitment to civic engagement, and intended future political participation (Claes, Hooghe, & Stolle, 2009; Davies et al., 2013; Youniss, 2011), there is a lack of research probing the relationship between service-learning and teacher candidates' identity development. The importance of "exploring learning" during initial civic teacher education and the development of one's civic identity through self-authorship allow us to learn about the relationship between experience in change-oriented service-learning and identity development as a teacher of civics or citizenship education.

This research draws upon a joint community service-learning collaboration among a government agency (Elections Canada), participants attending the largest national youth civic leadership program in Canada (Encounters with Canada), and teacher candidates attending a one-year Faculty of Education program at the University of Ottawa. The research project involved 22 preservice teachers who developed and delivered three 90-minute civic education modules to 1,000 youth engaged in the Encounters with Canada leadership program. The two authors of this article are team leaders in the program. This study sought to answer the following research questions: (1) How does

participating in an extracurricular community service-learning project influence teacher candidates' thinking about teaching civics and citizenship? (2) To what degree do teacher candidates begin to see themselves as civic educators and actors? And, (3) in what ways can extracurricular service-learning projects support teacher candidates in self-authoring civic identities? We now turn to a review of the literature that informed our approach to this research project.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Service-learning and civic engagement

Previous studies indicate that there is a significant and often long-term impact of service-learning on civic responsibility and participation (Birdwell, Scott, & Horley, 2013; Patterson, Doppen, & Misco, 2012). A case in point is a recent report on City Year, a long-running program in the United States that places college-age youth in a 10-month community service-learning program designed to promote leadership development and civic engagement (Anderson & Fabiano, 2007). A majority of former City Year participants reported that the program contributed to their development of civic skills to critically analyze information and to express their views to others, particularly family and friends. Furthermore, the results indicated that community service activities had a positive impact on participants' understanding of social and political issues and their engagement in civic life (e.g. participating in political activities and solving community problems). Similarly, Knapp, Fisher, and Levesque-Bristol (2010) argued that college students enrolled in service-learning courses were more likely to commit to civic responsibility and future civic engagement if their service-learning experiences promoted a sense of autonomy, structured critical reflection, and sustained engagement.

Conversely, in their review of the literature, Birdwell et al. (2013) cautioned that outcomes based on research that measures the effectiveness of civic engagement has not been consistently positive in evaluations of service-learning programs. For example, a follow-up study of the American Youth Corps program showed that service-learning did not lead to a statistically significant increase in civic engagement (Price, Williams, Simpson, Jastrzab, & Markovitz, 2011). Measures of civic engagement included items such as volunteering, participating in the political process (e.g. voting, talking to others about a political issue or attending community meetings), expressing opinions about the importance of active participation in civic activities, and investigating the feasibility of initiating a grassroots effort or working with the government to address community needs. Consequently, there is a bourgeoning body of research examining how service-learning contributes to an in-depth understanding and increased participation in civic engagement (James & Iverson, 2009; Jerome, 2012; Llewellyn, Cook & Molina, 2010).

Service-learning and teacher education

Service-learning in teacher education is not a new idea. In fact, a survey of 528 teacher education programs in the United States concluded that 59% of the programs introduced teacher candidates to service-learning (Anderson & Erickson, 2003). Service-learning can provide candidates with a rich context for cultivating their pedagogical knowledge and skills and extend their understanding of student learning (Spencer, Cox-Peterson, & Crawford, 2005; Tatebe, 2013). Among other benefits, teacher candidates reported that service-learning increased their understanding of literacy development (McMunn Dooley & Criss Mays, 2014), supported equitable science learning among diverse student populations (Cone, 2009b), strengthened their commitment to social justice education (Farnsworth, 2010; Tinkler, Hannah, Tinkler, & Miller, 2014), and extended their ability to respond to diverse urban student populations (Carter Andrews, 2009; Conner, 2010). In particular, preservice music teachers concluded that service-learning increased their confidence and commitment to teaching music and shaped their identities as music teachers (Burton & Reynolds, 2009).

Wade et al. (1999) contended that service-learning can contribute to effective pedagogical practice when graduates of teacher education enter K12 schools, especially if the service-learning experiences provide students with a high degree of ownership in conducting their projects. Likewise, Cone (2009a) argued that when service-learning builds on student teachers' sense of self-efficacy (their perceived ability to accomplish tasks, solve problems, and positively impact those with whom they interact), their newly acquired sense of personal effectiveness and mastery, in turn, strengthens their commitment to civic engagement. In their study of teacher education programs, Anderson and Erickson (2003) maintained that effective service-learning provides teachers with decision-making authority regarding the service that they provide, (e.g. deciding the curriculum and methods) in addition to emphasizing problem solving and service to the community — all core components of a participatory citizenship model defined as a shared responsibility to address issues affecting one's local and national community (Kahne, Crow, & Lee, 2013; Westheimer & Kahne, 2004).

Clearly there exists an established and diverse body of research on service-learning in teacher education. Our overview of the literature, however, reveals that service-learning in teacher education is generally framed within curricular courses — embedded in elective or methods classes (e.g. Ponder, Vander Veldt, & Lewis-Ferrell, 2011; Sulentic-Dowell, 2008). Specifically, students in these studies took up community service-learning within the context of a course and were dependent on curriculum directives to shape their project. Because our study took place within an extracurricular service-learning project, the teacher candidates had the opportunity to explore initiatives beyond the content-based boundaries of the curriculum, taught the lesson without undergoing a formal evaluative component, and were solely responsible for delivering

the content without direct supervision. While the directives that framed the lessons in this research were affiliated with the overall goals and objectives of civic education, the focus, selection of topics, and pedagogical practices were shaped by the individual and collaborative initiatives generated by the teacher candidates in their bi-weekly planning meetings with the team leaders. This unique feature of our study extends the scholarship on service-learning in teacher education in two significant ways. First, it offers new insights regarding the impact of extracurricular experiences on teacher candidates' learning. It is not our intention to argue the merits of extracurricular service-learning over those of co-curricular projects, but to point out the potential benefits of extracurricular service-learning in teacher education, an area that is given less attention in the academic literature. Second, it provides an in-depth analysis of the role of service-learning in crafting new teachers' identities. While Burton and Reynolds (2009) and Carter Andrews (2009) acknowledged how service-learning can shape preservice teachers' identities as music and urban educators, respectively, there is a paucity of research that investigates the role of service-learning in preparing teacher candidates to teach citizenship from the perspective of self-authoring an identity as a civic educator.

Framework of self-authorship

The journey towards self-authorship, according to Baxter Magolda (2004), is foundational to 21st century learning. It involves moving from following external influences to define one's beliefs, identity, and relationships towards making and acting on decisions based on one's own needs and perspectives as well as those of others. Becoming the author of one's life occurs along three intertwining dimensions. The *cognitive dimension* refers to epistemology, one's evolving assumptions about the nature, limits, and (un)certainty of knowledge. It involves developing an ability to make wise choices (e.g. for instruction) based on a critical analysis of possible actions, contexts, and consequences. The *intrapersonal dimension* references one's sense of self, including the development of self-efficacy through experience and overcoming challenging situations. Finally, the *interpersonal dimension* is marked by an awareness of one's position relative to others — engaging in interdependent relationships and collaboration to integrate multiple perspectives. It is through self-authorship that adults learn to take on the challenges and complexities of personal and professional life. In the context of teaching and learning, self-authorship can support educators to re-envision their practice, to shift from traditional teacher-led learning designs towards more relational designs (Baxter Magolda, 2007; Sanford, Hopper, & Starr, 2015). Drawing on Baxter Magolda's (2004) framework, Iverson and James (2013) examined the role of service-learning to influence how undergraduate students self-authored their civic identities. Building on the work of Iverson and James, we applied Baxter Magolda's three-dimensional framework of self-authorship to examine how teacher candidates self-authored their identities as civic educators through experiential service-learning.

While service-learning, as a way to enhance learning outcomes for preservice teachers, is not original, exploring learning that is situated in the interactions that take place outside of formal university classrooms allowed the researchers to probe a new dimension of teacher education and identity development (Farnsworth, 2010) and to investigate an area of civic education that is understudied. Examining learning during initial civic teacher education and the development of one's civic identity through self-authorship allowed us to explore the relationship between identity development as a civic educator and change-oriented service-learning. Given that not all types of service-learning lead to civic and political engagement, this study draws on Iverson and James' (2013) conceptual framework for *change-oriented service-learning* to "enhance students' civic-political capacity [beyond volunteerism] by deepening their understanding of issues impacting their community, developing their self-efficacy as civic actors and fostering interdependence through collective action" (p. 90). Teacher candidates drew upon innovative pedagogical approaches based on meaningful experiences, creative ideas, and diverse ways of learning that originated with the interests and concerns of the youth.

METHODOLOGY

This qualitative case study is part of a larger research project conducted in collaboration with two national organizations: a government agency, Elections Canada, and a national youth leadership program, Encounters with Canada. Both organizations are committed to enhancing youth civic engagement. One of the aims of the project was to provide teacher candidates with practical experience in conceptualizing, developing, and implementing hands-on, participatory citizenship engagement lesson plans for a diverse group of intermediate and high school students from across the country. Consistent with current research on experiential learning, the team encouraged the teacher candidates to take the lead in developing their modules and team members provided support when needed or requested.

The principles of change-oriented service-learning were directed in three ways. First, at the beginning of the project, the students were introduced to the rationale, the objectives, and learning outcomes for the project as determined by the collaborative organizations. Second, throughout their development of the lessons, the candidates received ongoing feedback from the team leaders. In other words, within the framework of the general directives, the teacher candidates were given wide latitude to design their own lessons, and over time, they revised their lessons based on feedback from the youth and the team members. Finally, the service-learning project addressed a critical issue — youth civic (dis)engagement — and aimed to support teacher candidates in developing the complex skills to address that concern. It was beyond the scope of this study to track the long-term influence of the project on youth civic engagement. However, weekly surveys from the youth indicated that

the majority of youth felt that the modules increased their understanding of their democratic responsibilities as Canadian citizens and provided them with strategies to talk about and take action on social and political issues in their schools and communities.

The teacher candidates worked collaboratively in three groups of six to eight members to develop three unique lesson modules. The modules focused on activities to equip the youth participants with strategies and tools for taking action to address concerns in their schools, communities, and beyond. Each of the lessons had a similar outline of five sequential parts: introduction (hook), discussion about the issues that concerned the youth, a lesson on how to address these concerns (e.g. starting a campaign, passing a bill, creating an organization), a group activity around their choice of topic, and a presentation of the issue to the large group, followed by an accounting of the reaction of the group using a vote and/or posting of results on social media (e.g. Twitter). Each group met separately with members of the research team during the fall semester to plan the lesson module. Group meetings were held every two weeks with email communication between meetings. These regular interactions helped to build rapport and trust amongst the group members and research team. In December 2013, each group presented an overview of their module to the research team and the other teacher candidates, who then provided feedback for improvement. A final wrap up meeting was held in January when the teacher candidates provided an overview of their updated lesson modules. The groups rotated on a 3-week cycle over 9 weeks; each group facilitated their module three times from January to April, 2014. During the teaching sessions, the youth participants were divided into six groups: five groups were English-speaking and one group was French-speaking. The weekly number of youth participants at each of the nine sessions ranged from 100 to 135 for a total of 981 participants over the nine weeks.

Rather than develop a module based on a state sanctioned curriculum — the youth participants represented 10 provinces and three territories, each with their own curricula — the candidates were asked to plan a 90-minute lesson that could be used in any classroom across the country. The 90-minute limit was set according to Encounters with Canada's schedule. At Encounters with Canada, youth from across the country come to the capital, Ottawa, for one week of activities and guest speakers centered on a specific theme (e.g. technology, science, politics, and arts). The population of students who attended the leadership program represented demographic trends across the country (rural, urban, regional, Indigenous communities, etc.). The youth were socioeconomically diverse. All travel costs were subsidized by a government agency, and each student was responsible for a payment of $675.00. Frequently, these payments were covered by multiple funding groups at the school, in the community, or among family members. The only requirement for students to attend Encounters with Canada was permission from their schools to miss a week of classes.

Preparing the lesson module was particularly challenging for the candidates, given that they were drawing on general directives of learning objectives and outcomes and that the issues to be discussed were to emerge from the students rather than a formal curriculum. This repositioned the teacher candidates as both teachers and learners alongside the youth. It required the teacher candidates to be open and prepared to explore diverse, and sometimes controversial, issues. The main factors influencing the creation of the modules were developed in consultation with members of the research team. The civic education modules created for this project were based on progressive pedagogical principles such as participatory, experiential, and interactive lesson design and pedagogical practices that focused on civic engagement, democratic engagement, leadership, and collaboration (Kahne et al., 2013; Youniss, 2011). The short and long term learning outcomes aimed to increase the youth participants' understanding of and interest in democracy, electoral and legislative processes, and active engagement in relation to civic and community responsibility, including an intention for future electoral participation.

Methods

Our research design was developed from a case study approach (Creswell, 2013) and a grounded theory methodology (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Creswell (2013) argued that a case study involves using multiple data sources to provide an in-depth description of an individual, event or unit of analysis. Our study provides rich information about a group of teacher candidates involved in an extracurricular service-learning project. Following grounded theory, the use of self-authorship as a framework emerged during the coding process as a lens to interpret the teacher candidates' reflections about their experiences with the service-learning project. We discuss this decision further in the analysis section.

Participants

The larger study involved 22 teacher candidates from a Faculty of Education who were recruited at the beginning of their one-year, post degree teacher education program. Teacher candidates from various subject disciplines were invited to participate in the study as part of a voluntary 30-hour community service-learning project in the Faculty of Education. Among the participants, 16 were females, six males; 10 were in the secondary school division, 10 in the intermediate (middle school), and two in the elementary division. The project was coordinated by a research team consisting of one university professor, two part-time professors, three graduate students, a high school teacher, and one representative from each of the two national organizations. Given the directives of our university's ethics agreement, participation in the research aspect of the project was voluntary. As such, this case study reports on data collected from 11 teacher candidates who consented to complete an online survey of open-ended reflection questions about their experience with the project.

Data sources and analysis

This article reports on five data sources to provide an in-depth description of teacher candidates' evolution in thinking about civics and their emerging identities as civic educators. First, after obtaining ethics approval from the university's Internal Review Board, we invited the teacher candidates to complete an online questionnaire containing four open-ended reflection questions after their group's first module presentation to the Encounters with Canada youth. The candidates responded to the same four questions again after subsequent teaching sessions with the youth. The questions invited teacher candidates to reflect on how participating in the project influenced their understanding of teaching citizenship and the democratic process, and their thinking about civic education in the classroom. We also asked teacher candidates to reflect on what worked, what didn't work, and what they would do differently in teaching their lessons. Finally, we inquired about their perceptions of the youth participants' response to the lesson.

Second, the members of the research team recorded anecdotal emails and discussions with the teacher candidates. These interactions were analyzed to supplement the survey data collected. The learning modules prepared by the teacher candidates provided a third source of data. We analyzed the learning modules in relation to teacher candidates' reflections on how they felt the youth participants responded to the lessons and the changes that they made in response to this feedback from their first to third session with the youth. The fourth data source, the team members' observations, was interpreted according to themes that emerged from our reading of the student teachers' reflections on their experiences. Finally, after each session, the youth participants responded to a short paper survey to evaluate the lesson module in addition to a weekly Likert-scale survey administered by the host group, Encounters with Canada. Given that the results from the short paper and Likert-scale survey were integrated into group discussions in relation to "improving" the lessons, we have included them in our data source. Using a constant comparative analysis (Corbin & Strauss, 2008), we examined the data for similarities, differences, and emerging themes. In the next phase of analysis, while analyzing the relationship among the themes, Baxter Magolda's (2004) three dimensions of self-authorship served as a useful framework to interpret the teacher candidates' civic identity development.

We temper the claims of this research by noting that we have not investigated the longer-term implications of the service-learning experience on the attitudes, beliefs, and future classroom practices of the teacher candidates. Nor have we tracked systemically the level of civic engagement among candidates following this project, except through anecdotal reporting. Nonetheless, our "snapshot" of the teacher candidates' experiences offer insights regarding their self-authoring identities as civic educators and signals directions for further research and practice involving community service-learning projects as an extracurricular experience during teacher education.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Taken together, our analysis of the multiple sources of data provides a nuanced understanding of the candidates' identity development as civic educators. The themes emerging from their responses suggest that participating in the change-oriented service-learning project contributed to the development of their identities in significant ways in relation to Baxter Magolda's (2004) three dimensions of self-authorship. We now turn to the discussion of these findings and the implications for change-oriented service-learning as an extracurricular experience in teacher education programs that promotes 21st century learning.

Changes in teacher candidates' thinking about teaching civics and citizenship

According to Baxter Magolda (2004), cognitive maturity occurs when one's previously held assumptions and understandings of the world are challenged by alternative views and situations and one comes to recognize the temporal and contextual nature of knowledge. Personal development requires moving away from an uncritical acceptance of knowledge, passed on to us by external authorities, such as parents, peers, and teachers, to reflectively constructing our own perspective. Previous studies on community service-learning have credited these projects with helping to disrupt prospective teachers' preconceived notions and stereotypes of students whose values and backgrounds differ from their own (Carter Andrews, 2009; Tinkler et al., 2014). Our study lends further support to these findings.

Almost all of the teacher candidates' initial reflections expressed surprise at the level of youth awareness, interest, and engagement in a wide variety of issues affecting their communities, country or world. Comments such as, "I always believed that [civic education] was important...now I understand that students love being civically engaged...to make a difference in their schools and communities" (Lee, initial reflection[1]), and "[participating in this project] has changed my thinking in terms of how students see their environment, what is important to them and what [plans] they are capable of developing to change their world" (Jesse, follow-up reflection) were representative of many teacher candidates' reflections. Similar remarks were repeated during group meetings that were held between the teacher candidates' module presentations. For the teacher candidates in our study, their interactions with the youth participants created dissonance in their prior assumptions about youth engagement, specifically that youth were not as apathetic as previously assumed. This in turn influenced their thinking about teaching civics and citizenship as captured by one teacher candidate:

> The students were very engaged in the activity...some students stayed behind [after the session] to inquire more about the topics that were discussed.... Seeing how engaged these students were in the activity, I would like to include similar topics in my lessons when I teach in order to promote democracy and social justice. (Carmen, initial reflection)

Moreover, a change in perception about youth apathy also influenced some teacher candidates' attitude towards teaching citizenship, "Based on this module, I am very excited to teach [civics] in school...I am more encouraged that there ARE students who care about civic education" (Andie, initial reflection).

This change in perspectives regarding youth engagement was prominent in the teacher candidates' follow-up reflections. For example, Carmen explained why after the first session, her group spent less time explaining ideas and concepts in order to give the youth more time to research and create their social media movement:

> This experience has allowed me to realize how creative and enthusiastic young students are about active citizenship...if you create engaging and interesting activities linked to civic education, students will love it. Students need to take charge of their learning and this is exactly what we did in our activity. They loved being involved and having a voice. (follow-up reflection)

Our findings echo those of Daly, Devlin-Scherer, Burroughs, and McCartan (2010), who reported that preservice teachers in their study expressed surprise at urban students' discussion skills and their awareness of and desire to learn more about political issues. In a similar vein, Conner (2010) contended that service-learning provides a context for teacher candidates to "unlearn" by confronting their prior assumptions about the recipients and by developing a habit to "constantly monitor their thoughts and behaviour, until sensitivity to the service recipients' experience becomes second nature" (p. 1171). Moreover, Carmen's reflection recognizes that students need opportunities to shape their own learning, a core element of 21st century education (Schleicher, 2014).

We note, however, that following their first session with the youth participants, two of the teacher candidates reaffirmed their prior view that youth don't really care about civics or find it boring. On the one hand, this observation underscores the belief that although service-learning can support some preservice teachers in developing a new awareness of themselves and challenging their prior assumptions about youth apathy, it can also risk perpetuating stereotypes or deficit notions of youth (McMunn et al., 2014). Of particular interest is the finding that many of the teacher candidates in our study did not blame youth apathy on the youth themselves, but rather on the traditional way that civics has been and is taught:

> After one session, it was clear that most students find citizenship boring. They perceive it as something for adults to talk about and they haven't quite made a connection with it yet. So when we teach it, we really need to make it relevant to them. It's important to know about Canada's democratic processes but students don't quite understand the connection as to *why* it should matter to them. (Sandy, initial reflection)

On the other hand, the perception that youth find civics boring may be a reflection on how effective these two teacher candidates were in facilitating

their first lesson module. After Sandy's group modified their lesson in response to feedback from the youth, who had requested more time for discussion and debate, Sandy acknowledged:

> The students had lots of ideas and lots to say. My group was very engaged; this was probably my most engaged group. [Civics] has the potential to be very dry...the teacher needs to be enthusiastic about it, and the teacher needs to help the students find a meaningful and relevant entry into the subject. (follow-up reflection)

This finding points to the importance of providing teacher candidates with multiple opportunities to receive feedback, reflect on, and modify their lesson plan in their journey towards self-authorship. In traditional methods courses, teacher candidates are not often afforded opportunities to revise assignments or "try out" a lesson multiple times. In this extracurricular project, the process of creating curriculum became increasingly dynamic as teacher candidates became more responsive to their learners' experiences and interests (Sanford et al., 2015).

Another area in which some teacher candidates' thinking was disrupted concerns the interdisciplinary nature of civic education. Although we did not ask teacher candidates to reflect specifically on the cross-curricular possibilities of civic education, more than one third of them from various disciplines such as science, history, and mathematics observed how civic education could easily be integrated across the curriculum, rather than limited to social studies or civics. Alex, for example, whose group's lesson focused on creating a campaign to advocate for an issue of personal interest, stated, "I think it's worth bringing up civics in classes [beyond] social studies...science education and environmental protection would integrate well. Similarly, a civics-related book could be used for a literacy book study" (initial reflection). As Daly et al. (2010) have argued, community service projects should be embedded across multiple disciplines so that teacher candidates in all disciplines can understand the importance of an interdisciplinary approach to planning, teaching, and assessing experiential civic education. The Encounters with Canada youth program is theme-based. Often, although not always, the youth participants raised issues related to the week's theme (e.g. science and technology, medicine and health, sports and fitness, arts and culture, and ecology and environment). The experience of adapting their learning modules to accommodate the weekly themes likely influenced teacher candidates' understanding of the interdisciplinary nature of civic education. After subsequent sessions with the youth, Alex reiterated with greater confidence:

> Students are very good at coming up with issues that matter to them. They are a lot more well-informed than we give them credit for. [Civics] can be done in any classroom, for any subject. There will always be a way to integrate it into the curriculum. (follow-up reflection)

Teaching and learning across disciplines can foster imaginative and innovative thinking skills required for teachers and learners to respond to the rapidly changing learning environments of the 21ˢᵗ century (Schleicher, 2014). The findings of our study suggest that service-learning outside of the formal curriculum, which is not tied to a particular subject-based course, has the potential to support teacher candidates in understanding the interdisciplinary nature of civic education.

Developing confidence and identifying as civic educators

As Alex's assertive quote demonstrates, confidence as an indicator of intrapersonal growth emerged as a key theme in our study. Development along the intrapersonal dimension is marked by a positive change in an individual's sense of self-efficacy or agency as a result of resolving challenges (Baxter Magolda, 2004). During group meetings that were held prior to the delivery of their lessons, some teacher candidates reported an initial reluctance to teaching civics. They thought the prospect was "scary" or "hard" — a common fear among pre-service and novice teachers (Reimer & McLean, 2009). Furthermore, confidence did not emerge as a prominent theme immediately following their first session with the youth participants. The outcome of our study is particularly significant given these observations. In follow-up reflections, team meetings and email exchanges, an overwhelming majority of teacher candidates expressed an increased sense of confidence in or preparedness to teach civics. A case in point is Jamie, who struggled with time management and facilitating discussions with the youth during the first session:

> I realize that as much as I love this topic and want to teach students, it's not easy. It's important that teachers are trained to teach civics because it's important. This way, no matter how difficult it is to teach, teachers will have somewhere to start. (initial reflection)

By the end of the project, however, Jamie shared:

> [This experience] has increased my ability to be confident in front of students I do not know. It has bettered my time management skills and overall my classroom management as well. I feel better prepared to teach civic education, and have learned that it can be made engaging for students.... It was a wonderful experience, I would do it again. (personal communication)

In their investigation of how classroom teachers integrate new technologies, Strong-Wilson, Cole, Rouse, and Tsoulos (2012) noted that when students responded positively to a learning experience, this in turn contributed to "teachers' enactment of a newly emerging self: one who was more confident, took more risks" (p. 181). Similar to Strong-Wilson et al.'s findings, teacher candidates in our study who expressed increased confidence in teaching civics also perceived positive responses from the youth participants. Given that teacher candidates had the opportunity to revise their lesson modules based on feedback from the project team and the Encounters with Canada youth,

it is not surprising that there was an upswing in positive responses from the youth in their evaluations. Indeed, during final group meetings and email exchanges, it was common to hear comments such as this one:

> I feel more confident teaching civics to all students realizing that they can indeed comprehend its importance and find it engaging. I also feel more confident about my abilities to teach high school students, as I am trained in Primary / Junior education and thought my skills to teach older students was lacking. (Kai, personal communication)

The teacher candidates' increased confidence in their abilities to engage this particular group of students may have been skewed by the fact that Encounters with Canada youth tend to self-select among academically engaged youth who apply for the program. Nonetheless, we argue that these findings are particularly critical given that although the structure of the lessons determined how the modules unfolded each time, the issues that became the focus of the discussions and presentations emerged from the youth participants. Not surprisingly, this circumstance created some anxiety among the candidates who had to be prepared each week to coordinate projects without any advanced warning of the topics. These topics were sometimes controversial and required pedagogical skills to facilitate the discussion.

Another aspect of self-efficacy is autonomy, such as when teacher candidates are granted authority and responsibility for planning and implementing essential aspects of the service-learning project (James & Iverson, 2009; Knapp et al., 2010; Wade et al., 1999). This formative experience is exemplified in a study with preservice elementary teachers enrolled in a science methods course (Cone, 2009a). As Cone (2009a) explained, teacher candidates gained "mastery experiences" (p. 21) as they effectively engaged in a cycle of learning: developing, delivering, reflecting upon, and improving science lessons for middle school students at a community centre. These experiences strengthened teacher candidates' sense of personal efficacy and beliefs in the importance of equitable science education for students from diverse sociocultural backgrounds. We noted parallel findings in our study. Despite being circumscribed by several project objectives listed previously, the teacher candidates were granted a fair amount of autonomy in designing and facilitating their civic modules. Furthermore, the opportunity to teach their modules three times afforded candidates time to reflect individually and as a group, to consider feedback from the youth and project team, and to revise their lessons after each session. Howe, Coleman, Hamshaw, and Westdijk (2014) contended that effective service-learning projects encourage participants to work *with* rather than *for* community partners, which is only possible if community partners invest in working alongside students. This was certainly the case in our project in which the two collaborative organizations provided teacher candidates with constructive feedback during the development and after each delivery of their lesson module. For some teacher candidates, this sense of self-efficacy spilled over into their practicum placement:

> Being a part of [this] community service-learning team has boosted my confidence as a teacher when discussing important roles as citizens with all levels of students. This experience has helped me be more comfortable [during my] second practicum classes! I even got to use our lesson plan and activity with civics classes. The teachers and students absolutely loved it! (Ade, personal communication)

Feedback from team members centred on two key directives related to methods of inquiry. First, the discussion addressed the need for the candidates to identify to the youth the purpose of the lesson and to connect the activity to the overall objectives. A second and related comment recommended that the candidates allow time for a 10- to 15-minute debrief at the end of the lesson to formalize the connection between the activity and engaging in issues in their own schools and communities. Overall, the candidates focused on the experiential part of the project, and the follow up discussion of the connection between the activity and citizenship was critical for the project. The candidates responded to these directives in the subsequent lessons. These revisions may have been a contributing factor in the improvement in evaluation scores as recorded on three Likert-scale responses from the youth for each lesson. We concur with Knapp et al. (2010), Cone (2009a), and Iverson and James (2013), who argued that factors such as guided intentional reflection, constant feedback, and autonomy to make decisions in service-learning projects increase a sense of self-efficacy and confidence among candidates, which in turn contributes to the self-authoring of a civic identity.

For many teacher candidates, the interactions and feedback from the youth participants contributed to their growth along the interpersonal dimension. This dimension emphasizes building healthy relationships and is characterized by a capacity to move from relying on others for defining one's identity, directions, and beliefs to negotiating and integrating multiple perspectives while also recognizing the potential in one's own ideas and abilities (Baxter Magolda, 2007). This profile involves understanding one's relationship with others in the community as symbiotic. In other words, an understanding that one's wellbeing is tied to that of others and that one's actions have an impact both on oneself and those in the broader community.

When asked to describe how the youth participants responded to their initial lesson, what worked and what they would change, more than half of the teacher candidates expressed a willingness to renegotiate the traditional teacher-student relationship — one in which the teacher imparts knowledge and solely structures the learning outcomes for students. These teacher candidates recognized that the youth participants were highly engaged in debate about the social and political issues raised during the session and suggested less "teacher talk" and more time for "the creative aspects" (Mel, initial reflection) like discussing and debating their issues, and planning and presenting their ideas for action. After subsequent sessions, these same teacher candidates continued to integrate

youth perspectives and shared how it influenced their thinking about civics: "Students are very knowledgeable and have strong opinions. These should not be stifled. Students know what interests them and it's best to teach to that" (Mel, follow-up reflection).

Not only did these teacher candidates show a willingness to consider feedback from the research team, they were also attentive to their interactions with the youth during the lesson and incorporated those observations in making decisions about improving their practice. Like Mel, Sandy's initial reflection demonstrates how teacher candidates renegotiated the traditional teacher-student relationship and its influence on their conceptions of civics:

> What worked was the connection some of the students made to the issue [that they selected to research]. It was very important to one student and the others rallied around it. This student spoke with passion about the issue and the others sensed how important it was to him....We need to shift the focus [of civic education] from explaining how Parliament works to how students can get involved. [Civics] is not just about having the right to vote. Youth can influence change in many ways. As teachers, we need to show them these connections...[show them] how they can get involved...[in] a project that is important to them, that they carry through and see the tangible outcomes. (initial reflection)

Teacher candidates' decision to "spend less time presenting and give the [youth] more time to coordinate what they want to do" (Alex, initial reflection) lends support to prior findings that the opportunity to discuss their lesson plans in a collaborative environment supported by feedback from the youth, research team, and community partners "allowed teacher candidates to reconceptualize their approach in order to focus on how students would learn rather than retaining a focus solely on how they would teach" (Maynes, Allison, & Julien-Schultz, 2012, p. 84). As Sanford et al. (2015) contended, collaboration provides an opportunity for educators to let go of fixed conceptions, listen to alternative ideas, and combine efforts to create a strong learning experience for students.

Sandy's reflection also recognizes a teacher's personal responsibility to teach civics and potential to influence student civic engagement. These themes of personal responsibility and influence were echoed in Carmen's reflection:

> Civic education is very important in the classrooms because students need to understand that they live in a democratic society and that what they think and do matters...it is our job as facilitators and teachers to help students understand their civic duties and responsibilities. (initial reflection)

Although Sandy and Carmen acknowledged their potential influence on youth civic engagement in their follow-up reflections, many teacher candidates tended to credit their lesson as influencing the youth's learning outcome: "our lesson plan was both engaging and effective in teaching civic engagement; [it made] the issues tangible for students to take an active role in their communities" (Jamie, follow-up reflection). The lesson plans prioritized youth taking action

to address concerns in their communities. For example, in two of the learning modules, teacher candidates showed promotional videos and websites of youth-initiated campaigns like Pink Shirt Day (CKNW Orphan's Fund, 2014) and Shannen's Dream (First Nations Child & Family Caring Society of Canada, 2014). While teacher candidates felt it was important for youth to engage actively as citizens, and recognized the important role of civic education, few reflected on the significance of their own civic engagement and its possible influence on students.

Self-authoring identities as civic actors?

Only two other teacher candidates remarked on the interdependent nature of their own civic engagement and that of the youth participants. After observing that the youth enthusiastically debated controversial topics, these teacher candidates admitted to a personal lack of knowledge of current events and a need to "know more about what is going on in school communities" (Lee, follow-up reflection) and "be on top of the news both at a local and national level" (Dana, follow-up reflection). Dana goes on to say, "in order to teach students how to be active citizens we [teachers] need to be well informed." Given that many of the teacher candidates' reflections expressed surprise that the youth participants were knowledgeable, aware, and engaged in issues affecting their communities and nation, it is concerning that so few teacher candidates reflected on their own civic knowledge and participation. This finding suggests that perhaps many teacher candidates saw themselves as civics teachers, but not necessarily as civic actors who influence and belong to the same community as the youth participants.

Moreover, in Sandy and Carmen's reflections, the word *teacher* was used alongside the pronouns *I, we* or *our*, an indication that they explicitly placed themselves within a professional community of teachers. But this point of reference was not the case for many of the other teacher candidates who tended to refer to *teacher* in the third person in their reflections. Furthermore, among the websites and YouTube videos that each of the groups selected to use in their lessons, most of their choices involved non-formal educational opportunities (e.g. fundraising outside of school, co-ordinating community groups, and public forums.) Also, with few exceptions (cited above), many of the videos that the candidates selected did not involve school-based initiatives and none of the campaigns that they profiled in their lessons featured school-based projects generated by teachers or teacher organizations / associations. Given their choice of media to introduce civic engagement, the candidates did not yet self-identify as part of a profession of civic educators.

We note, however, that in our conversations with the teacher candidates, some of them spoke of their involvement in both local and global civics and citizenship initiatives. Additionally, the open-ended questions posed in this study did not ask teacher candidates to reflect specifically on their reasons

for joining the project or their identities as civic *actors*, a limitation we will address in the second year of the project. Still, given that a lack of social and political awareness limits preservice teachers' ability to teach civic engagement (Journell, 2013), our findings indicate that service-learning projects should pay closer attention to teacher candidates' growth along the interpersonal dimension of self-authorship, particularly in relation to how their identities as civic actors and educators are intertwined and their potential influence on youth civic engagement.

CONCLUSION

Baxter Magolda (2007) argued that self-authorship is a capacity that supports college students in negotiating the challenges of adult life and supports 21st century learning, such as collaboration, effective citizenship, and interdependent relations with others. Therefore, enabling this capacity should be a primary focus of higher education. Similarly, we argue that self-authorship can help teacher candidates meet the challenges of teaching citizenship and, thus, should be a key focus of civic education instruction among teacher candidates of all disciplines. Although the wide flexibility of the curriculum affords teachers choice over content, "which can be positive in the hands of trained and experienced teachers...[in other cases, it can lead to courses] that fail to integrate those aspects that stress political institutions with current events and community level participation" (Milner & Lewis, 2011, p. 142). Change-oriented service-learning provided teacher candidates in this study with an opportunity to rethink previously held ideas about youth civic engagement and apathy. This experience, in turn, had a positive influence on their enthusiasm and capability for teaching civics. Contrary to Conway, Amel, and Gerwien (2007), who suggested that curricular service-learning projects have a greater influence than extracurricular service projects because they encourage reflection, the findings of this project indicate that extracurricular projects can also promote critical reflection when reflective practices are built into the service project design.

Furthermore, this project based on change-oriented service-learning with teacher candidates prompted new ways of thinking about teaching citizenship. Not only did teacher candidates report increased confidence in teaching citizenship, some observed how civic education could easily be integrated across other subject areas. While the results of this study remind educators to pay close attention to the development of the interpersonal dimension of self-authoring in service-learning projects, a significant finding of the study is that change-oriented service-learning has a strong impact on new teachers' development of self-efficacy and agency as they begin to see themselves as confident civic educators.

NOTES

1.   The names used throughout this paper are pseudonyms.

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