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Youth Organizers As Essential Partners In Teacher Education: Implications From A Community-Based Action Research Project

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YOUTH ORGANIZERS AS ESSENTIAL PARTNERS IN TEACHER EDUCATION: IMPLICATIONS FROM A COMMUNITY-BASED ACTION RESEARCH PROJECT

by

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DEDICATION

Feet, what do I need you for when I have wings to fly?
- Frida Kahlo

To my students at Mercy Education Project in Detroit who breathed life back into me, taught me community-based education, and inspired my passion for intersectional social justice. This and future work are always for you. I am because we are.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Teaching, learning, and being in community in Detroit, Michigan compels us to acknowledge that we reside upon the Native land of the Peoria, Anishinabewaki, Potawatomi, Ojibway, Miami, and Wyandot/Huron Peoples. Detroit lies amidst the Great Lakes waterways and the Detroit River, which Indigenous communities name Wawaitonong, or "where the river goes 'round" in Ojibwa (Fox and McGahey, 2019). In order to reimagine educational freedom that is rooted in intersectional social justice, we must recommit our teaching and learning to our local communities and shared futures (Love, 2019).

We know there are many voices, stories, and people who are erased within research, scholarship, teaching, and learning because of settler colonialism and white supremacy (Gonzales, 2011). We also know the ongoing struggle for sovereignty and decolonization by Indigenous peoples is intricately connected to the intersectional struggles of civil rights and social justice movements. In turn, this land acknowledgement and the work offered within this research project are one small effort in the process of decolonization, which must be in relation with Indigenous peoples (Keene & Wilbur, 2019; Reese, 2019; Tuck & Yang, 2012)

Alutiiq scholar Leilana Sabzalian calls educators to develop an anticolonial curriculum for civic education (2019). She asks educators to incorporate Indigenous knowledge and ways of being within our teaching and learning by centering six Indigenous orientations to: place, presence, perspectives, political nationhood, power, and partnerships. She asserts that this is a move toward restoration, recognition, and meaningful coexistence in order to engage in decolonization within our schools, communities, and beyond. Significantly, all of us are called to participate in such critical and loving work as we continue collaborating for transformative social change.

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I am grateful to have been loved and to be loved now and to be able to love,
because that liberates. Love liberates.
- Maya Angelou

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To my parents, thank you for always supporting me, my work, and my community. I know I can do anything because you have always strengthened and heartened my ambitions. Thank you

for loving me fully and for being with me in this journey. I am so grateful to have you by my side. To my sister, thank you for bringing joy and laughter into my life, and for always being a steady rock when I need it most. To my family, especially Grandpa Norm, Kim, Aunt Vic, Cheryl, Emily, and Bob, thank you for your tenacious love, support, and encouragement. To Oakwood Drive, thank you for teaching me at an early age what it means to be in purposeful and meaningful community.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

These children are saying, we are here now, to be seen, for the people they already are – already full human beings, exactly as human as their teachers, no more and no less. They have things to learn as citizens, and as scholars, and as family members, and they will grow and change and develop and learn. But they are already full human beings, and none of these lessons will make them more so. They already feel and love and hurt; they already desire to be entertained and engaged and embraced; they already insist on being taken seriously and cared for deeply. They will not be ignored, and they will not be invisible. (Shalaby, 2017, p. 168)

Vignette: Realizing Education as the Practice of Freedom

It was a Monday evening in November, and I sat next to Blue, Allison, and Harry at the Arab American Museum in Dearborn, Michigan. We were attending a community potluck and training on the sanctuary school and safe zone movement, which aims to ensure accessibility to education for all students and, in particular, protect the holistic well-being of undocumented students, families, and community members (Immigrants Rising & Jodaitis, 2020). The four of us are core team members of En Los Sueños, an intergenerational grassroots community organization advocating for immigration justice as an essential component of education justice. Blue and Allison, along with their English Language Arts teacher, Harry, are co-leaders of En Los Sueños' Youth Organizing Committee and are currently advocating for the adoption of sanctuary school and safe zone policies in their school district. For Blue and Allison, the issue of immigration justice is personal as it deeply connects to their own lived experiences within a predominantly Latinx school community in Detroit. Being so, Blue and Allison were highly engaged during the training – taking notes, asking questions, or elbowing one another when the content resonated.

Blue and Allison are youth organizers and they are involved in a variety of youth-centered extracurricular and grassroots community organizations engaged in social justice causes. Harry and I are adult allies who collaborate with young people like Blue and Allison as we work toward humanizing spaces and liberatory practices in both schools and communities. The four of us

believe that the everyday realities of children and young people cannot be separated from teaching and learning within PreK-12 classrooms. Furthermore, we believe that classrooms should be spaces in which students and teachers learn to both read the word and read the world (Freire, 1985). Within the current socio-political context of the United States, such critical civic initiatives and empowering learning opportunities are urgent in order to be in solidarity for transformative social change. For these reasons, we joined intergenerational community members at the sanctuary school and safe zone movement training in order to address the necessity of realizing education as the practice of freedom (Freire, 1970; hooks, 1994). As a teacher educator-scholar-community organizer, the Monday evening in November affirmed my resolute belief that partnerships with youth organizers in PreK-12 classrooms, grassroots community organizations, and teacher education programs are one strategy to work toward a reimaginative future.

Youth Organizers as Essential Partners in Teacher Education

> So, especially for new teachers, if you're in a setting where you are always doing the teaching and trying to fit into a structure and a box, and you're being taught how to put your students in a box, that is how your teaching career is going to be. It's really important from the get-go to be like, "Hey! You don't have to do that because your students are people, too, and they can teach you and you don't always have to do the teaching!" [Adult ally trainings] just really breaks up that misunderstanding, the misconception that only teachers can teach, only adults can teach. I don't know anything about teaching school, so I don't know how much contact teachers in training get with students, so it's just really important to just bring us into their classroom, combine the elements, and just test the waters a little bit. (Alaska, Participant Interview)

As a teacher educator-scholar-community organizer, I frequently connect the people, places, and ecosystems of local Detroit communities, such as Blue, Allison, and En Los Sueños, to the methods courses I instruct within my College of Education. Through community-based learning opportunities, I invite teacher candidates (TCs) enrolled in these methods courses to foster a sense of belonging and accountability to the students they will teach (Popielarz, In Press). For example, my course syllabi implement place-conscious readings, media, news articles and podcast

episodes, in addition to asset-based community-engaged projects. Significantly, my relationships with community members informs the development of community-based pedagogical and curricular practices within these methods courses. In turn, I frequently collaborate with community partners by having guest speakers in the methods courses or by visiting local community sites.

By grounding my practice as a teacher educator and scholar within the voices and lived experiences of local communities, I encourage TCs to see local people, places, and ecosystems as essential partners for classroom teaching and learning. Furthermore, such community-based learning opportunities in teacher education aims to disrupt harmful and oppressive practices within PreK-12 classrooms as TCs come to identify with the inherent strength and knowledge of children, young people, and local communities (Popielarz & Monreal, 2019). Significantly, this invokes the critical and reflexive process of *praxis* (Freire, 1970) – reflection and dialogue for transformative action – in order to continue the development of community-based teacher education and respond to the multiplicity of local communities with each passing semester. For these reasons, I desired to conduct a critical qualitative action research project of a social studies methods course I instruct in order to learn more about the ways in which community partners and TCs experience community-based learning opportunities within teacher education.

Due to my role as an adult ally within youth-centered and intergenerational grassroots community organizing spaces, I utilized the relationships I have with youth organizers and their adult allies to curate a community-based social studies methods course in the spring/summer semester of 2019. In addition, the youth organizers facilitated two distinct adult ally trainings for TCs enrolled in the social studies methods course. The primary purpose of these place-conscious and relational learning experiences of the course was to enhance TCs understanding of community-based pedagogy, while also supporting youth organizers in their social justice work within local

schools and communities. Furthermore, by (re)centering the voices and lived experiences of young people within the design and implementation of the social studies methods course, TCs had the opportunity to reimagine the classroom as a space to realize transformative social change. Through the generative findings of this action research project, my belief in the power of youth organizers as essential partners in community-based teacher education has been strengthened and affirmed. However, I have also come to understand the possibilities, contradictions, and limitations of such partnerships, which I will analyze and discuss at length in subsequent chapters. Thus, the implications of this action research project are significant for teacher educators, colleges of education, and grassroots community organizations seeking to foster community-based pedagogical and curricular practices.

Community-Based Teacher Education

Today, many teacher education programs are implementing community-based pedagogies that provide TCs the opportunity to learn from and within the communities they will teach. Community-based teacher education requires TCs to see learners in their classrooms as assets, which aims to cultivate inclusive and affirming learning environments (Guillen & Zeichner, 2018; Lee, 2010; Noel, 2016; Seidl, 2007). Furthermore, these transformative practices assert the inherent strengths and knowledge of the local community within teacher education (Hallman, 2012; Lee, 2018; Seidl & Friend, 2002; Zeichner, Bowman, Guillen, & Napolitan, 2016). In turn, teacher education programs become a tool to dismantle and transform an education system that often perpetuates oppressive and exclusionary practices (Haddix, 2015; Matias, 2013; Picower, 2009; Solomon, Portelli, Daniel, & Campbell, 2005). Such teaching and (re)learning practices aim to disrupt racist, sexist, and classist systems of oppression that are often (re)produced within many

PreK-12 and teacher education classrooms in order to work toward education as the practice of freedom.

Within community-based teacher education, traditional academic hierarchies of knowledge are challenged in order to include and place value upon local communities (Guillen & Zeichner, 2018; Zygmunt & Clark, 2016). Significantly, community-based teacher education (re)centers the knowledge, literacies, and cultural heritage of multicultural and multilingual students within dynamic learning environments (Noel, 2013; Zygmunt, Cipollone, Tancock, Clausen, Clark, & Mucherah, 2018). The place-conscious and student-centered practice of community-based teacher education situates the holistic identity of young people in order to support TCs in their understanding of culturally sustaining pedagogies within education (Paris, 2012). In turn, many teacher education programs engage in this invigorating practice by developing relationships and partnering with local communities for the benefit of children and young people in school (Lowenstein, Voelker, Sylvester, Roundrtree, Harris, Segrist, & Nielson, 2018). As a result, TCs may develop the capacity to be critically conscious educators whose pedagogy and curriculum is grounded in the people, places, and environment of their students (Murrell, 2001; Smolkin & Suina, 1999).

Fueled by people-power, self-determination, and sovereignty, Black, Indigenous, and communities of color have often mobilized through community-based teaching and learning strategies in order to organize for collective liberation. It is significant to note that community-based pedagogy is not new and has been at the center of Indigenous communities for millennia and into the present day (Tuck & Yang, 2012; Tuhiwai-Smith, 2012). Furthermore, community-based pedagogy has roots in global social and civil rights movements such as the Black Freedom Movement (Ransby, 2003), the Chicano/a Movement (Delgado Bernal, 1998; Zapata, 2016), the

Anti-Apartheid Movement (Dalai Lama, Tutu, & Abrams, 2016), the Liberation Theology Movement (Gutiérrez, 1973), the American Indian Movement (Dunbar-Ortiz, 2014), and the Committee for Peasant Unity movement (Menchú, 1984) of the 19th and 20th centuries. Furthermore, the tradition of community-based practices can be seen in modern intersectional social justice movements such as Movimiento Cosecha[1], Black Lives Matter[2], and the protectors of Mauna Kea[3]. Importantly, these movements have been effective and sustainable because the practice of community-based pedagogy is fundamentally youth-centered and intergenerational in order to foster collaboration.

(Re)centering the Voices and Lived Experiences of Youth Organizers within Community-Based Teacher Education

While I will discuss grassroots communities, community organizing, and youth organizers in depth within chapter two, I will pause here to provide a brief explanation of each term. I define *grassroots community* as a movement of people and organizations who address local, regional, national, and or/international social justice issues that most directly impact community members through egalitarian dialogue, decision-making, and action. In turn, *grassroots community organizing* brings together grassroots community members in collaborative campaigns, movements, and strategies to draw public attention to specific social justice issues. The work of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) during the Black Freedom Movement (Ransby, 2003) and of the present-day Black Lives Matter at School movement (Watson, Hagopian, & Au, 2018) are examples of both grassroots communities and community organizing for intersectional social justice. At the center of SNCC and Black Lives Matter at School were/are

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[1] Movimiento Cosecha. (n.d.). Retrieved on February 2, 2020 from https://www.lahuelga.com
[2] Black Lives Matter. (n.d.). Retrieved on February 2, 2020 from https://blacklivesmatter.com
[3] Protect Mauna Kea. (n.d.). Retrieved on February 2, 2020 from https://www.protectmaunakea.net

youth organizers who address national and international social justice issues at local and regional levels through the principles of participatory democracy. For the purposes of this research project, *youth organizers* are young people, typically teenagers and young adults within the ages of 14-19, who engage in grassroots community organizing efforts. In turn, adults who are involved within grassroots communities alongside young people are *adult allies* in community-based pedagogical practices.

As evidenced by the organizations and movements previously mentioned, there has been a (re)emergence of youth-led grassroots organizations who enact and model community-based pedagogy for transformative social change. In particular relevance to my work, many young people in Detroit, Michigan are actively engaged youth organizers as they intersect a variety of urgent social justice issues within education justice for transformative social change in their schools and communities. While community-based teacher education frequently partners with adult-led and adult-centered community and grassroots organizations, the literature reflects the limited collaboration between youth-led grassroots organizations and teacher education programs. In particular, the centering of youth voices is often inadequate within the literature of community-based teacher education (Lyiscott, Limarys, & Morrell, 2018; Rosen, 2019). This has critical implications for teacher education programs if TCs are to be supported in becoming critically conscious classroom teachers. In turn, this research project (re)centers the voices and perspectives of young people who are both students and youth organizers in Detroit. To this end, the research project will acknowledge and challenge the existing barriers between students and teachers, young people and adults, and teacher education programs and local communities in efforts to disrupt systemic oppressions.

In particular, this research project will bring together youth organizers, classroom teachers, TCs, teacher educators, and community educators in order to explicitly connect youth-led grassroots organizations to the PreK-12 and teacher education classrooms. Through active dialogue, reflection, and practice, the reciprocal collaboration at the center of this research project will aim to cultivate egalitarian learning opportunities for intersectional social justice in our schools and communities. Moreover, this research project is informed by and advocates for community that is radical, democratic, loving, feminist, and participatory in order to push forward individual, relational, community, and societal growth. In turn, the findings and subsequent implications from this research project demonstrate the possibilities, contradictions, and limitations of youth organizers, in collaboration with their adult allies, as essential partners in teacher education.

Objectives

The primary purpose of this research project is to analyze the use of community-based pedagogy within a social studies methods course informed by youth organizers and adult allies from two youth-centered grassroots community organizations in Detroit. Through a critical qualitative action research project, I discuss and analyze the process of designing and implementing learning experiences within a teacher education course alongside youth organizers and their adult allies who are active social change agents within the classroom and their local Detroit communities. Thus, this research project shares in the anticipated joys and challenges of curating a place-conscious and student-centered community-based pedagogy in collaboration with intergenerational community members. The findings of this research project are applicable for those engaged in liberatory education practices throughout PreK-12 classrooms, teacher education

programs, and grassroots community spaces. In this way, the intention at the core of this research project is to reimagine the possibilities of education that are not yet but could be.

Pointedly, this research project (re)centers the voices and lived experiences of youth organizers who are instrumental in the design and implementation of community-based pedagogy within a social studies methods course. As a result, the research project documents and shares the perceptions of young people and their adult allies as they collaborate with myself, a teacher educator-scholar-community organizer, in the preparation of TCs. In turn, the methodology of action research is useful in understanding the possibilities, contradictions, and limitations of a community-based pedagogy within the PreK-12 classroom and teacher education (Cammarota & Fine, 2008; McIntyre, 2010; Weis & Fine, 2004). Additionally, the research project discusses the successes and struggles of raising the critical consciousness of TCs through various community-engaged learning opportunities, such as attending adult ally trainings facilitated by the youth organizers. Through this approach, I aim to compassionately assert the voices of those who matter most in the reimagination of teacher education – young people and adult allies living for change, as movement activist Grace Lee Boggs (1998) would say, within the local grassroots community.

A secondary aim of this action research project is to participate in the process of praxis, which brings individuals and communities together in generative dialogue for critical reflection and transformative action (Freire, 1974). Action research has the potential to be a resourceful and dynamic methodology in order to engage researchers and participants in the process of praxis. Through action research, I analyze the intricate process of utilizing a community-based pedagogy within the realities of teacher education programs and PreK-12 classrooms. In turn, I employ action research to engage in dialogic reflection with myself and participants in order to examine the tensions of community-based pedagogy within the reimagination of the classroom as a space to

realize social change. The action research project is informed by participatory and community-based methods in order for participants, particularly the youth organizers and adult allies, to utilize knowledge and gain resources for their current social justice initiatives within schools and communities (Paris & Winn, 2014; Tuck & Mckenzie, 2015; Tuhiwai-Smith, 2012). Thus, the findings and implications of this action research project aim to be relevant and empowering well after the collection of data sources and well beyond the scope of this specific research project (Bang, Faber, Gurneau, Marin, & Soto, 2015).

The third intention of this research project is to examine the process of TCs becoming critically conscious social studies educators due to further connections within the local communities of students they will teach. By experiencing a community-based social studies methods course, TCs may develop the interest and capacity to teach in similar ways in their own future classrooms. The research project is purposefully situated within a social studies methods course in order to provoke the revitalization of an often standardized, homogenized, whitewashed, and, unfortunately, detested and marginalized subject matter (Bigelow, 1999; Monreal, 2019). By taking a community-based pedagogical approach to a social studies methods course, this research project intends to advocate for the social studies as a critical civic initiative, which informs and encourages students, teachers, and community members to engage in pertinent issues of social justice that intersect with education (Love, 2019; Popielarz, 2020; Ransby, 2003; Rodríguez, 2018; Sabzalian, 2019; Wade, 2001). As a former secondary classroom teacher and current teacher educator, I view the social studies as an interdisciplinary anchor to pursue education as the practice of freedom. Gloria Ladson-Billings (2001) expounds:

> It is time to think about ways that teacher preparation can become more responsive to the desires of preservice (and inservice) teachers to become more effective pedagogues with students who, heretofore, have not benefitted from schooling. If social studies is to realize its true mission – to prepare students to be active, responsible participants in a democratic

and multicultural society – then social studies teachers will need to develop more culturally relevant teaching approaches. (p. 213)

Within this framework, this action project suggests ways in which the social studies may reemerge as an essential foundation for teachers and learners to cultivate a critical consciousness that is necessary for participatory, democratic, and community-centered education (Ladson-Billings, 2001).

Generatively and perhaps most significantly, the findings of this research project provide implications for teacher education programs that are in the process of developing courses and field experiences in partnership with local communities and PreK-12 classrooms. Purposefully, this research project asserts that transformative practices within teacher education cannot be done unless in direct collaboration with local communities. If teacher education programs are to participate in the struggle for education justice, they must work in tandem with grassroots communities and, in particular, youth organizers and their adult allies. We know that children and young people, particularly Black, Indigenous, and students of color, are facing an onslaught of harmful and oppressive practices that dehumanize their very being within schools and communities (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2019). Thus, a central claim I build upon is that community-based pedagogy refuses this dehumanization and asserts that young people are already fully human, filled with community knowledge, cultural heritage, and dynamic identities. In turn, community-based pedagogy calls upon adult allies – classroom teachers, teacher educators, community leaders, elders, etc. – to bear witness to the beauty and resolve that is inherently deep within children and young people in order to work together for transformative social change.

With this in mind, the research project reimagines teacher education by acknowledging and disrupting the barriers between methods courses, classroom teaching, and youth-centered grassroots communities through the use of community-based pedagogy. In order to analyze these

objectives and the possibilities of youth organizers as essential partners in teacher education, the research project will inquire upon the following questions:

1. What implications does community-based pedagogy have for those of us who educate teacher candidates?

2. How does community-based pedagogy enhance or compromise the reimagination of the classroom as a space for young people and educators to collaborate for transformative social change?

3. In what ways does the praxis of action research engage the complexities of community-based pedagogy within the realities of PreK-12 classrooms and teacher education?

From Schooling to Education: Radical Possibilities for Transformative Social Change

The system of schooling in the United States continues to (re)produce racist, classist, and sexist systems of oppression in which the country itself was founded upon (Ladson-Billings, 2006; McCarty, 2018; Rios, 2008). Much like the youth organizers at the forefront of this action research project, many Black, Indigenous, and students of color seek out ways to "learn despite school, not because of it" (Love, 2019, p. 52). For these reasons, I will pause here to explicate how I distinguish the meaning of schooling and education throughout this action research project. *Schooling* often enforces compliance, standardization, individualism, and behavioral expectations, which can be seen through the perpetuation of white supremacy in the pedagogy and curriculum of many PreK-12 classrooms (Stovall, 2020). For example, the *hidden curriculum* – "the norms and values that are implicitly, but effectively taught in schools and that are not usually talked about in teachers' statements of end or goals" (Apple, 2004, p. 78) – often presents a biased view of the world through the white, Eurocentric, patriarchal, and heteronormative gaze (Morrison, 2019; Zinn, 2005). *Education,* on the contrary, is the antidote to schooling as it fosters critical inquiry,

collaboration, creativity, and democracy for radical social change. In turn, the practice and act of education is often suppressed through the perpetuation of harmful and oppressive systems of PreK-12 schooling in the United States (Stovall, 2020).

To elucidate, Carter G. Woodson addressed the white, dominant narrative of traditional schooling curriculum by creating the *Journal of Negro History* and establishing Black History Week in order to disrupt the miseducation of Black and African American students and teachers in the early 1900s (Brown & Au, 2014). Woodson's legacy can be seen in the previously mentioned Black Lives Matter at School Week of Action, which is grounded in the 13 principles of the Black Lives Matter movement (2020). Black Lives Matter at School facilitates a week of action during Black History Month in order to "demand an end to zero tolerance, mandate Black history and ethnic studies, hire more Black teachers, and fund counselors not cops" (2020). The ongoing efforts by the intergenerational Black Lives Matter at School organization demonstrates possibilities for social change yet recognizes the ongoing struggle to reconceptualize education as the practice of freedom.

Today, the schooling of PreK-12 students can be seen through the ways in which public education is utilized by corporate business owners and venture philanthropists to profit and shape the career trajectories and civic consciousness of young people (Apple, 1995; Au, 2009). In addition, classrooms are frequently spaces in which scripted curriculum ensures what students will learn in an era of continued high stakes testing and discredited notions of teacher accountability (Apple, 1993). Furthermore, schools are sites of gender, racial, and religious oppression, well documented in studies pertaining to the school to prison nexus (Stovall, 2016) and school to deportation pipeline (Dillard, 2018). It is evident that the United States schooling system further marginalizes many students whose identities do not fit within the dominant and canonical mold of

whiteness (Ladson-Billings, 2017; Paris, 2012). In this context, marginalized students in school continuously experience what Bettina Love (2019) names "spirit murdering", which places children and young people in continuous survival mode as their humanity is suppressed through the perpetuation of the "educational survival complex".

Moreover, public education is a contested space within the "renewal" of many urban cities (Lipman, 2011; Soja, 2010). While the schooling system at large is rooted in racist and oppressive structures, many Black, Indigenous, and communities of color have cultivated neighborhood public schools that are student-centered, place-conscious, and democratic (Journey For Justice Alliance, 2014). Historically, such culturally sustaining and revitalizing public school communities have been part of larger civil rights struggles and freedom movements throughout the United States (Griffith & Freedman, 2019). Today, numerous urban school districts, such as those in Chicago, Detroit, and New Orleans, have seen the use of privatization to weaponize and eradicate public education (Ewing, 2018). In turn, many Black, Indigenous, and communities of color have mobilized to resist neoliberal and neoconservative education reform policies such as No Child Left Behind, Race To The Top, and the Every Student Succeeds Act, which continuously interact with and sustain renewal processes to close and/or privatize community schools (Buras, 2013; Journey For Justice Alliance, 2014).

Thus, while the pressure of grassroots community mobilization frequently disrupts harmful policies perpetuated upon children and young people, hundreds of public schools throughout the United States have been closed, demolished, or turned into for-profit charter schools (Journey For Justice Alliance, 2014). Through such systemically racist practices, the landscape of urban cities shifts and the closure of a public-school ushers in the displacement of entire historical neighborhoods as demolition companies prepare for "revitalization" projects. In this process, long-

lasting communities are dismantled, and students are left without their neighborhood school. Oftentimes, children and young people carry the weight of such upheaval as their standardized test scores or the lack of perceived leadership skills by democratically elected officials are often cited as rationale for school closures. This method of erasure throughout the United States, most notably in urban city-centers with predominantly Black, Indigenous, and residents of color, personifies the spirit murdering of children and young people both in their classrooms and neighborhoods (Love, 2019). Shamefully, the democratic commitment of student-centered and place-conscious local public schools continues to be dismantled in the name of "progress" and corporate profit (Ewing, 2018).

Within the classroom, curriculum and pedagogy are often spaces of conflict, much like the future of neighborhood public schools. For example, in 2018, there was a fervent public uproar over proposed changes to the K-12 social studies standards in Michigan (French, 2018). The Michigan Department of Education established a bipartisan committee to revise the social studies state standards implemented in 2007. However, in the spring of 2018, former Senator Patrick Colbeck challenged the proposed K-12 social studies standards and catalyzed further revisions, which stripped the Michigan social studies standards of sociocultural content that he deemed political. As a result, Colbeck's proposed revisions to the standards emphasized a Eurocentric, Christian, and patriarchal perspective by removing content such as "common good", "diversity", "justice", "climate change", and the "National Association for the Advancement of Colored People". In addition, Colbeck eliminated "core democratic values" and "democratic" from the social studies standards in order to be "politically neutral" (French & VanHulle, 2018). Due to community mobilization, the Michigan Department of Education refuted Colbeck's revisions and

successfully approved updated K-12 social studies standards with the support of public comment and community involvement in the following year (French, 2019).

Notably, Colbeck's desire to cultivate a state standardized curriculum for the social studies runs parallel to the developing critical consciousness and organizing of young people in the current times. Often overlooked and suppressed by elected officials, policy makers, and education reformers, young people are actively galvanizing their communities for social change. In many instances, youth-centered, youth-led, and/or intergenerational grassroots community groups are often at the helm of current transformative social and civil rights movements. Black Youth Project[4], International Indigenous Youth Council[5], March For Our Lives[6], United We Dream[7], Muslim Girls Making Change[8], and the Global Climate Strike[9] are all prominent testaments to the power of collective youth organizing and critical civic initiatives. In juxtaposition, Colbeck's attempted revisions of the social studies state standards personify the hold that many conservative lawmakers and neoliberal policy reformers have on, what will become, scripted curriculum and high stakes standardized tests within the PreK-12 schooling system (Au, 2013). The agency and resistance to Colbeck's proposed revisions demonstrated by Michigan constituents relates to current social and civil rights movements as young people and intergenerational community members engage in critical civic initiatives for social justice within schools and communities (Au, 2016).

Much like in Michigan, the state of public education is often front-page news and a trending topic on social media throughout the country. We hear of low performance on standardized tests, chronic absenteeism, and teacher shortages through blaring headlines and primetime news

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[4] Black Youth Project. (n.d.). Retrieved on December 12, 2019, from http://blackyouthproject.com
[5] International Indigenous Youth Council. (n.d.). Retrieved on December 12, 2019, from https://indigenousyouth.org
[6] March For Our Lives. (n.d.). Retrieved on December 12, 2019, from https://marchforourlives.com
[7] United We Dream. (n.d.). Retrieved on December 12, 2019, from https://unitedwedream.org
[8] Muslim Girls Making Change. (n.d.). Retrieved on December 12, 2019, from https://muslimgirlsmakingchange.weebly.com
[9] Global Climate Strike. (n.d.). Retrieved on December 12, 2019, from https://globalclimatestrike.net

(Goldstein, 2011). Unfortunately, the blame for these "failures" are often placed upon students, teachers, and community members rather than efforts being taken to understand the root of political and socioeconomic forces that perpetuate systemic oppression within public education (Anyon, 2014). Nevertheless, young people, teachers, and community members continue to resist. For example, intergenerational Detroit community members are currently supporting a civil rights lawsuit, *Gary B. v. Snyder*, that aims to "vindicate the right of all students to access to literacy, no matter their zip code."[10] This federal case has monumental implications for the human right to literacy in the United States and it demonstrates the empowerment of intergenerational and community-based collaboration. Furthermore, the community mobilization behind the lawsuit asserts a critical counter narrative to the stories often told about "failing" public schools in predominantly low-income Black, Indigenous, and communities of color.

Recent scholarship has solidified that we are perpetuating harm and violence if our education practices are not working toward freedom through intersectional social justice (Love, 2019; Shalaby, 2017). Love (2019) elucidates:

> Educational justice can happen only through a simultaneous fight for economic justice, racial justice, housing justice, environmental justice, religious justice, queer justice, trans justice, citizenship justice, and disability justice … We must demand the impossible and employ a radical imagination focused on intersectional justice through community building and grassroots organizing. (p. 12)

Through this vision, we find ourselves with a profound opportunity to reimagine education as a critical civic initiative for transformative social change. More specifically, by being firmly rooted in the strengths and assets of students and grassroots communities, we may work toward education as the practice of freedom. Within this process, community-based pedagogy becomes a method and strategy to (re)center young people and local grassroots communities within teaching and

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[10] Busch, J. (2016). Right to literacy: Detroit. Retrieved on December 12, 2019, from https://www.detroit-accesstoliteracy.org

learning. Such efforts refuse corporate robber barons and venture philanthropists who aim to control public education for profit. In addition, schools and communities reject the erasure of Black, Indigenous, and people of color in order challenge city "renewal" plans that wreak havoc upon the sustainable health and well-being of urban communities. Moreover, students and teachers join in solidarity in order to disrupt the ways in which racist, classist, and sexist systems of oppression harm children and young people within PreK-12 classrooms. To this end, youth-centered, youth-led, and intergenerational social change movements become prominent examples to realize radical possibilities in education and beyond (Anyon, 2014).

Grassroots Community Organizations and Teacher Education in Collaboration

At a local level here in Detroit, Michigan, there exists an ecosystem of grassroots community organizing groups that thrive due to their interconnectedness (Kutil, 2018). For centuries, Detroit has been the foundation of incomparable social change and civil rights movements. Detroit is where enslaved Africans and Indigenous peoples fought for freedom amidst the colonial occupancy of the French, British, and then United States governments (Miles, 2017). Detroit is where students from Northern High School led a mass walkout and established a freedom school in 1966 as a method to resist inequitable school conditions due to systemic racism and school segregation (Gross, 2017). Detroit is where the Malcolm X Society and the Group on Advanced Leadership convened in 1968 for the Black Government Conference at the Shrine of the Black Madonna church in order to draft a declaration of independence on behalf of the African Diaspora in the United States (Berger, 2009). Detroit is where Jimmy and Grace Lee Boggs rooted themselves to work collectively in the Black Power Movement and Labor Rights Movement of the 20th century (Boggs, 1998). Detroit is where educators, students, parents, and community members have been mobilizing for decades to achieve equitable, student-centered, and community-

controlled schools (Suarez, 2018). Throughout the years, these civil rights and social movements have existed in coalition with one another, recognizing that issues of social justice are inextricably linked if communities are to achieve more radical, democratic, loving, feminist, and participatory futures.

It is within this context that I locate two distinct youth-centered grassroots organizations – Youth Liberation Army and En Los Sueños – that are equally living for change within their Detroit schools and communities. Together, the youth organizers and adult allies of these organizations are actively involved in the ecosystem that is the grassroots community in efforts to achieve intersectional social justice in Detroit and beyond. Both Youth Liberation Army and En Los Sueños provide insight, practices, and community knowledge for transformative PreK-12 education and teacher education programs. I will introduce them here and in depth within chapter three in order to introduce why I actively collaborate with both youth-centered grassroots organizations in the preparation of TCs in Detroit.

Youth Liberation Army

> Youth Liberation Army has continued to build into this school year. They are hosting movie nights, they are actively participating in and co-leading community events, such as the Climate Strike in September 2019, and they are facilitating school tours in order to recruit new members. In October 2019, Youth Liberation Army was invited to meet with Senator Bernie Sanders through their connection with Congresswoman Rashida Tlaib. Wearing their group t-shirts, Tia and Alaska were able to share in their work around educational justice and water justice within the City of Detroit. I was recently invited by Youth Liberation Army to be a member of their adult ally advisory board. I am really eager for this opportunity because it will provide me an additional outlet to support and collaborate with Youth Liberation Army. (Personal Reflective Journal, October 2019)

Youth Liberation Army is a grassroots community organization established, run by, and for marginalized youth in Metro Detroit. The organization was founded in the spring of 2018 when it grew organically out of the Detroit branch of March For Our Lives. Youth Liberation Army is a multi-racial and socio-economically diverse group of youth organizers who develop campaigns

and mobilize direct action in order to address the issues that most concern young people. Notably, the grassroots organization brings together young people from suburban, rural, and urban communities in Southeast Michigan in order to foster a far-reaching coalition of youth organizers. Since 2018, Youth Liberation Army has hosted a youth summit on the intersectionality of guns and violence, led a student strike on count day to protest inadequate and inequitable school conditions, and coordinated a water testing research project to advocate for water justice.

As Youth Liberation Army continues to evolve, they have come to identify as a school abolition organization. Grounded in the frameworks of Angela Davis, Grace Lee Boggs, David Stovall, Bettina Love, and adrienne maree brown, the grassroots organization advocates for youth liberation and the abolishment of the oppressive schooling system. Youth Liberation Army fosters school abolition through Emergent Pedagogy, which demands education that is rooted in: (1) consent/pleasure/curiosity, (2) non-compliance, (3) centering marginalized voices, (4) non-hierarchical relations, and (5) dynamic opportunities for everyone (Cuneo, Forthcoming). In the summer of 2019, the youth-led grassroots organization presented the praxis of Emergent Pedagogy at the national and liberatory Free Minds Free People Conference. In a classroom with standing room only, organizers from Youth Liberation Army discussed what school abolition looks like and where they believe school abolition will take their work moving forward.

En Los Sueños

> I have continued collaborating with Harry, Allison, and Blue on developing the mission and vision of En Los Sueños with our comrades on the core team. We are engaged in the process of praxis in order to be sure that we are being intentional and thoughtful in our strategic planning for the growth and future of En Los Sueños. One key component that Harry and I are focusing upon is the delicate balance of being co-conspirators with youth organizers. How can we be supportive and affirming advocates, while also being teachers and learners? This is something that we are learning through the work of En Los Sueños, especially as we collaborate with Allison and Blue in the development of our Community Action Research and Youth Organizing Committees. (Personal Reflective Journal, July 2019)

En Los Sueños is a coalition of students, educators, families, and community members who advocate and organize for immigration justice as a direct component of education justice. In the fall of 2017, the idea for En Los Sueños was born through an e-mail thread between classroom teachers concerned about the detrimental impact of the Trump presidential administration upon immigrant, refugee, and undocumented students and families. In order to bring together students, educators, families, and community members into the conversation, En Los Sueños facilitated teach-ins on immigration justice within education and attended marches and rallies in support of immigration justice throughout the spring and summer of 2018. Recognizing the urgency of their work, En Los Sueños began hosting monthly potlucks at local community sites during the 2018-2019 school year in order to build relationships, facilitate trainings, and engage intergenerational stakeholders in the work of immigration justice.

Through generative strategic planning, En Los Sueños continues to build upon its original mission through the establishment of the School Culture, Youth Organizing, and Community Action Research Committees. In the 2019-2020 school year, the School Culture Committee is supporting classroom teachers in the development of culturally relevant curriculum for immigrant, undocumented, and refugee students. In addition, the Youth Organizing Committee is collaborating with the Community Action Research Committee in order to develop a youth-centered campaign advocating for sanctuary school districts in Detroit. Significantly, the various initiatives of En Los Sueños' committees aim to bring together young people and their adult allies for more inclusive, humanizing, and loving schools and communities. Such intergenerational collaboration is at the foundation of En Los Sueños and has garnered the support of immigration justice organizations, elected officials, teachers' unions, and families throughout Detroit and the state of Michigan.

My Own Positionality

During our small group discussion, I had teacher candidates debrief about their visit with youth organizers from Youth Liberation Army. As I walked around the room, I heard that my students were inspired and impressed by the work of the youth organizers. They were also making direct connections to community-based and culturally sustaining pedagogies for teaching and learning in the social studies. However, some of the students were struggling with Youth Liberation Army's push back on harmful adults and teachers, especially White adults and teachers. Some students questioned if Youth Liberation Army was missing ways to collaborate with adults and teachers by their approach. They also questioned if they could take the learning experience from Youth Liberation Army and apply that specifically to the elementary classroom. These questions mirror my own and they are also questions that I am puzzling through in my work with youth organizers from Youth Liberation Army and En Los Sueños. I expressed the messiness and complicated process of collaborating with young people in order to challenge existing oppressive structures. I encouraged my teacher candidates to focus upon what the youth organizers were expressing at the core and where that may be coming from. More specifically, I prompted my teacher candidates to hear the message of love, collaboration, and partnership behind the work of Youth Liberation Army as they work to disrupt the pain and harm that has been perpetuated upon them by adults and teachers in the past and present. In this moment, I was grateful for the work of Carla Shalaby because *Troublemakers: Lessons in Freedom From Young Children in School* (2017) provided me the language I so desperately needed in supporting my teacher candidates. This also deeply connected to the work of Bettina Love on abolitionist teaching in *We Want To Do More Than Survive: Abolitionist Teaching and the Pursuit of Educational Freedom* (2019), which also provided me the language I needed to reflect with teacher candidates. We are all uncomfortable and struggling together as we reimagine an education system that we have yet to experience and see. (Personal Field Journal, June 2019)

There is a sense of great urgency in the transformative preparation of critically conscious and socio-culturally aware educators within the current era of public education. 51% of today's PreK-12 students in the United States are non-white, while nearly 80% of today's classroom teachers are white (Geiger, 2018). Frequently, classroom teachers in the United States do not represent or come from the same communities as the students that they teach (Banks, Cochran-Smith, Moll, Richert, Zeichner, LePage, Darling-Hammond, & Duffy, 2005; Sleeter, 2008; Staples, 2010). In Michigan, an overwhelming 91% of the teaching force is white (Stackhouse, 2018), while schools in Detroit specifically are comprised of predominantly African American students (Michigan Department of Education, 2018). Significantly, today's problematic and

disproportionate teaching force represents my own identity, along with many of the TCs in my College of Education, and this is where I locate myself – a white female teacher educator-scholar-community organizer – within the research project.

I grew up in Grand Rapids on the west side of Michigan. My friends and I jokingly called our hometown "The Bubble", somewhat aware that we were living a privileged existence that we did not have the knowledge or capability to explain at the time. My hometown is not diverse by any means and it thrives upon the foundations of the individualistic American Dream. After all, my side of the mitten state is the birthplace of Betsy DeVos' theocratic and libertarian epistemology. It was not until my undergraduate and teacher preparation courses at Michigan State University that I began to understand white privilege and systemic oppression. I went through the usual emotions of white fragility (DiAngelo, 2011) before I began to see the ways in which race, class, and gender intersected with great impact in our world and, more specifically, the education system. My year-long student teaching internship allowed me to see the pervasiveness of whiteness and how education may enforce or dismantle such a supremacist system. Still, it took the death of an unarmed teenage Black boy for me to truly begin the development of my critical consciousness necessary for teaching and learning.

Trayvon Martin's murder on February 26, 2012 altered the course of my life. At the time, I was teaching social studies at a PreK-8 Catholic school in a predominantly white and affluent suburb of Metro Detroit. Current events were a focal point of our curriculum in order for my middle school students to connect their world to our subject matter. Being so, my students raised questions about Trayvon and his murder. They wondered about why he was killed, they were critical about how Trayvon was perceived in the media, and they even questioned racially biased comments about Trayvon coming from adults in their own lives. It was during this period of questions with

my inquisitive students that my curriculum began to slowly shift, and my vocational path followed after.

In the following school year, I was teaching at a Detroit charter school. My students were 100% Black and my school serviced nearly 100% of the student body with Free and Reduced Lunch. Compared to the privilege I experienced in my previous teaching position, I was aghast at the classroom sizes, lack of resources, and asinine requirements of the board of directors at my new school. During the first months in my new position, I felt myself floundering and ill prepared to teach my new students. I knew in my mind and heart that I was struggling to connect with my students because I was not centering their identities, strengths, interests, knowledge, and communities to the social studies curriculum. Previously, this connection had come easy to me as a white female teacher with predominantly white students. Yet, in my new environment, I was faced with the reckoning that I did not know culturally relevant, or even culturally sustaining, teaching for classrooms that were comprised of all Black ninth-grade students.

During that school year, I was fortunate enough to be earning my Master of Arts in Teaching and Curriculum with a focus on Socio-Cultural Perspectives in Teaching and Learning at Michigan State University. Unlike my teacher preparation courses, I was direct in my purpose with earning my masters. I desired to know how social, cultural, and historical factors interconnected within the education system. With this focus, my master's courses helped me to see the world more clearly. Coupled with teaching social studies in Detroit, my students and my master's program encouraged me to develop what Paulo Freire calls *conscientização*, which "refers to learning to perceive social, political, and economic contradictions, and to take action against the oppressive elements of reality" (Freire, 2000). It was during this moment in time that I learned education is not neutral and it holds the power to either suppress or liberate both educators

and learners. This encouraged me to critically think and engage in collaborative learning with my students, which influenced how, what, and why I taught. Through student-centered and place-conscious learning experiences, I began to fumble my way through the understanding and development of a culturally relevant teaching praxis.

Learning to Fly

It took teaching adult women at a Detroit-based adult education organization for me to conceptualize and actualize community-based pedagogy. At this organization, I taught social studies for intergenerational and multicultural women who were earning their GED. I also worked as an education technology consultant and social studies curriculum developer while at the adult education organization. It was my adult female students who taught me that we are all interconnected and that I am nothing without community. Ranging in age from nineteen to fifty-seven, I taught students from all over the world - Yemen, Cameroon, Algeria, Jordan, Venezuela, Egypt, and Mexico – as well as those who were born and raised in Detroit. My students were single mothers working endless hours, matriarchs and caretakers of their families, first generation immigrants or refugees, or even push outs who had previously been abandoned by the schooling system. Although vastly different human beings, my students and I co-created a loving, caring, and nurturing community of learners. It was at this adult education organization that I learned how to cultivate a purposeful, responsive, and accommodating curriculum that supported my students to succeed. While a complicated, assimilative, and standardized process, my students passed the social studies GED tests at skyrocketing rates. They evidenced the power of a relevant curriculum and empowering pedagogy. Most importantly, it was my adult female students that encouraged me to apply for and begin my PhD program, which is why this action research project and all future work is dedicated to them.

As noted in the dedication and within this chapter, my time as an adult educator greatly influenced my path forward as a teacher educator-scholar-community organizer. Being so, I will take a moment to particularly elaborate upon the ways I grew as a critically conscious and anti-racist educator while teaching adult female students who were earning their GED. While teaching at the adult education organization in Detroit, I had space to grapple with my responsibility as a white female working toward intersectional social justice in collaboration with my students, almost all of whom were Black, Indigenous, and women of color. In addition, I was often the same age as or younger than many of my students at the adult education organization, which introduced me to the complexities of cultivating egalitarian learning communities with students from a variety of racial, socio-economic, and cultural backgrounds. While teaching at the adult education organization, the Flint Water Crisis was breaking news on local and national media outlets, some of my students had recently escaped the war in Yemen and were refugees, and other students were living as undocumented matriarchs within local Detroit communities. I decided that my curriculum and pedagogy had to respond, as well as my own critical consciousness and socio-cultural awareness, to the real-world issues impacting my students' everyday lives. In turn, I learned how curating community-based teaching and learning experiences alongside your students is deeply personal and political.

For example, I began to understand how to navigate spaces in which my students had internalized hegemonic and individualistic values or understandings, which caused some students to first blame the elected officials of Flint, Michigan for the water crisis rather than the austerity policies and corporate agendas of the State. Through a critical civic curriculum agenda, I guided students in (re)learning these misunderstandings and prompted them to challenge oppressive notions of citizenship, economy, and government that they had been mis-led to believe as

inherently patriotic. In another instance, some of my students would receive breaking news from family who were still living in Yemen during class. I remember a distinct moment when a student raised her hand, told me that her family's home was being bombed, and that she had to leave class in order to attempt contacting her siblings that were still living in Yemen. As the educator, I quickly adapted for the student, in addition to advocating for trauma-informed accommodations that she and other students so urgently needed with other teachers and staff at the adult education organization. Furthermore, I was sure to connect the war in Yemen to our social studies curriculum through a caring and critically conscious approach. In turn, I guided students through critical inquiry and analysis of the war in Yemen as they gained knowledge and insight about the United States' role in the genocide of Yemeni people.

These learning experiences were juxtaposed to the GED social studies curriculum, as it often elevates a dominant narrative over multicultural voices and experiences, in order to provide my students the critical skills and self-efficacy necessary to both read and write the world (Freire, 1985). To further illustrate my experiences at the adult education organization, many of my students were undocumented and, in turn, were disenchanted by various local, state, and national election cycles. As an educator, I knew that I had a responsibility to inform my students about the agency, rights, and dignity they are inherently guaranteed in order to support them in understanding their crucial role in elections, regardless of documentation status. As such, I introduced my students to United We Dream, a nation-wide immigration justice grassroots organization, in order for them to visualize and understand how they could participate in the 2016 election cycle.

These three instances demonstrate my passion for not only my students and social studies education, but also my passion for intersectional social justice within and through education.

Meaningfully, my students at the adult education organization challenged me to learn how to navigate spaces as a white female educator in responsible ways in order for my students to grow as community members. Furthermore, the adult education organization prompted me to understand and enact community-based pedagogical and curricular practices from a place of strength as I utilized my skills, knowledge, and expertise as a professionally certified educator to enhance the learning experiences and critical consciousness growth of my students. However, the adult education organization deeply humbled me as I learned the necessity of learning from and with my students who stemmed from lived experiences greatly different than my own. Due to this humility and eagerness to learn, I earned respect and trust from my students. In turn, my students were often open to the critical, place-conscious, and culturally sustaining focus of our social studies curriculum because they had seen and understood that I had their best interests at heart. Furthermore, I frequently utilized my positionality as a professional educator to advocate for the holistic well-being of my students with other teachers and staff in order to support them in their growth as women, students, and community members.

To be transparent, I was considering leaving the teaching profession before my time at the adult education organization. I had become disenchanted, disappointed, and dismayed as I witnessed the ways in which the PreK-12 schooling system perpetuated harm upon children, young people, educators, and communities. I wondered if I would be complicit to the toxicity I both observed and experienced if I stayed in the profession. At the adult education organization, I began to both heal and reimagine my role as an educator as I grounded my everyday teaching and learning in the relations I had with my students and my developing sense of belonging with Detroit communities (hooks, 2009). As my students quite literally breathed life back into me, I was invigorated as a classroom social studies teacher and community member. Our curriculum, as

discussed in this chapter, became dynamic and responsive to my students' multilingual and multicultural identities. We also rooted the curriculum in the context of current events, in addition to the questions, needs, concerns, and desires that my students had about and for the world at large. Through this process, I was prompted to grow in my critical consciousness and develop a sense of agency as my heart and mind responded to the students in my classroom.

As the curricular and pedagogical practices of our social studies classroom became more purposeful and meaningful, we forged a collaborative and experiential community of practice (Wenger, 1998). In turn, there were days where I felt like my students and I were flying. Although we immersed ourselves in challenging topics and difficult conversations, my students and I found joy as we shared in community-based teaching and learning together. Through this transformative time, I began to understand the deeply personal and political work of teaching as I actualized a classroom community that reimagined the aim and scope of social studies education (Freire, 1970). It was exhausting and taxing for my students and I to read the word in order to read the world (Freire, 1985). Yet, the holistic growth and academic achievement of my students within the social studies class spoke to the necessity of educators, such as myself, deeply embodying a radically loving and community-based teaching praxis.

Throughout my career as a classroom teacher and teacher educator, I have found many practitioners like myself who learned community-based pedagogy only after our teacher preparation and once we began our work in the classroom. I do believe that time is a great teacher and that much of our teaching practices are learned over the years. However, I do know that we are doing classroom students a disservice when we are not preparing TCs to be place-conscious, critical, responsive, justice-oriented, and anti-racist community-based educators (Love, 2019). Quite honestly, I know from experience that we perpetuate systems of oppression upon our

students when we enter into classrooms only ready to teach white middle class ways of being and forms of knowledge (Ladson-Billings, 1998). If we are to achieve a more loving and transformative future, we must implement community-based pedagogy within teacher education programs in order for TCs to actively learn how to teach alongside young people and local community members living for change.

Within this context, the lessons learned and experiences gained from my time as a social studies teacher with the adult education organization informed my understanding of being an anti-racist teacher educator-scholar-community organizer, which I will elaborate upon further in the methodology and implications chapters (Rembert, Harris, & Hamilton, 2019). It is my intent that the work of community-based pedagogy and methodology offered within this research project contributes to the decentering of whiteness, white supremacy, and white privilege from teacher education, PreK-12 classrooms, and community spaces (Ladson-Billings, 2001; Picower & Kohli, 2017). Furthermore, it is my objective that the findings, discussion, and implications of this research project encourage the curation of critical and justice-oriented educational spaces in which white teacher educators, classroom teachers, TCs, and community organizers participate in urgent and present-day issues (Ladson-Billings, 2017; Shear, Tschida, Bellows, Buchanan, & Saylor, 2018) in solidarity with vulnerable and marginalized students and communities. Thus, I continue to engage in Cheryl Matias' call for: "White teachers [to] 'check' themselves before they wreck themselves and our urban students of color" (2013). In turn, we may collaborate in the nuanced and complicated, yet necessary work of realizing education as the practice of freedom and ultimately for collective liberation (Petty, 2018).

Purposefully, it is my ambition as a teacher educator to support and guide TCs toward flying with their classroom students as I learned how to do while teaching at the adult education

organization. As such, I am vulnerable and open with TCs about the joy of teaching through relationships and community. However, I am also honest with TCs that they must learn the necessity of listening to their students with humility in order to develop their own critical consciousness and the understanding that their well-being is directly connected to the well-being of their students. While TCs typically know up front that teaching is a challenging career, they begin to understand through our collaborative learning experiences why and how the profession of teaching is deeply personal and political work, which must be in solidarity with students and communities. Oftentimes, my praxis as a teacher educator runs against the grain to many TCs' expectations and desires as future educators, but I consistently remain steadfast in my belief that TCs must learn to fly with their students before they become certified classroom teachers. Through this process, I hope that TCs gain strength and grounding for the days ahead in which they will need to fight alongside their students in the struggle for intersectional social justice. Furthermore, I believe that once TCs learn to fly with their students, as I have done as a classroom teacher and teacher educator, they will begin to understand that teaching is for the betterment of the common good, which requires a personally political commitment to curate learning communities in which students and educators may become agents of change.

By introducing TCs to community-based pedagogy, they may begin to conceptualize how to build relationships with their students and establish a sense of belonging within the communities they will teach. Through this process, it is my desire to guide TCs toward the feeling of flying as they reimagine education as radically loving, participatory, democratic, and egalitarian. It has now become one of the greatest joys of my life to witness TCs fly with their peers in methods courses or with their students in classroom field placements. In these moments, TCs will express how they now understand what I was talking about all semester and they cannot see themselves going back

to teaching through conventional traditions. It is my hope that TCs will continue to chase that feeling of joy as they fly with their students through the life-long journey of learning for collective liberation. I know many of my former, current, and future TCs will be challenged by the PreK-12 schooling system, just as I was and continue to be, yet I have confidence that they will remember the joy of being in solidarity with students and communities, which is a testament to the radical possibilities of the teaching profession. In turn, their vocation as educators will be a gift to themselves, their students, and our shared futures.

Within this milieu, I persistently maneuver the tension between being an educator and having "teacher expertise" within a variety of educational and community settings (Lowenstein, 2010). As a former classroom teacher and current teacher educator-scholar-community organizer, my desires to develop justice-oriented and community-based educational spaces have sometimes run contradictory to how some former and current students have come to understand relations of power within the United States schooling system. As such, I consistently navigate what I believe to be my responsibility as a critically conscious and anti-racist white female and the potentiality that I am asserting my own ambitions above those of my students in efforts to share power with them. Lowenstein (2010) describes this as navigating "perennial teaching tensions" in which decisions about the ways we teach are "dynamic and contextualized" (p. 34) and become the "work of teaching" (p. 34).

Thus, my own positionality prompts me to determinedly engage in critical reflexive processes in order to problematize how my use of critical pedagogical and curricular frameworks either enhance or compromise the critical consciousness growth of varying demographics of students within educational spaces (Barnes, 2017). In turn, tenuous questions remain as I aim to cultivate humanizing, culturally sustaining, and place-conscious classroom communities amongst

diverse student populations: Am I further suppressing student voice? Am I privileging perspectives over others? Is this actually an egalitarian learning community? Am I elevating specific multicultural experiences above others? Should I be the one teaching in these contexts? Am I (re)producing the trauma experienced by some of my students? Is this really an empowering critical pedagogy (Ellsworth, 1992)?

Community-Based Teacher Educators

I maintain that TCs have the opportunity to grow in their critical consciousness before they enter the classroom as future educators through community-based methods courses and field experiences within teacher education programs (Freire, 1974; hooks, 2010). For these exact reasons, I collaborate with Youth Liberation Army and En Los Sueños in the social studies methods course I facilitate as a teacher educator. The TCs I mentor, coach, and instruct are developing their teaching practice within predominantly low-income African American, Latinx, and Arab American communities throughout Detroit and Metro Detroit. In turn, it is significant that TCs conceptualize liberatory forms of learning that seek to sustain and support students who are marginalized within the United States schooling system (Paris & Alim, 2014). Such preparatory learning opportunities guide TCs in their ability to eradicate systems of oppression within education in order to (re)center the strengths and needs of not only their students, but also themselves and their shared communities (hooks, 2003; Yosso, 2015).

As a current teacher educator-scholar-community organizer, I am deeply interested in cultivating community-based teacher education programs in order to provide future teachers the opportunity to learn place-conscious and culturally sustaining pedagogies for the multicultural and multilingual learners they will teach. This holistic partnership between the local community and university creates the opportunity to develop inclusive learning spaces in which students find

meaning and relevancy in education. I have presented on this topic at higher education conferences and I have conducted qualitative research projects as the Principal Investigator, which has resulted in published peer-reviewed manuscripts. In addition, this specific research project examines the impact of designing and implementing a teacher education course with intergenerational community partners. In particular, the specific analysis and discussion of this research project will focus upon two adult ally trainings facilitated by youth organizers from Youth Liberation Army and En Los Sueños. As such, I am actively collaborating with those most directly impacted by harmful and oppressive schooling systems as we work together for transformative PreK-12 education and teacher education programs.

Through my role as a teacher educator, I have the opportunity to support TCs as they develop community-based pedagogical practices for place-conscious and student-centered classrooms. Feedback from TCs has demonstrated that the learning experiences within these methods courses and field placements are instrumental in their growth as critically conscious educators who view the classroom as a space to realize social justice. Furthermore, insight from community partners has highlighted their willingness and excitement to participate in relevant and meaningful learning experiences within teacher education. Even so, my scholarship pertaining to community-based teacher education acknowledges the barriers that prevent the effectiveness and sustainability of such transformative practices. In turn, the findings of this research project will engage in a thorough discussion about the complexity of community-based teacher education and implications for teacher education programs who aim to collaborate with intergenerational community partners.

As a community-based teacher educator and scholar, I am an active member of Detroit-based grassroots community organizations where I contribute to the development of people-

powered publications and reform initiatives in local schools and communities. I collaborate with the internationally recognized We The People of Detroit Community Research Collective, which is a community-rooted and directed collective of academics, researchers, community organizers, and designers who document and disseminate research on pertinent issues in Detroit. The publications of the collective continue to influence legislation, policy reform, and public health initiatives in Detroit and other cities. In addition, I provide critical qualitative research methodology consultation to a film team developing a documentary on the current Detroit-based literacy lawsuit, *Gary B. v. Snyder*, with national educational justice implications. The documentary is being curated alongside Detroit community members in order for the film to be a tool toward place-conscious social change.

It is important to reiterate that I am a co-founder of En Los Sueños and I am a member of Youth Liberation Army's adult ally advisory board. As I will discuss in chapter three, I consider my relationships to the participants, particularly the youth organizers and adult allies, a strength and opportunity of this research project (Kinloch & San Pedro, 2014). By being in relation with one another, I approach scholarship through a humanizing and loving framework in order to work toward intersectional social justice alongside the participants (Blackburn, 2014). In turn, I am guided by Ariana Mangual Figueroa's (2014) generative reflections: "We might ask, have we acknowledged and fulfilled our responsibility to the communities who have welcomed us? Have we – in both our own opinion and the opinion of participants – fulfilled the commitments we made at the beginning of our study?" (p. 129).

My relationship to and participation in both of these youth-centered grassroots organizations has influenced my practice as a community-based teacher educator-scholar-community organizer. As such, it is my ongoing intention to support En Los Sueños and Youth

Liberation Army in developing meaningful and relevant uses for the findings and implications of this action research project in order to enhance their work as social change agents within schools and communities. Additionally, I am committed to sharing in this research project with TCs, teacher educators, elected officials, policymakers, classroom teachers, and community organizers in order to be accountable to the youth organizer and adult ally participants (Winn, 2014). Such endeavors disrupt oppressive academic barriers in order to foster reciprocal knowledge production for all those living for change in Detroit and beyond.

Overview of Chapters

Through critical qualitative action research, I engage in dynamic collaborations with young people, classroom teachers, and community members in the design and implementation of community-based practices within teacher education programs. This process enhances TCs' understanding and use of community-based pedagogy while supporting youth organizers in their social justice work within schools and communities. In turn, by analyzing the process of connecting youth organizers and TCs through critical dialogue and reflection within a social studies methods course, this critical qualitative action research project will provide implications for teacher educators who are seeking to foster collaborative partnerships with youth-centered community organizations and intergenerational community members for transformative social change. In addition, I aim to contribute to the already indicated shortage in the literature that focuses upon youth-centered voices and experiences within teacher education programs. To achieve this, the chapters invite the reader to join youth organizers, adult allies, and TCs in dialogue and reflection as they grow in knowledge, critical consciousness, and aptitude of community-based pedagogy for more shared and loving futures.

Chapter two begins with a question from civil rights and social movement leader, Ella Baker: "Now, who are your people?" (Ransby, 2003, p. 13). It is with this question that I detail the theoretical framework of community-based pedagogy within grassroots communities, PreK-12 classrooms, and teacher education programs. I begin by expanding upon the definitions of community, grassroots communities, and community organizing in order to provide the reader with a nuanced understanding of what I really mean when I use the word *community*. Within this chapter, I intentionally situate how children and young people, alongside adult allies, utilize community-based teaching and learning strategies within social justice initiatives. Purposefully, I discuss how culturally sustaining pedagogy, as developed by Django Paris and H. Samy Alim (2014; 2017), is embedded within the community-based pedagogical practices utilized within this research project. Through this lens, I provide empirical examples of community-based pedagogy within PreK-12 classrooms and teacher education programs in order to document resistance to systemically oppressive forces that directly harm children and young people. Chapter two closes with suggestions to push community-based pedagogy forward and the ways in which this research project informs such generative ideas.

The purposeful thread of community continues into chapter three which outlines the use of critical qualitative action research informed by participatory and community-based methodologies. The methodology of participatory and community-based action research described in chapter three is informed by my ongoing collaboration with We The People of Detroit's Community Research Collective. Founded in 2008, We The People of Detroit is a grassroots community organization actively engaged in community action research projects related to land, water, and education justice in Detroit and beyond. Due to my experiences with We The People of Detroit, I am realistic about the complexity of engaging in a critical qualitative action research project with

intergenerational community members and TCs. Furthermore, I am honest about my role as a participant-observer within the research project in order to discuss the importance of relationships and accountability between teacher education programs and local communities. Chapter three continues by describing the settings, participants, the three distinct phases of the data collection process, and the analysis of the data sources of the research project. Significantly, I discuss how the process of praxis – reflection and dialogue for transformative action – alongside participants informed the findings and implications of the research project (Freire, 1970).

Following the groundwork of theory and method, chapter four presents the findings of the action research project based upon the analysis of three distinct phases of data collection sources. Chapter four will engage youth organizer, TC, and adult ally participants in dialogue with one another as they reflect upon the social studies methods course and, more specifically, the adult ally trainings in order to analyze three over-arching findings: (1) youth organizers as impassioned disruptors in teacher education, (2) youth organizers as realistic visionaries for social change, and (3) youth organizers as reflective learners through praxis. By centering and amplifying the voices and perspectives of the participants from the action research project, the findings will convey how youth organizers, TCs, and adult allies grew in critical consciousness and social awareness. In addition, chapter four will examine the findings through the critical theoretical framework of community-based pedagogy in order to reimagine education as a method to challenge systemic oppression and cultivate intersectional social justice. To this end, the findings will convey the complexities of fostering community-based pedagogy within the realities of teacher education programs, PreK-12 classrooms, and grassroots community spaces. In this way, chapter four will depict the possibilities, contradictions, and limitations of youth organizers as essential partners in teacher education, which will be discussed at length within chapters five and six.

The findings of the research project highlight the complex realities regarding the role of youth organizers as essential partners in teacher education. In turn, chapter five will discuss the possibilities, contradictions, and limitations of curating a social studies methods course informed by Youth Liberation Army and En Los Sueños. In particular, chapter five will examine how the design and facilitation of the adult ally trainings influenced the capacity of youth organizers, TCs, and adult allies to reimagine education for transformative social change within PreK-12 classrooms and local communities. Additionally, in connection to course assignments and further community engaged learning experiences, chapter five will question how, if at all, the social studies methods course and the adult ally trainings raised the critical consciousness and self-efficacy of TCs for community-based pedagogical and curricular practices within PreK-12 classrooms. Through the continuous process of praxis, chapter five will examine various data sources from the participants in order to acknowledge and consider the complexity of intergenerational learning experiences within a community-based social studies methods course. Situated within our current socio-political context, chapter five will point to the potential of learning from the possibilities, contradictions, and limitations of this action research project to realize education as the practice of freedom.

In closing, chapter six will begin with reflections about the role of adult allyship in regard to this action research project, as well as teaching and learning within PreK-12 classrooms and teacher education programs. Purposefully, I will provide examples of former TCs enacting community-based pedagogical and curricular practices within classroom field placements in order to demonstrate how and where the work is being done. Chapter six will proceed by outlining five areas of growth for those of us who educate TCs in order for youth organizers to become essential partners in teacher education programs through community-based practices: (1) invite youth

organizers and PreK-12 students to the decision making table, (2) establish trustworthy and reciprocal relationships with grassroots community organizations and intergenerational community members, (3) implement program-wide opportunities for TCs to learn and practice community-based pedagogy, (4) engage in community-based action research projects that are informed by and benefit local classrooms and communities, (5) further the research, analysis, and discussion of community-based teacher education in a variety of contexts, (6) foster teacher education programs as co-liberators through the practice of anti-racism, and (7) advocate for community-based policy reforms and legislation. Chapter six will recommend immediate and long-term strategies for the development of community-based teacher education through youth-centered and intergenerational collaborations. Such recommendations are not "best practices" or "reforms", but suggestions for how we may collectively realize intersectional social justice through education. Such reciprocal and accountable partnerships alongside PreK-12 students, classroom teachers, community members, and grassroots community organizations encourage teacher educators to participate in community-based initiatives that enact a liberatory and humanizing imaginary for a renewed education system. In turn, chapter six will conclude by advocating for the fruition of community-based teacher education in order for human beings of all ages to live for change within schools and communities.

CHAPTER TWO: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Now, who are your people? (Ella Baker as cited in Ransby, 2003, p. 13)

In order for us as poor and oppressed people to become a part of a society that is meaningful, the system under which we now exist has to be radically changed. This means that we are going to have to learn to think in radical terms. I use the term radical in its original meaning – getting down to and understanding the root cause. It means facing a system that does not lend itself to your needs and devising means by which you change that system. (Ella Baker as cited in Ransby, 2003, p. 1)

The Necessity of Community-Based Pedagogy

For youth organizers in Detroit, involvement in social justice causes are urgent and necessary. In particular, the young people of Youth Liberation Army and En Los Sueños view their involvement in local grassroots community organizations as a strategy to disrupt the perpetuation of harmful and oppressive systems within schools and communities. Through a variety of youth-centered campaigns and initiatives, Youth Liberation Army and En Los Sueños (re)center their voices and lived experiences in order to advocate for educational spaces that are humanizing and liberatory. In collaboration with their adult allies, youth organizers in Youth Liberation Army and En Los Sueños model community-based pedagogical and curricular practices in order to reimagine the classroom as a space to collaborate for transformative social change. Such efforts are extraordinary amidst the toxic and harsh realities children and young people, particularly Black, Indigenous, and students of color, experience every day within the United States PreK-12 schooling system.

For example, an ongoing crisis looms as communities and classrooms are disjointed through corporate education reforms and feigned "renewal" plans in urban city centers (Callejo, Breault, & White, 2014). Such crises have drastic impacts on children and young people as they also face the onslaught of high stakes standardized testing, oppressive dress codes, scripted curriculum practices, and excessive discipline policies. Furthermore, the continuation of school

closures and the privatization of public schools, as well as public spaces, have eroded a sense of belonging in neighborhoods and classrooms (Lipman, 2011). The identities of public schools and communities are actively being replaced and reshaped by corporate ventures and austerity practices, which push out long-term Black, Indigenous, and residents of color in city-centers like Detroit (Clement & Kanai, 2015; Pedroni, 2011).

Furthermore, within the current socio-political context, hate crimes are excessively perpetuated within classrooms and public spaces due to the relenting xenophobia and racism of the Trump presidential administration (Dillard, 2018). The authority of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and Customs and Border Patrol (CBP) have been strengthened in order to separate immigrant, refugee, and undocumented families, which impacts the socio-emotional health of students in vulnerable communities (Dreby, 2015). Additionally, environmental racism plagues predominantly African American cities like Detroit who live with disproportionate public health dangers as compared to more affluent and white Metro Detroit suburbs. Incinerators, hazardous waste facilities, air pollutants, and contaminated drinking water have increased asthma and learning disabilities among Detroit's children and young people, which can also be seen in predominantly Black, Indigenous, and communities of color throughout the United States (Martusewicz, Edmundson, & Lupinacci, 2015).

These unjust circumstances are innumerable, daunting, and complex. Furthermore, these confounding realities are often woven together and amplify the weight of systemic oppression that Black, Indigenous and students of color face each day throughout the United States. Classroom teachers, teacher candidates (TCs), and teacher educators cannot ignore the impact such issues have upon children and young people in classrooms. However, current and future educators should not shield themselves from the inherent knowledge, language, and cultural heritage residing within

students and communities, which should be viewed as assets in the co-creation of humanizing and revitalizing education. While the legislated and mandated requirements placed upon educators are great, they should not mitigate the ability or the agency for the classroom curriculum and pedagogy to respond to the needs and strengths of students and their communities.

In Detroit and beyond, there are classroom teachers who are guiding students through critical learning experiences in order to nurture their ability to both read the word and read the world (Freire, 1985). Through my role as a teacher educator-scholar-community organizer, I have witnessed classroom teachers and TCs connect place-conscious and culturally relevant issues into cross-curricular PreK-12 curriculum. Within these classroom spaces, educators and students learn alongside each other in order to both understand social justice issues and strategically take action against forces of injustice. However, many of these educators are outliers in their school buildings as they implement transformative learning opportunities for classroom teaching and learning. Historically, the United States schooling system was not built for, nor does it encourage, humanizing and student-centered pedagogical and curricular practices. Additionally, many of the educators and students co-creating empowering learning communities must do so strategically in order to meet school district mandates and state policies. In this light, the pursuit of humanizing teaching and learning is necessary in order to work towards education as the practice of freedom.

If PreK-12 teachers and teacher educators acknowledge and affirm the voices and lived experiences of young people, the classroom may then become a space to foster community-based pedagogy. This is obviously no easy task and requires a paradigm shift in both teacher education and classroom teaching. In turn, radical hope and love must be the groundwork of engaging in such transformative work. Furthermore, critical, analytical, and realistic frameworks are essential when proposing community-based pedagogies for reimagining education. Thus, the following

questions will guide the reflexive process of this research project and facilitate the subsequent literature review pertaining to the critical theoretical framework of community-based pedagogy:

4. What implications does community-based pedagogy have for those of us who educate teacher candidates?

5. How does community-based pedagogy enhance or compromise the reimagination of the classroom as a space for young people and educators to collaborate for transformative social change?

6. In what ways does the praxis of action research engage the complexities of community-based pedagogy within the realities of PreK-12 classrooms and teacher education?

To respond to these questions, this research project will discuss the implications of youth organizers as essential partners in teacher education through the use of community-based pedagogy in a social studies methods course. As such, the following literature review will conceptualize community-based pedagogy in order to contend its purpose and use within a critical qualitative action research project. Notably, the community-based pedagogy discussed in this literature review (re)centers the voices and perspectives of young people who are both students and youth organizers in Detroit. While PreK-12 classroom teachers, community educators, and teacher educators are actively engaging in a variety of community-based pedagogical practices – place-based, ecojustice, community-engaged – the literature often minimizes or ignores the significance of collaboration between youth-led grassroots organizations and teacher education programs. Furthermore, much of the literature on community-based pedagogy does not adequately affirm and acknowledge the lived experiences of young people who are engaged in intergenerational collaborations for transformative social change in schools and communities (Lyiscott, Limarys, & Morrell, 2018; Rosen, 2019). In turn, this literature review will further the

critical development of community-based pedagogy in order to underscore the importance of designing, implementing, and analyzing learning experiences in teacher education alongside youth organizers living for change in their school communities.

The primary purpose of this chapter will be to detail the theoretical framework of community-based pedagogy in order to discuss the possibilities, contradictions, and limitations of place-conscious and student-centered learning opportunities within teacher education. I will begin by defining community in order to ground the reader in an understanding of grassroots communities and community organizing for social change. I will then provide a thorough overview of the literature on community-based pedagogy in order to outline the opportunities and challenges of its use within PreK-12 classrooms and teacher education. Purposefully, I will acknowledge how the social studies may be an interdisciplinary anchor for educators and students to cultivate community-based pedagogical and curricular practices. Importantly, I will discuss culturally sustaining pedagogy, as developed by Django Paris and H. Samy Alim, which deeply connects to the foundations of community-based pedagogy. Subsequently, I will recommend implications for community-based pedagogy within PreK-12 classrooms, the grassroots community, and teacher education programs. Finally, I will conclude by advocating for the use of community-based pedagogy as a method to work towards intersectional social justice within the current times.

Community

For the purposes of this literature review situated within a critical qualitative action research project, I define *community* as people and places in relation as they live for one another, for tomorrow, and for change (Boggs, 1998; Kimmerer, 2013; Shalaby, 2017). Community has the potential to be emergent, dynamic, and transformative in order to respond to the needs and concerns of the people and places that make up a community. In turn, community may resemble

praxis as it is rooted in dialogue, reflection, and purposeful action. Community contains the possibilities of belovedness as it encourages accountability and reciprocity toward one another in the past, present, and future. Community is oftentimes painful and challenging, but community may also be joyful and pleasurable because it mirrors everyday life. Community may be participatory, democratic, and egalitarian in practice, which means it is often discouraged and suppressed through the (re)production of systems of oppression within schools and communities. In this way, community as a radically humanizing vision nurtures intersectional social justice amongst the shared futurity of people and places. Importantly, this definition does not aim to romanticize the practice and curation of community, but rather acknowledge and affirm community as a constellation of possibilities (Davis, 2003).

Educators and students often use the word community to describe meaningful and empowering classrooms, relationships, and neighborhoods (Boggs, 1998). Community is a shared sense of belonging within a particular place or period of time (Block, 2008). In *Community: The Structure of Belonging*, Peter Block outlines how *community members* are capable of generating "a structure of belonging" in order to eradicate isolation in everyday lives and vocations (2008). Through the creation of a shared community, members are held accountable to one another to achieve both a present and future that serves the common good. Block notes that a sustainable community takes time and effort to produce because of the various people, personalities, and purposes contributing to a shared structure of belonging.

Block argues that community encourages transformative social change as community members begin to center the needs of the common good in place of individual selves (2008). As authentic relationships are formed, the holistic well-being of the community is responsive to shared accountability and active citizenship begins to take shape. In this way, the community becomes a

dynamic place for community members to develop a shared humanity as they actively seek intersectional social justice. This requires members to practice citizenship as they develop an asset-mindset of the community in order to locate possibilities for transformative social change (Block, 2008). Through this process, members of a community are not problems to be solved, but rather the bearers of solutions to eradicate intersecting systems of oppression.

adrienne maree brown describes the process of developing social transformation through community as an "emergent strategy" (2017). A student and friend of Grace Lee Boggs, brown advocates for interconnected community that cultivates social transformation through mindful, dynamic, and intentional practices. brown elucidates: "Emergent strategies are ways for humans to practice complexity and grow the future through relatively simple interactions" (2017). In this way, emergent strategies are both personal and community methods to achieve individual and societal transformation. brown builds upon the legacy of Boggs by encouraging intergenerational community members to embrace the constant rebuilding, redefining, and respiriting of community organizing and movement building (Boggs, 1998). Significantly, the practice of emergent strategy conceptualized in the work of brown and Boggs is central to many grassroots community organizations in Detroit who actively collaborate together for intersectional social justice initiatives.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. proliferated the theory and implementation of "Beloved Community" throughout his leadership in the Black Freedom Movement. For King, Beloved Community was a method for people to develop critical consciousness and work in nonviolent community to eradicate poverty, hunger, and homelessness (The King Center, 2018). King advocated for an end to the Triple Evils of poverty, racism, and militarism through the six steps of nonviolent social change: (1) information gathering, (2) education, (3) personal commitment, (4)

discussion/negotiation, (5) direct action, and (6) reconciliation (King, 2000). At the core of King's concept of community was love, which would foster the ability for interconnected human beings to work toward social justice. Significantly, King's description and use of Beloved Community is rooted in *agape* love, which he described in a sermon at the Detroit Council of Churches' Lenten services in 1961:

> Then the Greek language has another word. It calls it *agape*. *Agape* is more than romantic love. *Agape* is more than friendship. *Agape* is understanding, redemptive goodwill for all men. *Agape* is an overflowing love, a spontaneous love, which seeks nothing in return. And theologians would say that is the love of God operating in the human heart. When you rise to love on this level you love all men, not because you like them, not because their ways appeal to you, not because they are worthful to you, but you love all men because God loves them. And you rise to the noble heights of loving the person who does the evil deed while hating the deed that the person does.

Groundbreaking critical pedagogues like Paulo Freire and bell hooks connect the concept of intentional and purposeful community to education. Within this frame, educational communities are spaces for transformative social change at the local level and beyond. Through a place-conscious critical pedagogy, people of all ages are both teachers and learners in order to shift systems of power within knowledge making. The critical conceptual frameworks of Freire and hooks assert the necessity of critical thinking and collaborative dialogue in order to form generative learning communities (Freire, 1970; hooks, 1994). The legacy of Freire and hooks model the fortitude of critical frameworks and pedagogies in cultivating more humanizing learning opportunities both inside and outside the traditional classroom. (Freire, 1992; hooks, 2003). In particular, critical pedagogy supports teachers and students in grasping how oppressive systems of power compound and impact everyday experiences in the local community. In this way, learning experiences that utilize critical pedagogy galvanize community-based education that is purposeful for critical consciousness, or *conscientização*, and sustainable social change (Freire, 1974; hooks, 2003).

In *EcoJustice Education: Toward Diverse, Democratic, and Sustainable Communities*, Rebecca Martusewicz, Jeff Edmundson, and John Lupinacci discuss the importance of the *commons* within the concept of *EcoJustice*, which: "Allows us to recognize both the interactions between cultural and ecological systems, and the ways that certain practices, beliefs, and relationships are oriented toward the future security of both" (2015). The commons are not owned by anyone, they are easily accessible, and they are depended on by the public for community-based solutions, practices, knowledge, and identity. The commons are centered within EcoJustice, which connects social justice and ecological sustainability for the collaborative protection of shared futures (Martusewicz et al, 2015). Through an EcoJustice framework, accountable communities may cultivate a "Pedagogy of Responsibility", which "exists in the tension between two necessary ethical questions: What do we need to conserve, and what needs to be transformed?" (Martusewicz et al, 2015).

Linda Tuhiwai-Smith encourages a "reframing" of community by affirming and acknowledging Indigenous ways of being and forms of knowledge (2012). For centuries and into the present day, Indigenous peoples have been forced to conform to Western, capitalist, and heteronormative perceptions of the world. However, Tuhiwai-Smith argues that each Indigenous community has specific linguistic and cultural traditions that shape a shared sense of belonging going back millennia. In this way, Indigenous peoples reframe expectations for how communities collaborate to achieve transformative social change (Smith, 2012). In *Youth Resistance Research and Theories of Change*, Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang assert that communities employ various methods to achieve social justice, which may not align with everyone's way of being and knowing within the world (2014). Thus, the complexity of emergent strategies throughout various global communities does not ensure a "best practice" guide for transformative social change. By

recognizing Indigenous ways of being and knowing within understandings of community, educators and students may move toward place-conscious restoration, recognition, and meaningful coexistence in order to engage in the process of decolonizing schools and communities (Sabzalian, 2019).

In light of these frameworks, it becomes evident that community is social justice work and an active process of becoming. No matter where community is blossoming, it requires community members to be accountable, purposeful, and committed to one another. Furthermore, hope and love are deeply woven within community in order to encourage people and places to tenaciously achieve a shared future. Moreover, the concept of community calls to mind that the struggle for intersectional social justice is a life-long commitment and long-term endeavor through individual, relational, and community growth. As Jasmine Ulmer illuminates: "The underlying ecological principle is simple, yet important: when everything is interconnected, everything matters. More to the point: community matters. Actions do not occur in isolation, but have the potential to affect everyone, everywhere" (2018, p. 2).

Grassroots Community and Grassroots Community Organizing

By 2016, Detroit was home to over 172,000 trees and the city was actively working to restore the treescapes throughout neighborhoods (Bragg, 2016). At the turn of the 18th century, Territorial Judge Augustus Woodward collaborated with civil engineer Pierre Charles L'Enfant in the urban and landscape planning of Detroit. Upon the Indigenous land of the Peoria, Potawatomi, Miami, and Anishinabewaki peoples, Woodward and L'Enfant designed a new Detroit in order to establish its dominance in the West (Miles, 2017). While planted by European settlers, new trees joined other plants in the sacred, cultural, and ecological communities of Indigenous peoples in the Great Lakes region (Martusewicz, Edmundson, & Lupinacci, 2015). Overtime, these trees grew

and increased in number as enslaved African, Indigenous, and immigrant labor built the city of Detroit and rebuilt it again after the Great Fire of 1805 (Miles, 2017). Firmly rooted and multiplying, Detroit's trees witnessed enslaved Africans seeking freedom through the Underground Railroad that led to the Detroit River. Providing sustenance, these trees supported Asian, Arab, African, and Latinx American migrants in the development of cultural and familial communities throughout the 20th century. Today, Detroit's trees personify the resilience of its citizens who are firmly interconnected at the grassroots of a shared place (Arvin, Tuck, & Morrill, 2013).

Grassroots community and grassroots community organizing have different connotations and meanings dependent on one's context and background. For the purposes of this action research project, I ground my understanding of the grassroots community within the discussion of community in this literature review. I define *grassroots community* as a movement of people and organizations who address local, regional, national, and or/international social justice issues that most directly impact community members through egalitarian dialogue, decision-making, and action. In turn, *grassroots community organizing* brings together grassroots community members in collaborative campaigns, movements, and strategies to draw public attention to specific social justice issues. *Youth organizers* are young people, typically teenagers and young adults within the ages of 12-19, who engage in grassroots community organizing efforts. In turn, adults who are involved within grassroots communities alongside young people are *adult allies* through the use of community-based pedagogical practices. Specifically, I locate youth organizers engaged in grassroots community organizing through the frameworks of radical democratic pedagogy (Ransby, 2003), youth activism (Conner & Rosen, 2016; Ginwright, Noguera, & Cammarota, 2006) and youth resistance theories of change (Tuck & Yang, 2014). This narrow focus within the

literature review connects to Youth Liberation Army and En Los Sueños who are the two youth-centered grassroots organizations participating in this action research project.

Radical Democratic Pedagogy

Ella Baker was a prominent African American woman during the civil rights and Black Freedom movements. Through the empowering use of radical democratic pedagogy, Baker is one of the most influential and far-reaching leaders of the 20th century. Throughout her lifelong work as a grassroots community organizer and educator, Baker would ask: "Now, who are your people?" In *Ella Baker and the Black Freedom Movement: A Radical Democratic Vision*, biographer Barbara Ransby explains the significance of this question (2003):

> "Now, who are your people?" symbolizes Baker's approach to life-history as well. Who one's people were was important to Ella Baker not to establish an elite pedigree, but to locate an individual as part of a family, a community, a region, a culture, and a historical period. Baker recognized that none us are self-made men or women; rather, we forge our identities within kinship networks, local communities, and organizations. (p. 14)

Baker was born in Virginia, raised in North Carolina, and radicalized in Harlem. As a pivotal leader in the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), In Friendship, Crusade for Citizenship, the Southern Conference Education Fund, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), Baker utilized community-based practices to organize and educate alongside Black, Indigenous, and people of color most impacted by racial and socioeconomic systems of oppression. In turn, Baker was an essential community organizer for global intersectional social justice initiatives such as the Mississippi Democratic Party, the Free Angela Davis campaign, the Puerto Rican Independence Movement, and the movement to end apartheid in South Africa.

Significantly, Baker and her contemporaries were "activist community educators" who utilized radical democratic pedagogy that was decentralized, public, and participatory (Ransby,

2003). Similar to the practices of Freire and Boggs, Baker recognized the inherent knowledge, assets, and resolve of intergenerational community members in order to co-create critical civic initiatives at the local level. In addition, Baker taught through example as she modeled the process of critical inquiry, the necessity of collaborative relationships, and the possibilities for all people to become agents of change. Such radical democratic pedagogy seeks and sustains educational freedom as Bettina Love elucidates (2019):

> [Baker] believed in the power of oppressed people and communities to create pathways to leadership that were decentralized and not hierarchal. She wanted people to understand just how strong and brilliant they were both individually and collectively. Baker was driven by the idea of a radical democratic practice in which the oppressed, excluded, and powerless became active in positions of power with decision-making opportunities. (p. 66)

Youth Activism

In *Contemporary Youth Activism: Advancing Social Justice in the United States*, Jerusha Conner and Sonia Rosen place the long history of youth activism within the context of present-day community organizing (2016). Conner and Rosen define grassroots activism as: "activism that emerges from the ground up, engaging people who genuinely feel inspired by a cause and come to the work on their own volition" (2016). Through this framework, grassroots communities engage in collective and accountable organizing for transformative social change. For Conner and Rosen, the use of the word "youth" within youth activism is purposeful and aims to reimagine the role of children and young people within society. Furthermore, youth activism is directly connected to intergenerational community organizing in order to affirm community members of all ages engaged in social justice work through critical civic initiatives, policy reform, direct action campaigns, social media strategies, and long-term movement mobilization.

Within youth-centered and intergenerational community organizing, activists engage in social justice struggles by acknowledging, problematizing, and strategizing around local concerns

or issues (Fernández, Kirshner, & Lewis, 2016). Through this process, youth develop the capacity to create action plans, events, and campaigns that slowly work toward sustainable social change. When youth activism is centered on the commons, it inspires opportunities for schools and grassroots community groups to collaborate around social justice and EcoJustice causes (Gallay, Lupinacci, Sarmiento, Flanagan, & Lowenstein, 2016). Significantly, youth activism encourages the use of multimodal storytelling and innovative knowledge sharing, which centers the voices and experiences of young people to raise critical consciousness in the present-day (Gallay et al., 2016).

In *Beyond Resistance! Youth Activism and Community Change*, Ginwright, Noguera, and Cammarota, share the ways in which youth activism can inspire "inclusive democracy and informed public policy" (2006, p. xx). Significantly, youth led activism requires adult allies to see young people as "present civic actors" rather than "future citizens" (Ginwright et al., 2006, p. xix). This (re)definition of youth activism has particular effects within the classroom, because it pushes teachers to ground their pedagogy and curriculum in the social justice issues that most impact and concern children and young people. Furthermore, youth activism challenges adult allies and classroom teachers to decenter themselves from the learning process in order to co-create project-based, purposeful, and collaborative learning experiences with young people (Kirshner, 2006). Unfortunately, the classroom is not always a place in which children and young people can engage in social justice work due to the perpetuation of oppressive systems such as racism, sexism, and classism. In turn, youth activists may utilize or create community-based youth organizations outside of school in order to engage in democratic social change (O'Donoghue, 2006). Thus, young people have the opportunity to engage in grassroots organizing with intergenerational community members and develop the skills necessary to be social change agents in the present moment rather than in the falsely idealized future.

Notably, youth activism (re)centers children and young people, particularly Black, Indigenous, and students of color, within the democratic process as they are often the most marginalized through racial and socioeconomic systems of oppression. The conceptual frameworks of youth activism refuse the concept that youth are "in transition, becoming, or adults to be" as such framings discredit the lived experiences of children and young people in the present moment (Ginwright et al., 2006, p. xix). In addition, the effects of neoliberal education reforms and policies have worked to further contain and police children and young people in schools. In turn, the oppressive nature of schooling intends to limit the agency and critical knowledge of children and young people in order to maintain the corporate, for-profit, and state power over public education (Conner & Rosen, 2016). Within this milieu, Baker's radical democratic pedagogy serves as a model and a guide in order for the capabilities of youth activists to not be romanticized, but rather supported through intergenerational collaboration for transformative social change.

Youth Resistance Theories of Change

Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang's *Youth Resistance Research and Theories of Change* frames the slow and steady process of intergenerational grassroots community organizing (2014). While there are often reactive activist events, community organizing is grounded in movements of proactive resistance that span decades. This resistance evolves over time due to lessons learned within a particular place and needs of a specific time (Tuck & Yang, 2014). When discussing youth resistance in particular, Tuck and Yang assert there is no ideal or sophisticated form of youth organizing and activism. Specifically, it is crucial that adult allies and community elders do not assert their own ideas or expectations for resistance to injustice upon young people. This allows youth resistance movements to develop as more authentic and relevant methods to dismantle

systems of oppression (Tuck & Yang, 2014). Consequently, young people may develop their own paths of resistance that may very well be outside of conventional community and societal norms.

In *Youth Resistance Research and Theories of Change*, Pedro Noguera shares his understanding that "organizing is an art and a skill", which requires structure, networks, and "a view of the long haul" (2014, p. 77). In turn, grassroots community organizing must involve the development of critical consciousness in order to establish sustainable action plans for social change. Noguera also offers the reminder that youth activism and resistance must be rooted in "collective agency" in order to be effective (2014). For those involved within intergenerational community organizing, respect and trust must be mutually earned in order to mitigate barriers between young people and adult allies. In turn, youth activists may develop the capacity for leadership and challenge top-down systems of power, which can be seen in the work of SNCC during the Black Freedom Movement. For example, SNCC established Freedom Schools throughout the southern United States during the 1950s and 1960s in order to provide culturally responsive and community-based education for Black school-aged children (House, 2010). Furthermore, Freedom Schools were spaces for children, young people, adults, and community elders to strategize for the growth of the Black Freedom Movement.

It is responsible to emphasize repeatedly that youth activism and resistance should not be romanticized as a means to alleviate societal injustices. While the involvement of youth in grassroots community organizing is strategic and preemptive, the responsibility of transformative social change should not rest on children and young people alone (Lyiscott, Carabello, & Morrell; Rosen, 2018). Tuck and Yang, along with other educational scholars within this literature review, describe the necessity of adult allies who engage in activism with children and young people. Transformative social change cannot occur in isolation of age demographics and thus requires

intergenerational collaboration to be sustainable. Furthermore, it is essential to acknowledge that not all youth are ready to or willing to engage in resistance movements. Just like all learners, children and young people need guidance if they are to develop as activists, leaders, and accountable community members (Fine, 2014). Moreover, such direction must be relational, trustworthy, and respectful in order to mitigate individuals, corporations, and organizations who use and/or co-opt youth movements for their own social, economic, or political gain. To this end, if youth-centered and youth-led community organizing is tokenism, systems of oppression are maintained, which spirit murders children and young people within schools and communities (Love, 2019; Tuck & Yang, 2014).

By amplifying the conceptual frameworks of radical democratic pedagogy, youth activism, and youth resistance theories of change, the reimagination of the classroom as student-centered and place-conscious through the principles of community and grassroots community organization may be understood and conceptualized. Within this lens, classroom teachers, teacher educators, and TCs may develop the capacity to co-create classrooms and curriculum alongside students and communities in which local injustices are brought to the surface in order to be acted upon. Through this process, a community-based pedagogy becomes a method to acknowledge and disrupt the barriers that prevent schools from working in tandem with local communities. In turn, the classroom becomes a space for students, community members, and teachers to engage in a shared sense of belonging by being in relation with one another, the public good, and the commons. Such a classroom community fosters students and teachers to develop the knowledge and skills necessary to both name and resist social injustices within schools and communities. Thus, the long-term, proactive, and radically loving work of grassroots communities and grassroots community

organizing encourages youth organizers and adult allies to collaborate together for transformative social change.

Community-Based Pedagogy

Community-based pedagogy connects the places, people, and ecosystems that surround students to the classroom. Through this dynamic practice, the identities of students and their communities are (re)centered in the learning environment. In this way, community-based pedagogy cultivates a sense of belonging for students in order to bridge the worlds of the classroom and home. Similar to the radical democratic pedagogy of Ella Baker and youth resistance theories of change, community-based pedagogy becomes a pedagogical and curricular praxis for teachers and students to respond to the social, economic, cultural, and environmental needs of a local place. Through this process, educators and learners join with families and community members to actively engage in social justice work that most directly impacts children and young people (Au, 2009; Eds. Rethinking Schools, 2017).

As discussed in chapter one, community-based pedagogy is not a novel concept has been at the root of social change and civil rights movements for centuries. African American Freedom Schools, Native American language revitalization projects, and ethnic studies programs are all examples of young people and adults practicing community-based pedagogy (Brown & Au, 2014; Ladson-Billings, 1995; McCarty & Lee, 2014). By the turn of the 20th century, the United States had established a segregated, homogenized, and standardized public education system, causing drastic disparities in who did and did not have access to quality schools (Suarez, 2018). As a response, many African American children attended community-based schools in local churches, such as Second Baptist Church in Detroit, instead of woefully underfunded and inequitable public schools (Schott-Bresler, 2018). Furthermore, community-based pedagogy is evident in the

Chicano/a and Indigenous civil rights movements of the 20th century, which have influenced student-centered education practices to this day. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, Mexican American students organized for multilingual and multicultural curriculum in their classrooms (Escobar, 2018). In the 1970s, the American Indian Movement established survival schools in order to affirm and revitalize liberatory curriculum practices for Indigenous students (Reyhner, 2018). These collaborations between student leaders, educators, and community members continue to inspire culturally sustaining and revitalizing ethnic studies programs around the country.

The second half of the 20th century would also see the global influence of Paulo Freire's critical pedagogy. Published in 1970, Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* introduced critical pedagogy to multicultural and multilingual educational researchers and practitioners. Freire's critical pedagogy is rooted in conscientização, which is the ongoing practice of critical consciousness, and calls upon educators to resist systems of oppression within their classrooms and community spaces. Feminist theorists and educators such as bell hooks have challenged critical pedagogy to intersect understandings of gender, sexuality, and race within learning communities (hooks, 1984). Like Freire, hooks views education as the practice of freedom and her own use of critical pedagogy emulates the purpose of classroom communities built upon shared power. By co-creating an engaged pedagogy, each student is viewed as an active contributor to the learning experiences within the classroom (hooks, 1994). By acknowledging and magnifying the intersecting identities of students in the classroom, the white, colonial, and patriarchal canon is dismantled in order for each student to find meaning and purpose within education (hooks, 2003). Importantly, both Freire and hooks share how a transformative and empowered community of

learners can take shape both inside and outside the four walls of the conventional classroom (Freire, 1974; hooks, 2010).

Community-based pedagogy is also related to place-based education, which aims to connect learning to the natural world and the local community in order to challenge individual and standard-based approaches to education (Smith & Sobel, 2010). Through place-based education, schools become the center of community sustainability and development, which enhances both the academic achievement of students and holistic improvement of the community (Smith, 2002). In "Making a World of Difference by Looking Locally", Ethan Lowenstein and Gregory Smith discuss the benefits of "involving students in local problem solving and action" with community members (2017). By connecting social, cultural, and ecological justice issues to the local community, students and teachers are able to bring the curriculum to life by engaging in active citizenship (Sobel, 2013). In *EcoJustice Education: Toward Diverse, Democratic, and Sustainable Communities*, Martusewizc et al. contend that place-based education becomes particularly empowering when partnered with the model of EcoJustice Education (2015). In this way, learning experiences become more relevant as students are connected to the local community and intergenerational community members (Boggs, 1998).

Gregory Smith and David Sobel (2010) believe in the transformative abilities of place- and community-based education "because it is the only term that allows for the inclusion of both the human and the more-than-human, something we believe is essential if educators are to help students grapple with the messy and cross-disciplinary nature of humankind's current dilemmas" (p. 21-22). As such, place- and community-based education strives to change not only the individualistic and conventional notions of the American PreK-12 schooling system, but also transform the conditions in which children, young people, and their communities are harmed

through the (re)production of such systemic oppression (Pilloton, 2010). Through this process, the community becomes a "living classroom" as students join educators, families, and community members in solving real world problems through place-conscious and empowering learning experiences (Gliner, 2013).

Established in the mid-1990s, the Rural School and Community Trust is recognized as a foundational organization in the proliferation of place- and community-based education, particularly within rural school communities. By connecting educators, students, and grassroots community organizers within various rural contexts, the Rural School and Community Trust (2005) advocates and enacts place-conscious education, which "has the power to engage students academically, pairing real-world relevance with intellectual rigor, while promoting genuine citizenship and preparing people to respect and live well in any community they choose." Much like their urban counterparts, rural school communities often face similar systemic injustices such as inequitable school funding, disinvestment in low-income communities, and the challenge to recruit effective classroom teachers (Walker, 2019). In turn, place- and community-based education becomes a pedagogical and curricular practice for educators and students within urban and rural school communities to address and work against the ways in which the PreK-12 schooling system harms low-income children and young people.

This is particularly salient following the discussion of King's Beloved community through the practice of agape love, which ultimately led to the co-creation of the Poor People's Campaign before Dr. King's assassination in 1968. The Poor People's Campaign, which is still active today, was founded in 1967 in order to join together poor people, regardless of race, in efforts to "demand jobs, unemployment insurance, a fair minimum wage, and education for poor adults and children" (King, 1967). Similarly, Baker advocated for the unity of poor people across racial and gendered

lines in order to work toward intersectional social justice. Like Dr. King, Baker recognized that social justice and civil rights movements must align with poor, working-class white, Black, Indigenous, and people of color in order to eradicate racist, classist, and sexist systems of oppression. Within this milieu, the community-based frameworks of King and Baker can be seen throughout rural, suburban, and urban uses of place- and community-based education for transformative social change within schools and communities.

David Gruenewald discusses the method of a "critical pedagogy of place" for students to become active members of schools and communities rather than cogs in the standardization machine (May 2003). Gruenewald theorizes the importance of multicultural "place-conscious education" as students and educators create learning communities of belonging and accountability (Fall 2003). Significantly, Gruenewald posits that a "critical pedagogy of place" must aim to rethink standardized understandings of the classroom, which often separate children and young people from the people, places, and ecosystems around them. Thus, the practices of critical pedagogy and place-based pedagogy enable educators and students to engage in the work of transformation and conservation (May 2003). For example, #FridaysForFuture is a current youth-led global movement where children and young people take to the streets of their neighborhoods and city centers every Friday in order to "protest against the lack of action on the climate crisis" (2020).

Eve Tuck, Marcia McKenzie, and Kate McCoy have challenged the intentions and purposes of place-based education as it often perpetuates settler colonialism within schools and communities (2014). This is notable for educators and students who are engaging in community-based practices as the historical context of settler colonialism must be acknowledged within student-centered and place-conscious learning experiences. Furthermore, land cannot be thought

of as separate to community-based pedagogy, which fosters the accountable and reciprocal relations between people, place, and ecosystems (Tuck, McKenzie, & McCoy, 2014). In her discussion of anticolonial approaches to civic education, Alutiiq scholar Leilana Sabzalian affirms that all teaching, learning, and being in community takes place on Indigenous lands (2019). Sabzalian calls upon educators and students to move beyond superficial and performative land acknowledgements by engaging in critical inquiry about and participating in solidarity with Indigenous peoples (2019). In turn, the collective use of community-based pedagogy will not further erase Indigenous nations, but rather work to be in relation with people and place.

As a teacher educator-scholar-community organizer, I contend that community-based pedagogy is fundamentally the social studies (Popielarz, 2018). When curated with purpose and relevancy, the social studies is deeply connected to all of the core subject areas – Mathematics, Science, English Language Arts, Foreign Language, Art, Music, etc. – as well as the people, places, and ecosystems that make up schools and communities (Boutte, 2015; Taylor, 2018; Valenzuela, 2017). For example, the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) defines social studies as:

> The integrated study of the social sciences and humanities promote civic competence. Within the school program, social studies provides coordinated, systematic study drawing upon such disciplines as anthropology, archaeology, economics, geography, history, law, philosophy, political science, psychology, religion, and sociology, as well as appropriate content from the humanities, mathematics, and natural sciences. The primary purpose of social studies is to help young people make informed and reasons decisions for the public good as citizens of a culturally diverse, democratic society in an interdependent world. (NCSS, 2020)

By embedding community-based theoretical frameworks within pedagogical and curricular practices, teachers and students are enveloped in the social studies in order to conceptualize and act upon their participatory and accountable roles as community members (Lowenstein & Smith, 2017). However, NCSS, the largest and most esteemed association for social studies educators, along with the College and University Faculty Assembly (CUFA) and American Educational

Research Association (AERA), frequently disregards or silences such critical and transformative social studies research and scholarship (Ladson-Billings, 2001; Shear, Tschida, Bellows, Buchanan, & Saylor, 2018). For these reasons, many prominent teacher educators and scholars have turned toward other educational associations such as the National Council for Teachers of English (NCTE) (Ladson-Billings, 2001), established independent progressive conferences (Elementary Social Studies Education Summit, 2020), or curated publication outlets in order to share in justice-oriented social studies (The Critical Social Educator, 2020).

Conversely, professional organizations such as AERA, NCSS, and CUFA are contested spaces and while they must move forward in significant ways, there are academics who are engage in critical, humanizing, and innovative scholarship within AERA, NCSS, and CUFA communities. For example, the aforementioned Elementary Social Studies Education Summit and *The Critical Social Educator* stem from scholars who are active within AERA, NCSS, and CUFA teacher education and social studies communities. Additionally, AERA has elevated and acknowledged critical scholars such as Maxine Greene (1981-82), James A. Banks (1997-98), Gloria Ladson-Billings (2005-06), and Kris Gutierrez (2010-11) to positions of leadership. Likewise, the current governance of CUFA is represented by critical scholars such as Brooke Blevins, Alex Cuenca, Margaret Crocco, Sarah Shear, Amanda Vickery, Dan Krutka, Noreen Naseem-Rodriguez, Annie Whitlock, and Christopher Busey who are reimagining the purposes of social studies education.

Furthermore, in my own personal experiences, I have continued to develop as a teacher educator-scholar-community organizer through the relationships I have built through various special interest groups and committees within AERA, NCSS, and CUFA. For instance, I recently submitted a proposal alongside my colleague, Timothy Monreal, to the CUFA 2020 conference entitled "Toward a Spatial Justice Agenda in the Social Studies" in order to "conceptualize spatial

justice, share how educators can engage in spatial thinking, and dialogue through what a call for spatial justice in social studies education might look like" (Popielarz & Monreal, Under Review).

Within this milieu, I argue that the critical theoretical framework of community-based pedagogy not only reinvigorates the social studies, but also encourages long-standing gatekeepers within NCSS, CUFA, and AERA to revisit the aim and scope of the social studies (Shear & Krutka, 2019). Through this research project, I join critical teacher educators and scholars who are ambitious in fulfilling the social studies as a critical civic initiative for intersectional social justice:

> Our collective, intersectional vision for [social studies] today is overt, deliberate, and explicit, and it positions teachers and children as powerful citizens who can think critically about the historical and current manifestations of oppression, take action both locally and globally, and consider others before self. (Shear, Tschida, Bellows, Buchanan, & Saylor, 2018, p. xvi)

To this end, the analysis and discussion of the findings in chapters four through six will examine the complexities of reconceptualizing the social studies as inherently community-based alongside youth organizers, TCs, and adult allies within a social studies methods course. Within the current socio-political context of these times, such a reimagination of the social studies is essential in order to realize transformative social change.

Situating Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy within Community-Based Pedagogy

Culturally sustaining pedagogy becomes a resourceful tool in building strong partnerships with PreK-12 students and their communities (Alim & Paris, 2017). A culturally sustaining pedagogy centers the linguistic and literary strengths of students in order to connect the knowledge and culture of students to the classroom. This liberatory form of learning seeks to "sustain and support" students who have been marginalized within the education system (Paris & Alim, 2014). Thus, a culturally sustaining classroom will "name and conceptualize" how students and their communities become the anchor of the curriculum (Paris & Alim, 2014). Culturally sustaining

pedagogy is purposefully situated within the discussion of community-based pedagogy since both

theoretical frameworks aim to humanize education through meaningful connections between

students and their communities. Django Paris elaborates:

> We offer that culturally sustaining pedagogy exists WHEREVER education sustains the lifeways of communities who have been and continue to be damaged and erased through schooling. This means that while we must push for, join, amplify CSP in schools (as nation-state institutions required for our young people), CSP (like teaching and learning) exists far beyond schools. CSP exists (has always existed) in community organizations, elder teaching, peer groups, social media/media, the arts, social movements. And, of course, the respectful, critical joining of the culturally sustaining practices of these spaces, places, mediums, people with schooling has led entire educational movements - #EthnicStudies and #HipHopEd as examples. This is to say from #BeyonceHomecoming to the All My Relations podcast – that which teaches and learns to sustain communities is what we seek to honor and amplify through our work in CSP – in schools and beyond. (2019, Twitter thread, emphasis in original)

Paris' "Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy: A Needed Change in Stance, Terminology, and

Practice" advocates for a "new term and a new approach" to culturally relevant, responsive, and

appropriate pedagogies (2012, p. 93). Paris found that the ground-breaking work of Gloria Ladson-

Billings' culturally relevant pedagogy (1995) and Geneva Gay's culturally responsive pedagogy

(2010) were often being applied in the classroom simply to "use the language and culture of the

students to teach them part of the 'acceptable' curricular cannon" (Paris, 2012, p. 95). Furthermore,

culturally relevant and responsive pedagogies continue to be appropriated by corporate education

reforms through character education and high stakes standardized testing (Love, 2019). In turn,

many classroom teachers, teacher educators, and TCs reinforce white middle class norms within

PreK-12 schooling, rather than engage in the critical and social justice frameworks defined in

culturally relevant and responsive pedagogies. In turn, Paris proposes the term culturally sustaining

pedagogy in order to:

> [Require] that our pedagogies be more than responsive of or relevant to the cultural experiences and practices of young people – it requires that they support young people in sustaining the cultural and linguistic competence of their communities while

simultaneously offering access to dominant cultural competence. Culturally sustaining pedagogy, then, has its explicit goal supporting multilingualism and multiculturalism in practice and perspective for students and teachers. (Paris, 2012, p. 93)

In Paris and H. Samy Alim's "What Are We Seeking to Sustain Through Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy? A Loving Critique Forward", the authors refuse the "white gaze", as theorized by Toni Morrison (2019), and ask: "What would our pedagogies look like if this gaze weren't a dominant one?" (2014, p. 86). Paris and Alim argue that asset pedagogies, such as cultural relevancy and responsiveness, are often used to posit students' linguistic strengths and cultural heritages within the dominant socio-cultural norms of schooling. In turn, multilingual and multicultural students are taught that their inherent identities are not affirmed nor included within institutions of power such as the United States education system. In turn, culturally sustaining pedagogy aims to circumvent this (re)produced oppression by:

> [Seeking] to perpetuate and foster – to *sustain* – linguistic, literate, and cultural pluralism as part of the democratic project of schooling and as a needed response to demographic and social change … CSP, then, is necessary to honor and value the rich and varied practices of communities of color *and* is a necessary pedagogy for supporting access to power in a changing nation. (Paris & Alim, 2014, p. 90, emphasis in original).

Parallel to community-based pedagogy, culturally sustaining pedagogy is rooted in "dynamic community practices" in order to connect teaching and learning to "the cultural practices that have sustained and strengthened us" (Paris & Alim, 2017, p. 12). However, culturally sustaining pedagogy acknowledges that communities are always evolving based upon the needs and growth of a particular place. In addition, culturally sustaining pedagogy does not romanticize notions of community and instead engages in loving critique to move communities forward toward social justice (Paris & Alim, 2017). Above all, culturally sustaining pedagogy is grounded in, "a love that can help us see our young people as whole versus broken when they enter schools, and a love that can work to keep them whole as they grow and expand who they are and can be through

education" (Paris & Alim, 2017, p. 14). Such pedagogical and curricular practices purposefully humanize education in order to intentionally connect students' lived experiences and communities to the classroom for transformative social change.

A current example of classroom teachers engaging in culturally sustaining pedagogy is #DisruptTexts, which "is a crowdsourced, grassroots effort *by* teachers *for* teachers to challenge the traditional canon in order to create a more inclusive, representative, and equitable language arts curriculum that our students deserve" (2018). Through Twitter chats, practitioner resources, national conference presentations, and peer-reviewed publications, #DisruptTexts rejects deficit pedagogies by sharing inclusive and counternarrative texts that are often erased within the canon of schooling. As such, #DisruptTexts actively (re)centers multilingual and multicultural students by engaging in anti-racist and anti-bias curricular and pedagogical practices (Ebarvia, 2018). Significantly, #DisruptTexts is gaining momentum as a grassroots movement through presentations at the 2019 National Council for Teachers of English (NCTE) Conference and publications in NCTE's *Council Chronicle*.

Importantly, Teresa L. McCarty and Tiffany S. Lee have expanded upon culturally sustaining pedagogy through a culturally sustaining/revitalizing pedagogy for Indigenous learners. As many Indigenous communities engage "in a fight for cultural and linguistic survival", a culturally sustaining/revitalizing pedagogy "[addresses] the sociohistorical and contemporary contexts of Native American schooling" (McCarty & Lee, 2014). Culturally sustaining/revitalizing pedagogy can be seen through the work of American Indian Health and Family Services in Detroit which "is a non-profit health center whose mission is to empower and enhance the physical, spiritual, emotional, and mental wellbeing of American Indian/Alaska Native individuals, families, and other underserved populations in Southeast Michigan through culturally grounded health and

family services" (2018). Through youth programming, ancestry knowledge sharing, social justice community organizing, peer mentoring, revitalizing traditional foodways, and language reclamation, the organization models community practices vital for Native American sovereignty and survivance (Deyhle, Swisher, Stevens, & Galvan, 2008).

The Southeast Michigan Stewardship (SEMIS) Coalition is an additional example of culturally sustaining pedagogy working in tandem with community-based pedagogy. A member of the Great Lakes Stewardship Initiative (GLSI) network, the SEMIS Coalition "facilitates school-community partnerships to develop students as citizen-stewards of healthy ecological-social systems" (2018). The SEMIS Coalition is partnered with thirty schools and thirty-five community partner organizations throughout Michigan with the goal of uniting "educators, activists, organizations, practitioners, community members and youth who are dedicated to transforming education and protecting the future of our human and natural commons" (2018). Purposefully, the SEMIS Coalition utilizes an interdisciplinary approach in order to foster the agency of children and young people as they gain knowledge and strategically develop action plans for solutions about local justice issues (Zalaznick, 2019). The SEMIS Coalition is a model of the slow and intentional process of co-creating collaborative and accountable communities for transformative social change (Lowenstein & Erkaeva, 2016).

Culturally sustaining pedagogy holistically honors the humanity and identity of young people and their communities in the pursuance of intersectional social justice, which is at the root of community-based pedagogy. This type of teaching and learning is an act of educational freedom in order for educators and students to acknowledge and disrupt systems of oppression within schools and communities. Through this practice, educators are encouraged to learn from and with their students as they seek to sustain and revitalize the multitude of spaces in which education may

take shape. In turn, teachers and students collaborate together to reconceive the classroom as a space of belonging, affirmation, and inclusivity for transformative social change.

Community-Based Teacher Education

Many teacher education programs have developed university and community-based partnerships to enhance the preparation of critically conscious and socially aware TCs (Lee, Eckrich, Lackey, & Showalter, 2010; Koerner & Abdul-Tawwab, 2006; Seidl & Friend, 2002; Zygmunt & Clark, 2016). *Community-based teacher education* is a method for future educators to develop knowledge and understanding of local communities, which is necessary for classroom field placements and university methods courses (Hallman, 2012; Zeichner, 2010). Furthermore, community-based teacher education encourages TCs to examine their privileges and biases as they learn the assets and strengths of children and young people within the communities they will teach (Cooper, 2007; Noel, 2016; Smolkin & Suina, 1999; Wade, 2000). Purposefully, TCs are also asked to recognize and analyze the particular systems of oppression that harm Black, Indigenous, and students of color within PreK-12 classrooms. Importantly, the literature conveys both the opportunities and immense challenges of developing partnerships between the university and local communities in order for community-based teacher education to be effective and sustainable (Guillen & Zeichner, 2018).

Through her work as a community-engaged scholar and teacher educator, Marcelle Haddix challenges teacher education programs to situate field placements and methods courses within the context of local communities beyond the walls of the classroom (2015). Haddix warns that voyeuristic notions of community-based teacher education often perpetuate harmful teaching and learning practices. Instead, Haddix discusses the necessity of teacher educators embodying the practice of community-engaged teaching and learning in order to more deeply connect education

to the lived realities and experiences of children and young people. In turn, Haddix advocates for the use of community engagement and a community-engaged teaching agenda:

> A community-engaged teaching agenda can move teacher educators and preservice teachers beyond the comforting and safe confines that have been constructed in teacher education programs to begin to account for the dynamic engagements of students and their families in non-school communities. Community engagement can get at issues of race and racism, equity and inequity, and social justice and injustices more pointedly than reading scholarly articles, learning new methods and pedagogies, or completing student teaching placements. Doing this work requires that both teacher educators and their preservice teachers fully acknowledge their goals for becoming teachers and educators. (2015, p. 69-70).

Peter Murrell's *The Community Teacher: A New Framework for Effective Urban Teaching* is a model for the development of community, university, and school partnerships, particularly within urban metropolis settings (2001). Murrell discusses the urgency of nurturing community teachers as many urban city-centers with predominantly Black, Indigenous, and students of color face injustices within schools and communities. Murrell argues that community teachers should be deeply embedded within the people and places in which they teach in order to collaborate together for transformative social change through socially just education. In *The Community Teacher*, Murrell describes the long-term process of developing effective and experienced community teachers through a teacher education program framework that is "community-dedicated, research-focused, collaboration-oriented" (2001, p. 3). Referencing the scholarship of Ladson-Billings' culturally relevant pedagogy, Murrell describes a community teacher as someone "who possesses the contextualized knowledge of the culture, community, and identity of the children and families he or she serves and draws on this knowledge to create the core teaching practices necessary for effectiveness in diverse settings" (2001, p. 52).

In *Moving Teacher Education into Urban Schools and Communities*, Jana Noel takes up the framework of Murrell's community teacher in order to situate teacher education programs

directly within schools and communities (2013). Noel argues that teacher education must build reciprocal and accountable relationships with schools and communities in order to de-center the privileged knowledge of universities. As such, teacher education programs may develop institution-wide community-based practices that collaborate with school and community partners for transformative social change. In *Transforming Teacher Education for Social Justice*, Eva Zygmunt and Patricia Clark discuss the process of developing program-wide community-based teacher education programs by situating TCs learning experiences directly within local schools, extracurricular activities, and community organizations (2016). Through the program Schools Within the Context of Community, which is informed by Murrell's community teacher framework, Zygmunt and Clark describe the innovative practice of community mentors, classroom teachers, community organizations, and community-engaged teacher educators working alongside one another in the preparation of TCs (2016). Within such community-based teacher education programs, TCs may develop the agency and self-efficacy to become community teachers who understand teaching as a committed political act and the work of social justice (Noel, 2013; Zygmunt & Clark, 2016).

Barbara Seidl (2007), Ken Zeichner (2016), and Robert E. Lee (2018) are notable teacher educators who have theorized, implemented, and researched community-based teacher education programs. With the goal of fostering critically conscious educators, Seidl, Zeichner, and Lee have researched and discussed the complex process of deeply connecting with the local community to further enhance the preparation of TCs. Within these programs, community organizations and community members become partnering teacher educators in order to support TCs in developing asset-based and culturally sustaining approaches to teaching and learning. Importantly, the distinct research of Seidl, Zeichner, and Lee note that community-based teacher education is indeed

difficult to implement. It requires additional resources, partnerships, funding, and support from stakeholders. Furthermore, community-based teacher education requires a paradigm shift in the preparation of potential teachers as it asserts the significance and importance of collaborating with local communities. Zeichner and Katherine Payne elaborate (2013):

> This shift needs to attend to both the processes of teacher education, how and from whom teachers learn in courses and field experiences, and how these decisions are negotiated – as well as to the larger structures in which teacher education is embedded ... we are not defending the status quo in university teacher education. Rather, we argue for a transformation of teacher education as a public good that requires participation from colleges and universities, schools, and communities. (p. 3)

The SEMIS Coalition, as mentioned previously, is at the center of a local university's place-based teacher preparation program that connects a Southeast Michigan teacher education program to local community organizations, place-based classroom models, and intergenerational community members. This place-based teacher education program is grounded in the framework of EcoJustice education in order to provide TCs the opportunity to understand, visualize, and practice community-based pedagogy. Importantly, the local community and young people are seen as partnering teacher educators, which encourages TCs to learn from the people and places in which they are teaching. In *Place-Based Teacher Education: A Model Whose Time Has Come*, Ethan Lowenstein, Imandeep Kaur Grewal, Nigora Erkaeva, Rebecca Nielson, and Lisa Voelker describe the process of developing a collaborative and purposeful place-based education program with local school communities and grassroots community organizations (2018). Notably, the generative reflections by the authors on reciprocity and accountability acknowledges the long-term process of cultivating community-based teacher education programs that are committed to culturally sustaining and revitalizing pedagogies (Lowenstein et al., 2018).

Moving Community-Based Pedagogy Forward

There have been resounding calls for teacher education programs to be more intimately involved with the local community in order to collaborate in transformative social change (DeNicolo, Yu, Crowley, & Gabel, 2017). Noteworthy literature has problematized and analyzed the tenacious process of developing teacher education programs that are both accountable to and collaborative with local community organizations (Lowenstein, Martusewicz, & Voelker, 2010). In addition, many teacher educators advocate for connecting TCs to community leaders in efforts to learn culturally relevant, revitalizing, and sustaining pedagogies (Zygmunt, Cipollone, Tancock, Clausen, Clark, & Mucherah, 2018). Furthermore, Youth Participatory Action Research has demonstrated how young people engage with adult allies in social justice causes both inside and outside the classroom (Burke & Greene, 2015). However, much of the literature on community-based pedagogy does not center the voices and lived experiences of children, young people, and TCs throughout place-conscious and culturally sustaining learning opportunities. Moreover, the literature often reinforces the status-quo rather than discussing and actualizing how community-based pedagogy may be a liberatory practice to challenge systemic oppression while also working toward intersectional social justice (Love, 2019).

These gaps in the research literature encourages scholars to learn more about the ways in which youth, teacher education programs, and the grassroots community experience collaborative learning opportunities. The theoretical frameworks of radical democratic pedagogy, youth activism, and youth resistance theories of change offer guidance for community-based scholars and practitioners as they acknowledge and disrupt the existing barriers between intergenerational community members and teacher education programs. Additionally, the methodologies of Youth Participatory Action Research (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2007), Youth Resistance Research (Tuck

& Yang, 2014), and Community Action Research (Bang, Faber, Gurenau, Marin, & Soto, 2015) offer structures for the analysis of designing and implementing learning experiences between youth organizers and TCs through the use of community-based pedagogy, which is at the heart of this action research project. Importantly, these contributions should not aim to romanticize the use of community-based pedagogy within teacher education programs, but instead further nuance intergenerational partnerships for transformative social change in schools and communities.

Community-based pedagogy is not alternative education, nor is it an extracurricular activity. The transformative purposes of community-based pedagogy is not intended to increase the academic achievement of children and young people through Eurocentric, heteronormative, and standardized notions of knowledge. Rather, community-based pedagogy is about dismantling systems of oppression that continue to harm young people both inside and outside the classroom. In *We Want To Do More Than Survive: Abolitionist Teaching and the Pursuit of Educational Freedom*, Love argues that grassroots community organizations are models for this exact paradigm shift that is needed to reimagine and humanize education (2019). By affirming and including youth-centered and intergenerational grassroots organizations within PreK-12 classrooms and teacher education programs through the use of community-based pedagogy, teaching and learning becomes a practice of freedom. Additionally, community-based pedagogy must be informed by culturally sustaining pedagogy, which advocates "schooling should be a site for sustaining the cultural practices of communities of color rather than eradicating them" (Paris & Alim, 2017). In this way, future research literature must depict the complex process of utilizing community-based pedagogy within teacher education and its subsequent impact upon the curricular and pedagogical practices of TCs and teacher education programs themselves.

Within this urgent work, it is vital that community-based pedagogy continues to evolve in order to respond to the strengths and needs of local communities and community members. To further the understanding of community-based pedagogy, additional critical qualitative research projects must take place within the interconnections of PreK-12 classrooms, teacher education programs, and grassroots communities. This research should share in the process of designing and implementing community-based pedagogical practices alongside community members within their own local context. Furthermore, this research should problematize the complexity of engaging in community-based pedagogy within the realities of current rural, urban, and/or suburban learning communities. Significantly, such critical qualitative research projects must aim to (re)center the voices and perspectives of grassroots community organizations and community members in order to disrupt oppressive top-down power dynamics between universities and local communities. In turn, research endeavors should aim to collectively design, implement, and analyze the impact of community-based methods courses and classroom field placements amongst TCs. Such generative research projects will support teacher educators, classroom teachers, community members, TCs, children, and young people in advocating for community-based pedagogy in schools, communities, and teacher education programs.

In order to further the critical development of community-based pedagogy within a variety of educational spaces, the findings and discussion from this action research project will have implications for teacher education programs, PreK-12 classroom teachers, and grassroots community organizations. This action research project will analyze the use of a community-based pedagogy as the voices and lived experiences of youth organizers are (re)centered within a social studies methods course. Informed by participatory and community-based methodologies, this critical qualitative action research project will further the current scholarship relevant to research

projects amplifying the insights of community partners in teacher education programs (Guillen & Zeichner, 2018; Lee, 2018; Zygmunt, Cipollone, Tancock, Clausen, Clark, & Mucherah, 2018). Purposefully, this action research project will examine the possibilities, contradictions, and limitations of youth organizers as essential partners within teacher education in order to acknowledge and discuss the complexity of intergenerational learning experiences within community-based pedagogy. As such, this research project will contribute to critical discussions pertaining to ongoing paradigm shifts within teacher education programs and PreK-12 classrooms for transformative social change in schools and communities.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

We might collectively reimagine the foundations of social research so that love might become ontology, epistemology, methodology, axiology, and pedagogy, too. / We might then contribute to a better world by countering the changing tides of our historical present, by teaching methodological diversity as methodological justice, and by teaching critical qualitative inquiry is/as love. (Jasmine Ulmer, 2017)

Community-Based Action Research

At the end of the class period, I dialogued with Youth Liberation Army to debrief their adult ally training. They were filled with "I notice" observations (Some of the teacher candidates were engaged and some teacher candidates looked put off) and "I wonder" questions (Do you think this was tailored enough to them as elementary teachers? Do you think they have been impacted?). In this moment, I was able to remind the youth organizers about one of the purposes of the research project being that I will share the data findings and analysis from the adult ally training with them in order to inform their work moving forward. This really energized the youth organizers and they were excited to be reminded that the research I am doing will help inform them and their work around facilitating trainings and workshops. When Youth Liberation Army was leaving the classroom, I yelled, "Thank you so much for coming! I love y'all!" Each youth organizer turned around and yelled, "We love you, too!" It was in that moment that all of the work around participatory, humanizing, and community-based research was visualized. My heart swelled and I was reminded of the reciprocity and trust behind our love for one another. In that moment, I felt free and I wondered if the youth organizers felt free, too. (Personal Field Journal, June 2019)

The theoretical framework of community-based pedagogy informs this critical qualitative action research project in order to challenge traditional norms of research and knowledge production within teacher education, classrooms, and communities. In particular, I posit the necessity of love, trustworthiness, respect, belonging, and accountability as the bloodline of this action research project informed by participatory and community-based methodologies. In turn, I am indebted to my relationships with the participants of this research project as we collectively reflect upon the possibilities of freedom, liberation, justice, transformation, and reimagination through critical qualitative inquiry and research. Such a process is messy and offers no clear answers to complicated questions of teaching and learning for transformative social change (Shear & Krutka, 2019). In this way, the analysis of the findings and implications that will be shared from

this research project mirror the practice of community-based pedagogy as incomplete and always ongoing.

Significantly, my own experiences as a community action researcher in Detroit encapsulates my understanding and use of a place-conscious research methodology (Ulmer, 2017). We The People of Detroit (WPD) was co-founded in response to Emergency Management over the city of Detroit and Detroit Public Schools in 2008 by the State of Michigan (We The People of Detroit, 2019). As a grassroots community organization, WPD informs, educates, and empowers Detroit citizens on imperative and intersectional issues of land, water, and education justice. As a member of WPD's Community Research Collective (CRC), I collaborate with community activists, academics, researchers, artists, and designers in developing public knowledge through community-based and participatory action research. WPD's most recent projects center critical counter narratives through the (re)centering of community knowledge in response to ongoing racial and socioeconomic injustices in Detroit such as the public health crisis due to mass water shutoffs, the displacement of residents due to illegal tax foreclosures, and the dismantling of school communities through the privatization of public education.

Due to my role in the CRC, I cultivate relationships with Detroit community members as we produce and utilize community-curated knowledge as a tool for empowerment and transformative social change. In turn, the community-based theoretical framework and methodology of the CRC compel me to see action research as a tool in the tradition and legacy of civil rights and social change movements. By acknowledging and disrupting the barriers between universities and communities, the CRC actively pushes forward new ideas for how research is produced and utilized (Images 1 and 2). The CRC purposefully reimagines our ways of knowing and being in our communities and our world in order to work toward intersectional social justice.

In this way, my experiences with the CRC have called me to understand and engage in research as a method to cultivate community (Ulmer, 2018) among the people and places of Detroit – Wawaitonong, or "where the river goes 'round" – and beyond (Fox and McGahey, 2019).

Image 1.

We The People of Detroit. (2018). We The People of Detroit Community Research Collective: Our process and working values. Presented at the Allied Media Conference, Detroit, MI.
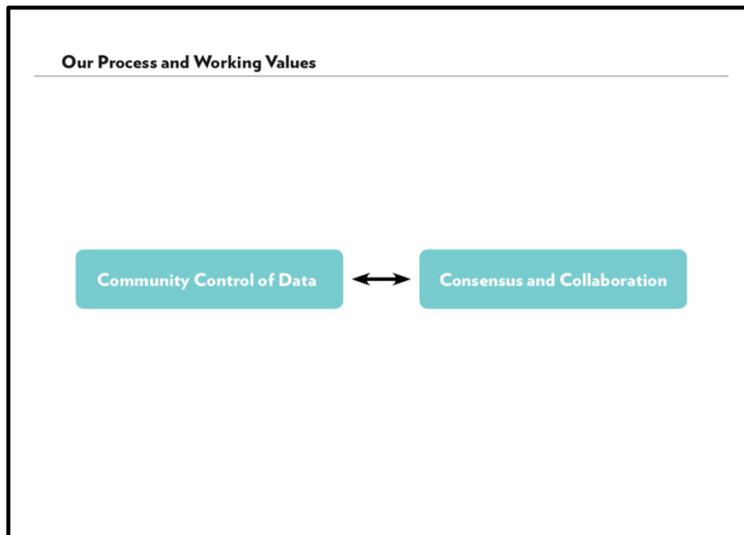
Image 2.

We The People of Detroit. (2018). We The People of Detroit Community Research Collective: How do we use our work? Presented at the Allied Media Conference, Detroit, MI.
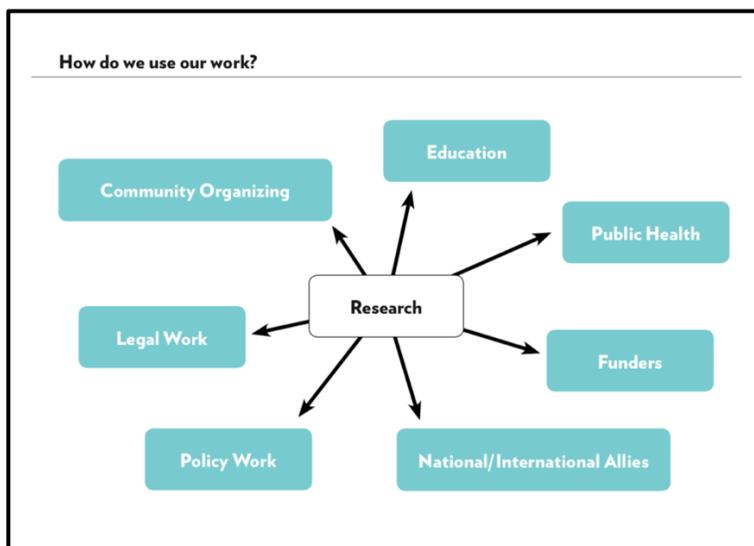
Critical Qualitative Action Research

It is important to continue the discussion of action research methodology with the reminder that it has long existed outside of the academy as a community-based strategy to produce knowledge and work toward transformative social change amongst people and places. In *Decolonizing Methodologies*, Linda Tuhiwai-Smith describes the array of community-based action research utilized globally by Indigenous peoples to continuously resist white supremacy and settler colonialism (2012). Within or outside the use of universities, action research is a product of Indigenous theoretical frameworks and research methodologies, which have sought to sustain and revitalize Indigenous knowledge and ways of being (Kimmerer, 2013). Moreover, decolonizing action research projects are often unique to a specific place, group of people, and moment in time (Tuck & McKenzie, 2015). In turn, action research has potential to be inclusive and affirming of a local place and its community members in order to collectively work toward transformative social and ecological justice (Tuck & McKenzie, 2015).

Critical qualitative methodologies are often used within research projects to pursue what is ethical and political in order to reimagine what can be (Cammarota & Fine, 2008). In turn, many critical qualitative researchers challenge what is traditional or foundational in order to confront and expand our ways of being, seeing, doing, and knowing (Paris & Winn, 2014). Such research projects typically engage in dynamic and reflexive processes in order to have truthful and analytical dialogue to work toward justice-oriented transformation (hooks, 1984; 1994; Freire, 2000). In addition, a growing body of literature now demonstrates how critical qualitative methodology may confront oppressive power structures as counternarratives are centered within research projects (Tuck & Yang, 2014; Tuck & McKenzie, 2015). Furthermore, critical qualitative

projects may be informed by participatory and community-centered methods in order to humanize the research process (Weis & Fine, 2004).

Within a critical qualitative lens, action research may be conceived as a method of collective agency to bring about justice-oriented and place-conscious transformation. For the purposes of this research project, I engage in the methodology of action research to demonstrate the opportunities and struggles of enacting a community-based pedagogy within the realities of PreK-12 schooling and the requirements of teacher education programs. Through critical qualitative data sources, I document the process of designing and enacting a community-based pedagogy in order to honor the messiness and contradictions of its use within a specific social studies methods course. In turn, action research provides me the opportunity to engage in critical reflexive processes alongside research project participants – youth organizers, adult allies, and teacher candidates (TCs) – in order to better understand the complexities of developing a culturally sustaining and place-conscious community-based pedagogy.

In turn, the critical qualitative methodology of this action research project is grounded in the process of praxis in order to engage youth organizers, adult allies, and TCs in collaborative reflection, dialogue, and action for transformative social change in schools and communities (Freire, 1974). Significantly, praxis edifies the analysis and discussion of the findings and subsequent implications from this action research project. Importantly, this action research project is informed by the community-based pedagogical practices of Grace Lee Boggs and the radical democratic pedagogical strategies of Ella Baker in order to develop intergenerational learning opportunities amongst young people, TCs, and adult allies (Boggs, 1998; Ransby, 2003). Through this theoretical framework, I engage in community-based research (CBR) methodologies that are grounded in the local and embodied social justice issues of the participants. (Tuck & McKenzie,

2015). Through the foundation of reciprocal and accountable relationships, CBR encourages the influence and guidance of participants in order for the findings and implications to be useful in their classrooms and communities.

Such community-based methodological practices are informed by participatory action research (PAR), which asserts that critical qualitative research cannot be done in isolation. PAR is particularly informative since this action research project analyzes the design, implementation, and impact of community-based pedagogy with youth organizers, adult allies, and TCs. Through the influence of PAR, I engage action research as a method of collaborative and emergent praxis in order to work toward critical and justice-oriented PreK-12 classrooms and teacher education programs. Due to this humanizing methodological approach, I negotiated the university and systemic barriers that often romanticize the involvement of children and young people within critical qualitative action research projects. In turn, PAR methodology encouraged me to disrupt barriers between the university and school communities in order to engage in responsible collaboration with local change agents.

More specifically, community-based and participatory methodologies informed how this specific action research project is cognizant of and accountable to students and communities in order to co-create action-based solutions to local needs (McIntyre, 2010). In this way, mutual love, respect, and trustworthiness grounded the collaboration between myself, a researcher-participant, and participants within the research project (Paris & Winn, 2014). My role as a teacher educator-scholar-community organizer required me to be responsive to the needs and purposes of participants in PreK-12 classrooms, grassroots community organizations, and teacher education programs. As such, the participatory and community-based approach of this action research project informed the collection, analysis, and use of data sources.

To ensure reciprocity and accountability, youth organizer, adult ally, and teacher candidate participants had specific requests regarding their collaboration with the social studies methods course and the research project. This specifically impacted the focus of analysis for the research project. In turn, the findings from this research project have been provided to participants in order to encourage their specific ambitions as students, community organizers, and classroom teachers. For example, the analysis of data sources are actively being used by youth organizers and adult allies to inform their current community organizing initiatives and campaigns regarding environmental justice, immigration justice, and youth liberation. Additionally, the subsequent findings from the research project have informed areas of specific growth for TCs as they continue to develop their teaching practice.

Critical Qualitative Inquiry

The primary purpose of this action research project is to analyze the use of community-based pedagogy within a social studies methods course informed by youth organizers and adult allies living for change in their schools and communities (Boggs, 1998). More specifically, the research project engages in critical qualitative inquiry relating to the possibilities, contradictions, and limitations of youth organizers as essential partners in teacher education through the design, facilitation, and impact of two distinct adult ally trainings. The research project is purposefully situated within a social studies methods course in order to reconceive the social studies as a critical civic initiative for participatory, democratic, and community-based education. Secondly, this action research project examines the process of TCs' emerging critical consciousness due to deepening connections with young people and identification with local Detroit communities. Thus, the proposed research aims to understand the complexities of TCs further developing their teaching practice within the context of a community-based pedagogy. Finally, and most importantly, the

action research project (re)centers the voices and lived experiences of youth organizers who are instrumental in the design and implementation of community-based pedagogy within the social studies methods course. As a result, the proposed research documents and analyzes the collaborative process of youth organizers and adult allies in the preparation of TCs. In turn, this research project inquires and reflects upon the following questions:

1. What implications does community-based pedagogy have for those of us who educate teacher candidates?

2. How does community-based pedagogy enhance or compromise the reimagination of the classroom as a space for young people and educators to collaborate for transformative social change?

3. In what ways does the praxis of action research engage the complexities of community-based pedagogy within the realities of PreK-12 classrooms and teacher education?

Settings

The methodology of this action research project is grounded in the critical theoretical framework of community-based pedagogy and is informed by the local community and the participants (Ulmer, 2017). As a teacher educator-scholar-community organizer within Detroit-based grassroots communities, the research project is purposeful situated amongst the relationships I have cultivated with youth organizer and adult ally participants over the past few years (Paris & Winn, 2014). Furthermore, the research project is driven by the knowledge, cultural heritage, and assets of community members in order to disrupt traditional top-down power dynamics between research universities and local communities (Bang, Faber, Gurneau, Marin, & Soto, 2015). Moreover, the inherent needs and desire of participants most impacted by social injustices within schools and communities are at the forefront of this action research project (Lipman, 2013). In this

way, the findings reveal the active inquiry, dialogue, and reflection amongst myself and participants throughout the research project as we collaborate together in the development of community-based pedagogy for transformative social change.

Community Sites

Beginning in April 2019, I began meeting with the youth organizer and adult ally participants at a variety of community sites in Detroit and Metro Detroit for the specific purposes of this action research project. The city of Detroit has an estimated population of 672,662 people with the population demographic makeup as: 78.6% Black or African American, 14.6 % White, 7.6% Hispanic or Latino, 1.6% Asian, and 0.3% of American Indian and Alaska Native.[11] Metro Detroit consists of 80 Northern, Northwest, Southern, Downriver, and Western suburbs with a population of 4,326,442 people[12] and a demographic makeup of: 66% White, 22% Black or African American, 5% Hispanic or Latino, and 5% Asian.[13]

Settings to collaborate together in the planning of the social studies methods course were strategic and included a LGBTQ+ inclusive coffee shop, an ecojustice and feminist coffee shop, a long-time neighborhood family bakery, and a specific grassroots community organization meeting space. Community site locations were chosen by participants due to their own comfort, familiarity, and public accessibility. In addition, community sites chosen for the planning phase of the research project were locations where I had previously interacted with the participants related to grassroots community organizing efforts. After the completion of the social studies methods course, I

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[11] The United States Census Bureau. (2018). *Quick facts: Detroit city, Michigan*. Retrieved on December 12, 2019 from https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/detroitcitymichigan,MI/PST045218

[12] The University of Michigan Library. (2019). *Detroit suburbs*. Retrieved on December 12, 2019 from https://guides.lib.umich.edu/c.php?g=283069&p=1885993

[13] The United States Census Bureau. (2018). *American community survey 1-year estimates.* Retrieved on December 12, 2019 from https://censusreporter.org/profiles/31000US19820-detroit-warren-dearborn-mi-metro-area/

continued to meet with youth organizer and adult ally participants, in addition to TC participants, at these specific locations for interviews.

Urban Public Research University

I am an instructor for a specific social studies methods course within a College of Education at an urban public research university located in Detroit, Michigan. The university has 17,663 undergraduate students, 2,016 professional students, and 7,165 graduate students [14] with a demographic makeup of: 58% White, 16.7% Black or African American, 9.4% Asian, 5.1% Hispanic/Latino, 0.2% American Indian or Alaska Native, and 0.1% Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander.[15] The university was founded in 1868 and the Detroit Normal Training School was established later in 1881, which would eventually become the College of Education.[16]

College of Education. As a graduate student and part-time faculty member in the College of Education (COE), I am an instructor for a social studies methods course which provides me the opportunity to analyze the development and implementation of a community-based pedagogy through this action research project. In addition, I am a former classroom social studies teacher and hold a professional teaching certificate in the social studies from the state of Michigan. By developing an action research project through a course of which I am the instructor of record, I have the opportunity to actively develop my praxis as a social studies teacher educator and support colleagues in the improvement of social studies methods courses and classroom field placements.

The COE has 1,187 undergraduate and 1,143 graduate students. There are 1,632 female students and 695 male students with a demographic makeup of: 60% White, 22% Black or African

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[14] Office of Institutional Research and Analysis. (2019). *Wayne State at a glance: Enrollment headcount quick facts, All*. Retrieved on December 12, 2019 from https://oira.wayne.edu/institutional-data/enrollment-headcount

[15] College Factual. (2019). *Wayne State demographics: How diverse is it?* Retrieved on December 12, 2019 from https://www.collegefactual.com/colleges/wayne-state-university/student-life/diversity/

[16] Wayne State University. (2019). *Rooted in Detroit: History and traditions.* Retrieved on December 12, 2019 from https://wayne.edu/about/history/

American, 4.8% Hispanic or Latino, 3.4% Asian, 0.5% American Indian or Alaska Native, 0.4% Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, and some students identifying as two or more races.[17] The demographic makeup of the COE student population mirrors the current trends of classroom teachers as predominantly white in the United States and in the state of Michigan (Stackhouse, 2018). More specifically, the 22 TCs enrolled in the social studies methods course and the subsequent 10 TCs who voluntarily participated in this action research project are predominantly white females.

Undergraduate and graduate TCs in the COE must take a list of required courses prior to their graduation and application for teacher certification. TCs in the Elementary Education program may earn a major in core subjects or student-centered comprehensive subjects. Each Elementary Education program entails university general education requirements, college requirements, a teaching major or minor, and professional education courses that provide clinical field experiences. In addition, TCs must pass state-required standardized tests and graduate from the COE's preparation program before earning their teacher certification. TCs must complete all university and college requirements before proceeding to the professional education sequence of PreK-12 classroom experience through participation in clinical field placements.

COE students aiming to become certified in Elementary Education within the state of Michigan must take an elementary social studies curriculum/methods course. Students who enroll in the social studies methods course in the COE must be Level 2 TCs, which means they have completed their university general education and college requirements. In addition, TCs who enroll in the social studies methods course are actively engaging in classroom field placements through the COE. The course entails specific Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium

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[17] Office of Institutional Research and Analysis. (2019). *Wayne State at a glance: Enrollment headcount quick facts, College of Education*. Retrieved on December 12, 2019 from https://oira.wayne.edu/institutional-data/enrollment-headcount

(InTASC) learning outcomes, which support the requirements of the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) for teacher certification.

Neither the InTASC learning outcomes for CAEP or the mission of the COE explicitly detail the importance of TCs engaging with young people or the local community as an equal teacher. However, both CAEP and the COE encourage teacher preparation that is committed to reflection, innovation, and equity in diversity. By connecting the social studies methods course to the grassroots community in order to experience a community-based pedagogy, TCs have the opportunity to meet graduation and certification requirements through meaningful and relevant practices (Darling-Hammond, 2006). Furthermore, TCs acquire further skills and resources to connect the lived experiences of young people and their communities within classroom field placements. The foundation of the syllabus for this particular social studies methods course has been designed through collaborative planning with colleagues in the COE, who are also implementing student-centered and place-conscious learning opportunities for TCs.

Social Studies Methods Course. The social studies methods course at the focal point of this research project took place during an accelerated spring/summer semester of 2019. The course was 8-weeks long and met 2 times per week in the COE of an urban public research university in Detroit, MI. Each course meeting was 150 minutes for a total of 300 minutes per week. The syllabus used for this specific social studies methods is included in the appendix section and is centered on PreK-8 elementary social studies (Appendix A). As the instructor of record for the course, I had relative autonomy and support from colleagues to curate a syllabus through a community-based pedagogical and curricular framework. The description of the course as outlined in the syllabus is as follows:

> The mission of the College of Education is to cultivate the "Effective Urban Educator", which is a teacher who is committed to innovation, reflection, and equity in diversity. As

such, this course will conceptualize the importance of the social studies classroom in the development of an effective urban educator. Importantly, teacher candidates will study community-based and culturally sustaining pedagogy and curriculum within the social studies. Additionally, teacher candidates will engage with young people who are active change agents in the local community in order to envision and implement collaborative, humanizing, and empowering social studies learning environments.

TCs engaged in collaborative learning experiences through a community-based pedagogy that was informed and/or planned by youth organizer and adult ally participants. TCs contextualized the cultural, geographic, historical, anthropological, and sociological components of the social studies through student-centered and place-conscious lens. The structure of readings, digital media, assignments, and collaborative inquiry throughout the semester prompted TCs to learn through the process of praxis and a critical conceptual framework. The goals of the course included preparing TCs to become community-based educators for the multilingual and multicultural learners they will teach in classroom field placements and their own future classrooms. In turn, the subject matter of the social studies served as a vehicle for TCs to conceptualize and enact the critical theoretical framework of community-based pedagogy as discussed in chapter two.

Community Engaged Learning Experiences: Living History of Detroit. TCs participated in four community engaged learning experiences during the semester of the social studies methods course. The first of the community engaged learning experiences involved a guest visit from a Detroit-based journalist and historian, Ken Coleman, in order to discuss the documentary film, *Detroit 48202: Conversations Along a Postal Route.*[18] The second of the community engaged learning experiences included a visit to the main branch of the Detroit Public Library for a tour of the Burton Historical Connection. Both of these community engaged learning experiences aimed to support TCs in their knowledge growth about the history of Detroit and how this impacts city residents in the present-day. Furthermore, these specific learning opportunities connected TCs to

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[18] Sporn, P (Producer & Director). (2018). *Detroit 48202: Conversations Along a Postal Route*. [Documentary Film]. Grito Productions.

assets and partners in local Detroit communities in order to strengthen their elementary social studies classrooms.

Community Engaged Learning Experiences: Adult Ally Trainings. The third and fourth community engaged learning experiences were adult ally trainings co-designed and facilitated by youth organizer and adult ally participants. Originally invited to facilitate a community-engaged learning experience for TCs, the youth organizers from Youth Liberation Army and En Los Sueños both decided to facilitate adult ally trainings. The two youth-centered grassroots organizations do not know each other and did not collaborate for the purposes of this action research project. The adult ally trainings prompted TCs to critically reflect upon and experience community-based pedagogy as conceptualized by young people. An additional ambition of these specific community engaged learning experiences was to provide TCs a deeper connection and understanding of the inherent knowledge, interests, and cultural heritage of children and young people in order to cultivate an asset lens necessary for their teaching practice. Although distinct, the adult ally trainings had similarities as they were informed by the youth organizers lived experiences in PreK-12 classrooms. Youth organizers visited the college campus to facilitate their adult ally training in order to learn, dialogue, and reflect with TCs about justice-oriented and radically loving community-based education in schools and communities.

The third community engaged learning experience was an adult ally training facilitated by Youth Liberation Army which is a school abolition group established and run by marginalized youth in order to address the most concerning issues of children and young people in schools. 6 youth organizers and 1 adult ally co-led the adult ally training that focused on the intersections of water, environmental, and education justice. The adult ally training consisted of a panel discussion, question and answer session, small group dialogue after close-reading specific texts, and

impromptu role play scenarios. The adult ally training closed with youth organizers providing TCs a "do and don't" list for classroom teaching and learning. The agenda and materials for this adult ally training is included in the appendix section (Appendix B).

The fourth community engaged learning experience was an adult ally training facilitated by En Los Sueños, which is an intergenerational organization of educators, students, families, and community members established to advocate for and work toward immigration justice as a component of education justice. 2 youth organizers and 1 adult ally from En Los Sueños co-led the adult ally training that focused on the intersections of immigration, multilingual, and education justice. The adult ally training consisted of an introductory discussion, written reflection, partner and whole group dialogue, prepared role-playing skits, and a question and answer session. The adult ally training closed with youth organizers providing TCs a "positive and negative" list for classroom teaching and learning. The agenda and materials for this adult ally training is included in the appendix section (Appendix C).

Embodying the Position of Participant-Researcher

As previously discussed, I have relationships with the youth organizers and adult allies of Youth Liberation Army and En Los Sueños. Moreover, I was the instructor of record for the social studies methods course at the center of this research project, which afforded me the opportunity to embody the position of participant-researcher (Pedroni, 2007, p. 145). In turn, I did not approach the research project as a neutral university researcher or teacher educator. Rather, I understood the research project as a purposeful opportunity to practice and learn from implementing a critical, justice-oriented, and radical community-based pedagogy, as outlined in chapter two, within a social studies methods course. Due to my experiences as a teacher educator and scholar within my COE and as a community action researcher in WPD's CRC, I carried

expertise, skills, and knowledge with me into the research project. As a white female teacher educator, this was fundamental as it allowed me to navigate the nuanced spaces between the public university and local grassroots communities. Furthermore, I had gained permission from multi-racial community leaders and elders within WPD's CRC to conduct the research project, which provided me credibility amongst the youth organizer and adult ally participants. As such, the relationships I had built within Detroit-based grassroots organizations throughout recent years ensured 8 youth organizer participants, along with their 2 adult allies, for the research project. Moreover, Rae, one of the additional adult allies, supported as a peer mentor for the social studies methods course. Upon introducing the research project to the TCs enrolled in the social studies methods course, I stepped out of the room in order for Rae to facilitate questions from the TCs and encourage their participation in the research project. In turn, my relationship with Rae and her reputation amongst the TCs provided me leverage to secure 10 teacher candidate participants for the research project.

Because of my close relationships to the adult allies, particularly Lilith and Harry, I had access to the youth organizers of Youth Liberation Army and En Los Sueños. Carrying with me the lessons I learned from my students as a classroom teacher and teacher educator, as well as my comrades in WPD's CRC, I understood that I had to continue earning the respect and trust of the youth organizers in order to secure their support in the research project. In turn, I began frequently attending the community organizing meetings and events hosted by Youth Liberation Army and En Los Sueños in order for them to get to know me on a more personal and relational level (Watson, 2012, p. 184). In addition, I sought the participation of the youth organizers by not only explaining my goals of the research project, but also clearly stating my ambitions as an anti-racist teacher educator and scholar who enacts community-based pedagogical and curricular

practices (McGeehan, 2018). Furthermore, I was clear with the youth organizers and adult allies that I desired for the research project to be purposeful and reciprocal for their own ambitions.

In turn, the youth organizers shared how visiting the social studies methods course and participating in the research project would provide them an opportunity to improve upon, practice, and learn from the facilitation of their adult ally trainings. As such, the youth organizers and adult allies recognized my expertise, skills, and knowledge, which would prove useful for their growth as grassroots community organizations. Significantly, the youth organizers learned that I was able to provide them supplies (food, post-it paper, coloring supplies, transportation, etc.), which prompted me to utilize my financial privilege as a white female teacher educator and scholar to support the grassroots community organizations in their various campaigns and initiatives. In turn, by offering my expertise, skills, knowledge, and access to a variety of privileged spaces for the benefit of the youth organizer and adult ally participants, I was able to better mediate the complex terrain of being a white female teacher educator-scholar-community organizer throughout the duration of the research project.

It is important to note that because I approached the research project as an opportunity to work toward intersectional social justice alongside the participants, I was not able to secure a classroom field placement at a Detroit-based middle school, which was where two youth organizers attended and one adult ally taught at the time. Although I met with the principal of the school multiple times in order to be a transparent and flexible participant-researcher, the administration ultimately decided I would not be able to conduct research within their school or have the TCs visit through a classroom field placement. This ultimate decision was made following many of the questions the principal had inquired about the justice-oriented aims of the research project, which I perceived as her desire to remain apolitical and neutral. However, due

to the tense relationship between the school administration and staff at the time, I believe this definitive decision by the principal actually protected the anonymity and well-being of three research project participants.

Participants

For this research project, I utilized the relationships I have with youth organizers, community members, classroom educators, and TCs in the design, implementation, and analysis of a social studies methods course. All participants engaged in collaborative data collection methods in order to assess the impact of a community-based pedagogy and, in particular, the influence of the adult ally trainings facilitated by the youth organizers. All participants were informed of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) approved research project in detail and consented to participate. Parents/guardians received information of the research project and consented to participation on behalf of participants under the age of eighteen. Adult allies were aware of and collaborative in communication with youth organizer participants. Research project participants were in direct communication with me via text or e-mail.

There are 21 total participants in the research project, all of which self-identified their pseudonym, race/ethnicity, gender pronoun, age, and student/employment status (Table 1). In addition, the youth organizers chose a pseudonym for their specific grassroots community organization. For the purposes of this research project, the 8 youth organizer participants are young people between the ages of 14-19. The 3 adult allies of this research project are involved within grassroots community organizations and/or PreK-12 education. The 10 TCs who volunteered to participate are all from the spring/summer 2019 semester of the social studies methods course, which had 22 students total. All organizations, schools, institutions, or specific locations have been

de-identified. The identity of Detroit within this research project proposal is through broad

terminology in order to mitigate the identification of participants.

Table 1.

Participant Information

Pseudonym	Race/Ethnicity	Pronouns	Gender	Age	Student/Employment Status
Youth Organizers					
Alaska	African American	She/Her/Hers	Female	17	Student
Mary	Black	She/Her/Hers	Female	18	Student/work-study
Tia	African American	She/Her/Hers	Female	19	Student
Patrick	White	She/Her/Hers	Female	18	Student/employed
Riley	White	He/Him/His	Male	19	Student
Lily	Black	She/Her/Hers	Female	19	Student/employed
Blue	Puerto Rican	She/Her/Hers	Female	14	Student
Allison	Hispanic	She/Her/Hers	Female	14	Student
Adult Allies					
Rae	Biracial	She/Her/Hers	Female	24	Special Education Teacher
Harry	White	He/Him/His	Male	Late 20s	English Language Arts Teacher
Lilith	White	She/They	Gender Fluid	27	Self-employed contract worker
Teacher Candidates					
Renee	White	She/Her/Hers	Female	21	Student/employed
Fay	White	She/Her/Hers	Female	39	Student/employed
Amy	White	She/Her/Hers	Female	NA	Student/employed
Kramer	White	She/Her/Hers	Female	24	Student/employed
Maya	Asian American and White	She/Her/Hers	Female	23	Student/employed
Eleanor	White	She/Her/Hers	Female	23	Student/employed
Tyrone	African American	He/Him/His	Male	22	Student/employed
Gabrielle	Latina	She/Her/Hers	Female	24	Student/employed
Rosalina	White	She/Her/Hers	Female	35	Student/employed
Christopher	White	She/Her/Hers	Female	24	Student/employed

Table Notes.

For more information regarding pronouns, please see: GLSEN. (2020). *Pronouns: A resource guide for educators.* Retrieved on February 4, 2020 from: https://www.glsen.org/activity/pronouns-resource-educators.

Youth Organizers

The particular focus of this research project pertains to distinct two adult ally trainings designed and facilitated by youth organizers who are also participants. I have ongoing relationships with the youth organizers through my involvement in their grassroots organizations – Youth Liberation Army and En Los Sueños – which I have discussed previously in chapter one and here in chapter three. I engaged in collaborative planning meetings with each group separately. Not knowing about the other organization's plans, each group designed and facilitated unique adult ally trainings for TCs in the social studies methods course. Although distinctive, the adult ally trainings had similarities as they were informed by the youth organizers lived experiences as young people and students in Detroit. Youth organizers visited the college campus to facilitate their adult ally training in order to learn, dialogue, and reflect with TCs about justice-oriented, humanizing, and loving education in schools and communities. I will briefly describe the 6 youth organizers from Youth Liberation Army and 2 youth organizers from En Los Sueños here in order to center their humanity and identity within the research project:

Alaska. Alaska is a 17-year-old African American female (She/Her/Hers) and a current high school student. Alaska is a co-founding member of Youth Liberation Army and is an active youth organizer within her school and Detroit community. Alaska declares: "I just want people to know that I'm just like any other student. There's nothing magical about me. I'm not the exception and I'm the norm."

Mary. Mary is an 18-year-old Black female (She/Her/Hers) and a current college student. As a high school senior, Mary was a co-founding member of Youth Liberation Army and currently collaborates with the grassroots organization through advising and mentorship. Mary explains:

"Everything we say has purpose because we put the thought and meaning behind it. I want people to know that we are always open to ideas that adults have, but sometimes it gets overbearing."

Tia. Tia is an 18-year-old African American female (She/Her/Hers) and a current college student. As a high school senior, Tia was a co-founding member of Youth Liberation Army and is currently facilitating the Youth Advisory Board of the grassroots organization. Tia asserts: "I'm involved in Youth Liberation Army and things like that because I have a genuine passion for creating change in Detroit."

Patrick. Patrick is an 18-year-old white female (She/Her/Hers) and a current college student. As a high school senior, Patrick was a co-founding member of Youth Liberation Army and remains an active member in the grassroots organization. Patrick clarifies: "[We] want to build relationships with other adults because we're working towards a common goal. It's about challenging the stigmas and what's expected and how we're supposed to interact with one another."

Riley. Riley is a 19-year-old white male (He/Him/His) and a current college student. As a high school senior, Riley was a co-founding member of Youth Liberation Army and currently collaborates with the grassroots organization through advising and mentorship. Riley encourages: "Age doesn't have to define you … just because you're young, it doesn't mean you can't have knowledge and you can't have experience."

Lily. Lily is a 19-year-old Black female (She/Her/Hers) and a current college student. As a high school senior, Lily was a co-founding member of Youth Liberation Army and currently collaborates with the grassroots organization through advising and mentorship. Lily implores: "I am in this for the long run. I want to see the education crisis solved and I want to see people working towards it. I just want change and I just want to look back on this and feel good about the change that I helped with."

Blue. Blue is a 14-year-old Puerto Rican female (She/Her/Hers) and is a current high school student. Blue became involved in her middle school's action club as a 7th grader, which led her to become involved in a variety of grassroots organizations in Detroit. She is currently an active member with the Youth Organizing Committee of En Los Sueños. Blue reflects: "Whenever I do things like this, it gives me a chance to share what I think is important and it makes me feel like I made a difference in the world."

Allison. Allison is a 14-year-old Hispanic female (She/Her/Hers) and is a current high school student. Allison became involved in her middle school's action club as a 7th grader, which led her to become involved in a variety of grassroots organizations in Detroit. She is currently an active member with the Youth Organizing Committee of En Los Sueños. Allison explains: "I'm really passionate about immigration work because it's something that is going on around where I live, so I got into it more than I thought I would."

Adult Allies

There were 3 adult allies who participated in the research project. It is important to note that two out of the three adult allies in this action research project are white, which I acknowledge as a limitation. While the adult allies are tenacious in efforts to grow as anti-racists, efforts to acknowledge and amplify local Black, Indigenous, and educators of color must be strengthened in current and future research. The adult allies are involved with youth organizers, grassroots community organizations, and PreK-12 education, yet they each have distinct identities and professions. For the purposes of this research project, adults who are involved within grassroots community organizations alongside young people are adult allies. I will describe them briefly here:

Harry. Harry is a white male (He/Him/His) in his late 20s. He is a middle school English Language Arts teacher at a predominantly Hispanic and Latinx charter school in Detroit. Harry is

actively involved with his students through intergenerational grassroots organizations that advocate for education justice within schools and communities. Alongside his students and colleagues, Harry is a co-founding member of En Los Sueños.

Lilith. Lilith is a 27-year-old white gender-fluid person (She/They). She is a self-employed contract worker who is an active community organizer, community educator, and facilitator within local and national grassroots community spaces. Through their work as a school abolitionist, Lilith is a co-founding member of Youth Liberation Army in collaboration with youth organizers and young people.

Rae. Rae is a 24-year-old Biracial female (She/Her/Hers). At the beginning of this research project, Rae was an active peer mentor for TCs enrolled in the social studies methods and completing her final classroom field placement requirement as a teacher candidate. Rae is a recent graduate of the COE and current middle school special education teacher at a predominantly Arab American public school in Metro Detroit.

Teacher Candidates

There were 10 TCs who volunteered their time to participate in the research project. The TCs were enrolled in the spring/summer semester of the social studies methods course which had 22 students total. TCs are undergraduate students enrolled in an urban public research university and they are in level two of their undergraduate and teacher certification program of their COE. Many of the TCs will graduate in the subsequent year of the social studies methods course. I will describe each TC briefly here:

Renee. Renee is a 21-year-old white female teacher candidate (She/Her/Hers) majoring in Special Education with a Cognitive Impairment endorsement. Renee is a director of a special needs summer camp program in Metro Detroit and is passionate about climate justice.

Fay. Fay is a 39-year-old white female teacher candidate (She/Her/Hers) majoring in Special Education. A mother of two and an active member in her children's school, Fay is interested in Universal Design for Learning in order to make the world accessible for everyone.

Amy. Amy is a white female teacher candidate (She/Her/Hers) majoring in Elementary Education with an Early Childhood endorsement. Amy is active in a variety of extracurricular activities and community service opportunities with elementary school-aged students.

Kramer. Kramer is a 24-year-old white female teacher candidate (She/Her/Hers) majoring in Elementary Education with an Early Childhood endorsement. Kramer is dedicated to her family and connects this to her work with infants at a local daycare/preschool.

Maya. Maya is a 23-year-old Asian American and white female teacher candidate (She/Her/Hers) majoring in Integrated Sciences Elementary Education. Maya is creative and is passionate about connecting the Arts and Science for fun and inclusive learning experiences.

Eleanor. Eleanor is a 23-year-old white female teacher candidate (She/Her/Hers) majoring in Elementary Education with a concentration in Early Childhood. Eleanor is a nanny for three young boys which has inspired the development of a student-centered teaching practice.

Gabrielle. Gabrielle is a 24-year-old Latina female teacher candidate (She/Her/Hers) majoring in Elementary Education with a concentration in Early Childhood. Gabrielle loves reading and enjoys learning about local history, especially in connection to her cultural heritage.

Tyrone. Tyrone is a 22-year-old African American male teacher candidate (He/Him/His) majoring in Special Education. Tyrone is on the university football team and is an active volunteer within local schools, various community groups, and his church.

Rosalina. Rosalina is a 35-year-old white female teacher candidate (She/Her/Hers) majoring in Special Education with a Cognitive Impairment endorsement. A mother of two, Rosalina engages in a variety of community learning experiences with her children.

Christopher. Christopher is a 24-year-old white female teacher candidate (She/Her/Hers) majoring in Elementary Education with a concentration in Early Childhood. Christopher is currently a lead teacher for 2.5-year-olds at a local daycare/preschool.

Data Source Collection

The research project implemented a variety of qualitative data collection methods in order to report on various processes for the development, implementation, and impact of a community-based pedagogy within a social studies methods course (Maxwell, 2013; Paris & Winn, 2014; Smith, 2012). The data source collection spanned a five-month period, April 2019 through August 2019, and occurred through three distinct phases: before, during, and after the social studies methods course. Data sources were shared with participants at each distinct phase of the research project in order to gain insight and feedback. The appendix section includes the consent forms provided to all participants and parents/guardians for participants under the age of 18 (Appendix D), as well as the various interview protocols (Appendix E).

Ongoing Through All Data Collection Phases

Throughout the duration of the action research project, I took field notes of my observations during the design, implementation, and analysis of the social studies methods course. These observations detail my own personal voice, perceptions, and reflections throughout each phase of the research project. In addition, I engaged in critical reflection in a personal research journal about the possibilities, contradictions, and limitations of a community-based pedagogy. The field notes and journal only include observations and reflections of research project participants. I used

pseudonyms during the construction of field notes and journal writing in addition to deidentifying all organizations, schools, institutions, or specific locations in order to protect the anonymity of participants. I cross-analyzed the field notes and journal writing with various data collection sources and subsequent analyses throughout the research project.

Phase One: Before the Course

As a participant-researcher, I had already built relationships with the adult allies and youth organizers of Youth Liberation Army and En Los Sueños. In order to maintain the trust and respect of Youth Liberation Army and En Los Sueños, I continued attending various meetings, community events, and rallies/marches facilitated or attended by the two grassroots organizations. Through these interactions, I began brainstorming ideas with youth organizers and adult allies about the ways in which they might collaborate with the social studies methods course. To ensure reciprocity and accountability, Youth Liberation Army and En Los Sueños requested that I provide them with the opportunity to practice their facilitation and leadership skills through the use of adult ally trainings for TCs. Data source collection at this phase included writing field note observations and reflective journal entries.

During phase one, I facilitated individual semi-structured interviews with the adult allies – Harry, Lilith, and Rae – in order to better understand how they conceptualize and enact their nuanced roles in schools and communities. I audio recorded and transcribed the semi-structured interviews. During this phase, I also engaged in separate collaborative planning meetings with Youth Liberation Army and En Los Sueños in the co-design of their distinct adult ally trainings for the social studies methods course. In addition, I received feedback from Youth Liberation Army and En Los Sueños on the assignments and multi-modal resources of the social studies methods course syllabus. I audio recorded and transcribed the collaborative planning meetings.

The audio recordings were cross-analyzed with field notes and journal entries in order to critically reflect on the development of a community-based pedagogy informed by the voices and experiences of youth organizers.

Phase Two: During the Course

On the first day of the spring/summer social studies methods course, I introduced TCs to the research project. TCs had the opportunity to voluntarily participate in the research project anytime during the duration of the semester. 10 out of the 22 TCs enrolled in the course consented to participating in the research project. All 22 of the TCs participated in the community-engaged learning experiences and assignments of the social studies methods course. With consent, I took observation field notes only of participating TCs when the social studies methods course was collaborating in the adult ally trainings with Youth Liberation Army and En Los Sueños. These field notes recorded observable interactions between participating TCs and youth organizers. Throughout the course, I engaged in active journal writing in order to critically reflect upon the implementation and impact of community-based pedagogical learning experiences amongst participating TCs.

After the adult ally trainings, I debriefed with participants from Youth Liberation Army and En Los Sueños. I met with Youth Liberation Army to reflect on their visit to the social studies methods course, while the youth organizers and adult ally from En Los Sueños communicated via e-mail through the use of written reflections. I took detailed observation field notes of these reflective interactions before comparing and contrasting the discussions and writings to the collaborative planning meetings with Youth Liberation Army and En Los Sueños. To ensure reciprocity and accountability, Youth Liberation Army and En Los Sueños requested that I provide

them with summarized feedback pertaining to the adult ally trainings once I had collected and analyzed the various data sources from all research project participants.

Phase Three: After the Course

Following the completion of the social studies methods course, after all grades were submitted and finalized, I contacted the research project participants to initiate individual semi-structured interviews. The primary purpose of these interviews was to engage participants in critical inquiry and collaborative dialogue about the impact of a community-based pedagogy in the social studies methods course. I again interviewed each of the adult allies in semi-structured individual interviews. I interviewed Blue and Allison, youth organizers from En Los Sueños, together with their adult ally, Harry. I interviewed youth organizers from Youth Liberation Army – Alaska, Mary, Tia, Patrick, Riley, and Lily – individually. I also interviewed each teacher candidate – Renee, Fay, Amy, Kramer, Maya, Eleanor, Gabrielle, Tyrone, Rosalina, and Christopher – individually. Each interview ranged from 45 to 120 minutes. I audio recorded and transcribed all of the interviews and shared in the transcriptions with participants in order to ensure their ability to revise or redact specific information.

Following their individual interview, I gained the permission of TCs to analyze their course assignments. Assignments were examined for patterns and cross-analyzed with observation field notes, journal reflections, and interviews in order to identify how TCs conceptualized and enacted community-based pedagogy within their specific subject area and grade level. During the subsequent fall semester, I asked TCs to complete a follow-up survey via e-mail in order to understand how they are implementing community-based pedagogy, if at all, within their additional methods course and current classroom field placements. 9 out of the 10 TCs responded to and completed the follow-up survey via e-mail. To ensure reciprocity and accountability, I have

maintained contact with many of the TCs participating in the research project. Through e-mail, text, or in-person meetings, I continue to guide and mentor some of the TCs relating to their development and growth as community-based educators.

Analysis of Data Source Collection

I engaged in the analysis of data sources throughout the data collection phases. During phases one, two, and three of the research project, I immersed myself in initial coding in order to organize the data into broad overarching categories (Maxwell, 2013). These codes suggested developing patterns in the action research project, which I actively utilized in comparing and contrasting the ongoing collection of data sources (Maxwell, 2013). Initially, the categories of analysis grouped the data source collection by participants in order to understand the impact of community-based pedagogy on youth organizers, adult allies, and TCs respectively. As such, each phase of the research project consisted of numerous ongoing levels of analysis at one time (Maxwell, 2013). From these initial categorical groups and subsequent developing patterns, emerging themes were established which contributed to the possibilities, contradictions, and limitations of community-based pedagogy within a social studies methods course.

In particular, youth organizers from Youth Liberation Army and En Los Sueños requested that I provide them with summarized feedback pertaining to the adult ally trainings once I had collected and analyzed the various data sources from research project participants (Appendix F and G). As such, the emerging themes specifically focused on the dialogue and interactions between youth organizers and TCs during the adult ally trainings. I met with participants from Youth Liberation Army and En Los Sueños separately in order to share in detailed feedback pertaining to their distinct adult ally trainings and the subsequent emerging themes of the research project. Through collaborative discussion, youth organizers and adult allies from the grassroots

organizations reflected upon the summarized feedback of their adult ally trainings. Youth organizers and adult allies also asked generative questions and offered their insight related to the emerging themes. In addition to the follow-up survey, I shared in the emerging themes with TCs via e-mail in order to gain their perspectives. 9 out of the 10 TCs responded to the e-mail and consented to the emerging themes of the research project.

The thoughtful critique of participants during the analysis process of the data sources actively worked to convey the complex perceptions and experiences within the research project (Paris & Winn, 2014; Smith, 2012). In efforts to mitigate a "single story", the interpretation of the data aimed to represent the voices and experiences of participants (Anders & Lester, 2015; Adichie, 2009). By engaging in consistent critical reflection during the collection and analysis of data sources with participants, I am able to center their own identification and representation within the research project (Anders & Lester, 2015). Moreover, the analyses of data sources are actively being used by youth organizers and adult allies in their current community organizing initiatives and campaigns related to intersectional social justice issues in education. Furthermore, survey responses from TCs indicate that the social studies methods course and their involvement in the research project have informed their developing practice as classroom teachers.

Considerations for the Collection and Analysis of Data Sources

This action research project, informed by community-based and participatory methodologies, encourages teacher education programs to rethink perceptions and expectations of children and young people uniquely involved in transformative social change (Kelley, 2014). In turn, the action research project encourages intergenerational collaboration between youth organizers, adult allies, and TCs within teacher education programs. The objectives of this research project are inherently averse to systems of oppression (re)produced in PreK-12 schooling. In turn,

the findings section engages in critical analysis about the potentiality and contradictions pertaining to youth organizers as essential partners in teacher education. Thus, the humanizing methodology of community-based and participatory action research affords the analysis of the opportunities and challenges in developing a community-based pedagogy within the realities of PreK-12 classrooms and teacher education (Irizarry & Brown, 2014).

As previously mentioned, I collaborated with participants as I collected and analyzed the data sources for the research project. Through this reciprocal and accountable process, the participants provided greater nuance and depth pertaining to the emerging themes and subsequent findings of the research project. Through the process of praxis, which is the combined use of reflection, dialogue, and transformative action (Freire, 1970), the participants engaged with me in furthering the analysis of a community-based pedagogy within a social studies methods course (Kinloch & San Pedro, 2014). Through these collaborative efforts within action research, I aimed to "ensure that power is not used in suppressive or coercive ways – that is, that power is used 'with' and not 'over' others" (Irizarry & Brown, 2014).

As a white female teacher educator and scholar at an urban public research university, I hold social, cultural, and economic power that many of the participants do not. My identity as a white female within the academy secures my privilege and protection over many of the research project participants, specifically those who are Black/African American, Latina, and Asian American students. Throughout history and into the present day, universities conduct harmful research upon vulnerable participants, particularly within Black, Indigenous, and communities of color. Furthermore, university researchers actively erase the inherent knowledge of Black, Indigenous, and communities of color when they do not develop respectful and mutual relationships with research project participants. In turn, the relationships and community at the

center of this research project are essential as they have required my accountability and reciprocity to the participants in the collection, analysis, and use of data sources (Hurston, 2018).

This research project does not intend to romanticize youth organizers, adult allies, or TCs (Fordham, 2014). In addition, this research project does not aim to provide any false illusions concerning the realities of intergenerational learning experiences within the realities of PreK-12 classrooms and teacher education programs. Ongoing dialogue with advisors and colleagues within academic, classroom, and grassroots community spaces grounds me in cautious optimism about the possibilities, contradictions, and limitations of curating a community-based pedagogy alongside youth organizer, adult ally, and teacher candidate participants. Accordingly, the findings and the subsequent implications offered from this research project provide invigorating, yet incomplete and always ongoing suggestions for the role of youth organizers as essential partners in teacher education for transformative social change.

Adult participants of this action research project are intended to be allies as they learn and work alongside youth organizers through a community-based theoretical framework. However, this action research project has the ability to empower and/or disenfranchise the youth organizers as they (re)center their voices and lived experiences within the social studies methods course through the use of adult ally trainings (Cammarota, 2011). For example, while the youth organizers were driven by the opportunity to facilitate the adult ally trainings for TCs, they were still prompted to re-live traumatic experiences as they planned, implemented, and reflected upon their collaboration within the social studies methods course. Furthermore, there are instances in which adult participants, such as TCs and adult allies, are actively (re)learning their roles within intergenerational learning communities, which may have led to the (re)production of harmful top-down power dynamics within educational spaces. This creates problematic scenarios in

which adults may further suppress children and young people in their attempts to participate in the work of collective liberation (Irizarry & Brown, 2014). In turn, adult allies and research project participants must reframe how young people are involved in the praxis of both community-based pedagogy and methodology (Gildersleeve, 2010). Thus, the action research project encourages teacher educators, TCs, classroom teachers, and community organizers to (re)think perceptions and expectations of children and young people uniquely involved in transformative social change (Kelley, 2014).

In turn, the goals of this action research project prompts participants to move beyond simply listening to children and young people and begin to develop strategies for powering with one another for intersectional social justice (Irizarry & Brown, 2014). As a white female teacher educator-scholar-community organizer, this challenged me to reflect and act upon my responsibility to anti-racist practices as I collaborated with youth organizers who were predominantly female Black and Latina students. Likewise, due to my professional and experienced position as a teacher educator-scholar-community organizer, I often traversed the line of supporting the ambitions and ideas of youth organizers, while still guiding and supporting them as students, change agents, and facilitators. In turn, I utilized the methodology of action research to better understand how participants of various age, racial, and gendered backgrounds engage in complex intergenerational collaboration in order to further the development of community-based pedagogy within teacher education programs, PreK-12 classrooms, and grassroots community spaces.

As a participant-researcher, there were numerous instances where I offered my expertise, skills, and knowledge during collaborative planning meetings with the youth organizer and adult ally participants in order to provide guidance in the development of the adult ally trainings. For

example, because of my background as a teacher educator-scholar-community organizer, I would make suggestions and provide feedback through conversations that began with: "I'm wondering about ... ?", "What if ... ?", "Have you thought about ... ?", or "When I did something similar, I learned ... ." In addition, there were occurrences in collaborative planning meetings where I had to remind youth organizer and adult ally participants about my own needs as an instructor of record for the social studies methods course and Principle Investigator of the action research project. In turn, I had to contemplate the demands of my public university and the desires of the grassroots community. This was often a challenging space to occupy and embody as I did not intend to elevate the whiteness of the academy or center my own white privilege above the youth organizers.

While collecting data sources, I was an instructor of record for the TCs who were enrolled in the social studies methods course and participants in the research project. As I guided the predominantly white female TCs in the development of their critical consciousness throughout the semester, I often disrupted deficit mindsets, which is to be expected as a teacher educator who is implementing community-based pedagogical and curricular practices. However, I was also collecting field notes or writing in my own reflective field journal, which complicated my embodiment of a participant-researcher. Moreover, one-on-one interviews with some of the TCs was particularly challenging as they occasionally shared internalized biased views about the youth organizers or students within their classroom field placements. Although the interviews served as a data source, I felt a responsibility to interrupt such harmful views through the use of guided questions and critical inquiry prompts during semi-structured interviews. In turn, I attempted to engage my responsibility as an anti-racist teacher educator-scholar-community

organizer, but also struggled with the complexity of such moments throughout the collection of data sources.

Similar to my experiences as a classroom teacher and teacher educator, the collection and analysis of data sources throughout the research project provided me the opportunity to better understand how I may curate, navigate, and engage in anti-racist spaces as a white female. Yet, the same questions I asked as a white female teacher educator-scholar-community organizer within chapter one remain long-after the collection and analysis of data sources: Am I further suppressing student voice? Am I privileging perspectives over others? Is this actually an egalitarian learning community? Am I elevating specific multicultural experiences above others? Should I be the one teaching in these contexts? Am I (re)producing the trauma experienced by some of my students? Is this really an empowering critical pedagogy (Ellsworth, 1992)? I contend that I am still grappling with nuanced inquiries outlined here, yet I intend to continue developing as an embodied participant-researcher who is informed by community-based and participatory methodologies in efforts to achieve collective liberation (Petty, 2018).

Within this milieu, I acknowledge the uniqueness of this action research project in its approach to community-based and participatory methodologies. Furthermore, I affirm that the relationships I have with participants, particularly with youth organizers and adult allies within local grassroots communities, are distinct. However, this is not a limitation for the analysis and discussion of the findings in this research project. Rather, these relationships foster accountable and reciprocal implications in order for this action research project to benefit the participants directly. Moreover, I contend that the relationships I have with participants models and advocates for a community-based pedagogy that is radical, democratic, feminist, participatory, and most

importantly, loving. To this end, I quote Carla Shalaby, author of *Troublemakers: Lessons in Freedom from Young Children at School* (2017), at length:

> I propose that we be love … If you be love, as a teacher, then what you model is the belief – through the everyday things you do – that no human being deserves to suffer any threat to or assault on her personhood. It means that even in the face of a young person constantly calling you out, cursing you out, or throwing a chair, you be love in response that disciplines rather than punishes. You be love by modeling healing over harm. You be love by restoring community instead of excluding community. People misunderstand the meaning of love in public life. On the surface it can seem easy to be love. We can be less mean, more forgiving. We can yell less and smile more. Public love is confused with things like affection, kindness, politeness. I am talking instead about a love that is fierce, powerful, political, insistent. This kind of love is not easy. Authentic public love necessarily demands conflict, tears, and hurt, because our transition to freedom and to more human ways of being requires that we call ourselves out in order to call others in. It requires that we be willing to confront one another, and that we be willing to listen generously when we are being confronted – letting go of our personal feelings for a commitment, instead, to the shared goal of freedom. Can we imagine our classrooms as a place to practice these revolutionary ways of being? If being love means materially changing the conditions of our world, we can begin to understand why it is hard work. And it becomes clear that we need to start practicing early, as young children, with the support of adults who are teaching and learning alongside us. (p. 172-173)

Through the lens of being love, I argue that the foundational framework of this action research project and the social studies methods course may be fostered with varying people and places as children, young people, classroom teachers, teacher educators, teacher candidates, and intergenerational community organizers realize education as the practice of freedom.

Findings

The analysis of the data sources found that the design, implementation, and impact of adult ally trainings emerged as the most salient experience of the social studies methods course amongst participants, which will be discussed in depth within chapters four, five, and six. Generatively, my specific focus on the adult ally trainings for the purposes of this research project is also based upon the requests of the youth organizer participants in Youth Liberation Army and En Los Sueños. At the onset of the research project, after being prompted to lead a community-engaged learning

experience, youth organizers requested that I provide them with the opportunity to practice their facilitation and leadership skills through the use of adult ally trainings for TCs. Following the adult ally trainings, I engaged in dialogue with the youth organizers from Youth Liberation Army and En Los Sueños in which they requested that I provide them with summarized feedback pertaining to the adult ally trainings.

These specific requests informed my focal point during the data analysis process and matched my initial ambitions for the research project – to (re)center and amplify the voices and lived experiences of young people in order to curate egalitarian learning opportunities for intersectional social justice within schools and communities. To this end, chapter four will examine the process of youth organizers, adult allies, and TCs engaging in critical dialogue and reflection through the analysis of three over-arching findings: (1) youth organizers as impassioned disruptors in teacher education, (2) youth organizers as realistic visionaries for social change, and (3) youth organizers as reflective learners through praxis. Subsequently, chapter five will discuss the possibilities, contradictions, and limitations of Youth Liberation Army and En Los Sueños as essential partners in the social studies methods course. In turn, chapter six will outline implications for teacher education programs who are developing community-based practices in partnership with intergenerational community members, grassroots community organizations, and local school districts for transformative social change.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Antiracist pedagogy combined with grassroots organizing can prepare students and their families to demand the impossible in the fight for eradicating these persistent and structural barriers. Pedagogy should work in tandem with students' own knowledge of their community and grassroots organizations to push forward new ideas for social change, not just be a tool to enhance test scores or grades. Pedagogy, regardless of its name, is useless without teachers dedicated to challenging systemic oppression with intersectional social justice. (Love, 2019, p. 19)

Ally (verb): to unite or form a connection or relation between; to form or enter into an alliance. (Merriam-Webster, 2019)

Introduction

A primary purpose of this action research project is to acknowledge and disrupt existing systemic barriers between PreK-12 schooling, local communities, and teacher education programs. As a teacher educator-scholar-community organizer, I frequently connect the people, places, and ecosystems of local Detroit communities to the courses I instruct within the College of Education (COE). Through this community-based pedagogical and curricular approach, I prompt teacher candidates (TCs) to foster a sense of belonging and accountability to the students they will teach. Through this process, TCs are encouraged to identify with the inherent strength and knowledge of children, young people, and local communities in order to cultivate place-conscious and culturally sustaining PreK-12 classroom spaces. In turn, due to my ongoing role as a community organizer and adult ally within Detroit-based youth-centered and intergenerational grassroots community organizing spaces, I collaborated with Youth Liberation Army and En Los Sueños for a social studies methods course in the spring/summer semester of 2019. Purposefully, the youth organizers facilitated two distinct adult ally trainings in order to join the TCs in the process of praxis – dialogue, reflection, and action (Freire, 1970). As such, the youth organizers modeled how TCs may better engage with children and young people for humanizing and liberatory education.

Meaningfully, the adult ally trainings intended to enhance TCs understanding and use of community-based pedagogy while also supporting youth organizers in their social justice work within schools and communities. Furthermore, this dynamic practice of designing and implementing adult ally trainings informed the roles of adult allies involved in the action research project as we grow to be more community-based educators and organizers. In turn, this chapter engages in a critical examination of how youth organizers, TCs, and adult allies dialogue with one another as they reflect upon experiencing place-conscious and culturally sustaining learning opportunities within and through a social studies methods course. More specifically, this chapter will invite the reader into an experience that mirrors the process of learning within community through the analysis of three over-arching findings that (re)center youth organizers as essential partners in teacher education: (1) youth organizers as impassioned disruptors in teacher education, (2) youth organizers as realistic visionaries for social change, and (3) youth organizers as reflective learners through praxis.

Purposefully, this chapter will examine the findings through the theoretical framework of community-based pedagogy in order to reimagine education as a method to challenge systemic oppression and cultivate intersectional social justice. Due to the complexity and nuance of such educational practices, the analysis of the findings will unfurl the possibilities, contradictions, and limitations of collaborating with youth organizers and their adult allies through a community-based pedagogical framework, which will be discussed in depth in chapter five. This chapter will conclude by acknowledging and affirming youth organizers desire for adult allyship to be a call to action to realize transformative social change within schools and communities. For the purposes of chapters four, five, and six, I will refer myself as a teacher educator-scholar-community organizer, researcher-participant, and adult ally interchangeably.

Adult Ally Trainings

This chapter will specifically focus upon the design, facilitation, and impact of two distinct adult ally trainings led by two youth-centered grassroots community organizations, Youth Liberation Army and En Los Sueños. As discussed in chapter three, the grassroots organizations did not collaborate together and thus created unique adult ally trainings for TCs through the context of the social studies methods course. To this end, it is illuminating that both Youth Liberation Army and En Los Sueños decided to curate adult ally trainings based upon the various lived experiences of youth organizers in schools and communities. The adult ally trainings were facilitated by the youth organizers – Blue, Allison, Alaska, Mary, Tia, Patrick, Riley, and Lily – with support and guidance from myself and the other adult allies – Harry, Lilith, and Rae. The two adult ally trainings were informed and inspired by previous presentations, trainings, and professional development sessions that Youth Liberation Army and En Los Sueños have formerly facilitated for school staff/faculty, community educators, family members, and grassroots organizers. It is important to note that Youth Liberation Army utilizes the terms adult ally and adult ally trainings through their work in schools and communities. In turn, the adult allies of this research project, as well as Allison and Blue from En Los Sueños, agreed to identify with both terms for the purposes of this research project.

Youth organizers visited the social studies methods course on two separate days to facilitate their adult ally training in order to learn, dialogue, and reflect with TCs about justice-oriented and radically loving community-based education in schools and communities. Throughout the research project, I conducted detailed field notes in order to reflect on the impact of designing and implementing community engaged learning experiences, such as adult ally trainings, alongside youth organizers and their adult allies. Here, I will quote two excerpts from my field notes journal

at length in order to thoroughly depict the distinct adult ally trainings facilitated by Youth Liberation Army and En Los Sueños. The full agendas and resources for each adult ally training are in the appendix section (Appendix B and C). The specific content of the two separate adult ally trainings will be thoroughly analyzed and discussed in this chapter and in the subsequent chapter five.

Adult Ally Training One: Youth Liberation Army

On Monday, June 12, Youth Liberation Army visited my class for their adult ally training. There were six youth organizers present – Alaska, Lily, Mary, Patrick, Riley, and Tia – along with their adult ally, Lilith. At the start of the session, the youth organizers shared in the agenda for the day and introduced themselves to my teacher candidates. The youth organizers were seated at the front of the room in order to facilitate a panel discussion in which Lilith asked them questions about their experiences with adults and teachers within school. During this panel discussion, one of the teacher candidates was asking quite a few questions about their work and what inspires them as youth organizers. This teacher candidate appeared to be enthralled and her learning experience through Youth Liberation Army was prominent throughout the class period. As the youth organizers led the panel discussion, they referenced their previous work around March For Our Lives and their organizing against gun violence. They also discussed their work regarding the Detroit water crisis and explained current efforts about water testing, which was featured in an article from *Riverwise Magazine*[19] that my teacher candidates read ahead of time for class. Next, the youth organizers passed out reading materials for my teacher candidates to annotate before small group dialogue. The three texts were: (1) Dr. Martin Luther King's *Letter from a Birmingham Jail*[20], (2) Kahlil Gibran's *On Children*[21], and (3) text message exchanges between parents/children, along with Facebook comments from adults critiquing the work of Youth Liberation Army. Youth Liberation Army broke the teacher candidates up into small groups of six, which allowed each youth organizer to facilitate a small group discussion with the class. The small group discussion was a focal point of the community engaged learning experience and it encouraged everyone to engage in critical inquiry around the texts, while also making connections to the work of Youth Liberation and the preparation of the teacher candidates as future educators. As I walked around the classroom, I noticed high levels of engagement and participation. I also heard teacher candidates referencing our community norms in order to engage in active listening and dialogue with their peers and the youth organizers. Following the small group discussion, Youth Liberation Army facilitated a whole class debrief before a 10-minute break. Next, Youth Liberation Army facilitated role play scenarios in which adults/teachers were supportive and/or demeaning allies. Each role play scenario stemmed from the experiences of the youth organizers in schools. After each role play, the youth organizers would ask

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[19] Campbell, E. (2018). Young activists test for water safety. *Riverwise Magazine*, Fall-Winter 2018, 7-8.

[20] King, M.L. (1963). *Letter From a Birmingham Jail*. The Martin Luther King, Jr. Research and Education Institute. Retrieved on January 7, 2020, from: https://kinginstitute.stanford.edu/king-papers/documents/letter-birmingham-jail

[21] Gibran, K. (1923). On children. *The Prophet*. Retrieved on January 7, 2020, from: https://poets.org/poem/children-1

teacher candidates for their thoughts and reflections before prompting them to engage in an additional role play where they modeled how adults could act positively in the same scenario as allies. The final role play was related to classroom teaching and what to do as teachers when students bring social justice issues, local causes, etc. to the classroom. This allowed us to engage in critical dialogue about our previous course readings, podcasts, and assignments. It was in this moment that I hoped my teacher candidates were able to clearly imagine and visualize the work we have been (re)learning about in action. At the end of the community engaged learning experience, the youth organizers shared a list of "Do's" and "Don'ts" with teacher candidates in order to support them in being adult allies in the classroom. This was especially applicable to teacher candidates because the list was filled with strategies that they can easily apply to the classroom.

Adult Ally Training Two: En Los Sueños

On Monday of this week, Harry, Allison, and Blue of En Los Sueños joined my class to facilitate an adult ally training. The training was one that we had been collaboratively planning and it was a training that they revised based upon previously professional development facilitations at their school. Ahead of their visit, Harry, Allison, and Blue had shared their plans with me through Google Docs and asked me to print materials for them and their students. Harry, Allison, and Blue arrived early, and they were able to run through their plans and prep for the workshop before class began. After I introduced Harry, Allison, and Blue, Allison and Blue began the workshop by sharing in their work with En Los Sueños and their action club at school. They explained the "learning outcomes" and "agenda" for the day and they had displayed a "data wall" on the whiteboard at the front of the room, as part of a role-playing skit that would reveal itself later on in the training. Allison and Blue began by going through a list of negative things teachers do in the classroom and in school that are based upon their own experiences. They acted out two skits, which required volunteers from my class. After each skit, Allison and Blue invited the teacher candidates to debrief, dialogue, and ask questions. The first skit was regarding languages other than English (in their case, Spanish) not being allowed to be spoken in certain classrooms in their school, even though it is a bilingual school. Allison and Blue explained how this feels as students, how they perceive their teachers who enforce English-only classrooms, and how such practices have impacted their sustaining ability to speak Spanish. While debriefing the skit, some teacher candidates were quick to excuse the "no Spanish" policy because teachers may not know what is being said or students may be bullying one another. This allowed both Harry and I to generatively interrupt with discussions of humanizing and culturally sustaining practices in the classroom. In addition, other teacher candidates in the class brought up the importance of students being able to speak both English and Spanish in the classroom and in the school because it is affirming, inclusive, and respectful. From there, many of the teacher candidates asked Allison and Blue questions about their experiences in school regarding speaking in English and Spanish, which allowed them to speak their truth about the importance and purpose of Spanish to their identities, cultural heritage, and knowledge. Allison explained her own experiences of coming to school and not knowing English, so she was placed in a separate classroom where she was immersed in English-only curriculum. One of the teacher candidates identified with Allison and reflected on similar experiences she had as an immigrant

student. This discussion was really thoughtful as it encouraged teacher candidates to make deep connections to the content of our course around culturally sustaining pedagogy. The next skit pertained to data walls in which students were publicly praised and/or demeaned for the scores they earned in class. When prompted to debrief this experience, a teacher candidate brought up how this enforces competition and encourages his little sister to behave in class. However, one of the teacher candidates had brought 3 boys she nannies to class the same day and one of the boys, who is in early elementary school, explained how much he disliked the data wall scenario because it was mean and scary. Allison then shared how she was discussing data walls with her elementary school aged siblings and how they had expressed the similar feelings of fear and sadness regarding data walls. From there, we had a really robust discussion in our classroom about what it means to ground our classrooms in love, respect, trust, and community. Harry again shared in his own teaching practices and how the work of building a loving community in his classroom can be challenging because many students are used to teachers being "strict", "punishing", and/or "yelling". This was an important opportunity for teacher candidates to think outside the parameters of typical "classroom management" and to brainstorm what it looks like to cultivate a community-based classroom environment. Following the second skit, Blue and Allison shared positive examples of what teachers do and shared that Harry does all of these in his classroom. For this skit, Harry acted as the teacher and acted out what it looks like to start each class period in his class. This facilitated a welcoming discussion of what everyone did over the weekend and how everyone is doing. Following this skit, teacher candidates compared and contrasted this opening scene to the original opening scene at the start of the workshop. This encouraged teacher candidates to engage in critical reflection about how they felt as learners in both scenarios. This led to a discussion about the importance of classroom community and relationships. We also connected the skit to a chapter we read on the importance of community classroom meetings. After the skit, Blue and Allison prompted all of us to reflect on the following: "What is one thing you can do in your future classroom that will benefit both you and your students?" We had time to write our response before a whole class debrief. Each one of the teacher candidates shared their responses which were all grounded in loving actions they could take as classroom teachers. I then had Harry share in his teaching practice with my students in order for them to more closely connect our themes and objectives for the course. Harry also discussed the work of En Los Sueños and the community of family members, community partners, students, and teachers who are involved in the organization. Harry was really vulnerable in what he shared with my students – what he has learned from mistakes and victories in the classroom – and how that is an ongoing process for him as an educator. We closed with a Q/A where a couple of teacher candidates asked questions about Harry's teaching practice and asked questions about the work of Blue and Allison in their student action club.

Youth Organizers as Impassioned Disruptors in Teacher Education

Youth Organizers

When I first began meeting with youth organizers from Youth Liberation Army and En Los Sueños, I was enamored by their forthrightness and perseverance. Ranging in age from 14 to

19, many of the youth organizers became involved in social justice initiatives that directly impact them, their peers, and communities. All eight of the youth organizers involved in this research project chose to seek out extracurricular activities or grassroots community organizations to collaborate in various causes for social change as such opportunities are often not interconnected within PreK-12 classroom teaching and learning. For the youth organizers, this process has further crystalized the limits of PreK-12 schooling which often negates or perpetuates the oppression that young people experience everyday within or outside the four walls of the classroom. While some of the youth organizers indicated their appreciation of teachers who are supportive and critically conscious, those experiences have been unique and represent outliers within their PreK-12 schooling journeys. In turn, the youth organizers from Youth Liberation Army and En Los Sueños have immersed themselves in grassroots community organizing to not only gain critical skills and civic knowledge, but to also disrupt harmful systems of oppression that impact their capacity to thrive. Tia describes:

> I feel like organizing is the only time I've gotten to do student-centered stuff. The schools and the teachers that I've had, the way they treated students, they weren't really receptive to that kind of thing. When you get the feeling of being able to lead something with other students and then it's over and you have to go back to everything being teacher-centered and adult-led, it's really frustrating. Because once you get the feeling of what it's like to have students lead something, you don't want to go back. It kind of sucks.

Tia's reflections reference going back to school the day after co-leading the 2018 March For Our Lives student walk outs in Detroit and insinuates why youth organizers were impassioned by the opportunity to purposefully disrupt and shape a social studies methods course within a teacher education program. By facilitating an adult ally training, youth organizers aspired to interrupt damaging and exclusionary pedagogical practices before TCs entered the classroom as educators. In turn, the youth organizers had hopes that the adult ally trainings may plant seeds for more loving, justice-oriented, and critically conscious teaching and learning for students

everywhere. This was evident in Mary's reflections on her agreement to co-facilitate an adult ally training for TCs:

> When I heard we would be doing this for teacher candidates, I was like, "Yes! They so need it! They so need it!" Because this is where it starts. You have to teach the teacher how to be a better teacher and I think that's where it starts as far as making a better and more free learning space. You have to first change the mindset and perspective of the teacher. I think going there and doing the training was really good for [the teacher candidates] as far as getting to know what's okay, what's maybe not okay, what students like, what students don't really like, and I think that was a learning experience for both sides. We learned from them and being able to talk to them about, "This is how you connect the community around your school to the kids" and "This is how you can be a caring teacher and actually get involved with your students on a daily basis within their life". So, I think it was really eye opening for them, as well as us.

By centering their own voices and lived experiences, the youth organizers shared critical counternarratives during the planning and implementation of the adult ally trainings. Within planning meetings and interviews, youth organizers were very clear about the ways in which the system of schooling is built to oppress children and young people, particularly in the context of Detroit. The youth organizers' passion to unsettle the ways in which racist, classist, and sexist systems of oppression intersect with PreK-12 schooling fueled their desire to facilitate adult ally trainings for TCs. Alaska, who has been featured in local news outlets over the years due to her activism on education justice, explains this perspective pointedly:

> I feel like a lot of it can just be narrowed down into one thing which is the foundation that schools were built on. Everything that schools were meant to do, that is what I hate. The foundation of control, of suppression, putting students in boxes, that's what I hate. Although schools have a horrible history, I feel like there's so much room for improvement and growth. We just need to take those chances, but we don't. For me, it also starts with the history of schools for the Black community and historically what schools have meant for us in terms of segregation, low-expectations, limited resources, and still school segregation today. I mean clearly Michigan is one of the prime examples. If anyone knows, I know, considering I've been bouncing back and forth between school districts my whole life. One of my first things that was activism per say was when I got to high school [and] I wrote an article about school inequalities from the lens of a freshman who had just moved from the suburbs. That's what I hate about school, the fact that I needed so desperately for someone to listen to what I had to say about this that I had to go and write out all of my anger and frustration. That's what I hate about school.

Such radical honesty about the toxicity of PreK-12 schools provided youth organizers the ability to share what they need from educators and school staff in order to be respected, affirmed, and encouraged. Importantly, many of the ideas the youth organizers have for improving teaching and learning revolves around positive experiences with classroom teachers and adult allies, which also informed the agendas and resources for their adult ally trainings. For example, Allison and Blue often discussed feelings of belonging and accountability within the pedagogy and curriculum of their English Language Arts class. In turn, the youth organizers are able to reimagine what classrooms could look like if students and communities were centered within PreK-12 classrooms. Here, I engage in dialogue with Allison and Blue during a planning meeting about the potential impact for system-wide change if schools were more like their English Language Arts class:

> *Allison*: I know [Blue and I] had an [English Language Arts] class, but some of it was centered on police brutality. I think it was a tough topic that we kind of did not want to talk about, but it brought the class together and we discussed different stuff. It was such a good thing that we actually had that topic for our whole class, and it brought up different issues that connected to police brutality, including immigration issues, and we all had time to connect.

> *Blue*: Well, there are some classes where I felt like it was okay or not okay, but I was able to share anything if I wanted to, like Mr. Harry's class. There was a lot of other classes where they didn't want to talk about anything, and it was kind of annoying because I would have stuff on my mind. I'd talk about stuff, but there's a lot of stuff to talk about and no one wanted to talk about it, and it was really annoying.

> *Kaitlin*: Because sometimes there will be so many things on your mind that it'll be hard to focus in and learn?

> *Allison*: Yeah, because we're expected to close everything off and just learn, but we're not learning about what's really going on. I feel like that's why I really liked the [English Language Arts] class, because it was always time to learn about something going on in the community and it was always involved in the lessons somehow. I really liked that, because it touched on a bunch of other stuff.

> *Kaitlin*: What do you think schools would look like if that was standard practice across the board? If classes in schools were more like your English Language Arts class?

Blue: I feel like students would be a lot more open. They'd probably feel a lot safer if they were able to talk about issues that affect them. They'd feel safer and better.

Allison: More willing to go to school.

Blue: They'd probably be able to focus more.

Many of the youth organizers utilized the collaborative process of the adult ally trainings to share in the learning experiences they have enjoyed in school. Some of the youth organizers would describe one specific teacher in depth who had curated a classroom learning environment in which students thrived through critical inquiry, creativity, and collaboration. Such pedagogical practices were utilized by youth organizers during their adult ally trainings and were at the forefront of their needs and desires for student-centered and place-conscious learning experiences. In turn, the youth organizers offered specific examples and models of student-centered learning experiences in order to inform the developing practice of TCs. For example, Patrick was indebted to her History teacher and spoke of her influence as an adult ally:

> I think schools should cultivate passion for a kid. I think teachers should try to see where students interest lies and then expand upon it, not trying to force down just what they need to teach, "This is the curriculum, and I need you to want to learn this." Instead of, "This is what you're interested in", it's "Here's resources and materials that will expand your interest and provide you with new, challenging outlooks." The only time I've ever felt that is with my History teacher, but I've never been in a class like that since. It's bringing interest to the teacher and the teacher validating that interest and trying to dive deeper into it and lead the discussion in a way that also provokes more interest or invokes other interest from students. I think school should be about recognizing other people's passions and validating how they're feeling about whatever they're learning. I think student-led learning should be about that. It should be about teachers recognizing, appreciating, and then helping. Every single class I went into with my history teacher, I genuinely felt excited. I was very appreciative of the way she taught and that was very student-led and the most student-led classroom I've ever been in.

For Patrick, her History teacher modeled how the classroom can be a space to disrupt the oppressive experiences that young people endure every day in school. By validating student interests and curating relevant learning opportunities, Patrick's History teacher implemented the

methods of community-based pedagogy that are inherently student-centered. Similar to Patrick, many of the youth organizers, particularly those who are Black/African American and Latina students, discussed the necessity of community-based pedagogical and curricular practices in order to (re)center the inherent knowledge, cultural heritage, and assets of their own communities within the classroom. For youth organizers like Lily, it's simple to meaningfully connect your students' community to the classroom curriculum:

> There are so many things teachers can do if you just slightly change things that would impact the classroom completely! Instead of doing a lesson about this person, put in this person and instead of doing a lesson on this broader thing, narrow it down to your students' community. It's so impactful and it shows, one, that you care and then, two, it shows your students that they should care, and it gives them space to talk about things that are happening in their community. It's a nice little gateway to incorporate that into your lesson and it's really easy!

Time and time again, youth organizers echoed Lily's call for classroom teachers to implement community-based pedagogy in simple ways. Oftentimes, the youth organizers shared the positive impact of teachers developing relationships with the local community in order to provide students resources and participate in community events. For Blue and Allison, such efforts made by teachers speak volumes to students and supports the curation of inclusive and affirming classroom communities:

> *Blue*: I think it's just the teacher knowing what's going on in the community or being aware of stuff that's in the community.
>
> *Allison*: And probably students' other communities – their culture. I really like having that board in the back of Mr. Harry's classroom where it showed community events. I really liked going back there. Starting off the class with how your day was and explaining stuff during the week and what was going around. I liked that.
>
> *Blue*: He was also informed about cultures and stuff around that.
>
> *Allison*: I find it really nice because putting their time and effort in, trying to get to know us better and it shows they actually care. So, it makes it feel more comfortable all around, especially in classrooms.

Blue: Makes students feel more welcomed and cared for if teachers respect us.

Allison: Yeah, like events that are happening that you could really relate to the students. I mean, other teachers that don't live here in Detroit, I appreciate them getting to games, like the volleyball games. That's at least an effort. I'm not a volleyball player, but I feel like that would feel great, "My teacher who doesn't live here goes to my volleyball games." I remember how the guys were really excited that Mr. Harry would go to the soccer games. They're really happy and are like, "Are you going to the soccer game today, Mr. Harry?"

Through various planning meetings and interviews, it became evident that youth organizers are impassioned to both specifically name oppressive forces within the PreK-12 schooling system and collaborate with adults to work towards transformative social change. In turn, the youth organizers were purposeful in the design of the adult ally trainings in order to encourage TCs to collaborate with children and young people in the development of safe, respectful, and supportive classrooms. Furthermore, the youth organizers asserted the importance of relationships between adults, children, and young people in order to work toward generative and egalitarian interactions. Patrick explains:

I think I want the teacher candidates to know that we – me and other youth organizers – want to build relationships with other adults because we're working towards a common goal. It's not about breaking down relationships and causing distrust and disrespect. It's not about that. It's more about challenging the stigmas and also challenging what's expected and how we're supposed to interact with one another. Anytime you start to challenge something, especially when it's with how you regard each other and you're in a relationship specifically between youth and adults, it becomes seen as disrespectful even if it's not. It's just maybe our relationship could be better and could be further in a more positive direction if we regarded each other in a different way.

Youth organizers are utterly exhausted by top-down power dynamics that negate their freedom, creativity, and growth in schools and communities. Furthermore, the youth organizers often struggle with adults who focus upon the agitations caused by youth organizers, rather than listening to and understanding their underlying calls for intersectional social justice. In turn, the youth organizers were hopeful that the adult ally trainings were an opportunity to inform TCs about

the perspectives of children and young people when it comes to relationships with adults, while also encouraging TCs to listen closely to children and young people. Mary asserts:

> We aren't against adult allyship. We aren't against anything that adults do to try to help us. We aren't rebellious teenagers just wanting to make noise. Everything we say has purpose because we put the thought and meaning behind it. I want people to know that we are always open to ideas that adults have, but sometimes it gets overbearing. So, it's not us bashing adults, but it's more of, "This is how youth have been feeling for a long time and this is what we want to be recognized."

Many of the youth organizers viewed the adult ally training with TCs as an opportunity to push forward new ideas, to learn in new ways, and to gain new experiences that are reciprocal and meaningful for children, young people, and adults. In turn, the youth organizers designed the adult ally trainings to purposefully model classroom spaces that affirm and amplify the knowledge of PreK-12 students and youth organizers. For example, Riley saw the adult ally training as a means to share lessons and experiences with TCs through his involvement in grassroots community organizations:

> I wanted the experience. That was my first adult ally training because it was a way to share my experience and practice sharing my experience. I think being able to share your own story and your testimonial can be very impactful. It was a way for me to practice that and a way for me to share what I've done so far. I also have lessons that I like to share with other people because they've made an impact on me, so to be able to share this with teacher candidates. I think the lessons we taught them are student-centered and I think that's partly what we were working towards – classrooms that support us. It's important to have specific trainings like that because it allows young people to get experience during trainings because I think that's valuable. We learn stuff from doing it and then it allows us to share about the work we're doing, so it's a way to show that young people are doing things and they are doing important things.

Significantly, youth organizers utilized the adult ally trainings to highlight social justice issues that affect young people every day within schools and communities through the use of personal testimony. By sharing in their specific initiatives pertaining to environmental justice or immigration justice, the youth organizers intended to prepare TCs to better support children and young people who face injustices within or outside the classroom. For example, Youth Liberation

Army discussed how the Detroit water crisis is actively impacting children and young people in

school. Alaska noticed how surprised TCs were to hear about the lack of support many of the youth

organizers have received from school staff/faculty to alleviate the compounding injustices of the

Detroit water crisis:

> Some of the [teacher candidates] said, "That's crazy", "That's wild", "That shouldn't
> happen", "Will I be a part of the problem or part of the solution?", and "Where will I fall
> if that happens to me and my students?". That's what I want people to think about, because
> [water shutoffs] happened in schools and when they heard what some of our teachers and
> administrators did, they were like, "What? That's crazy!" It sucks to say, but you're not so
> much different than they are and at the end of the day, it's really important for you to hear
> this so you can start thinking about situations like this. You need to understand your actions
> and what kind of teacher you're going to be and where you're going to fall in situations
> like that. Understandably, a lot of teachers had never encountered that situation, but that
> doesn't excuse their actions. It gives some context and understanding to the situation, but
> it's good for [teacher candidates] to hear that because people think it's just a one-time thing,
> but no, this happens every single day in every single school. No, it's not a once in a lifetime
> thing. It's not at all. It will happen to you, so what are you going to do?

Importantly, youth organizers demonstrated how the lived experiences of children and

young people, such as the Detroit water crisis, may be connected to teaching and learning during

the facilitation of their adult ally trainings. It was significant for youth organizers that TCs had the

opportunity to not only learn about specific issues happening in the community, like extreme air,

water, and soil pollution caused by unregulated factories, but to also understand how they may

collaborate with students in the classroom to address them. In turn, the youth organizers from

Youth Liberation Army and En Los Sueños modeled and enacted community-based pedagogy for

TCs through the use of skits, role play scenarios, and debrief discussions. Tia shares the importance

of such participatory practices:

> I feel like it's kind of similar to what I was saying about getting high schoolers involved
> when they're young, so getting teacher candidates interested when they're first starting out
> can really go a long way. There was one specific part I remember where someone from
> Youth Liberation Army was playing a student from Southwest and the smoke inhalation
> was affecting her. That really stood out because it kind of touched on the emotional aspect
> of being a teacher and how growing up, a lot of my teachers would say, "Whatever you

have going on in your life, you leave it outside of my door." I heard that so many times and that's kind of messed up.

Ultimately, many of the youth organizers recognized the perceived malleability of TCs and the opportunity at hand through the adult ally trainings. Throughout all of the planning meetings and interviews, youth organizers demonstrated that they were keenly aware about their ability to disrupt harmful practices in school by engaging in collaborative learning with TCs. In turn, the youth organizers hoped to uplift community-based pedagogical and curricular practices in which all students could flourish. Blue shares her reasoning for participating in the adult ally trainings:

> Impressionable. So, these teacher candidates, they're not really teaching yet, but they're still kind of open and learning to get new ideas and all that. From experiences that I've had in school with teachers that aren't open to learning new things, the adult ally trainings gave me a chance to give teacher candidates who don't know certain things how to run a class well.

Teacher Candidates

Many of the TCs participating in the research project were vocal throughout course assignments, in-class reflections, and subsequent interviews about the impact the youth organizers had on their understanding of community-based pedagogy. All of the participating TCs were new to adult ally trainings and learned about the role of youth organizers within grassroots community organizations for the first time in the social studies methods course. In turn, many of the learning experiences throughout the semester, such as readings and course assignments, aimed to support TCs in their ability to connect the work of Youth Liberation Army and En Los Sueños to PreK-12 classrooms. In turn, TCs would develop the ability to (re)center the identities, passions, and interests of their students within pedagogical and curricular decisions. As such, the use of critical counternarratives and personal testimony during the adult ally trainings called upon TCs to connect the youth organizers' lived experiences and inherent knowledge to their developing teaching

practice. In particular, the adult ally trainings were a testament to the necessity of listening to and learning from students, as Fay explains:

> I don't know everything, and I don't know what their lives are like. I only know what I know, and kids are smart. I learn from them all the time, they'll say stuff and, "Yeah, you're right," and they inform me of so much stuff. Plus, they'll ask me questions and it forces me to learn something new, too. Kids will have different questions and different ideas and different ways of looking at things, so if you go with that, you will also learn a whole new perspective of information.

For many of the TCs, the adult ally trainings were a completely new experience that both inspired and challenged their own personal and professional aspirations as educators. In particular, the presence and self-efficacy of the youth organizers interrupted some of the TCs notions about the distinction between teachers and students in the classroom. This was evident in Maya's reactions toward the adult ally trainings and the learning experience with Youth Liberation Army in particular:

> The perspective switch for me was successful and I liked the literature they gave us. The one poem, *[On Children]*, I wrote in my journal one part of it, and I'm like, "Don't forget this." Something like, "Don't give them thoughts, we house their bodies, not their souls," and that really hit me. And just Youth Liberation Army showing us what they've done with the water, I thought that was amazing, so I feel like that was really successful and they definitely helped us. Just their courage and their patience. Youth Liberation Army scared me. I was like, "Woah, I am in trouble." I felt like they had a little bit of rage in them, a little bit of fire, which is good.

In addition, Maya was insightful about the ways in which the adult ally trainings and other community-engaged learning experiences in the course have influenced her as a developing classroom teacher. Now, Maya envisions herself as a guide and supporter of PreK-12 students in order to foster agency and build upon their interests. Significantly, Maya's reflections at the end of the term on her growth as an educator within her classroom field placement mirror the words she previously cited from Khalil Gibran's poem, *On Children* (1923):

> This course has greatly impacted my identity as an educator. I now see myself in the passenger seat and my students are driving the car. I guide them and suggest roads they

should take, but they are behind the wheel and they are free to choose their path and create their journey. Our course has made me rethink my teaching practices. I will not speak for my students for they have powerful voices of their own. I can suggest and model and explain positive behavior to my students, but I cannot force their actions.

A shared theme of the social studies methods course was to embrace vulnerability in the process of (re)learning through course readings, assignments, and community-engaged learning experiences. For many of the TCs, this fundamental theme of the course invited TCs to be more open to the critical counternarratives and personal testimony of the youth organizers. Furthermore, this was significant as it provided them space to grow in their critical consciousness for classroom teaching and learning. Eleanor described the impact that the adult ally trainings had on her understanding of vulnerability to learn and grow alongside her students:

> This course has impacted me as an educator because I know that it's okay to relearn things with my students and to be vulnerable during the relearning experiences. I believe that is a crucial part in education, being willing to learn with my students and be open to a new learning lens that with create more opportunities and knowledge of information. I believe teachers have a lot they can learn from their students because they are today's growing change agents. I know through this experience, I learned a lot from students from Youth Liberation Army and En Los Sueños, and I felt empowered and inspired by them and their passion behind everything they pursue.

Many of the TCs discussed how the community-based focus of the social studies methods course shifted their understanding of teaching and learning within the elementary grades. For example, some of the TCs began to reconceptualize the established roles of teachers and students as more flexible and dynamic within classroom spaces. In turn, the adult ally trainings provided TCs an opportunity to visualize, reflect, and dialogue upon ways to agitate top-down power dynamics within early childhood, special education, and elementary classrooms. Renee, a special education major, explains how the adult ally trainings impacted her view of what children and young people are capable of as active citizens within schools and communities:

> I think through them and the one thing that really makes me think back on it is that the Youth Liberation Army and En Los Sueños students are capable of doing literally anything as long

as they are given the space and the resources to do it. It's mind-blowing how much these kids, literal high school kids, can do without someone holding their hand. I think a lot of times, especially in special ed, people just assume that our students can't do anything unless they're taught specifically how to do it or if someone is helping them through it. I think the most successful thing is helping me further realize that as long as students have a space, they will be able to run with it and they can do so much. It kind of goes back to the student-centered learning in the classroom, that they will be able to do what interests them in ways that interest them as long as they're given the space to do so. I think as an educator, it is definitely our responsibility to foster our students' creativity and their own personal thoughts and becoming their own human. Obviously, I wouldn't just give students a school and be like, "Do what you gotta do", but instead giving them the support and giving them direction when they need it. I think that's super important, especially for them to become engaged and responsible citizens as they grow up. They'll be able to get their own thoughts on things and their own stance and move from there rather than just taking what everyone's feeding them and being okay with it.

Due to the multiple modes of engagement and interaction provided during the adult ally trainings, the TCs visualized and discussed both positive and negative scenarios of adult allyship as classroom teachers. In particular, the skits and role-play scenarios facilitated by Youth Liberation Army and En Los Sueños unsettled many of the everyday practices that TCs see within their classroom field placements in order to propose more humanizing and culturally sustaining classroom communities. Although TCs are consistently learning various teaching practices within methods courses and classroom field placements, the adult ally trainings provided necessary student insight related to teaching and learning. Amy explains the impact of the various activities in the adult ally trainings on her teaching practice:

> I think the skits that they put on were super helpful and to be on the spot like that. It really did work out though, but it does make you think that what you say on the spot could really either damage or uplift the whole scenario. It did help me realize, "Oh, so I could say it in this context, and it would be okay, or if I say it in a certain way, it could bring them down and shut them down." So, that was really helpful instead of them just talking about it. It was really nice to see it in action.

Likewise, the "do's and don'ts" and "positive and negative" lists of adult allyship provided by youth organizers proved to be invaluable resources for classroom teaching and learning. For the TCs, the straight-forward and bullet point lists about effective and ineffective allyship were

applicable for their development as community-based educators. This encouraged many TCs to formatively assess current curricular and pedagogical practices, as Kramer details:

> Youth Liberation Army gave us the list of do's and don'ts and I remember going over that and being like, "This is something we do, this is something we don't do," and looking for the opportunity to change, "This is something that I would like to try." I know I have it with my folder. One thing En Los Sueños did was the morning meeting and the classroom talk, letting students just get it out. I do that now with my summer group. We have a morning meeting every day, we go over calendar and then I give students time to talk about things that are going on their life, what they did, and anything they want to share. So, some kids will share, and some kids don't want to speak up, which we don't force them, but it's something that I incorporate. I loved seeing that [in my classroom field placement]. We did that every day, too.

Notably, the impassioned content of the adult ally trainings connected to many of the harmful practices that TCs have experienced or witnessed both as PreK-12 and undergraduate students. In this way, the same damaging practices that many of the youth organizers hoped to disrupt through the adult ally trainings connected to some of the TCs' aspirations as future educators. More specifically, the adult ally trainings encouraged some of the TCs to interrupt the detrimental and negative experiences that are commonly normalized for all students within PreK-12 schooling. This is evident in Rosalina's remarks about candle snuffers and candle igniters in the classroom:

> What the heck was I doing when I was that age? Why wasn't I that cool? They were inspirational, the experience of meeting them and talking with them. There's a lot of candle snuffers out there and I want to be the teacher that ignites students and [the youth organizers] made me realize, which I always kind of felt like that before, but this was at a different level. Not just academically, but socially for them and just making changes for themselves. We talked about that in your course, as well, teaching students that they can be the change and people did make changes because they didn't like what was going on. I feel like it's often, "This is what we used to do in the past when we didn't like something, but we don't really do that anymore." But we're sheep now, we just follow the law, and I want them to know that if they don't like the way someone is being treated or they don't like a law or something needs to be updated because it's archaic now, that they have that possibility and that change in them. Your course taught me that I can teach like that. I can instill that desire, light that spark of learning and obtaining knowledge and growing. I feel like it was always the little candle snuffer. That's what most of my teachers have been, the candle snuffer, where I want to be the igniter.

Throughout the social studies methods course and particularly in the adult ally trainings, TCs learned about culturally sustaining pedagogy as a central component to community-based teaching and learning practices. Many of the predominantly white female TCs felt personally confronted by the concepts of culturally sustaining pedagogy as the theoretical framework decenters whiteness and is rooted in anti-racism. As such, the adult ally trainings were significant for many TCs to continue their understanding of culturally sustaining pedagogy in the classroom. For Tyrone, the focus on multiculturalism and multilingualism as an asset within Blue and Allison's adult ally training was significant for his understanding and advocacy of culturally sustaining practices in the classroom:

> Students have a voice and they should be heard. Teachers should listen, not to always speak first, to see what the class reaction is to something that you say, understand that they can help you in situations that another can't. Like [the youth organizers] said, they're educated, too, especially when you want your classroom to be community-based. If you're not from the city, they probably know more about the city than you. They're in the city. So just be willing to listen and understand that they have a voice and they should be heard. The two young ladies from En Los Sueños were very powerful and to be able to understand how working in that environment, you have to be flexible and you have to understand that's what they're comfortable doing, speaking their language, and you don't want to tarnish that because that's their background, that's who they are. I think it is important, especially working in a school like that, to have some type of background on their language.

The adult ally trainings had a unique effect on the TCs, particularly those who are interested in learning more about the vibrant identities, cultural heritage, and community assets of their students in Detroit-based classroom field placements. Furthermore, some of the TCs, like Gabrielle, understood that youth organizers had current information about PreK-12 schooling that she was not necessarily aware of as a former student and future educator. In turn, Gabrielle was open to what Youth Liberation Army and En Los Sueños had to teach her as impassioned disruptors in teacher education:

> I think it's important to learn from youth organizers because it's a totally different perspective. I don't really remember school that much and what I went through and times

change, so things that they're dealing with, I didn't deal with in school. They're a different culture, a different area, so I think it's important because it's a different perspective and a lot of the things that I learned from them are things that I wouldn't have thought of. When they were talking about not to insert yourself into something, because your first instinct is to be, "Let me help them!" They were like, "Don't do that." I wouldn't have known that. Even though you have been in high school or elementary school or middle school, you're not anymore and it's different and so for them to express what they're going through at their time in school, it's going to be different than what you had. It's important to draw from that to help your teaching because it's hard, you can never really know exactly what someone is going through because everyone's experiences are different but when you're taking that information from students and they're telling you things, it helps you to better understand your students. Everything they were saying I was thinking, "Okay, how can I use this in my classroom and help my students?"

Adult Allies

For the adult allies (myself, Harry, Lilith, and Rae), the ways in which youth organizers interrupted the teacher education classroom is reflective of our own dissident practices within methods course, PreK-12 classrooms, and grassroots community spaces. The four of us often find ourselves collaborating with one another, in addition to other colleagues, through purposeful disruption as we seek more community-based educational spaces for children, young people, and TCs to thrive and, oftentimes, survive. In turn, our desire and decision to collaborate with youth organizers functions as an opportunity to engage with our students in the work of intersectional social justice. Within this context, Harry reflects upon the importance of adult ally trainings as a way to unsettle oppressive structures in schools and communities for his students:

I, of course, loved the opportunity for my students to demonstrate their leadership skills, to practice their leadership skills, and to play such an active role in organizing or advocating for educational justice by sharing their knowledge, their experiences, their understanding of how classrooms rooted in relationships and community can and should look like. Our structures, systems, institutions, classrooms, etc. often don't create space, make space, or allow space for young people to teach, to lead, to contribute, so I am always grateful for opportunities for my kids to challenge that hierarchy and to lead or show what alternative futures can look like. As I mentioned earlier, I loved how it was a space where we could create meanings and understandings together. Oh! And I really loved how you told us that the one teacher candidate spoke out loud during class for the first time when she connected her own life experience with Blue and Allison sharing the challenges of students coming

to U.S. schools and not speaking English. I think it was really special for my kids to see how impactful their stories can be.

By collaborating with youth organizers through the design and implementation of adult ally trainings, we were able to model, practice, and reflect upon our roles as adult allies. For each of us, this is a challenging and rewarding process with no clear answers or guides. However, we know that we must engage with children and young people in the struggle for intersectional social justice in order to both name and disrupt systemic oppression within schools and communities. As a peer mentor and classroom teacher, Rae viewed the adult ally trainings as paramount for TCs to view the city of Detroit and its community members as assets in order to work toward transformative social change:

> First of all, you can't come in with the mindset of, "I'm here to save these kids and their families and their communities." You can't come in thinking there's something horribly wrong here that needs to be different and that's the only way that it can be better. So, honoring communities and people and families for who they are and what their strengths are and working on those things, instead of saying everything needs to be completely different in order for things to be better here. How can we build on those strengths for a more positive outcome that isn't stripping schools and students and families of who they are at their core and what they are and want to be?

As discussed in chapter three, the design of the social studies methods syllabus was informed by my relationships and collaboration with the youth organizers. Through dialogue and reflection with the youth organizers and adult allies of Youth Liberation Army and En Los Sueños, I curated a community-based course syllabus. In addition, I often sought the feedback of former TCs who had been enrolled in my social studies methods course. This design process required vulnerability and flexibility as I negotiated and fractured the barriers that often exist between teacher educators, TCs, and PreK-12 students. Importantly, I shared with TCs how I put together the social studies methods course syllabus in order to model community-based pedagogical and curricular practices. I reflected on this process throughout my field notes:

In April, I completed the draft of my social studies syllabus and I shared it with trusted friends and peers in order to receive their feedback. I also shared the syllabus with current and former teacher candidates in order to gain their insight, as well as asking them questions about the plans and logistics of my course. This was an extremely fruitful experience for me since I was able to revise my syllabus based upon the feedback of friends, peers, and teacher candidates. It also allowed me to share in some of the youth organizers' ideas for the course and gauge what would be impactful for former teacher candidates. I have also invited former teacher candidates to the Canvas page for the social studies course and I have invited them to come visit the course whenever they'd like. I am hoping they do as this would model community for my current teacher candidates.

Through our collaborative processes, the adult allies and myself frequently reflected upon the top-down power dynamics between children, young people, and adults. We often found ourselves struggling to conceive of classroom and community spaces in which power did not get in the way of humanizing and loving education. Due to our own experiences as PreK-12 students and our current roles related to education, we are intimately aware of the ways in which racist, classist, and sexist systems of oppression prevent teachers from cultivating egalitarian and democratic classroom spaces. Meaningfully, this spoke to our motivating purposes of bringing youth organizers and teacher candidates together for dialogue and reflection. By connecting current PreK-12 students and future educators together through shared learning experiences, the adult allies hoped to make the conventional roles in the classroom more permeable and fluid. Lilith discusses:

I think that the dichotomy is false. I don't really believe in teachers and students as static objects. So, it's important for everybody to be constant learners because our world is constantly changing, and we are constantly changing and how do we expect to function without learning with it? It's what has evolved us and made us better. Why is it specifically important for people who are employed as teachers to learn from students who are warehoused as students? Because they will be miserable otherwise, because they'll hate themselves if they don't. I've never met a teacher that I disliked who seemed happy. My teachers who were the worst teachers were really unhappy people and the ones who didn't listen to us. The better relationships they had with us, the happier they were. You need to have relationships with your students so that you don't hate your life. That seems obvious to me. You spend your entire day with these humans, and you think that you're not going to learn anything from them because you're already perfect? You have to agree to be around each other and to that end, you have to learn from each other and what that means. You

know, what are your needs in this space? What am I not doing? What needs am I not meeting? How do you learn? What are you interested in? What lights your fire? Just being curious about those things is the stuff of relationship building. So, I just feel bad for any teacher who doesn't learn from their students.

Within this context, the adult allies were persistently reflective about the merging of youth organizers and TCs in order to work towards transformative social change through community-based education. As adult allies, we recognized the significance of building trust and respect in order for youth organizers and TCs to learn from one another. Furthermore, we understood the significance of reciprocity and mutual vulnerability in order for both youth organizers and TCs to feel safe and nurtured within the facilitation of the adult ally trainings. In turn, the adult allies intended to interrupt dehumanizing practices within PreK-12 schooling in order to model education as community-based. Harry describes how he felt being in the classroom space during the adult ally training facilitated by Blue and Allison:

> It was a beautiful merging of folks who aren't often in spaces together, but who need to be in spaces and community together – practicing teachers, current students, teacher candidates, teacher educators, and researchers. I really loved how we were able to come together and share our experiences, our knowledge, and our needs as we collectively engage in the work of educational justice. Part of what I mean here is that my students presented and did the heavy lifting, but I was able to share my knowledge and experiences, you, Kaitlin, were able to share your knowledge and experiences, and the teacher candidates were able to share their knowledge and experiences. I think it was a great model of how our classrooms should function – validating and learning from the knowledge and experiences of everyone in the room.

As the adult allies engage in this work together, we are deeply conscious and reflective of our responsibility to both youth organizers and TCs. While we are fervent in working towards transformative social change through community-based pedagogical and curricular practices, we have no misapprehensions that such a process is incomplete, imperfect, and always ongoing. In turn, the adult allies remain open to the lifelong practice of (re)learning alongside children, young

people, and intergenerational community members. Rae discusses why and how she stays open to this process of reflection and growth as an educator and adult ally:

> I've never really felt like I was the smartest person in the room. I've never really had a hard time saying, "I don't get that" or "Can you help me do this?" I've never really felt like the authority of the smartest person here. Maybe that sounds like a lack of confidence or some kind of insecurity, but I don't really think that's it. I think that it's always been easy for me to know that there were people who knew more than I did and that was never something that was embarrassing for me. I've always been the kid that's like, "That doesn't make any sense. Will you run that back a few more times?" So, to a certain extent, it's just my personality of not being embarrassed to ask for help and I've always been very willing to reach out to people when I'm struggling, whether it's with finding something or in my own personal life. I feel like I'm pretty good at admitting that lack of whatever it is. So, it came pretty natural to me to think my students probably know more than me. If that's something that you struggle with, reaching out for help or asking questions, then I could understand why going into your teaching, it would be hard to say, "These ten-year-old's probably know more about this than I know."

Impassioned Disruption within Community-Based Pedagogy

As discussed in chapter two, community-based pedagogy re-centers the identities of students and their own communities within learning environments. Community-based pedagogy curates a sense of belonging for students as the places, people, and ecosystems that surround them is connected to teaching and learning. For youth organizers, community-based pedagogy is a method to respond to the social, economic, cultural, and environmental needs of local place through the assets and strengths of young people and their communities. Purposefully, community-based pedagogy was utilized by Youth Liberation Army and En Los Sueños during the design and facilitation of the adult ally trainings in order to demonstrate how intersecting social justice issues that most directly impact children and young people may be meaningfully connected to PreK-12 classrooms.

Notably, TCs witnessed how impassioned disruption is essential to community-based pedagogy through the adult ally trainings. The youth organizers were forthright in explaining how they continue to be further marginalized within PreK-12 schooling, which has fostered their desire

to collaborate with adult allies in reimagining education that is humanizing and liberatory. For TCs, this was an opportunity to learn from and with current students in order to envision the classroom as a space of inclusion, empowerment, and relevance. In turn, the purposeful disruption of the youth organizers within the social studies methods course encouraged TCs to grow as adult allies for the benefit of children, young people, and local communities. However, as the youth organizers demonstrated in planning meetings, adult ally trainings, and subsequent interviews, such collaborative endeavors are not without setbacks or challenges, which requires realistic visions for social change.

Youth Organizers as Realistic Visionaries for Social Change

Due to their roles as students and community members, the youth organizers are realistic in their social justice work. They believe in the possibilities of transformative social change in schools and communities, but they also know and understand the complicated, hard, and long-term efforts to achieve such paradigm shifts within schools and communities. For example, Youth Liberation Army was formed out of the Detroit-based chapter of March For Our Lives, which is a nation-wide movement organizing for the end of gun violence in the United States. In another instance, En Los Sueños was established to advocate for and work toward immigration justice in schools and communities amidst the dangerous realities of the Trump presidential administration. Pointedly, the youth organizers involved in Youth Liberation Army and En Los Sueños are quite literally fighting for their own lives, as well as the lives of their peers and loved ones. In turn, the youth organizers at the center of this research project have acquired knowledge and awareness through a multiplicity of experiences related to their involvement in social justice and civil rights movements at a relatively young age.

To this end, many of the youth organizers grapple with hope and disillusion at the same time because of past and current experiences with adults as they have pushed for transformative social change within schools and communities. More specifically, while the youth organizers have learned the realities of living for change amongst intergenerational community members, many of the adults they encounter through PreK-12 schooling have also enacted harmful practices that remind youth organizers why the road toward justice is long, winding, and bumpy. In this light, Lily draws connections from her life as PreK-12 student to the wisdom she has gained through grassroots community organizing in order to provide a nuanced perspective for the facilitation of adult ally trainings:

> Not everything is going to get in there and if they don't need it, they're not going to take it, but if they need it and you are giving it to them, then they'll take it. But if you're giving them the wrong stuff, they won't be healthy, and the soil will be bad. If you pour Coca-Cola in the soil and you expect the plant to grow, I don't think a plant is going to grow. And if you over water a plant or if you lecture them too much or if you give them too much of the same thing, it's not going to work. But if you cater to their needs, if you try to learn what their needs are and they see that and they see that you're trying to meet them where they're at, they'll be receptive. If they're still not receptive after that, you need to find out what will make them receptive. Change your approach.

Although teenagers, the youth organizers who collaborated in this research project are experienced in both their roles as students and as change agents. However, the youth organizers are relatively new to positive intergenerational experiences between adults and young people within educational settings. Due to their lived realities with adults, such as some classroom teachers, family members, and community leaders, many of the youth organizers were wondering what difference the adult ally training would make. For example, Allison wondered if the adult ally training would be impactful enough for TCs to grow as adult allies:

> It was indeed challenging for me teaching and learning with all those future teachers. Having to share fears, insecurity, and discomfort we have felt in classrooms throughout the years was terrifying. To be vulnerable enough to share what is going on in my classrooms and teaching future teachers how not to make the same mistakes [my teachers] did. As a

teenager I just didn't know if I would get a message across through adult minds. I thought who would want to listen to a kid in a way ranting about their school problems. I feared the judgment because they were older and had no idea what was going on for kids in classrooms my age. I had the chance to teach them, but would they even listen to what I had to say? Was what I had to say enough for it to do an impact? I still don't know. It is challenging because I don't know their mindsets, because they are older, and don't know what to say for it to be impactful.

Many of the youth organizers were nervous, scared, or terrified about facilitating the adult ally training because of previous and current lived experiences with adults. In turn, many of the youth organizers wondered if the TCs would hear their words and take them to heart for their teaching practice. The training brought up anxieties for the youth organizers as they wondered about how they would be perceived and how they would come across for the TCs. This is reflected within Alaska's inquiry and reflection regarding the adult ally training:

> So, this is for my own personal curiosity, but did your teacher candidates see us as just some kids or were we … what did they see us as? I ask because I'm constantly collecting information on what we do, how we do it, and how it's perceived. Because that's definitely a big thing, how people deal with us and how does that help when we are planning this curriculum and how it helps when we talk about results and how people interpret and internalize what we are saying. Because, before you guys, we had a precursor [adult ally training] with another organization and that went horrible. It was bad right off the bat, and that's why I was worried about your class and I was like, "Aw, dang, is it going to be like that?" Because that would be super sucky.

A central component of the social studies methods course and the adult ally trainings was the decentering of whiteness through the use of culturally sustaining and place-conscious pedagogies. Many TCs are often personally and professionally confronted when introduced to such anti-racist conceptual frameworks by teacher educators, let alone by youth organizers In turn, some of the participating TCs centered their white identity within the adult ally trainings in ways that were frustrating for the youth organizers, almost all of which are Black/African American and Latina female students. Alaska, a Black female, describes a particularly frustrating moment of

white fragility (DiAngelo, 2018) that she witnessed from a white female teacher candidate during

the small group segment of Youth Liberation Army's adult ally training:

> White woman guilt is something I experienced firsthand at the session. When we were in the individual groups reading one of the passages, someone started crying and I was like, "I don't know what to do with this." I wasn't gonna be like, "Stop crying," because I know what she feels. So, it was white woman guilt, but it was also very transcendent for her to realize what she was complicit in. It's always half and half, because I was like, "I understand you, it's okay, you're fine, this is a safe space." But, on the other hand, I was like, "Girl, come on, really? You're a grown-ass woman and you haven't really figured this out yet?" Clearly you haven't been in the position to figure this out, but a lot of things have been presented straight to your face and still nothing, so I don't know if I should really be feeling sorry for you.

Many of the youth organizers also experienced the harmful effects of top-down power

dynamics that they intended to interrupt through the adult ally trainings. Through non-verbal cues,

interactions in small group discussions, or pointed questions during whole group dialogue, many

of the youth organizers noticed that TCs struggled with the shift of perceived power in the teacher

education classroom during adult ally trainings. Patrick explains a particularly uncomfortable

experience:

> It was very interesting. My group was smaller than all of the other ones, which I didn't mind at all, so I think there were more opportunities for people to say their ideas and people were able to talk longer, too. You really got to understand exactly what [teacher candidates] were saying and hearing. If part of it was problematic, you could feel the discomfort in people, I think, a little bit more as well and it forced people to talk, so that was good. But it was just very weird, because one of them definitely did not want me to be treating them like a student and I was the teacher because they were older than me. I could sense it right away and it was very interesting because it's like, "You're treating me exactly how you're not going to want your students to treat you." It just feels like teachers are still people and they have a lot to learn still. They don't necessarily know how to behave if they're not taught to and maybe they're just not open to it at a specific time, but they're just people.

As developing facilitators, the youth organizers noticed when the TCs struggled to make

meaningful connections to the content of the adult ally trainings. Furthermore, the youth organizers

were able to gauge that some of the TCs would need more time to develop their understanding of

how the critical, anti-racist work of adult allyship connected to specifically elementary education.

Mary explains what she learned by formatively assessing TCs during the adult ally training:

> It was good. I wish maybe everyone was a little bit more into it. There were a couple people that were really, really into it and really good, but I wish everyone would have the same energy and the same vibe and would be really into it. I do hope everyone learned the same and learned what they could do better, what they can do better. I know it was still kind of early for some people, but I just hope the energy was there and that they processed and understood everything. I think some of them had a hard time connecting to whatever age group they were teaching, so trying to make it relatable for them was a little bit of a task. I think that we got that, and I think doing the skits and stuff helped a bit more to relate to their specific age group.

While youth organizers are engaging in community organizing every day for social justice causes, they are also intimately aware of the realities of life-long anti-oppression work. As critically conscious young people involved in grassroots community spaces, the youth organizers actively learn from and with their adult allies, community leaders, and elders who are active in the struggle for intersectional social justice. In turn, while hope motivates youth organizers to continue their efforts, they typically refrain from romanticizing the realization of transformative social change. Youth organizers expressed hope for the TCs and believed that they planted seeds, sometimes referencing back to the impact they have had on previous teachers or TCs at their own schools. Blue expressed hope for the future educators, although she, like the other youth organizers, remains grounded in the difficulties of changing hearts and minds:

> It was challenging, yet rewarding, teaching and learning with all of those future teachers. A part that I really enjoyed about this whole experience was being able to share my experiences with those future teachers knowing that they will look back on that when they start teaching. I always have a hard time speaking in front of people, but it always helps when the audience is respectful and open. I hope we made a difference in how they will carry themselves as teachers in the future. Whenever I do things like this, it gives me a chance to share what I think is important and it makes me feel like I made a difference in the world. I hope what I had to say stuck with the future teachers in your class.

Teacher Candidates

Throughout the social studies methods course and during the adult ally trainings, the TCs demonstrated that critical consciousness growth is not linear and is an ongoing practice. For many TCs, the content of the course challenged them to engage in active (re)learning about social studies education. In addition, the course prompted TCs to actively reflect upon the relevance and purpose of community-based pedagogy within the social studies. This required TCs to turn inward through self-reflection in order to grow as critically conscious and social aware elementary social studies teachers. As such, all of the TCs naturally struggled within their (re)learning experiences, yet they were consistently reminded that discomfort is essential to evolve as educators and human beings through assignments, readings, in-class discussion, and the various community engaged learning experiences of the social studies methods course. In turn, the TCs modeled why youth organizers, in addition to teacher educators and adult allies, must remain realistic in the dynamic process of social change work. As Gabrielle, a teacher candidate, encourages:

> I think one important piece that I keep talking about is teaching kids how to critically think for themselves and not just, "Your teacher says this, take it at that." Teaching them to think and question and wonder about things is one part. I think another part is not putting so much emphasis on the testing aspect of school. I don't know if that can ever happen, but just helping them as people and not just as students, if that makes sense. Knowing your students, like community-based, student-based, culturally based, and knowing them to help cultivate that within themselves. A lot of stuff would have to be different and I think it's kind of starting a little bit. It's definitely progressing. It's going somewhere. I think it will happen a lot more with the new wave of teachers coming in and coming up, because we're learning these things and people in the education programs are learning them and eventually maybe other stuff will leave.

Within this lens, the adult ally trainings were a unique opportunity for TCs to participate in active (re)learning about place conscious and culturally sustaining practices within social studies education. While some were receptive to the perspectives of youth organizers, other TCs pushed back in the following, although not limited to, forms: ageism, centering whiteness, and refuting

the issues concerning young people in local school communities. For example, Amy's critiques

for how the adult ally trainings may improve situates her expertise above that of a youth organizer.

In addition, Amy shares in her skepticism regarding social justice issues intersecting with the lives

of elementary school students, which may appear different than those shared by the older youth

organizers:

> When we were paired up in those groups, I felt like that went on forever. I felt like we were done talking and the girl that we had, I don't remember who I had, but she was kind of quiet. We did bring up, because they were at the high school level and middle school level, that we may not face the difficulties that the high school or middle school level is facing because we're at elementary. I think we're going to face different problems than middle schools and high schools.

Many of the TCs struggled to connect the work of adult allyship to early elementary and

early childhood education as the youth organizers frequently discussed their experiences in middle

and high school classrooms. Similar to Amy, Christopher suggests that the adult ally trainings may

be improved by offering them to secondary education majors rather than elementary education

majors. In addition, Christopher's comment regarding the "struggles" of youth organizers may

reinforce a deficit or saviorism lens:

> I loved the Youth Liberation Army students, because it was so interesting to hear from them, but I think it would be even more awesome just around campus with other education courses like secondary teaching courses, because they can benefit even more from what they are saying. I benefit from it as well because I can teach older kids and listen to them, but I think that they should go to all the secondary teacher teaching courses. There should just be a mandatory class where you have to listen, because you learn a lot from them, and it was really, really cool to hear their struggles and what they took from it.

During the adult ally trainings, youth organizers were strong in their voice and empowered

in their facilitation practice. In turn, youth organizers asserted a critical counternarrative to the

notion that children and young people have passive voices that must be awakened by a caring

educator. As such, a learning outcome of the adult ally trainings was for TCs to grow in their

understanding that children and young people are born fully human with their own voices and

identities. While many TCs like Eleanor were deeply impacted by Youth Liberation Army and En

Los Sueños, their language still suggests that educators have the ability to give students a voice,

which perpetuates a deficit mindset:

> Giving your students a voice early in the classroom rather than later was just really inspiring because these young people, who are younger than me, are making a huge difference and these are the people in our classrooms every day and these are the people that are looking at us to help them form their voice and help them form an opinion and help them grow as students. I think that all starts in the early age classrooms when you help your students have a voice and I think it's so true that we are forming and inspiring young minds, because we are. They're going to be the voice of society one day, so the better that we help them, the better that we educate them, and give them the voice that they need, they're going to grow as older, functioning members of society.

As a teacher educator, my role before, during, and after the adult ally trainings was to

support TCs through critical inquiry and reflection in order to raise their critical consciousness.

Furthermore, I aimed to guide TCs as they made sense of the adult ally trainings for their

developing classroom teaching practice. For many TCs, the adult ally trainings were a challenge

to the power that they hold as future educators. Furthermore, because the social studies methods

course and the adult ally trainings aimed to decenter whiteness from the classroom, many of the

white TCs felt personally attacked. This discomfort was apparent during in-class discussions

following the adult ally trainings or in reflective dialogue related to course reading assignments,

which is depicted in my personal field journal:

> On Wednesday, the teacher candidates completed their critical inquiry and analysis of the social studies standards, before we began our discussion of culturally sustaining pedagogy (CSP). Teacher candidates were broken up into small groups to engage in dialogue about the Paris and Alim CSP article based upon guided questions I provided. Walking around the room, I noticed that the majority of teacher candidates were struggling to respond to what CSP is and what it aims to do. While walking around, I was able to support teacher candidates in their developing understanding of CSP, but there was just not enough time in class. When we came back together to debrief, I shared a 3-minute video of Toni Morrison explaining the concept of the white gaze, which is referenced frequently by Paris and Alim. When I asked teacher candidates to share their thoughts and reactions, in connection to the article, there was complete silence – except for my one African American male teacher candidate who immediately had a thoughtful response. We slowly fumbled our way

through a discussion on the white gaze and how this connects to the core tenets of CSP, which I had as bullet points on the projector. Still, I was noticing that so much of the language used within CSP was new to teacher candidates and it was a concept that many of them have never thought about before. I am wondering if the demographics of this class is making a difference because it is predominantly white. I am also wondering if teacher candidates are diving deep into CSP in their other methods courses. I am wondering if teacher candidates see CSP as a necessary component of being an educator who is about social justice, anti-racism, and equity. Introducing CSP to teacher candidates is SO hard. It's challenging every semester and every semester, I am wondering if I am even doing it right. Phew. I don't feel defeated. I know it's hard, but I wish the white gaze wasn't so strong in every space. We'll get there. Slowly, but surely. My goals for next week are to really connect CSP to tangible concepts and ideas. I am hoping that will help and provide teacher candidates more context as to what CSP is and does ahead of the adult ally trainings.

Some of the TCs were motivated and inspired by the youth organizers within the adult ally trainings, but they did express trepidation about their ability to implement community-based practices within their classroom field placements. The TCs anticipated the potential pushback they would receive from mentor teachers or colleagues if they curated culturally sustaining and place-conscious learning experiences within the classroom. This is reflected in Christopher's anxieties about her ability to teach critical and justice-oriented social studies curriculum:

Challenges I see would be, like we talked about in class, having the mentor teacher not be on board with something or just completely different viewpoints of teaching. I think that would be a huge problem because I would be afraid to speak up about something, but I hope that I would be able to and I hope that the teacher would make me feel comfortable that I could. That would be awesome. Even in terms of becoming a teacher, with administration and other teachers, I hope I have great co-teachers next door, but you never know. I foresee that being a problem as someone just not being on the same page as me, you know, like seven chapters behind or something.

Furthermore, many TCs struggled with the limited time that the social studies, as well as science and the arts, receives in elementary education. Due to these realities, many TCs expressed frustrations about implementing the methods and strategies from the course and adult ally trainings within their classroom field placements. This is reflected in Gabrielle's comments:

I already know that social studies is not super valued where I'll be teaching, so I think that's going to be a struggle. I already know that the reading program is almost half of the day. Just reading. I was shocked by this, but the [mentor] teacher had me teach all of the reading

and I didn't have much support from her for that, so I tried to do what I could. I did maybe five social studies lessons over the couple months I was there. Science was a five-minute video clip and that was their science. I already know, just in general because of the 3rd grade reading law, that's already going to be super prioritized for sure. So, I know that's going to be a problem trying to get [social studies] in and I'm nervous because we've learned about how we can bring social studies into different areas, but it's very, very scripted, all the things that they do. So, I'm nervous about if the [mentor] teacher will let me deviate from the structured curriculum.

For TCs, mentor teachers personified either a support system or a barrier toward the curation of community-based pedagogical and curricular practices. In addition, many TCs acknowledge their current focus is on learning the ins and outs of being a classroom teacher rather than implementing place-conscious and culturally sustaining learning experiences. This frustration is reflected in Fay's reflections about a recent classroom field placement:

> The classroom field placement I am in requires us to follow a specific curriculum. I can introduce new books, but I do not feel comfortable straying too far from the curriculum provided. It's not my classroom. I feel limited in my student teaching placement. There is so much to learn and to do from testing to behavior management to meeting district curriculum goals. I don't even know where I could fit in a transformative teaching practice while still trying to conform to all of the other rules and goals.

While some TCs expressed their worries about practicing the lessons learned from the adult ally trainings within their classroom field placements, some did appear to be further inspired to embed social justice within elementary education because of their interactions with youth organizers. This is apparent in Tyrone's contributions through class discussion, course assignments, and interviews in which he consistently acknowledged the complexity of being both an adult ally and a classroom teacher:

> Just being understanding as a teacher and having the students' back and not always going where the principal wants you to go. If the principal wants this to happen and you know it's not okay, don't let it slide. That's why it was important to have that talk because it's very dangerous for a teacher, because their job is on the line and that was one thing that we expressed to [the youth organizers], that we have a boss and sometimes you have families to feed, so stepping on toes would be tough, especially in that area. But [Alaska] showed us and gave us examples of different ways to do that, for sure. I think [Youth Liberation Army] did an awesome job and it's exactly how they should do it. It just seems genuine.

You know when you put so much time into something and it doesn't seem real? I think they came in and they were just open, and I think they should just be keeping it that way. We need to know what's real and they showed us what's real. They didn't give us a bunch of PowerPoints and talk through it, so I think just being genuine, being real, don't clamp the students' limitations on what they want and what they want to say. They're doing it because they have a voice. Let them use their voice, for sure.

Importantly, many of the TCs discussed positive and inspiring examples of community-based practices from their previous classroom field placements. For example, the local early childhood center was brought up often by TCs as they made sense of the learning opportunities within the social studies methods course. Renee reflects on the student-driven and place-conscious learning actively occurring at the early childhood center, which allowed her to make strong connections to Youth Liberation Army and En Los Sueños:

I think the first time I saw anything similar to student-centered learning was when I was doing my apprenticeship hours and I was at the early childhood center. They were talking about something and one day the kids brought up something about a spaceship because an astronaut had just come back and the kids were super excited to hear about it. So, we took a trip to the Science Center and we got a whole model rocket ship built, and they were super excited because they got to video chat with this astronaut. And this was at the early childhood center! I feel like that's student-centered because you're building your curriculum around student interests and things that are affecting them. If that's something that's interesting to them, you can tie it to a standard, and then I feel like that would be ideal. Building off of your students' needs rather than what you're comfortable teaching.

The adult ally trainings and the learning experiences of the social studies course affirmed what some of the TCs already believed about the necessity of social justice and civic action within elementary education. For example, Rosalina joined another teacher candidate, Renee, from the social studies methods course at the September 2019 Climate Strike in Detroit, which was co-led by Youth Liberation Army. Moreover, Rosalina brought her own children to the Climate Strike in order to foster their ability to be social change agents like the youth organizers. Rosalina shares her reflections:

From the Youth Liberation Army workshop, I was in awe of students we worked with. They inspired me to instill that same sense of making change happen that I took my own

children to a strike. It was a great feeling to meet up with one of the students from the workshop and express to her that it was because of her that I brought my own kids to the event.

Adult Allies

For adult allies who are working toward transformative social change in collaboration with youth organizers and TCs, we must be mindful about how we engage in our support and guidance of intergenerational learning experiences. For the adult allies involved in this research project, we found that we must be realistic visionaries in the work of social change. Like youth organizers and TCs, we are consistently growing and evolving through our roles as classroom teachers, teacher educators, and community organizers. In this way, we must be honest with ourselves and with those that we teach and mentor about the challenges and complexities of engaging in unique learning experiences such as adult ally trainings. In particular, adult allies like Harry find that there are few models for intergenerational and community-engaged learning experiences. Thus, while we know adult ally trainings are an opportunity to push forward new ideas for humanizing education, Harry advocates for more spaces to practice such liberatory methods for teaching and learning:

> I don't think there are many models for how to do community-engaged, student-centered, or culturally sustaining learning and pedagogies. Not that I have it all figured out at all, but I think it was powerful for future teachers to see how teachers and students can work together to create schools and classrooms that are humanizing, that are rooted in community and relationships, and that are places to practice freedom, to practice joy and healing, etc. We can learn about these ideas during teacher ed programs, if we're lucky, but it's another step when you think about, "Okay, but what does and can this actually look like?" Creating these community-engaged learning experiences allows future teachers to see examples and how they can incorporate these student-centered pedagogies into their future classrooms. That is huge! I think my kids also brought a lot of important perspectives to your teacher candidates that will support their future classrooms – how to avoid dehumanizing your students while working in a system that is often dehumanizing, like when my kids did the skit on data walls. How to validate, sustain, and create spaces for students' identities, like when my kids did the skit on speaking Spanish in school.

As Harry implies, the education system in the present moment is not built for community-based pedagogy that is place-conscious and culturally sustaining. In turn, if we are prompting youth organizers and TCs to enact transformative practices within educational and community spaces that are inherently oppressive, we must work in tandem with them beyond classrooms and teacher education programs. This is paramount in order for youth organizers and TCs to not feel the weight of responsibility in reimagining an education system otherwise, one that could be, but is not yet. In turn, adult allies must not romanticize the struggle to change hearts and minds for social change. Lilith, a school abolitionist, elaborates upon the importance of collaborating with youth organizers as one strategy to agitate systemic oppression:

> I do youth organizing work from the perspective of school abolition. So, my goal is to shift the power balance in schools. It is, to me, incredibly unfair that we have institutions where 90% of the people in the building have no say in what happens in the building. It's just not democracy. It makes no sense. By teaching youth organizing and practicing youth organizing, young people have an opportunity to shift those scales and to take some of that power back and to learn democracy – to practice it. I think that's important because it transforms us as individuals, and it transforms our culture and it transforms schools to think differently and react differently and consider different people when they make decisions. I think when we accomplish those three transformations, we see the world differently, the possibilities differently, and ultimately, I hope it leads to school abolition and leads to a different kind of institution building for learning. I really love learning and I believe in learning and I don't think that's what schools do, so I hope that student organizing is one part of the puzzle that changes how we do that.

Through the adult ally trainings, youth organizers and TCs reimagined education as they practiced teaching and learning through a student-centered and community-based lens. However, such a reimaginative experience was coupled with feelings of caution and hesitancy due to the past and present lived experiences of youth organizers and TCs in the classroom. As adult allies, we were cognizant of such conflicting occurrences, which required us to be aware of the specific needs of youth organizers and TCs during the adult ally trainings. In particular, the top-down power dynamics within the classroom during the adult ally trainings were palpable as youth organizers

and TCs practiced being in an egalitarian learning environment. Lilith explains her perspective as

an adult ally for Youth Liberation Army during the adult ally training:

> It was interesting and it's always really interesting to watch young people facilitate after I've worked for them for so long. I know they were super nervous. I think the panel is always really helpful for setting the scene and getting them comfortable talking. It's really helpful to get everyone comfortable in the space. But when they moved into the breakout sessions, I noticed a lot of the power dynamics shifted in the room and adults were talking a lot and that's okay because the young people were supposed to be facilitating, but I think the young people could have done more teaching. I think they could have done more of, "Here's what we mean when we do this." One of the things that became really clear in that class, that was also clear in the adult ally training, was that adults thought we made it a little bit like school because we liked those things about school. When they hear someone say we're making you highlight, talk to the text because teachers make us do that, they don't hear the sarcastic, patronizing side. I think the young people thought they were being very obvious, but just hammering some of those points home more is a skill set that young people need to learn. How to say the thing you're trying to say, not just dart around it, not allude to it but to actually come out straight and say we think school is patronizing and we don't like these kinds of assignments.

Many of the youth organizers expressed the urgency of social change work, which can

motivate and inspire oneself while also further anxiety and worries. In turn, adult allies must be

conscious of conflicting emotions and provide the necessary support for youth organizers and their

specific goals. As made clear in their critical counternarratives and personal testimony, the

anxieties of the youth organizers are not irrational. In turn, we must embolden them with tools and

resources to engage in proactive social change work. For adult allies, this requires the refusal of

romanticizing young people who are social change agents in order to truly engage with them in

the social justice initiatives they are passionate about. Lilith explains:

> When I sit down with high school students, I don't ask them, "What campaign do you want to run? What social justice issue do you want to work on?" I ask them, "What makes you angry? You know, what bugs you at school? What is annoying?" Because that's where you start, you start with those collective grievances, but most adults when they hear those things, want to correct them. You know, they want to solve the problem for the kids like, "Oh, well, have you tried talking to your principal?", or, "Well, that's probably a budgetary thing," or, "Well, the real problem with that is class sizes." They have some solution in their back pocket that just quiets the kid. I'm not saying they're wrong, maybe their solution is true and correct, but kids have to come to that themselves. When you're mad about something,

just hearing it brushed off is not an empowering experience. So, even though you've talked to this kid and you've asked questions, you've also now silenced them. I would see that happen over and over again. The other thing is about just how oppressed kids are and how bad their lives are. People don't realize it because we idealize youth.

For Rae, being an adult ally throughout the research project was also combined with her role as a peer mentor for TCs in the social studies methods course. A former teacher candidate and recent graduate of the COE, Rae uniquely understood the complexities and challenges of fostering the critical consciousness of TCs through the use of adult ally trainings. Furthermore, through her own involvement with the youth organizers, Rae understood how children and young people were not even romanticized, but simply prevented from being involved the work of transformative social change due to oppressive systemic structures:

> How do you change the minds of old white people or just even overall more accepting adults? The [youth organizers] are so willing to do the work and have these amazing ideas, but then they only go so far and it's not their fault. It's an adult problem. It's not a student problem. The [youth organizers] are there and they have the ideas and they're more than willing to do what needs to be done, but they're just getting stopped at a certain point. It's almost like how much change and new ideas can we have. There's a threshold of, "Okay, you're being a little too much for us. We're going to stop you here." I feel like there's a certain point where the older generations are like, "Okay, that's enough right now. We've been feeling too uncomfortable, we've reached our maximum discomfort, that'll be all from you." I'm sorry you feel uncomfortable but I'm not sorry.

Knowingly, Rae was forthright in her hesitancy about the potential impact of the adult ally trainings upon TCs and how TCs may perceive the youth organizers, in addition to a variety of community-engaged learning experiences:

> I think that there's going to be a lot of people that are like, "Okay, this is really cool, we're having kids come into our class, that's cute." And then there will probably be a small group people that's like, "This is amazing. How do I do this? How do I get involved like this and learning all the things going on here?" I feel like there's gonna be a small group of people that are like, "Why am I paying money to have these middle schoolers from Detroit come in here? This is really what I'm spending my college credit money on?" But I feel like that's an issue of how we view teachers as smarter and that's not actually what it is.

Furthermore, Rae was very mindful about how the contributions and actions of TCs during the adult ally trainings may potentially impact the youth organizers. Due to her past experiences in various methods courses and classroom field placements as a teacher candidate, Rae knew that many TCs, who are also her peers, would struggle to understand the realistic vision of the youth organizers:

> I think it's frustrating for everyone, but especially for young people, to find out something isn't as good as they thought it would be. I am wondering if some of the youth organizers felt that way after coming to class - were they underwhelmed by the reactions they got from teacher candidates, pleasantly surprised, or did it turn out pretty much how they thought it would? In a perfect world they would have left feeling hopeful after meeting with teacher candidates.

Due to the time constraints of the accelerated spring/summer semester course, there was simply never enough time to engage with TCs as they grew in their critical consciousness and shifted their understanding of top-down power dynamics in the classroom. In addition, two adult ally trainings were not enough for TCs to learn alongside young people for transformative educational practices. Within these constraints, additional community-engaged learning experiences and course assignments provided TCs further opportunities to connect the adult ally trainings to place-conscious and culturally sustaining social studies education. This can be seen in my written reflections after the TCs and I participated in a book club together based on Renée Watson's young adult novel, *This Side of Home* (Watson, 2015):

> We had our second book club discussion on *This Side of Home*. Each small group was animated and engaged in their dialogue and discussion about the book. I was able to assess that the majority of teacher candidates had read the book, as they were all making deep connections to what they had read in connection to our course. When we came back together to debrief, one teacher candidate shared how the book encouraged "windows and mirrors" (Bishop, 1990) learning experiences for him and how this process allowed him to see the meaning and purpose of culturally sustaining social studies. Another teacher candidate shared how the book connected to her own relearning of white privilege during this semester and how it really challenged her to think deeply about implicit and explicit biases. An additional teacher candidate made connections from the book to Youth Liberation Army and En Los Sueños, because she could acutely see the characters from

This Side of Home reflected in the young people we had collaborated with during the semester. The teacher candidates seemed to be recognizing the importance of partnering with and learning from community members. Finally, we spent a lot of time discussing the teaching practice of Mrs. Armstrong from *This Side of Home*. Her teaching and learning in the book modeled the type of social studies teaching and learning we have been discussing in class. Students made connections to student-centered and student-led teaching and learning, the teacher as a guide and facilitator, culturally sustaining pedagogy, and teaching and learning as an act of social justice. Students made explicit connections to Harry's teaching practice, which was really powerful and exciting!

After the adult ally trainings, I reflected with adult allies about ways to build upon the desired goals of the adult ally trainings. For example, implementing additional opportunities for youth organizers and TCs to collaborate together within local community spaces would encourage the continued reimagination of education as place-conscious and culturally sustaining. Furthermore, youth organizers and TCs would have continued guidance in the development of the critical skills and self-efficacy necessary for enacting community-based pedagogical and curricular practices. Importantly, adult allies would be purposeful in their facilitation of such specific intergenerational learning experiences in order to be accountable to youth organizers and TCs in the work of transformative social change. In this way, we would continue supporting one another as realistic visionaries for social change, as Harry explains:

> I think it's reminding me of Carla Shalaby and a quote from *Troublemakers: Lessons in Freedom from Young Children at Scho*ol (2017). Something along the lines of how this work is messy because we're trying to enact a vision of freedom that we have not experienced, that we have not lived, and I feel that with schooling. I feel like I'm trying to enact a way of teaching and learning and building community and in an educational context that is like nothing I've ever experienced personally and there aren't clear models for, "Here it is!"

Realistic Visions for Social Change through Community-Based Pedagogy

 Community-based pedagogy is grounded in critical inquiry and collaborative dialogue in order for teachers and learners to grow as individuals and also as accountable community members. Furthermore, community-based pedagogy shifts systems of power as both teachers and students

are recognized as keepers and makers of knowledge. Within this context, community-based pedagogy is a framework for teachers and students to name and understand systems of oppression that impact schools and communities in order to work towards more humanizing and shared futures. To this end, community-based pedagogy requires accountability, purpose, and commitment between teachers and students as they join in solidarity for intersectional social justice causes. Such a process is lifelong, dynamic, and incomplete, which requires one to be hopeful, yet a realistic visionary for transformative social change.

Through a community-based framework, the adult ally trainings within a teacher education classroom prompted youth organizers, TCs, and adult allies to cultivate a shared sense of belonging by being in relation and dialogue with one another. In addition, the adult ally trainings encouraged TCs to conceptualize how they would co-create place-conscious and culturally sustaining classrooms alongside their students. As evidenced throughout the findings in this chapter, such collaborative and community-engaged learning experiences are nuanced and complex. In turn, while adult ally trainings offer exciting possibilities for paradigm shifts in teacher education programs and PreK-12 classrooms, they are also filled with contradictions and limitations. Importantly, this mitigates the possibility to romanticize the role of youth organizers as essential partners in community-based teacher education and instead encourages the critical analysis of adult ally trainings. In this way, realistic visions for social change are made possible through the process of praxis.

Youth Organizers as Reflective Learners Through Praxis

Youth Organizers

For the youth organizers, collaborating with adult allies and TCs throughout the duration of the research project provided an opportunity to improve upon their facilitation skills and critical

knowledge growth through the process of praxis. Praxis, as detailed in Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, engages individuals and communities in generative dialogue for critical reflection and transformative action (1970). As discussed in the first three chapters, praxis is woven throughout the community-based pedagogy of the social studies methods course and the methodology of this community-based action research project. Since the process of praxis requires vulnerability, youth organizers were encouraged to be open to their own critiques of the adult ally trainings, as well as those from the TCs and adult allies, in order to grow as change agents within schools and communities. Lily explains the reasoning of her participation in the adult ally trainings, which deeply connects to the process of praxis:

> I was curious to see what I could do because I had just come back from a training that was teaching adult allies how to be adult allies. I was able to use what I learned from that training and my own experience to help. So, it was really just practice and you know practicing what I had already learned and seeing if I could do it.

While planning the adult ally trainings, youth organizers drew on past facilitation endeavors in which they have previously provided professional development for educators, presented at youth-centered conferences, and hosted workshops for grassroots community organizers. In addition, the adult ally trainings were largely inspired by the lived experiences of youth organizers in PreK-12 classrooms. This was demonstrated in the collaborative planning meeting with Blue, Allison, and Harry:

> *Harry*: So, here's the agenda for the training that [En Los Sueños] did. Do you want to talk through it?

> *Blue*: Warm up stuff, introduction ...

> *Harry*: So, this was all part one, right?

> *Allison*: Yeah, we were talking about what [En Los Sueños] was, after the surveys, and the information we got back, and how we made the improvement team.

> *Blue*: Why don't we just read the agenda?

Harry: So, this all the context [of the training in the agenda].

Allison: We talked about negative situations that we experience, that was -

Harry: And here, they just explained them.

Kaitlin: Oh, so you acted some of them out?

Blue: Yeah, we acted them out.

Kaitlin: Oh, you could have my students act out some of them. That might be really powerful for them to experience the negative situations and positive situations. Then you could have time to debrief and dialogue about it?

Allison: Yeah, what we did was, "What happened in this situation? What could go better? What was the wrong thing that happened?" And we got some discussion, not as much as I was expecting, but -

Blue: Mhmm.

Harry: If we wanted to connect it to immigration justice, like this one in particular about speaking Spanish -

Blue: I think just any language. I feel like some people forget that, they don't forget, they just don't recognize that it's not just Hispanic, but it's everyone else.

Kaitlin: Right, so you could preface it as, "This is our example, but there are so many other languages that students might speak."

Allison: I remember after this, a teacher stopped saying this about the Spanish thing, because they knew it was in the class.

Harry: You mean the teacher that was telling people to stop speaking Spanish, stopped?

Allison: Yeah, but when she hears a certain tone when people are talking Spanish, she's like, "What are you saying? What's so funny?" She was talking about something and they said something in Spanish, and they started laughing and then the teacher was like, "There was nothing funny about what I said, so what were you talking about?"

Harry: That was recently?

Allison: Yeah, yesterday. And then we have discussions. And then the math-y one.

Harry: Oh, the data wall?

Kaitlin: So, if you do the acting ones, have you seen in elementary schools, maybe you had to do this, how if you are misbehaving, you have to take your name and move it to yellow or red?

Allison: That was so painful. I cried so much.

Blue: I cried so much.

Throughout the collaborative planning meetings, the youth organizers reflected upon which activities, readings, and reflective prompts would be purposeful for the TCs during the adult ally trainings. Through this process, youth organizers were able to make decisions about specific learning goals that would be impactful for the TCs, which was demonstrated in a collaborative planning meeting with Youth Liberation Army, Lilith, and Rae:

> *Patrick*: I did that at the first adult ally training and I kind of wanted to do it as how in school they make us do text analysis a lot, so basically read through the text and mark things that interest you, things you have questions about, so basically analyzing the text.
>
> *Lilith*: And the texts are? Do you remember what they are?
>
> *Mary*: One is an excerpt from Martin Luther King's *Letter From a Birmingham Jail*.
>
> *Alaska*: One is a poem from -
>
> *Lilith*: Khalil Gibran's *On Children*. And then the other one is a text message between Alaska and her mother. And do we also use the Facebook comment?
>
> *Mary*: I don't think we did, maybe we did, I don't know.
>
> *Lilith*: We should add that back on.
>
> *Kaitlin*: Are they jigsawing? Are different groups reading one text per group or are they -
>
> *Mary*: We put them all in a packet and so they all did them.

The adult ally trainings within the social studies methods course were a unique opportunity for youth organizers to practice their facilitation and community organizing skills since many of the youth organizers had not previously interacted with future educators in a teacher education classroom setting. For Patrick, the adult ally training was significant because it provided youth

organizers an opportunity to develop leadership skills and to disrupt the typical top-down power

dynamics of classroom teaching and learning. Patrick explains: "I just was getting more excited

and more comfortable with it. It provided me with an opportunity to be a leader and especially in

the small group, it felt good to be able to take charge of a situation, because it doesn't happen in a

school setting for the most part."

Many of the youth organizers were curious to facilitate an adult ally training for TCs and

some wondered how receptive the TCs would be to the ideas presented in the adult ally trainings.

Therefore, I made efforts to validate and legitimate the knowledge of youth organizers before,

during, and after the adult ally trainings within the social studies methods course. As such, I

employed my agency and relative power as a teacher educator-scholar-community organizer to

foster a classroom space that would be open to the content of the adult ally trainings. In turn, youth

organizers like Tia were heartened to witness how reasonably receptive and positive the TCs were

during the adult ally trainings:

> I was really curious as to what the teacher candidates were going to be like, if they would
> be receptive or not. I hadn't gone to any of the other adult ally trainings, I really wanted to
> know what was going to be taught, so I thought it would be a cool thing to experience.
> They were all really receptive in a way I haven't really experienced with older people in
> the past. They really took the stuff we said seriously, and they all seemed to be really
> passionate about being better working with youth, which was really cool to witness,
> because I never really dealt with adults that were that receptive. It was really cool.

From the onset, youth organizers desired to practice their adult ally trainings in order to

grow both as facilitators and community organizers. During planning meetings, youth organizers

would ask for specific information or request access to resources that would support them in

furthering the goals of their current initiatives or campaigns. In addition, youth organizers

requested that I provide them with a summary of feedback pertaining to their adult ally training

from the various data sources collected for the research project. These specific requests were

conducted through the methodology of critical action research and the practice of community-based pedagogy. For Riley, this process was an opportunity to practice and improve upon a facilitation technique, multiplicity, he learned from community organizer and author, adrienne maree brown (2013):

> I guess that's something I have to practice. Even when I am nervous and especially in the role of facilitating, to notice different power dynamics and try to minimize them. It takes years. There's a word – multiplicity. I read an article about it and it's about when you're facilitating and noticing power dynamics and leveling the playing field in your group. So, it's learning how to level playing fields of privilege and power of the groups you're in. It's super difficult, there's probably tons of research.

Following their visit to the social studies methods course, the youth organizers were filled with ideas for ways to improve upon the adult ally trainings for TCs or other adults in various school and community settings. Alaska discussed the importance of having more consistent learning opportunities between youth organizers and TCs in order to build upon their skills and self-efficacy:

> I feel like multiple sessions would be good and not just a day, so we can reinforce some ideas and go back and clean some stuff up. We see them in their element, so it would be nice for them to see us in our element, like taking them on a field trip or something like that. I think one of the things I wanted to do more in the session was for it to be more individualized and personal, so definitely more small groups, more one-on-one. Youth Liberation Army could write up the curriculum. That would be really cool and so they could constantly hear [our ideas].

In addition, the youth organizers discussed the importance of further connecting the content of the adult ally trainings to the grade level and subject area of the TCs for more impactful learning opportunities. Mary explains:

> I would probably take a little bit more time preparing the situations that were done and the roles in them, so they could really feel it and get into it and understand it. The age groups are different that some of them would be teaching, so to tailor it a little bit more to whatever age group they were teaching or specific to the subject that they were going into. I would put a little more thought behind the scenarios that we did in the skits.

Because the adult ally trainings were an opportunity to develop their leadership skills and to further practice facilitation, youth organizers learned that they could be more steadfast in their purpose. In addition, the youth organizers learned how they could more purposefully connect their message to the professional ambitions of TCs as future elementary educators. Patrick elaborates:

> I think going through those text pieces and being able to analyze them with people who, I think, their first instinct is just to hand out papers and just text analyze. It feels very demeaning to go through that all the time. It doesn't feel like someone is really listening to your ideas that much and they're looking for buzz words for you to say and as long as you hit those buzzwords, you're on the correct path to figuring out the message. It's not genuinely, "How are you thinking and how are you feeling about this topic?" I thought it was very valuable that we did that. I think we could have been better about communicating that we didn't like it. I think it came off that we did like it for sure, so that was a little bit of a problem. I think it was just an issue of we didn't curate our meeting with your class to social studies elementary kids. So, it's harder for them to take interest and see that connection. So, I felt we could have done that better to curate our argument to the audience. At the same time, I think there were specific teachers who took a lot from it, like someone started crying and they really had a lot from that and that's good, too. Figuring out that balance is really hard, because you want to connect to what you're there for as much as possible, while also still exposing to new material.

While the youth organizers expressed they had a "positive experience" and would "do it again", the additional prospects for them to facilitate adult ally trainings are realistically few and far between. Furthermore, the actualities and demands of school, families, and extracurriculars impact the capacity of youth organizers to be continuously reflecting and improving upon their facilitation skills, whether in teacher education programs or in their schools and communities. However, the impact of the adult ally trainings points to the importance of continuous opportunities for young people, future educators, and classroom teachers to learn alongside one another. Allison speaks to the significance of intergenerational learning opportunities like the adult ally trainings:

> [The teacher candidates] were saying stuff that they were interpreting in a different way and I was like, "I hadn't thought about it and that was good to know." I don't know most of the teacher candidates' minds because I just know the [teachers] at my school and I only know what students say. I don't know what most of teachers think, so it was good to know more.

The youth organizers are dynamic and respond to the pressing needs of their community organizations. For example, Youth Liberation Army is currently focusing upon direct action regarding the harmful impact of the Detroit water crisis and En Los Sueños is actively organizing for local charter schools to adopt sanctuary school district policies similar to that of Detroit Public Schools Community District. As such, the facilitation of adult ally trainings for teacher education programs, school districts, or community organizations is one of the many initiatives that youth organizers are engaged in for transformative social change. In turn, the process of praxis allowed youth organizers to apply lessons learned from the adult ally trainings to other causes and interests related to their grassroots community organization. Within this lens, Alaska discusses the meaning of youth-centered and youth-led grassroots organizations like Youth Liberation Army:

> Youth Liberation Army and organizations like Youth Liberation Army are important to schools, first off, because schools are supposed to be a safe space, but they tend to not be. So, organizations like Youth Liberation Army provide that safe space to young people who want to venture out of the norm and go do things and test the boundaries, push against authority a little bit. We're that safe space and it's all about empowerment and making sure that your voice is heard, that you have a seat at the table, you feel like you're being listened to as an active member in society. Youth Liberation Army is important in communities because there's a lack of youth organizations that are run by youth, led by youth, which makes them youth organizations, so we are able to fill that gap and especially since we're not really bound by one way of thinking. We come from such a diverse group of young people that we have the capability to do everything and I think that's really important.

Teacher Candidates

For the TCs, the adult ally trainings were an invitation to reflect upon their developing teaching practice by engaging in the process of praxis. As previously discussed in chapter three, the adult ally trainings were two of four community engaged learning experiences that TCs participated in during the social studies methods course. In addition, the adult ally trainings were one of many learning opportunities for TCs to grow as community-based practitioners throughout the semester course. In turn, the TCs made sense of community-based pedagogy through the

process of praxis by participating in the adult ally trainings, specific course assignments, in-class

discussions, critical reflective opportunities, and multi-modal-resources from the social studies

methods course. Through this process, TCs grew to understand the importance of community both

inside and outside the walls of the classroom, which is vital for critical consciousness growth

through praxis. Eleanor elaborates:

> I feel like a lot of times community doesn't get brought into classrooms and I think it's really important, because if you establish that the community is important in the classroom and you provide opportunities where the students can learn about the community, get involved in the community, and even just bringing people from the community to talk with your students, it really makes an impact because they know you care about them. Not only do they know you care about them, but you care about their community, you care about where they grew up, and you care about what's going on around them. The more we know about [community] and the more that we immerse the community, the better it is because our students can learn better. I just think connecting the community really brings in the whole culture of the classroom and the whole community spirit. I feel like when you bring in the community, you're embracing all your students because your students are representatives all throughout the community, so when you bring different parts of that, you really accept all your students for who they are.

The TCs, particularly those who participated in the research project, voiced the impact the

youth organizers had on their understandings of students, even those in early elementary school

grades, as change agents. In turn, many of the TCs would connect community-engaged learning

experiences from the social studies methods course to the adult ally trainings or to their time spent

in classroom field placements. Renee discusses her developing practice as a critically conscious

teacher candidate who curates culturally and place-conscious learning environments for

transformative social change within the elementary classroom:

> This course has given me so many new ideas in my teaching practices. I have learned how easy it can be to involve the community in all lessons, especially those driven by student interest. I have done my best to involve the community where I am student teaching in and in my lessons while I have been there. By doing this and relating lessons back to current events or issues directly affecting the students living in the area, I am able to see a great increase in student engagement and participation. I have also learned that it is easily possible to encourage students to be active citizens in society by teaching in this way. Exposing students to social justice issues and the unspoken histories of different events,

people, cultures, and places allows students to see all sides of current events and history instead of the typically taught, white-washed versions. This goes back to teaching students to be active citizens and allowing them to learn through mirrors and windows (Bishop, 1990). This course has completely changed the way I viewed teaching the social studies in the most positive way. I cannot wait to allow my future students to learn in a way that I was never taught in school.

In the community-based social studies methods course, TCs engaged in culturally sustaining learning opportunities which decenters whiteness in order to (re)center the assets and knowledge of multicultural and multilingual students within the curriculum. The adult ally trainings, in addition to major course assignments such as the Journey Box Project and the Community Engaged Lesson Plan Project, prompted TCs to conceptualize the significance of culturally sustaining pedagogy in order to potentially implement such humanizing pedagogical practices within classroom field placements. Gabrielle explains the influence of the two major course assignments on her practice, which stimulated her understanding of culturally sustaining pedagogy through the process of praxis:

> The community-based assignment where we had to go somewhere. That really made me start thinking about how I need to be more open to learning new things, because everyone gravitates to things that they know or are familiar with or that they see themselves in. I've been to the [Detroit Institute of Arts] so many times throughout my life, but I never visited the African American section, because I always went to things that I liked, like the ancient civilizations area or the Renaissance and I started thinking, "How come you never went to go see that?" That particular project had me start learning more about myself and how I need to push the thing that I'm interested in, to get to know my students, to help them grow. I like the journey box project a lot, too. It helped me learn more about myself, but in a different way, more like my culture, because my family is one of the families that came from Texas. They were migrant workers, but my mom doesn't speak Spanish. I don't speak Spanish, because my grandma's generation wanted to be white. None of them taught their kids how to speak Spanish and they wanted to fit in as much as possible into white America. Learning about that whole thing and where Chicano comes from, because I didn't know that whole part of it, that it was derogatory and they used it, so that helped me learn about myself and my people culturally. This is how I want my students to feel. I learned so much more and I want them to feel and be super excited about, so it was overall super cool.

Many of the TCs discussed the complexity of fostering culturally sustaining and place-conscious practices within elementary social studies education. Purposefully, the framework of

community-based pedagogy encouraged TCs to engage in the process of praxis to conceptualize how their classrooms would (re)center and amplify the community cultural wealth of students and communities. For example, Kramer purposefully connected the framework of community-based pedagogy to a future classroom that would be in another city. In this way, Kramer demonstrated that the core learning outcomes from the social studies methods course, including the adult ally trainings, are applicable to wherever the TCs may be as classroom teachers in the near future:

> I was actually thinking about that a lot with moving to a new place. I should try to get to know the area. I know some of it from being out there quite often but not enough to teach about it or to get involved with it. So, I've been thinking about that a lot with moving out that way. It would be a good chance to explore, find new places, even possible field trips, local parks, things like that to bring that into the classroom. I think it's important for kids to know what's around them and to even do projects or other activities to get them involved in their communities to show how important their involvement is. I am looking forward to implementing the many strategies we have talked about in the class into my own classroom. I am so excited to be able to include the local community. Since I will be moving, I am even more excited to have the opportunity to get to know that new community and build new partnerships.

Significantly, many of the TCs struggled in the process of praxis as they often found themselves engaging in critical reflection and dialogue about uncomfortable and challenging topics. In this way, some of the TCs acknowledged the many structural and oppressive barriers that exist, such as racism, sexism, and classism, which greatly impacts their ability to foster community-based learning experiences in PreK-12 classrooms. Tyrone discusses the complexity of nurturing culturally sustaining pedagogy, which was modeled in the social studies methods course and adult ally trainings:

> Being uncomfortable, because a lot of cultural things are being uncomfortable and when you place that in the curriculum, it can get serious in the classroom. Being open-minded and being uncomfortable and understanding that, as a class, you're going to take steps that might step on toes, but we are all here together to reach one goal and that is to learn about each and every individual and use each and every individual to help build our community.

Many of the TCs discussed the lack of opportunities to implement community-based practices in their classroom field placements. In turn, some of the TCs do not have the ability to meaningfully reflect upon and dialogue about the process of curating community-based learning environments. Such barriers point to the necessity of further intergenerational learning experiences, such as adult ally trainings, in order for TCs to grow as critically conscious and social aware educators. In turn, TCs may further develop the self-efficacy necessary to implement community-based pedagogy within classroom field placements rather than wait for their own future classrooms. As Fay discusses: "When I have my own classroom, I would like to reach beyond the boundaries of the school to teach. I realize my potential to change the way I teach to also be an agent for social change." Within this milieu, the process of praxis is vital in order for TCs to feel confident in implementing the core learning outcomes of the adult ally trainings and the social studies methods course.

Adult Allies

Similar to the youth organizers and TCs, the adult allies were involved in the process of praxis as the research project progressed. For the adult allies participating in this research project, the reflective and dialogical tenets of praxis encouraged us to better understand and improve upon our roles within intergenerational learning communities. Although we stem from various professional backgrounds, each of the adult allies were enthused by the use of action research methodology and community-based pedagogy in order to grow as classroom teachers, teacher educators, and community organizers. For Harry in particular, the process of curating adult ally trainings alongside youth organizers was an opportunity for him to merge his roles as a classroom teacher and a community organizer:

> I feel like I've been really trying to understand my role as an educator and an organizer. Particularly thinking more about youth organizing and what it looks like to do youth

organizing through En Los Sueños and how I can bring my experiences and skills and perspectives as an educator into that sort of capacity. So, that was part of why I wanted to do the project, too, just reflect and process on what that experience has been like of being in these different roles when I want them to not feel like different roles.

As adult allies, we were honest with one another about the complexity of collaborating within an intergenerational community space, which is always complicated and messy. In turn, we found the process of bringing youth organizers and TCs together for critical reflection and dialogue to be filled with challenges. However, by acknowledging the difficulty of our role as adult allies, we discovered that we were more easily able to delve into the process of praxis and emerge with new ideas for transformative social change in our schools and communities. For Rae, the dual roles as a peer mentor for TCs and adult ally for youth organizers encouraged her to embrace the lifelong process of praxis:

> I feel like I'm on the right path towards what I want to be as a teacher, but obviously there's always more work to be done, so in my own personal journey as an educator, it's important for me to keep learning or relearning and keep putting in the work to eventually go out into the world and be a positive influence as a teacher. It's important for me to always be learning and challenging things that I have learned and being able to look back on that critically to know something wasn't right there.

The collaboration amongst the adult allies challenged our various roles as classroom teachers, teacher educators, and community organizers. We wondered together, we pushed one another's thinking, and we supported one another in our own (re)learning processes. In this way, we all recognized the uniqueness and importance of curating community-based learning experiences amongst youth organizers and TCs. For Lilith and the youth organizers in Youth Liberation Army, their participation in the research project was uniquely timed since they are a relatively new grassroots community organization. Lilith discusses the significance of trustworthy relationships during the research project in order for adult allies and youth organizers to reflect, learn, and grow:

I think the most important thing is the relationship that you built over a year with Youth Liberation Army because it made it so, that as we transition as an organization and did things a little differently and identified a little differently, you sort of can roll with that and not feel like you were being left behind or like you didn't know what was going on. I was thinking it might have been easier on us if we had started this process today, now a year later, because Youth Liberation Army knows a little bit more about itself, a little bit larger, a little more collected. We might be more certain of ourselves, but at the same time, I think starting off with that uncertainty was good in some ways and that was just where we were at the time and managed to put something together that I think the young people were really proud of. The thing that ended up being good about the timing is we had this product that we had just developed, we had this adult ally training that we thought was really helpful and would be good for teachers. So, timing is always difficult, but I think it was good in this case.

Similar to the youth organizers, the adult allies engaged in critical reflection and dialogue together in order to debrief and improve upon the adult ally trainings. For example, we found that time and logistics were great hinderances to the meaningful design of the adult ally trainings. Furthermore, we gained self-awareness as adult allies for ways we may improve upon the guidance of youth organizers in their facilitation of adult ally trainings. Harry discusses additional areas of growth specific for his role as an adult ally:

I mean, most practically, the biggest challenge was just finding time to prepare for this, especially since it was at the end of the school year. My classes were working on a big project and action club was working on a big event - Congresswoman Rashida Tlaib's visit - so it was difficult to find time to prepare. I also think the audience was an interesting challenge. My kids hadn't ever facilitated anything for teacher candidates before, so we had to reframe and rethink the original training my kids had created, which was for teachers at their school. To help reframe their original training to fit this audience, I sort of just asked, "What do you think future teachers need to know?" which I think was both a helpful and an overwhelming framing. My kids were kind of like, "So much!" So, I think just considering the audience of future teachers was a little bit of a challenge. Also, thinking about developing facilitation skills among my [students], that's a bit of a challenge for me, and this event sort of validated that. Don't get me wrong, I think Blue and Allison did an amazing job, but I've learned that I have more to learn about how to teach my kids how to facilitate. They wrote independently an amazing and powerful script for this training, but I need to push my students to use those scripts, which they create often for our trainings, events, and meetings, more as a guide, which is a challenge for me.

Lilith gained new insight about the youth organizers she collaborates with through the design and implementation of the adult ally trainings. More specifically, Lilith found that the youth

organizers were more open to various initiatives if adult allies are working to build trustworthy

and egalitarian relationships with them. In turn, Lilith came to better understand how she and other

adult allies may be accountable to youth organizers. This was made visible through my interactions

with youth organizers as a researcher-participant, which Lilith explains:

> I would say we learned a lot from that early part about making sure that the adults who I'm collaborating with come talk to the youth. That's now a priority for me. I've learned to not commit to anything until that happens. If anybody comes up to me and asks me, "Can we work with Youth Liberation Army?" I say, "Come to a meeting." Your willingness to do that and how well it worked when you came and talked to them and how invested they were in it was really the turning point for me. I was like, "Oh, okay, they can work with other adults and I don't have to constantly worry about who am I bringing this space. Is it fully fleshed-out? Is it easy to explain to them?" Even with all my talk about young people being the leaders and young people being fully capable, there's still that little bit of ageism, that's like, "I want to protect them from wasting their time" or if someone doesn't have all the pieces together, "Is that going to turn them off or is it going to make them frustrated?" It was very surprising to me how enthusiastic they were and how quickly they responded to your ideas.

Rae discussed the importance of TCs having structured time to practice the community-

based pedagogical strategies at the center of the adult ally trainings and the social studies methods

course. While the adult ally trainings were potentially impactful for TCs, Rae challenged teacher

education programs to implement further opportunities for TCs to engage in the process of praxis

before entering the classroom as educators:

> To me, this is one of the most important pieces. The initial exposure is a great start, but teacher candidates need to constantly be practicing community-based pedagogy so when they get into their own classrooms, they know what needs to be done and how to do it. I wish I would have had more opportunities to practice this before I started my first teaching job.

Throughout the duration of the research project and the social studies methods course, I

conducted detailed field notes in order to engage in the process of praxis. My intention with the

field notes was to critically reflect upon my various roles as a teacher educator and researcher-

participant. In turn, the field notes are filled with questions such as, "Am I doing this right?" and

statements like, "This is so brutally hard." However, key moments of the research project pointed

to the significance of collaborating in the process of praxis with TCs, youth organizers, and adult

allies, which is suggested in this personal field journal entry:

> Over the past couple of days, I provided feedback and comments for my teacher candidates' journey box projects. I was really blown away by what they put together. It was absolutely remarkable to see the purposeful and tenacious work many of them put into their journey box projects. For part of the final project, I incorporated a reflective paper with prompts for my teacher candidates. Reading these papers, which connected to the overall goals and desired outcomes of the course, was an exciting way to read what stood out to my teacher candidates and what was impactful for them as learners and teachers. As I read these reflections, I felt really excited and affirmed as a teacher because I could see and feel the immense (re)learning that many of my teacher candidates engaged in throughout our semester. I was so grateful for what they shared with me, especially because some of the teacher candidates connected the journey box project to their learning experiences with Youth Liberation Army and En Los Sueños. As I read my teacher candidate's journey box projects and reflective papers, coupled with thinking back to the other assignments from the semester, I could really see that many of my teacher candidates appeared to be involved in Freire's praxis = critical analysis, reflection, and dialogue in order to develop critical consciousness for transformative action. Many of my teacher candidates did not appear to be "studenting", but they instead appeared to be "learning". This was really evident in many of my teacher candidates' assignments and it helped me to see that all of the work we had done throughout the semester was grounded in consciousness raising rather than simply going through the motions of a methods course.

The adult allies contend that the collaboration amongst youth organizers and TCs within a

social studies methods course is one way to work toward transformative social change in schools

and communities. We are also aware of the challenges in this work as there needs to be system-

wide changes in order for intergenerational learning experiences within teacher education, the

PreK-12 classroom, and community spaces to be effective. We are consistently thinking about how

to navigate this work while causing the least amount of harm to young people and future educators.

In addition, the limited capacity for youth organizers to participate in a variety of initiatives and

endeavors points to the role of adult allies who have the ability to alleviate some of the burden that

many youth organizers feel within social justice work. Within this lens, the process of praxis

affords us the opportunity to always be developing as adult allies who aim to be accountable and

responsible to our students and communities. Rae shares the significance of this community-based approach: "It's important to me to know that there's a group of people who are willing to do all of those things even when it's difficult and even when it's super uncomfortable and even if you have a few less teacher friends in the building, to not just go along with it."

Reflective Learning through Praxis as Fundamental to Community-Based Pedagogy

Community-based pedagogy encourages teachers and learners to participate in the process of praxis, which stimulates individuals and communities to engage in generative dialogue for critical reflection and transformative action. Praxis is fundamental to the concept of conscientização, as theorized by Freire, which is the ongoing practice of critical consciousness and calls upon learners and educators to resist systems of oppression within schools and communities (1970). Praxis is non-linear and dynamic, which acknowledges that learning is a lifelong journey with oneself and in relation to people, places, and ecosystems. The process of praxis is oftentimes uncomfortable and challenging as new ways of knowing and being are (re)centered within learning communities in order to unsettle long-time systems of oppression. In turn, the use of praxis within community-based pedagogy is empowering as students and educators are encouraged to learn from and with one another for more humanizing and liberatory education.

The design, implementation, and analysis of the adult ally trainings would not have been possible without the process of praxis. Through the community-based methodology of the action research project and the community-based pedagogy of the social studies methods course, praxis was utilized in order to actively reflect and dialogue upon the impact of the two adult ally trainings. For youth organizers, praxis informs their ongoing work within schools and communities as the findings from the research project data sources are instrumental toward improving upon their collaboration with adults and adult allies. For TCs, praxis prompted their participation within the

community engaged learning experiences of the social studies methods course in order to grow as critically conscious and socially aware educators. For the adult allies, praxis invited us to reflect upon the complexities of our roles as classroom teachers, teacher educators, and community organizers in order to improve our facilitation of community-based learning experiences. By engaging in these various processes in community with one another, we reimagined and enacted education as the work of intersectional social justice for transformative social change.

Ally is a Verb

When the youth organizers first explained the purpose and the premise behind the adult ally trainings, I found myself fixated on the word "ally". As an anti-racist white female teacher educator-scholar-community organizer, ally has never seemed to encompass the breadth of the work involved in social justice initiatives. However, upon collaborating with youth organizers from Youth Liberation Army and En Los Sueños, I have come to more fully understand the role of "ally". When used as a verb, ally calls upon us "to unite or form a connection or relation between" and "to form or enter into an alliance" (Merriam-Webster, 2019). Within this lens, the adult ally trainings facilitated by youth organizers in Youth Liberation Army and En Los Sueños are a call to action.

The critical theoretical framework of community-based pedagogy is a tool for classroom teachers, teacher educators, teacher candidates, and community organizers to grow as allies for children and young people. Furthermore, as depicted in the findings of this chapter, community-based pedagogy challenges us to act upon our agency in order to disrupt harmful practices within schools and communities, to be realistic visionaries for social change, and to be reflective learners through praxis. In this way, we may (re)center the needs, desires, and strengths of children and young people as we collaborate together for transformative social change. To this end, chapter five

will discuss the possibilities, contradictions, and limitations of the adult ally trainings in order to better understand the complexity of youth organizers as essential partners within a community-based social studies methods course. In turn, chapter six will offer immediate and long-term implications for teacher educators seeking to foster community-based teacher education programs.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

Education as the practice of freedom – as opposed to education as the practice of domination – denies that man is abstract, isolated, independent, and unattached to the world; it also denies that the world exists as a reality apart from people. Authentic reflection considers neither abstract man nor the world without people, but people in their relations with the world. In these relations consciousness and world are simultaneous: consciousness neither precedes the world nor follows it.
(Freire, 1970, p. 81)

The classroom remains the most radical space of possibility in the academy ... Urging all of us to open our minds and hearts so that we can think and rethink, so that we can create new visions, I celebrate teaching that enables transgressions – a movement against and beyond boundaries. It is that movement which makes education the practice of freedom.
(hooks, 1994, p. 12)

Introduction

This action research project purposefully brought together youth organizers and teacher candidates (TCs) in order to disrupt the perpetuation of oppressive power structures and exclusionary practices within PreK-12 classrooms. Through the critical theoretical framework of community-based pedagogy, this action research project (re)centers the voices and perspectives of young people who are living for change in Detroit as both students and youth organizers. As a participant-researcher, I curated a community-based social studies methods course alongside youth organizers and adult allies from two grassroots community organizations in Detroit – Youth Liberation Army and En Los Sueños. Prompted to lead a community-engaged learning experience for TCs enrolled in the social studies methods course, each organization chose to design and facilitate distinct adult ally trainings. Informed by their own lived experiences in schools and communities, the adult ally trainings demonstrated the critical consciousness and agency of youth organizers as they demonstrated how students and future educators may collaborate together to address the most concerning issues facing children and young people in schools and communities.

Opportunities for intentional dialogue and reflection prompted the youth organizers and TCs to acknowledge and challenge the top-down power dynamics between students and teachers, young people and adults, and teacher education programs and local communities in order to push forward new ideas for more liberatory and humanizing education practices. This process aimed to enhance TCs' understanding and use of community-based pedagogy while supporting youth organizers in their social justice work within schools and communities. For many of the TCs, learning from and with youth organizers affirmed, strengthened, or challenged their pedagogical philosophies and practices as developing educators. In addition, the adult ally trainings were an opportunity for youth organizers to develop skills and knowledge necessary for their ongoing social justice initiatives Yet, the findings indicate that community-based teacher education, as informed by the youth organizers and their adult allies within this specific research project, is not without complications and barriers. While the role of youth organizers as essential partners in teacher education point toward reimaginative possibilities, the process of collaboration is filled with contradictions and limitations.

Similar to the ambitions of the youth organizers involved in this research project, community-based teacher education aims to benefit children and young people within schools and communities. To this end, the methodology of community-based action research prompts the critical analysis of the collaboration amongst youth organizers, TCs, and adult allies at the heart of this research project. As such, chapter five will discuss the possibilities, contradictions, and limitations of youth organizers as essential partners in teacher education through the lens of a community-based pedagogical and methodological framework. Through the discussion of various data sources collected during each phase of the action research project, I employ the continuous process of praxis to acknowledge and consider the complexity of intergenerational learning

experiences in order to further the development of community-based teacher education. In our current socio-political context, such curricular and pedagogical practices are necessary and urgent in order for educators, students, and community members to actualize education as the practice of freedom, which is the root purpose of community-based pedagogy. In turn, the role of the youth organizers in the social studies methods course calls classroom teachers, teacher educators, and community organizers to action and to question:

7. What implications does community-based pedagogy have for those of us who educate teacher candidates?

8. How does community-based pedagogy enhance or compromise the reimagination of the classroom as a space for young people and educators to collaborate for transformative social change?

9. In what ways does the praxis of action research engage the complexities of community-based pedagogy within the realities of PreK-12 classrooms and teacher education?

Possibilities

Through the design and facilitation of adult trainings, the youth organizers enacted a radical and conscious-raising community-based pedagogy as they challenged an education system that does not meet their needs in order to push forward new ideas to strategically change the system. Situating critical counternarratives and personal testimony based upon their own lived experiences within the agendas of the adult ally trainings, the youth organizers demonstrated how intersecting systems of oppression harm them in schools and communities (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). Through this process, the youth organizers prompted TCs to reconceptualize education as the practice of freedom through the dialogical and reflective process of praxis (Freire, 1970; hooks,

1994). This can be seen within the literary texts and role-playing skits designed and implemented by Youth Liberation Army and En Los Sueños within the adult ally trainings.

It is important to pause here to acknowledge and discuss the top-down power dynamics that the youth organizers purposefully disrupted within the adult ally trainings in terms of both age and race. As previously discussed, the teaching profession is overwhelmingly white, while PreK-12 students are increasingly diverse (Geiger, 2018). The racial demographics of the teaching profession are reflected in the research project participants in which the majority of TCs and adult allies are white, and the majority of youth organizers are Black/African American and Latina female students. Within the dynamic of white teachers and students of color, the youth organizers often question the authority of white teachers in order to critique the permeating whiteness of the United States schooling system. This is particularly salient within the context of a post-*Brown v. Board of Education* (1954, 1955) and *Milliken v. Bradley* (1974) era in which African American educators and administrators were pushed out of the profession (hooks, 1994) and predominantly African American public school districts throughout the country were further disinvested (Baugh, 2011) due to de jure and de facto segregation.

While the youth organizers interrogate top-down power dynamics beyond the four walls of the classroom, their challenges to predominantly white teachers is different than their objections to community leaders, family members, and elders of color due to the historical legacy of systemic racism in the United States. It is not my ambition to minimize the potentially challenging and detrimental experiences of youth organizers within their communities and families, but to instead explicitly focus upon the nuanced relations between predominantly white teachers and Black, Indigenous, and students of color within PreK-12 classrooms. In particular, the youth organizers are troubled by the ways in which white educators assert their power in the classroom through

pedagogical and curricular decisions at the expense of children and young people's cultural heritage, inherent knowledge, and community assets (Delpit, 2006). For Alaska, this often feels and looks like psychological warfare:

> The purpose of school is to wage psychological warfare on young people, on vulnerable young people. Its purpose is to control, to reshape, and redefine how we see ourselves and how we see the world in order to continue perpetuating the toxic and destructive systems of oppression that exist within America. I think it's happening in every school and every school district and while it looks different, part of the psychological warfare is not just on students, but also against students.

Thus, it is empowering for youth organizers, along with their adult allies, to name and examine intersecting systems of oppression within the United States schooling system through the use of critical counternarratives and personal testimony (Crenshaw 1989; 1991). Moreover, the conceptual frameworks of radical democratic pedagogy, youth activism, and youth resistance theories of change, as discussed in chapter two, elucidate how Youth Liberation Army and En Los Sueños bring local injustices within schools and communities to the surface in order to be acted upon. In turn, the youth organizers reveal the dominant white gaze (Morrison, 2019) through anti-racist practices, which works to reimagine education as the practice of freedom rather than the practice of domination (Freire, 1970; hooks, 1994).

Literary Texts as Critical Counternarratives

Youth Liberation Army chose specific literary texts to speak to the TCs during the adult ally trainings. Having previously facilitated adult ally trainings for community members and community educators, the youth organizers found Martin Luther King Jr.'s "Letter From a Birmingham Jail" and Khalil Gibran's "On Children" to be an impactful tool to describe their needs and concerns regarding relationships with adults in schools and communities (Appendix B). Speaking through the words of King and Gibran, the youth organizers asserted critical counternarratives related to their everyday life as children and young people. In this way, Youth

Liberation Army challenged the dominant ideology of whiteness within PreK-12 schooling and teacher education programs in order to assert the significance of their experiential knowledge as students and community organizers (Yosso, 2005).

By situating their own narrative within a teacher education classroom, youth organizers countered the deficit lens that many TCs bring to methods courses and classroom field placements (Ladson-Billings, 1999). More specifically, Youth Liberation Army declared that children and young people who address injustices they experience are not the problem. Rather, the problem is embedded within the oppressive structure of schools that perpetuates top-down power dynamics rooted in systemic racism, classism, and sexism. The majority of the youth organizer participants identify as Black/African American and Latina female students and their use of anti-racist texts, such as King's "Letter From a Birmingham Jail", centers intersectional social justice in order to affirm the diverse identities of children and young people within PreK-12 schools (Love, 2019). For Youth Liberation Army, King's pointed argument against the "white moderate" was a method to communicate their own disappointment in adult allies who prefer their own comfort above enacting social change. More specifically, the use of Dr. King's letter challenged TCs to confront how white supremacy is perpetuated in PreK-12 classrooms by well-meaning white teachers. Here, I quote Dr. King (1963) at length in order to juxtapose his analysis of the white moderate to the ambitions of Youth Liberation Army:

> I must make two honest confessions to you, my Christian and Jewish brothers. First, I must confess that over the past few years I have been gravely disappointed with the white moderate. I have almost reached the regrettable conclusion that the Negro's great stumbling block in his stride toward freedom is not the White Citizen's Counciler or the Ku Klux Klanner, but the white moderate, who is more devoted to "order" than to justice; who prefers a negative peace which is the absence of tension to a positive peace which is the presence of justice; who constantly says: "I agree with you in the goal you seek, but I cannot agree with your methods of direct action"; who paternalistically believes he can set the timetable for another man's freedom; who lives by a mythical concept of time and who constantly advises the Negro to wait for a "more convenient season." Shallow

understanding from people of good will is more frustrating than absolute misunderstanding from people of ill will. Lukewarm acceptance is much more bewildering than outright rejection. I had hoped that the white moderate would understand that law and order exist for the purpose of establishing justice and that when they fail in this purpose they become the dangerously structured dams that block the flow of social progress. I had hoped that the white moderate would understand that the present tension in the South is a necessary phase of the transition from an obnoxious negative peace, in which the Negro passively accepted his unjust plight, to a substantive and positive peace, in which all men will respect the dignity and worth of human personality. Actually, we who engage in nonviolent direct action are not the creators of tension. We merely bring to the surface the hidden tension that is already alive. We bring it out in the open, where it can be seen and dealt with. Like a boil that can never be cured so long as it is covered up but must be opened with all its ugliness to the natural medicines of air and light, injustice must be exposed, with all the tension its exposure creates, to the light of human conscience and the air of national opinion before it can be cured.

By challenging the white moderate who do not "get to the power structure" or "see the justice of our cause" (King, 1963), the youth organizers recognized and named the potential agency of TCs to be anti-racist and critically conscious adult allies within school communities. Recognizing the political act of teaching, the youth organizers utilized King's "Letter From a Birmingham Jail" to critically dialogue and reflect with TCs about justice-oriented and empowering learning opportunities in the classroom. Lily expands upon the ambitions of this critical inquiry:

> So, I asked my own questions. I had asked, "Why do you think they don't share materials like the poem that we read? "Why don't they share that in schools?" I had asked, "Why do they share the "Letter from a Birmingham Jail" in schools, but they don't share it in the way that we share it.? So, what's the difference? What motivations do schools have when they share it? What's their narrative when they share it versus our narrative?" Because the "Letter From a Birmingham Jail" is to his allies and that's how we see it … Because we don't look deeper. We're not told to look deeper.

Through Gibran's "On Children", youth organizers advocated for the relationships they desire between teachers and students, which should be mutually supportive and in solidarity for the benefit of shared futures. In turn, "On Children" acted as a paired literary text to "Letter From a Birmingham Jail" in order for youth organizers to beckon TCs to join them as they collectively

interrupt toxic schooling practices through their everyday pedagogical and curricular decisions.

As discussed in chapter four, "On Children" was particularly impactful for some of the TCs as

they (re)conceptualized their role as educators within student-centered and relational elementary

classrooms to be as a guide or facilitator. Being so, I provide the full text of Gibran's "On Children"

(1923) here:

> Your children are not your children.
> They are the sons and daughters of Life's longing for itself.
> They come through you but not from you,
> And though they are with you yet they belong not to you.
>
> You may give them your love but not your thoughts,
> For they have their own thoughts.
> You may house their bodies but not their souls,
> For their souls dwell in the house of tomorrow,
> which you cannot visit, not even in your dreams.
> You may strive to be like them,
> but seek not to make them like you.
> For life goes not backward nor tarries with yesterday.
>
> You are the bows from which your children
> as living arrows are sent forth.
> The archer sees the mark upon the path of the infinite,
> and He bends you with His might
> that His arrows may go swift and far.
> Let your bending in the archer's hand be for gladness;
> For even as He loves the arrow that flies,
> so He loves also the bow that is stable.

Through the literary text of "On Children", the youth organizers disrupted the banking

method of schooling, often found within PreK-12 schooling and teacher education programs,

which positions the teacher as the giver of knowledge and voice (Freire, 1970). With a teaching

population that is predominantly white and female, the banking method often reinforces top-down

power structures within PreK-12 classrooms through the centering of white, Eurocentric, settler

colonial, and patriarchal ideologies. By engaging TCs in critical inquiry and dialogue pertaining

to "On Children" during the adult ally trainings, Youth Liberation Army modeled community-

based learning opportunities between young people and adults, which is a counternarrative to the banking method that many students experience and what many TCs have internalized as the correct way to approach teaching. In turn, the youth organizers advocated for the reconceptualization of classroom teaching as democratic and egalitarian, which prompts education as the practice of freedom for both students and teachers. Mary's critical analysis of power in the classrooms contextualizes Youth Liberation Army's community-based framework:

> It can be a power struggle sometimes, but people shouldn't think of it as power per say. It should be thought of as an environment where everybody's voice matters, where everybody is listened to, where everyone is equal. I think it should be an environment where everybody is equal. The power struggle should be diminished completely. It should be everyone is equal, and we are allowed to equally share our opinions about how this classroom should go. A lot of adults have an issue with that, because most adults always assume that they are right, and they lead all the time and their way is the highway and their way goes all the time. But just diminish the power struggle, that power mindset that you have to be in control all of the time and that you're in power all of the time. Even if you're a teacher of kindergartners, you are all equal and they are still human beings, too. They can say what they want to learn and how they want to learn, so I think that's a big thing, just diminish that completely, just that whole mindset. You don't need to have power, it's fine.

Community-based pedagogy acknowledges that students and teachers are consistently (re)learning and evolving in order to mitigate romanticizing democratic and relational learning communities. Through this framework, the voices and lived experiences of children and young people are inherent assets for intergenerational teaching and learning. For the youth organizers of Youth Liberation Army, this is an empowering critical counternarrative to unsettle oppressive power structures that limits the agency and critical knowledge of children and young people within the realities of many PreK-12 classrooms. Therefore, the facilitation of the adult ally training by Youth Liberation Army prompted TCs to both read the word and read the world (Freire, 1985) for humanizing and liberatory education. Such critical inquiry and analysis provides teachers and learners the ability to name, understand, and disrupt oppressive systems of power within PreK-12

schooling. In turn, everyday community-based curricular and pedagogical practices become an opportunity to pursue education as the practice of freedom.

Role-Playing Skits as Personal Testimony

The youth organizers of En Los Sueños viewed role-playing skits as opportunities to situate their personal testimonies within the adult ally trainings in order to advocate for culturally sustaining education. Having previously facilitated an adult ally training for a teacher/staff professional development session at their middle school, En Los Sueños found the use of skits to be a method to convey how everyday classroom life both negatively and positively impacts their identities as young people. In turn, the youth organizers designed two skits for TCs in order to name harmful practices in PreK-12 schooling before facilitating and discussing one final skit for more culturally sustaining curricular and pedagogical practices (Appendix C).

The first skit connected to English-only language policies within PreK-12 schooling and the devastating effect this has on children, young people, and their families. Within the ongoing systems of settler colonialism and white supremacy, the cultural heritage and linguistic knowledge of multicultural and multilingual students are often suppressed within today's classrooms (Gonzales, 2015). In turn, many educators enact racist biases that view the inherent assets of students as deficits (Paris & Alim, 2014). For example, many school districts often enforce English-only policies, contrived from federally mandated Indian Boarding Schools, aimed at assimilating children and young people into the dominant white supremacist culture of the United States (McCarty & Lee, 2014). The following is an excerpt from En Los Sueños' adult ally training agenda, which demonstrates the harm of monolingual and monocultural classrooms that Blue, Allison, and their peers have experienced:

> *Scene #1*: Not allowing students to have normal conversations in their own language with their friends.

[Students are finishing their work and the teacher is giving instructions]

Blue = Teacher
*Teacher***:** We have 5 minutes of class. Raise your hand if you still have your paper.
[No students raise their hand]
*Teacher***:** Ok, everyone is done. You can talk among yourself for the remainder of class. Good job today!

[Students turn around and start talking with their friends. One group of students start speaking Spanish]

Student A (Mr. Harry): Qué vas hacer este fin de semana?

Student B (WSU [teacher candidate]): Nada solamente voy a mirar una pelicula con mi familia.

Student C (Allison): (excitedly) Y yo voy mirar El Chavo Del 8!!!!!

[All three students laugh]

Teacher: (slightly annoyed) Hey guys, you know the rule: No Spanish.

Student C: Pero porqué??

Blue: It's later that same day in the evening, and student C is at home eating dinner with their mom

Mom (Kaitlin): Qué hiciste hoy en la escuela?

Student C (Allison): Hoy en matematicas aprendimos ….ohh I don't remember how to say the word in spanish!!!….no me acuerdo como decir esta palabra. Ughh it's not important… olvídalo no es importante!

Discussion:
Take 2 minutes to talk with someone next to you about what went wrong in this situation and what could be done better? (discuss - 2 minutes)
Now does anyone want to share what they discussed?

The second skit related to the use of data walls in the elementary and middle school classroom. As previously mentioned in chapter four, data walls are a source of fear and anxiety for many children and young people in schools. Data walls are often displayed in the classroom or in the adjacent hallways in order to demonstrate the socio-emotional or academic achievement of

students. Aimed to foster competition and gauge formative assessment, data walls are now a common occurrence within PreK-12 schooling without substantial research advocating their effectiveness (Hall, 2016). Such data-driven practices enforce the corporatization and standardization of public schools through neoliberal education reforms (Au, 2016). In this portion of En Los Sueños' adult ally training agenda, Blue and Allison challenge the use of data walls by centering the detrimental impact such practices have on them and their peers:

> *Scene #2*: When teachers use data walls to make students move their pin based on their test score in front of the class, it can make students feel uncomfortable, ashamed, and not smart.

> *Allison*: For this scene, we need three volunteers.

> [A teacher is sitting at her desk and calling students up to tell them their grades on a recent test they took. After the teacher tells the students their grade, they have to move their pin on the data wall to show what their score was, in front of the whole class]

> *Teacher (Allison)*: Matthew (WSU [teacher candidate]), please come up here.

> (Matthew walks up to the teacher's desk. A few people are staring)

> *Teacher*: You got an 96% on this test. Good job!!! Go move your pin.
> *Matthew (WSU [teacher candidate]*): Let's gooooooo!!!!

> (Matthew excitedly moved his pin toward the top of the data wall)

> *Student A (WSU [teacher candidate])*: Matthew is so smart!!!!

> *Teacher*: Sammy, please come up here.

> (Sammy (WSU [teacher candidate]) Walks up to the teacher's desk, looking embarrassed. A few people are staring again.)

> *Teacher*: Hi, Sammy (sounding disappointed). You got a 62% on this test. Go move your pin.

> (Sammy looks sad and ashamed. She puts her pin on the bottom portion of the data wall. Sammy starts walking back to her seat).

> *Student A talking to Student B*: I thought she was smart!!!

> (Sammy sits down and puts her head on her desk).

Discussion:
Take 2 minutes to talk with someone next to you about what went wrong in this situation and what could be done better! (discuss - 2 minutes)
Now does anyone want to share what they discussed?

The first two skits facilitated by Blue and Allison demonstrate the ways in which multicultural and multilingual identities are oppressed through racist, sexist, and classist systems of oppression maintained within PreK-12 schooling (Delgado-Bernal, 2002). Significantly, Blue and Allison juxtapose two distinct experiences in school to their own personal testimony, which challenges the dominance of such unjust systems within PreK-12 classrooms. As delineated in chapter four, the use of these particular skits challenged TCs to confront common, yet damaging practices they may see within classroom field placements through a critically conscious and justice-oriented lens. In the discussion that followed each skit, TCs were prompted to rewrite the scene in order to (re)conceptualize culturally sustaining pedagogical practices in the elementary social studies classroom. This is significant for Allison and Blue who often shared the ways in which the deficit perspectives of teachers harm their peers and families within the local Latinx immigrant community. Allison provides a specific example:

> That's a problem I had with one teacher. We were having to explain A Day Without Immigrants and she was like, "Why is that so important?" because we were talking about how we weren't going to be at school and we didn't have another option. It's a small class and we were talking about it and she was upset about it and was like, "Why do you think that's more important than you're learning? Why do you think you should be able to miss school? You're supposed to be at school every day and be on top of everything." We were explaining how this day is really important to us and she was like, "Well, tell me how it is." We were having trouble because we were trying to explain it to her, but it felt like it wasn't going through to her. We were like, "Isn't it kind of obvious? It's in the name?" And people were getting kind of mad and telling her it's really important to us.

Through this lens, the skits were a strategy for Blue and Allison to utilize their personal testimony as a prompt for TCs to reimagine education as student-centered and place-conscious. In turn, the multiculturalism and multilingualism of Blue, Allison, and their peers become integral

assets and resources for classrooms that enact community-based pedagogy (Yosso, 2005). Furthermore, the skits recognize that educators have the capacity to interrupt the perpetuation of harmful practices in order to co-create radically loving learning environments with children and young people. This can be seen in the third and final skit of En Los Sueños' adult ally training, which uplifts the necessity of relationships and community in the classroom:

> *Blue*: Now we're going to act out a positive way to teach. Think back to the beginning of our training and how we started it. We sort of rushed into it and didn't really interact with you. How did that make you feel? [write down responses on poster]. Now we're going to act out the way we should have started the training and the way you should start your future classrooms.
>
> *Teacher (Mr. Harry)*: Alright folks, how are you? How was your weekend?
>
> *take responses from WSU [teacher candidates]*
>
> *Student A (Blue)*: It was so fun! I learned how to drive. And then I got ice cream!
>
> *Student B (Allison)*: My dog died…
>
> *Teacher*: Ohh… I'm so sorry!! Is there anything we can do to support you right now?
>
> *Discussion:*
> Allison: Can someone explain what we did differently at the beginning of the lesson? How did this make you feel? [write down responses on poster to contrast]

The third and final skit facilitated by Blue and Allison modeled community-based pedagogy for TCs. In particular, the third skit demonstrated a simple, yet impactful way for educators to re-center the identities of students and their communities within the classroom. Throughout the research project and during the adult ally training, Blue and Allison referenced their English Language Arts class where their teacher and adult ally, Harry, purposefully connects the humanity of his students to the curriculum. Furthermore, Blue and Allison shared their appreciation of classroom teachers that relate the socio-cultural needs and issues of their local communities within learning experiences. Such place-conscious and accountable practices are at

the core of community-based pedagogy and view the classroom as a space of hope and possibility for transformative social change. For Blue and Allison, this was a central message they intended to convey to TCs during the facilitation of the adult ally trainings.

Welcoming Prospects for Education as the Practice of Freedom

Through the facilitation of adult ally trainings, the youth organizers centered the human impact of oppressive systems placed upon children and young people in school. At the same time, the youth organizers centered their inherent knowledge, critical consciousness, and socio-cultural assets in order to demonstrate how TCs may engage with students and communities to seek and sustain intersectional social justice. In this way, the youth organizers modeled the possibilities of learning environments that center children and young people who are in collaboration with the supportive role of adult allies. Such intergenerational collaborations are at the core of community-based pedagogy as both teachers and students learn alongside one another to both understand and strategically take action against social injustices. Youth Liberation Army and En Los Sueños both demonstrate how the classroom is inherently political, subjective, and requires the process of praxis to realize education as the practice of freedom.

The initiatives of the youth organizers are rooted in the legacy of social change and civil rights movements advocating and working toward intersectional social justice through education. For example, in 1863, Fannie Richards opened a private school for Black children in Detroit, one of the first of its kind in the state of Michigan. Richards, Detroit's first Black school teacher, joined colleagues to resist the segregation of the Detroit public school system at the legislative level (Historic Elmwood Cemetery & Foundation, 2020). In 1871, the Michigan Supreme Court declared that Detroit public schools must be desegregated due to the anti-racist and democratic leadership of Richards and other community members. However, as we now know, Detroit public

schools maintained separate and unequal public education through de jure and de facto segregation well into the 20th century (Suarez, 2018). Today, in the 2020s, public schools are more racially and socioeconomically segregated than they were in 1954 at the time of the *Brown v. Board of Education* landmark decision (Meatto, 2019). While the anti-racist and liberatory legacy of Richards has lasting impacts into the present day for Detroit's predominantly Black, Indigenous, and students of color, her work remains unfinished and ongoing.

Today, Richards' radical democratic pedagogy is a model for the place-conscious and culturally sustaining classrooms that Youth Liberation Army and En Los Sueños aim to curate alongside adult allies. For the TCs in the social studies methods course of this research project, such community-based pedagogical practices are urgent and necessary as they learn how to be educators within a predominantly African American urban city that continues to resist an onslaught of local and state-level policies sanctioning austerity policies and disinvesting in low-income neighborhoods (Popielarz, 2017). In turn, it is significant that TCs engaged in critical reflection and dialogue with the youth organizers in order to answer the call to action of allyship and carry on the legacy of community-based educators like Richards.

Contradictions

Social Studies as a Critical Civic Initiative

The 10 TCs who voluntarily participated in the research project were students in a social studies methods course I instructed in the College of Education (COE) at an urban city-center public research university, which was described in depth in the methodology chapter (Appendix A). The intention of the course was to provide TCs the opportunity to study community-based and culturally sustaining pedagogy and curriculum within the social studies. Through a place-conscious and student-centered approach, the course aimed to provide TCs the critical skills and

resources necessary to enact collaborative, humanizing, and empowering social studies learning environments. In turn, the essential questions of the social studies methods course as outlined in the syllabus laid the foundation for the semester:

1. What is social studies education? Why does social studies education matter?

2. What does community-based pedagogy look like in the social studies classroom? How might this encourage place-conscious and student-centered learning opportunities in the social studies?

3. What does culturally sustaining pedagogy look like in the social studies classroom? How might this inspire humanizing and empowering learning opportunities in the social studies?

4. How can social studies in the elementary grades foster students to be active citizens and social change agents within their communities?

5. In what ways can the emphasis of social studies in the elementary grades hearten teaching and learning for social justice?

In efforts to prompt the critical inquiry and analysis of social studies curriculum, the essential questions of the course guided myself and the TCs in a reconceptualization of social studies as a critical civic initiative (Love, 2019). Course readings, multi-modal resources, and collaborative discussions challenged the TCs to reflect upon their own social studies learning experiences. This process invited TCs to inquire upon the social studies learning environments that were impactful and memorable, if at all, which were most often place-conscious and student-centered in approach. Additionally, course assignments engaged TCs in the process of praxis as they developed interdisciplinary curricular resources and activities for elementary students that disrupted the single story and dominant narrative that is often perpetuated in the social studies

(Adichie, 2009). Paired with a variety of community-engaged learning experiences as discussed in the methodology chapter, the TCs conceptualized how community members, organizations, and local places could be strategic resources for teaching and learning in the social studies.

It is important to remember that this particular course is a requirement for elementary education TCs in the COE, which means that many of the TCs enrolled in the course are not social studies majors. In addition, in my experiences teaching this particular social studies methods course, the TCs enrolled often voice their disdain for the subject matter due to previous experiences in PreK-12 and higher education classrooms. The TCs have often discussed the standardized, homogenized, and whitewashed approach to social studies education, which did not challenge them to think critically, to meaningfully connect the subject matter to the world around them, or to purposefully learn through multicultural perspectives. I join critical scholars in arguing that the erasure of critical perspectives, counternarratives, and the voices of Black, Indigenous, and people of color from the social studies is not an accident (Ladson-Billings, 2003). Furthermore, I contend that social studies, like all of education, is inherently political and personal as it provides teachers and students the ability to both read the word and the world (Freire, 1985). Within this critical analytical framework, I understand why many of the TCs in my course must (re)experience social studies in order to mitigate the continuation of harmful curricular and pedagogical practices they themselves faced as children and young people.

Within this milieu, I approach the design and the instruction of the social studies methods course as an opportunity to embrace the contradictory past experiences of TCs to the aspirations of the syllabus, which joins TCs in (re)learning the social studies and its possibilities for the classroom. For these reasons, the course assignments and community engaged learning experiences of the course model how future educators may also be learners in the classroom and

engage in a lifelong process of disrupting the canon of conventional social studies schooling (Ebarvia, 2018). For example, one of the major course assignments is a community engaged lesson plan project, which consists of developing a community asset map of a specific person, event, neighborhood, community site, or social issue within Detroit that directly connects to the design of a community-based lesson plan for interdisciplinary elementary social studies education (Appendix A). In addition, the second major course assignment is a journey box project (Alarcon, Holmes, & Bybee, 2015; Salinas, Franquiz, and Rodriguez, 2016) in which TCs critically analyze the Michigan K-8 Social Studies Standards and the National Council for the Social Studies C3 Framework in order to (re)center the full story of a person, time period, or event that is typically marginalized within elementary social studies education.

Both major course assignments aim to provide TCs the opportunity to curate meaningful, relevant, and empowering social studies education, while also making sense of community engaged learning experiences throughout the semester (Appendix A). Notably, due to their active (re)learning of the social studies as a critical civic initiative, some of the assignments created by TCs are contradictory to the goals of the course, which will be discussed further in this chapter. As a teacher educator, these moments of contradiction are openings to support TCs in their development as critically conscious and justice-oriented social studies educators. Moreover, when TCs give voice to racist, classist, or sexist beliefs that are incongruous to community-based and culturally sustaining social studies education, as defined in chapter two, a window of opportunity emerges to redirect TCs away from such destructive schooling practices.

Purposefully, my collaboration with youth organizers and adult allies from Youth Liberation Army and En Los Sueños influenced the curriculum of the social studies methods course, which invoked a critical approach to disrupt systems of oppression and enact more place-

conscious and culturally sustaining pedagogies in education. It is through this critical-conscious raising and justice-oriented method to the course that TCs were introduced to Youth Liberation Army and En Los Sueños in order to witness social studies as a critical civic initiative. Specifically, the two major course assignments intentionally acted as scaffolding to the adult ally trainings facilitated by youth organizers in order to discourage many of the harmful practices that TCs experienced themselves in PreK-12 classrooms. As discussed previously in chapter four, the youth organizers modeled a community-based pedagogy for TCs, which encourages students and teachers to grapple with relevant issues of intersectional social justice within education. In this way, TCs were invited to reimagine the social studies as an interdisciplinary anchor to curate radical, participatory, and democratic learning communities for individual, relational, and societal growth.

Although I approach my design and instruction of this social studies methods course through hope (Freire, 1994; hooks, 2003), there are pressing realities that TCs face within classroom field placements that contradict the potential of implementing transformative social studies practices. Many of the TCs are placed in classrooms where social studies is consistently pushed to the side in the name of high stakes standardized testing and scripted curriculum mandates (Fitchett & Heafner, 2014). Furthermore, TCs are often given the task to design social studies learning experiences that occur sporadically as the subject matter is often an after-thought (Anderson, 2014). In turn, many TCs lack the mentorship necessary for implementing place-conscious and culturally sustaining approaches to the social studies within their classroom field placements (Aronson, 2016). Moreover, TCs must negotiate the agency they may or may not have as currently uncertified educators in efforts to disrupt harmful practices in the social studies while they are guests in local classrooms (Fitchett, Starker, & Salyers, 2012). Combined with their own

experiences as learners in social studies classrooms, many of the TCs struggle to envision elementary classrooms in which they may enact the community-based curricular and pedagogical practices of our social studies methods course.

Within this context, it is important to discuss the complex experiences of TCs within the social studies methods course. In particular, it is necessary to probe the various ways in which TCs learned from and with youth organizers in connection to the design of the course syllabus. Such contradictory experiences are an opportunity to better understand how TCs may or may not apply the desired learning outcomes of both the social studies methods course and the adult ally trainings within classroom field placements and their own future classrooms. By examining these contradictions, the collaborative role of youth organizers as essential partners within community-based teacher education may be strengthened. As such, I will share in course assignments and interview responses from the participating TCs in order to assess how, if at all, Youth Liberation Army and En Los Sueños influenced their practice as emerging educators.

Affirmation

For some of the TCs, learning from and with youth organizers affirmed their curricular and pedagogical philosophies as developing educators. At the beginning of the semester, there were specific TCs who recognized the urgency and necessity of justice-oriented social studies education. Due their ongoing experiences in various methods courses and classroom field placements, these TCs approached education with a developing, yet foundational critical consciousness that informed their openness to the design of the social studies methods course. Moreover, some of the TCs recognized the significance of the community-based pedagogy modeled by the youth organizers for meaningful and relevant classroom learning experiences. This can be seen in course

assignments where some of the TCs referenced the influence of youth organizers upon their social studies teaching philosophy and practice.

Renee was emboldened by the youth organizers and consequently created a journey box project on Women's Reproductive Rights in order to (re)center an often taboo and controversial topic within upper elementary social studies classrooms. Renee explains her reasoning in developing a social justice-based project in a course assignment reflection:

> Through my Journey Box, I am trying to show students a side of history they might not have known about before. More importantly, I am using my Journey Box to show how history and current events are related. I want students to be able to see how views change over time and learn to choose a side on controversial issues based on the information they obtain and experiences they have. By doing this, students will become active citizens in social justice issues. They will be able to understand the impact they could have on society by speaking up for what they believe in and finding ways to support.

Furthermore, Renee's experience learning from and with youth organizers affirmed her pedagogical philosophies for elementary social studies education to be a critical civic initiative:

> Relearning different aspects of women's history has encouraged me to want to be more involved in social justice movements surrounding human rights. I think teaching students at a young age about the injustices in history and in current events will create a spark in students minds to want to become active citizens. Teachers should take this spark and create a fire by allowing students to take a stand and do something meaningful. As [Youth Liberation Army] taught us, we only need to give students the space and support to be creative and they will do the rest. Teaching counternarratives and allowing students to learn through multiple lenses will encourage this want to become active citizens.

Maya's journey box project on Black female scientists within the Space Race encouraged the development of an interdisciplinary learning experience by bridging the worlds of STEM, social studies, and the arts through culturally sustaining pedagogy. Maya elaborates in a course assignment reflection:

> My Journey Box ended up connecting to culturally sustaining pedagogy in more ways than I thought. As I researched, I continued to find hidden stories of figures that persevered through racial and gender barriers working for NASA during the space race. These figures had a tremendous impact on space exploration and the civil rights movement. There are now many schools and programs that encourage all cultures, races, and genders in STEM

careers. STEM careers have been held by predominantly white men and we are now seeing this statistic change. There is more diversity in the STEM careers than ever before, and we look up to brave people like Katherine Johnson and now Leland Melvin for tipping the statistics scales and empowering all races, cultures and genders to find their place in social change and human advancement.

Importantly, Maya's journey box project served as an additional way for her to connect her learning experiences with the youth organizers to her passion for cross-curricular and culturally sustaining practices within elementary education. Furthermore, the youth organizers inspired Maya to envision the social studies curriculum as a tool to guide and support children and young people as growing change agents:

> I just thought the Space Race would be a good topic and it turned out to be more meaningful and important than I ever expected which just goes to show how much is right under the surface! The journey of the journey box definitely full circled for me and I found myself making so many different connections. As well as listening to the students from [Youth Liberation Army] and [En Los Sueños]. I hadn't really thought about my students being activists and how I would support them until meeting these students. The poem that [Youth Liberation Army] gave us sticks in my head, "You may give them your love, but not your thoughts, for they have their own thoughts. You may house their bodies, but not their souls, for their souls' dwell in the house of tomorrow."

Informative

For other TCs, their interactions with the youth organizers informed their critical consciousness growth throughout the course. For example, some of the TCs openly discussed the importance of intersecting social justice within education while also acknowledging their own need to evolve in this area as future educators. The community norms of our course, such as being open to discomfort and embracing the messiness of (re)learning, encouraged some TCs to be vulnerable in their understandings of social justice within the classroom. In this way, the adult ally trainings were significant for visualizing justice-oriented approaches to community-based pedagogy in elementary social studies education.

Gabrielle's community engaged lesson plan project connected a variety of exhibits at the Detroit Institute of Arts to the creation of self-portraits in a second-grade classroom. For Gabrielle, this lesson plan prompted students to: "explain the cultural component of their self-portrait as it pertains to them", "describe the different cultures they have seen in their classroom", and "recognize that communities are diverse and to learn the importance of learning about the people in our community". Gabrielle's lesson plan project connected to the ways in which the youth organizers informed her understanding of community-based and culturally sustaining pedagogies within the elementary social studies classroom. By engaging in critical self-reflection, Gabrielle came to understand how she might bring students' identities to the classroom, as well as social justice issues, which she shares in a course assignment:

> Throughout our course I have learned quite a few things about myself that I was not aware of. Before taking this class, I was not aware of the real impact you can have on children when talking about social studies/social justice topics at the elementary school level. I also doubted that these topics were appropriate for students in elementary classes. I doubted their ability to comprehend topics and their ability to initiate change at such a young age. After this class, I cannot believe that I ever doubted their abilities and what children are capable of. During the community engaged lesson plan as well as learning about social justice topics in class, I was able to learn something important about myself. I noticed that I close myself off to things happening around me a lot of the time. Unless it interests me in some way, I oftentimes just don't pay attention. I noticed it especially with topics that are negative. Because I am such a loving person, I hate to think about anyone in pain, in trouble. I tend not to like to think about bad things going on in the world. I realized as uncomfortable as this may be for me, it is something that I need to improve upon. How will I be able to help my students navigate the world and topics of this nature if I cannot do it myself? That is not the example that I want to set for my children.

Fay visited and researched the Heidelberg Project, an outdoor art project on Detroit's east side curated by Tyree Guyton, with her 3-year-old son for her community engaged lesson plan project. Fay learned about the resources that Guyton, in partnership with the Heidelberg Arts Leadership Academy, have developed for classroom teaching and learning. Fay's community engaged learning experience at the Heidelberg Project was informative throughout the semester as

she came to better understand the power of everyday people, children and young people included, as social change agents. While Fay experienced difficulties in her classroom field placements as a teacher candidate, learning alongside the youth organizers amplified the lessons gained from her visit to the Heidelberg Project and heartened her to cultivate social studies as a critical civic initiative as a teacher. This is demonstrated in Fay's course assignment:

> Throughout this semester I learned that teaching children to be agents of change is empowering. I saw kids make changes in their communities against pushback form adults. The [Youth Liberation Army] kids were inspiring, they were clear minded and focused on a goal. I think teaching social studies can be interesting and exciting if taught in a way that represents all kids. Social studies was never taught from a social justice perspective in my experience. Taking this perspective allows kids to be involved in creating a world they have a voice in.

Intention Versus Impact

For some of the TCs, the youth organizers confirmed their perceived role of teachers as caregivers, nurturers, and protectors in the classroom. While this is not inherently problematic and speaks to the radically loving work of many classroom teachers, such beliefs have the potential to evoke savior mentalities. For example, due to systemic racism, classism, and sexism within PreK-12 schooling, a belief that teachers have the ability to give students voice persistently remains. Since classroom teachers in the United States are overwhelmingly white and female, the notion that an educator has the power to give students a voice perpetuates white supremacy, particularly in the context of an increasingly diverse PreK-12 student population (Matias, 2013). In turn, the use of language such as "giving students a voice" negates the inherent knowledge, cultural heritage, and linguistic skills of children and young people. This can be seen in one of Eleanor's interview responses in which she demonstrates the problematic language of giving students voice:

> If anything, providing students with a voice is the most powerful tool you can do as a teacher over any core academic subject. As cliché as the phrase sounds, we as teachers are forming and inspiring young minds because they are the voice of society, so we need to

help them, educate them, support them and give them the power to have a voice, form opinions, develop new understandings and make a difference.

Through the use of critical counternarratives and personal testimony within the adult ally trainings, the youth organizers aimed to disrupt the continuation of such deficit mindsets. Furthermore, the learning objectives and curricular plans of the social studies methods course intended to mitigate this example of saviorism. While this was not enough to completely shift TCs from using such engrained language practices within classroom teaching and learning, seeds may have been planted for (re)learning opportunities. As indicated in course assignments and subsequent interviews, TCs like Eleanor gained new insights from the youth organizers for their evolving teaching practice, particularly the difference between intention and impact. With this in mind, it is possible that Eleanor may be open to (re)learning her language use in order to foster more humanizing social studies learning environments:

> Intentions do not always match the implications! I believe that this was brought into light in both Youth Liberation Army and En Los Sueños when students were faced with various different experiences where the teachers or parent thought they had good intentions, but their implication was completely different. This made me step back and thinking my comfortability with my experiences and being able to share in outside spaces is accepting the vulnerability, being real with your students and others around you and being open to learning from my students and different experiences that I am presented with. Every opportunity can lead me to a new lens to add on to growing perceptions of understanding. However, I think it is equally okay to step back and be able to take a moment and think about how to word or how to say something so that my implications match my intentions. As humans, we don't know all the answers, but we can learn those answers from other people and be willing to listen.

Children and young people need opportunities to develop their voice within classroom and community spaces (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2007). Such learning experiences are empowering and embedded within community-based pedagogy. In turn, it is significant to continue supporting TCs in distinguishing the difference between giving students a voice versus supporting students in cultivating their voice, which is a lesson in intention versus impact as described by Eleanor.

Ongoing reflection and dialogue amongst TCs, youth organizers, and adult allies is one strategy to work toward egalitarian language shifts in the classroom and impede the mentality of saviorism for transformative social change.

Deficit Perspectives

Unfortunately, the adult ally trainings and the structure of course assignments affirmed some of the TCs' deficit perspectives about Detroit and Detroit community members. The curricular and pedagogical practices of the social studies methods course attempted to challenge racist, classist, and sexist biases held by some of the TCs in order to prevent the potential harm of children and young people in local PreK-12 classrooms. Furthermore, the adult ally trainings aimed to assert the community cultural wealth of students in Detroit for more justice-oriented and radically loving teaching and learning. However, because the course named and discussed some of the racial, cultural, gender, and socioeconomic systems of oppression that children and young people experience in Detroit school communities, the deficit mindset held by some TCs pertaining to Black, Indigenous, and students of color in Detroit was affirmed.

For example, some of the TCs who were not from Detroit were tentative about participating in the community asset mapping and community engaged lesson plan project. Holding on to previously held beliefs about Detroit communities, some of the TCs struggled to see the strengths of Detroit community members in connection to asset-based classroom teaching and learning. This is evident in Christopher's community engaged lesson plan project in which she researched and visited the Heidelberg Project. While the Heidelberg Project was created to juxtapose the disinvestment of predominantly Black neighborhoods in Detroit to the possibilities of people-power and self-determination for transformative social change (Shapiro, 2011), Christopher's

deficit lens prevented her from seeing the greater picture, which is reflected in her course assignment:

> From a first glance it looks like some sort of art display, but it is so much more than that. After doing further research, the [Heidelberg Project (HP)] started by a man and his idea. After growing up on Heidelberg street and seeing the drugs, abuse, neglect, and death that took place on his home street, he decided there needed to be a change. He started something that has spread and taken over the Detroit community. A few things I wondered before going to visit the street was: Is it safe? Is it still the same? Will there be traffic? Will I see anybody else visiting? I had some of these thoughts because I have been to the HP before. I was very young when I first went to the HP it was at least grade school. The HP is a huge asset to the community for the past 30 years. The HP has involved the community in collecting objects for the display as well as clean up and having creative minds. The community can now look at the demolished and dilapidated homes around the community and think, "What can I do to make this better? This is art now and this isn't a depiction of my life in Detroit! We can conquer and make something terrible a desirable destination!"

Christopher was primarily concerned about her safety when visiting the Heidelberg Project for her community engaged lesson plan project. Furthermore, her reflections contradict her deficit perspectives within a learning experience that simultaneously prompted her to engage in (re)learning about a specific Detroit neighborhood community:

> The community is made to seem valuable. The streets they live on have inspired an artist to create something that will inspire broken communities to flourish. I think this community engaged experience is an eye opener for some students to see how some people live. I think this experience will show them that you can make beauty out of anything and that you can achieve what you want most. The sounds I heard were not what I was actually excepting to hear. I heard birds chirping and children laughing, as well as a swing set swinging in the distance. It smelts like freshly mowed lawn, rubber, and shoes. It's a safe place for people in the community to walk around as they have 24-hour video surveillance. They also provide porta johns which is nice for the homeless around the neighborhood who need to use it.

While TCs like Christopher were potentially impacted by the community engaged learning experiences of the social studies methods course, they require ongoing support and guidance to reflect upon their own innate biases in order to develop the critical consciousness necessary for being a classroom teacher. Furthermore, TCs like Christopher need additional time to learn about the community cultural wealth of their students in order to cultivate meaningful and empowering

curricular and pedagogical practices (Yosso, 2005). Significantly, Christopher's experiences with the community engaged lesson plan project speak to the ways in which I, as a teacher educator, must further scaffold course assignments as to not perpetuate destructive deficit mindsets. Moving forward, I must be more mindful about assessing TCs' understanding of valuing local communities and community members before they participate in course assignments such as the community engaged lesson plan project (Haddix, 2014).

Limited Opportunities

While the structure of the social studies methods course provided TCs opportunities for critical reflection, dialogue, and growth, not all of the TCs have opportunities to implement community-based pedagogy, as informed by the adult ally trainings and the social studies methods course, within classroom field placements. The realities of the United States schooling system were forefront in each course session and the TCs often struggled to visualize what elementary social studies education as a critical civic initiative could look like. While the TCs collectively gained strategies and resources from the social studies methods course, some of them expressed the limited opportunities they have within the actualities of many classroom field placements. For TCs who demonstrated great promise as critically conscious future educators within the course, this hindered their ability to recognize their own inherent agency to implement justice-oriented practices within the classroom. This can be seen in Gabrielle's reflections after the social studies methods course upon completing a semester-long classroom field placement:

> I think that when I am in my own classroom, depending on where I end up, I will be more interested in following Youth Liberation Army and En Los Sueños. I was just in a kindergarten room where I think the children would be open to learning about things they learned in our class. But it's tough when it is not your classroom. There was also not much opportunity to discuss some of these topics with the heavily scripted curriculum.

However, some of the TCs had mentor teachers already practicing community-based pedagogy in the elementary social studies classroom, which provided them guidance and support in developing place-conscious and culturally sustaining learning communities. Amy reflects:

> My [mentor teacher] this semester was happy that some of us wanted to incorporate activities within the community with our students. We even went on a fall walk to explore the surroundings of Detroit. We also had parents/grandparents come in to share a part of their culture with the topic of bread in the month of November.

While Fay often discussed the complexities of her ability to disrupt harmful practices in her classroom field placement, the remaining impact of the social studies methods course and the adult ally trainings point toward hopeful possibilities. Fay considers:

> Since these [adult ally trainings], I am still constantly thinking about how I am fostering students' independence, individuality, creativity, and problem-solving skills. I remember the [youth organizers] talking about how they would like teachers to simply provide a space for students to be able to work amongst themselves while an adult is only there for support when they are asked. Since then, I have made sure to pay close attention to how I am speaking to students. I want students to feel that their thoughts, ideas, and feelings are all valid and just as important as the thoughts, ideas, and feelings of adults.

Embracing the Contradictions

The experiences found within the social studies methods course speak to the variety of ways TCs conceptualize their responsibility as critically conscious and justice-oriented educators in the social studies and beyond. For example, the discussion of course assignments and interview responses points to the complex impact of TCs (re)learning social studies as a critical civic initiative for classroom teaching and learning. Additionally, the process of praxis offers important insights from TCs in order to understand how the role of youth organizers within the social studies methods course impacted their philosophies and practices as developing educators. By embracing these contradictory experiences, the curricular and pedagogical design of the social studies methods course is problematized in order to critically reflect and improve upon collaborating with youth organizers and their adult allies in the curation of community-based learning experiences

within a teacher education program. Furthermore, critical inquiry and reflection regarding the contradictions within the experiences of the social studies methods course highlight the paradigm shifts that must occur in order for community-based teacher education to be effective and sustainable. Thereby, in efforts to name and understand that which encourages and/or suppresses children, young people, and TCs from realizing transformative social change within PreK-12 schooling and teacher education programs, we are able to foster education as the practice of freedom.

Limitations

At the present moment, PreK-12 classrooms and teacher education programs are not built for the community-based pedagogy envisioned and enacted by the youth organizers and adult allies of this research project. The United States schooling system continues to reproduce racist, classist, and sexist systems of oppression in which the country itself was founded upon (Ladson-Billings, 2006; McCarty, 2018; Rios, 2008). Indicative of historical and settler colonial legacy, PreK-12 school districts utilize high stakes standardized testing measurements to track children and young people into specific career trajectories (Apple, 1995). Additionally, PreK-12 school districts are inequitably funded through archaic policies, which perpetuate racial and socioeconomic segregation (Hannah-Jones, 2016). Moreover, slavery remains dynamic and ongoing as children and young people of color are terrorized in schools and communities through the school-to-prison nexus (Stovall, 2016). The impact of such oppressive systems is evidenced through the ongoing resistance of grassroots community organizations in Detroit such as Youth Liberation Army and En Los Sueños.

Within this context, it is necessary to assert that our aim should not be to fit community-based pedagogy within the white supremacist structure of the United States schooling system.

Instead, we must push forward new ideas for education in which community-based pedagogy forefronts paradigm shifts in PreK-12 classrooms and teacher education programs. Given the current sociopolitical terrain in Detroit and beyond – where children and young people are separated from their families due to U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement raids (Wells, 2019), where children and young people face detrimental health effects due to unregulated air, water, and soil pollution (Neavling, 2020), where children and young people experience water shutoffs in their homes and schools due to infrastructure disinvestment and inequitable policies (Costley, 2020), and where children and young people participate in national marches, rallies, and teach-ins to advocate for common-sense gun reform legislation to protect their own lives and the lives of their peers (Noble, 2019) – this is difficult and challenging work. Pointedly, the realities of our present moment are a reminder that education must be realized as the practice of freedom in order to interrupt ongoing systems of oppression within schools and communities that spirit murder children and young people (Love, 2019).

In turn, youth organizers collaborating as essential partners in teacher education provides one strategy, in company with the variety of initiatives and campaigns led by grassroots community organizations throughout the United States, to seek and sustain education as the practice of freedom. The process of praxis, which is a central component of community-based pedagogy and the methodology of action research, encourages the critical analysis of designing and implementing a social studies methods course alongside youth organizers and adult allies. Within this framework, the limitations found throughout this action research project suggest the ways in which community-based teacher education may be improved upon for future development and lays the groundwork for immediate and long-term implications that will be discussed at length in chapter six. In turn, the remainder of this chapter will examine limitations of my collaboration

with youth organizers and adult allies for the social studies methods course in order to acknowledge and learn from the challenges of reimagining education for necessary and urgent transformative social change.

Time and Logistics

As is often the case in education, there is simply never enough time. In terms of the social studies methods course, time was a major factor in what I was able to accomplish alongside youth organizers, adult allies, and TCs. The particular course at the center of this action research project was during an accelerated spring/summer semester, which means that the timing of the course was particularly challenging to collaborate with school and community partners. Due to the many activities and responsibilities of the youth organizers and adult allies, their capacity to participate with the social studies methods course was limited. In addition, the specific course was prearranged during the day and as a result, the adult ally trainings had to be scheduled at the end of the PreK-12 school year in order for the youth organizers to not be absent from school, which also meant the end of our university semester. In turn, while an everyday reality for teachers and students, the logistical preparation of the adult ally trainings was cumbersome.

As the instructor of record for the course, I had envisioned more learning opportunities between youth organizers and TCs for the social studies methods course. In feedback pertaining to the adult ally trainings, both youth organizers and TCs recommended additional collaboration at local community sites in order to further their critical reflection and dialogue. Furthermore, youth organizers and TCs agreed that ongoing learning experiences within the COE and PreK-12 classrooms would continue to break down the top-down power dynamics amongst teachers and students. For example, Eleanor discussed the possibilities of connecting Youth Liberation Army

and En Los Sueños' adult ally trainings to other subject area methods courses in the COE and within local classrooms:

> I feel like young students should be brought in more than just this class, because I feel like they can teach us a lot. I feel like if this was done in math, I feel like math teachers would learn so much about what not to do with students because I feel like a lot of students are traumatized and have bad experiences in math. I know I personally was one of them and wish I could have been like, "Hey, you're not helping me. You're actually deterring me away from this subject." So, I feel like it could be more helpful if these groups and these different young individuals were brought in more towards the classroom and to help teachers because in the end teachers are teaching students and if the students aren't getting it, you're having that disconnect and the only person that can help bridge that is the students. [Students] can tell the teachers, "Hey, I'm not getting it here." So, I feel like when you have the students teaching the teacher, it's going to provide a better learning environment.

While these limitations impacted the effectiveness of the adult ally trainings, they speak to larger paradigm shifts that must occur within teacher education programs and local school districts in order to foster community-based learning environments. Harry, an adult ally, adds:

> Thinking about schools, schools being really, really rooted in community and no boundaries between schools and communities, being integral into how we structure schools and make decisions about schools. I see that as a long-term vision but that couldn't happen today, right? We don't have the shared learning that we need to do that. There's so much that would need to happen for that sort of process, of community driven [education spaces] to be meaningful. That is definitely a long-term goal.

Moving forward, scheduling this particular course during the fall semester may encourage further intergenerational learning experiences amongst TCs and youth organizers in other social studies methods courses during the subsequent winter and spring/summer semesters. By scheduling this course during the fall semester, there would be an increased likelihood of securing a classroom field placement in which TCs could implement community-based pedagogical practices with current students. Furthermore, if planned in advance, the course could be scheduled at a time convenient for both youth organizers and TCs, which would allow for more regular and continuous collaboration. Such timing and logistical planning would prompt immediate changes

that would make the social studies methods course more effective and work towards long-term shifts in the design of the teacher education program.

Disconnect from Classroom Field Placement

Due to the timing of the spring/summer semester, the social studies methods course was not connected to a specific classroom field placement with a partnering school district. I made fervent efforts as the instructor of record to arrange a classroom field placement in a PreK-8 school that some of the youth organizers attended, but such an opportunity did not come to fruition. While the social studies methods course was embedded within local Detroit communities and TCs had occasions to participate in community engaged learning experiences, the disconnect from the course to the classroom was notable. As analyzed in chapter four and discussed in chapter five, TCs need opportunities to practice community-based pedagogy within PreK-12 classrooms. In turn, TCs develop the self-efficacy and recognize their own agency in curating place-conscious and culturally sustaining classroom spaces.

For example, in a previous semester of this social studies methods course, I visited Harry's middle school English Language Arts classroom with another group of TCs. This community engaged learning experience demonstrated what the community-based pedagogical and curricular practices we discussed in class looked like in action. Moreover, following our visit to Harry's classroom and learning alongside his middle school students, the community between the TCs in the social studies methods course was strengthened. Rae, an adult ally of this research project and a TC in the previous semester of the social studies methods course, describes the impact this had on her own personal growth and practice as an educator:

> When I took this class last spring/summer I really wasn't sure like what to expect. I feel like I didn't have a lot of positive experiences in my K-12 social studies life. I really wasn't sure what I was walking into and I feel like every class, the whole drive home, I was mind blown. I was like, "Social studies doesn't have to be talking about these old dead white men

and telling these false stories that glorify obviously who was in power at the time." When I took this class, it changed everything for me and how I viewed myself as an educator and how I went into my student teaching and how I viewed the students. I feel like I would have had a very different experience going into those settings. I feel like I just would have had a different mindset and it would have been more towards a deficit lens. I feel like because I took this class right before I went into such a strongly Middle Eastern community [as a teacher candidate and current special education teacher] that I was able to totally see it as an asset and every day I was like, "These kids are amazing, they're bilingual, and they're geniuses." I think that this was a class that was really important to me in my journey to becoming an educator and so it was important to me to be a part of other people getting that because it really was totally life-changing for me as someone who wanted to be a teacher.

Rae's comments speak to the necessity of TCs having access to local school districts and classroom teachers as partners in order to support them in conceptualizing community-based pedagogy. As a teacher educator comparing and contrasting different semesters of the same social studies methods course, I now deeply understand the significance of meaningfully connecting the various community engaged learning experiences to a classroom field placement. If community-based teacher education is to be effective and sustainable, classroom field placements in which place-conscious and culturally sustaining learning is transpiring must be a priority. In turn, TCs have the ability to connect the community engaged learning experiences of the course to current students in local PreK-12 classrooms.

Practice for Youth Organizers

The youth organizers in this research project are all relatively new to facilitating adult ally trainings. This is not a weakness of the youth organizers, but it speaks to larger structural limitations within PreK-12 schooling that limit the agency and autonomy of children and young people. In turn, many of the youth organizers shared in their desire to practice their facilitation skills and gain generative feedback on the adult ally trainings through their participation in the social studies methods course. Furthermore, the youth organizers perceived the TCs as an

additional audience to discuss the possibilities of student-centered and egalitarian educational

spaces, as Patrick explains:

> I came to your class because I think discussions are important. It's a whole new demographic of people that I hadn't been exposed to or hadn't had that intimate connection or discussion with, so it was an opportunity to be exposed to that and to interact with people who didn't necessarily know a lot about organizing and about the issues within the community. I felt like it was a good opportunity to have those hard discussions. I felt it would challenge me to be more understanding and patient, those types of qualities I wanted for my teachers, to make them feel that way, too. I had never gotten that, so I wanted them to feel that way. It was just a great opportunity to teach and to also learn.

Through the process of designing and implementing adult ally trainings, the adult allies of

this research project recognized their role in providing youth organizers with opportunities to

practice their facilitation skills and leadership dispositions. In turn, the adult allies and myself often

discussed our responsibility in guiding the youth organizers through intergenerational learning

experiences that aim to disrupt top-down power dynamics. For example, Harry reflected upon the

next step of his collaborations with Blue and Allison, which is to support them in their emerging

facilitation proficiencies:

> I think one thing I learned that I need to do better with is giving Blue and Allison more support with facilitation and that sort of comes back to that dynamic of giving support, help, guide, but not too much. I'm trying to navigate that and honor their agency and their ideas and their own intuition about what it means to facilitate, but it's also okay to learn and to teach people different facilitation needs. I think sometimes I shy away from that because I want to acknowledge their agency. I feel like we have gotten to a place of them creating presentations and we just haven't moved past that. We have this idea, we script it out, and then we just do it, and it worked well at first, but I think they started to really rely on that and it's a pretty disconnected facilitation process for them. They're not totally engaging with what's happening or thinking about the experience as a whole, they're just going kind of going down this script. They can develop things really cool and from beginning to end have a really purposeful structure and format and goals, but I think the next step working with them are some facilitation techniques that they can utilize to help make it more dynamic. So, this really validated that this is our next step.

As an instructor of the course, I did not actively connect the active process of youth

organizers developing as facilitators to the active process of TCs developing as educators. This

was a limitation of my own practice as a teacher educator and a missed opportunity to engage in critical inquiry with TCs about the lifelong process of (re)learning that one experiences as a classroom teacher. Moving forward, I intend to make this correlation more explicit in order for TCs to reflect upon the vulnerability and authenticity in which the youth organizers approached the facilitation of the adult ally trainings. This may have beneficial implications for the pedagogical and curricular practices of TCs, while also suggesting how they can be guides and supporters within community-based classrooms.

New Experience for Adult Allies

For the adult allies in this research project, collaborating together alongside youth organizers within the specific context of the social studies methods course was a new experience. While the four of us have previously formed relationships with Youth Liberation Army and En Los Sueños through grassroots community organizing efforts, the process of bringing youth organizers and TCs together for critical dialogue and reflection was a new action-step for us as adult allies. Like the youth organizers and the TCs, we were actively learning about the specifics of our roles as adult allies throughout the duration of the research project. This partnership amongst the adult allies challenged our teaching and facilitation practices as we wondered together, pushed one another's thinking, and supported each other in our own (re)learning processes. In turn, we collectively engaged in the process of praxis in order to raise our own critical consciousness and evolve as educators, which Lilith explains: "If you don't have that praxis, you know, that belief that your radical analysis should change the way you interact, the way you engage, the way you act, the way you behave, you're going to just fall into those same roles and assumptions."

Persistently on the minds of the adult allies was our responsibility to the youth organizers, the majority of whom are Black/African American and Latina female students. While we were

attentive and conscious of supporting youth organizers in what they agreed to do for the social studies methods course, we sometimes wondered if we were perpetuating harm or if we were placing too much responsibility on young people to change the hearts and minds of future educators. Furthermore, three of the four adult allies, myself included, involved in the research project identify as white, which challenged us to problematize our positionality and subsequent collaboration with the youth organizers. As a participant-researcher, I attest that such questions speak to the broader limitations of this action research project and to the schooling system at large in which the majority of classroom teachers are white and female. In turn, the adult allies were prompted to engage in thought-provoking conversations about our role as co-conspirators and co-liberators alongside the youth organizers in order to decenter whiteness from educational spaces, as well as grassroots community organizations.

Throughout our collaboration in this research project, the adult allies came to better understand the significance of classroom teachers, teacher educators, and community educators coming together in order to support children and young people address social injustices within schools and communities. While we understand the numerous limitations to our involvement in the planning and implementing of the adult ally trainings, we contend that the intergenerational collaboration at the center of this research project is one strategy to work toward transformative social change in PreK-12 classrooms and teacher education programs, which will be discussed in greater detail within chapter six. Rae explicates:

> You kind of need an adult to actually set that up and pass out the fliers or talk to whatever administration or whatever adult to adult conversation needs to happen. But when students are actually in charge of coming up with these ideas, planning them out, what their ideas look like in action, it's so empowering for them to know, "Okay, so I can actually do something about this." I think that if they weren't given that opportunity then it's really easy to think, "Well, this is just where I live, and these are just the conditions, and these are just the things that happen and there's nothing to be done." If students have opportunities in these student-led grassroot organizations, I think that it gives them the

knowledge that they are powerful, they can do these things, and they can be change agents, because they're doing it and they're practicing as kids. If they're doing that as students in school, they can only do more as they get older and learn more and have more connections and opportunities.

While the adult allies and I are novice facilitators of critical dialogue and reflection between TCs and youth organizers, we believe in the possibilities of community-based teacher education for the benefit of children and young people within PreK-12 classrooms. As educators who are embedded within local communities and understand the significance for youth-centered educational spaces, we, as Lilith explains: "Prioritize the relationship over the content, over the structure, over everything." As such, we have decided to embrace the limitations of this action research project and the design of the social studies methods course to grow as anti-racist, accountable, and radically loving adult allies who respond to the youth organizers call to action. In this way, we hope to contribute to the work of adult allies in Detroit and beyond who seek transformative social change alongside children, young people, and TCs.

One and Done is Not Effective

Due to the timing and logistics of this particular social studies methods course, the two adult ally trainings, as well as the two additional community engaged learning experiences, each occurred only one time. While I continue to actively connect with the youth organizers, adult allies, and the TCs, the two youth-led grassroots organizations only had one course session each to reflect and dialogue with TCs enrolled in the social studies methods course. As discussed in chapter four and chapter five, youth organizers and TCs provided feedback about the limitations of one-time intergenerational learning experiences. For one, by not continuing to foster relationships between the TCs and the youth organizers, the potential to disrupt top-down power dynamics for the benefit of egalitarian classroom teaching and learning is reduced. Secondly, one-time adult ally trainings facilitated by the youth organizers is not enough to foster the self-efficacy and agency of TCs to

implement community-based practices within their classroom field placements. As Gabrielle, a TC, suggests: "Maybe it would be good to have [more] sessions to kind of deepen it a little more."

For the youth organizers, their minimal collaboration with the TCs prompted them to question their ability to support the future educators in developing student-centered learning environments. While the youth organizers understood they planted seeds for potential social change during the adult ally trainings, they often wondered about the ways in which TCs would grow as critically conscious and justice-oriented educators, as Lily indicates:

> Keep paying attention to the late bloomers, because that definitely stayed on my mind after I left. The people that are the most impacted by the "Letter From a Birmingham Jail" stayed on my mind, too, because I realized they had never been exposed like that before. Obviously pay attention to everyone but pay special attention to the ones that need help. Because that just doesn't apply to students in classroom settings, but it applies to college students.

As a former classroom teacher and current teacher educator, I understand Lily's desire to pay attention to the late bloomers as specific students stay on my mind year after year. In turn, I now have further clarity about the importance of continuing to provide youth organizers and TCs scheduled occasions to build relationships through shared learning experiences within teacher education courses, local community spaces, and PreK-12 classrooms. While this speaks to the limitations in the design of the social studies methods course, the limited possibilities for children, young people, and TCs to learn alongside one another in such an innovative format speaks to the broader limitations of teacher education programs and PreK-12 schooling. As Rae, an adult ally, implores: "It would be awesome if this was just a normal part of teacher prep. We have so much to learn from young people."

As a teacher educator, I know that teachers and learners both require multiple opportunities to engage with new content and subject matter in order for such practices to become effective and sustainable. For the TCs in particular, interacting with the youth organizers and additional

community partners throughout the social studies methods course was a completely new experience. Many of the TCs expressed learning about youth organizers for the first time through the format of the adult ally trainings, as Fay suggests:

> It was definitely different. It was cool. Having a lot of different people from the community come into our class was interesting. It was good. Just having those faces in the classroom, I didn't know anything about [Youth Liberation Army and [En Los Sueños] and I didn't know anything about those kids.

In addition, while the TCs have a variety of opportunities to participate in culturally sustaining and place-conscious learning environments through methods courses and classroom field placements through the COE, many of the TCs have limited relationships or partnerships with local grassroots organizations and community members. In turn, TCs often engaged in critical inquiry about how they would implement the community-based pedagogical and curricular practices experienced during the social studies methods course and the adult ally trainings within their classroom field placements. For TCs like Maya, discussions about how to meaningfully connect local communities to the social studies curriculum were common throughout the semester:

> Being a part of your community with the students and having them know what's around them and what resources there are and having them available and showing them, having different organizations come in. I don't even know what's going around me until you kind of look for them, so having outlets like that.

It is important that TCs have ongoing and conveniently scheduled times where they may be enveloped in community-based pedagogical and curricular practices. It is a limitation of this research project for TCs to simply have one accelerated semester of humanizing and liberatory learning experiences. Furthermore, it is a disservice to the participating youth organizers to constrain their ability to influence the TCs as potential change agents within local school communities. This suggests my responsibility as a teacher educator-scholar-community organizer to further my collaboration with colleagues in the COE, partnering school districts, and grassroots

community organizations to foster system-wide shifts within the design and vision of community-based social studies methods courses, as well as community-based teacher education programs. In this way, we may collectively respond to the calls of action by youth organizers such as Allison:

> It's different in every school, but I feel like that should be a thing for a group of students or a student that does a teacher education meeting every year or every once in a while, when they have to bring up an issue, because things are different in every school. Someone who has been at the school since the beginning could be doing that because they know everyone, and they know what everyone is feeling and that could be something to share out. You don't get a lot of student input in places like our school. When we had students on the school improvement team, it was a new thing for them and I was surprised it was the first time they ever did that, but it was kind of like, of course you've never done that. No one takes our voices seriously ever. We have meetings sometimes, they don't hear us, and they think, "What do we have to say?" Because we've changed a lot and we've seen a lot of things that are different, and we do have a lot to say but they would think that we don't, and they see us as very immature and childish.

Limitations as Possibility

My involvement in the grassroots community of Detroit has informed my perspective on limitations, which I view as possibility. In the grassroots communities I am in relation with, we often debrief events, campaigns, or initiatives in order to pin-point what was effective and ineffective. Such collaborative discussions lead us to share ideas and strategies for improvement in order to grow in our practice as educators, organizers, or activists. Similarly, as a teacher educator, I guide and mentor TCs through the process of becoming critically conscious educators who implement community-based pedagogy within local PreK-12 classrooms. Because TCs are learning how to teach, they require guidance related to the unsuccessful and successful aspects of their pedagogical and curricular plans. In turn, I embrace vulnerability and honesty with TCs as they gain insight from their own limitations and the limitations of the PreK-12 schooling system for their emerging teaching practice. Within this milieu, I understand the process of learning from limitations as essential to the process of praxis, which Freire describes as hopeful and "an

adventure in unveiling" (1994, p. 1). In this way, we partake in education as the practice of freedom, which is grounded in the empowering struggle for hope, as hooks enlightens (2003),

> My hope emerges from those places of struggle where I witness individuals positively transforming their lives and the world around them. Educating is always a vocation rooted in hopefulness. As teachers we believe that learning is possible, that nothing can keep an open mind from seeking after knowledge and finding a way home. (p. xiv)

Radically Loving Ambitions

The possibilities, contradictions, and limitations of this action research project point to broader implications in order for youth organizers to become essential partners within teacher education programs. By disrupting systemic barriers that prevent reflection and dialogue between youth organizers and TCs, this action research project contributes to the development of community-based teacher education that aims to foster culturally sustaining and place-conscious PreK-12 school communities. While this process is dynamic and nuanced, I contend that mutual and reciprocal partnerships between youth-centered grassroots community organizations and teacher education programs is one specific strategy to reimagine education that is truly student-centered. Moreover, by (re)centering the voices and lived experiences of young people who are active change agents within teacher education programs through the use of community-based pedagogy, TCs bear witness to the possibilities of liberatory and humanizing education.

More specifically, the possibilities, contradictions, and limitations of the design and facilitation of the adult ally trainings at the center of a social studies methods course highlight how we may cultivate community-based pedagogical and curricular practices that benefit children and young people within schools and communities, as well as TCs within teacher education programs. In turn, chapter six will outline both the immediate and long-term work that must take place in order for community-based teacher education to be sustainable and effective. As such, chapter six will provide specific implications that will support teacher educators, classroom teachers,

community members, TCs, children, and young people in working toward community-based pedagogy for transformative social change within schools and communities. In our current socio-political context, such radically loving ambitions are necessary and urgent in order to realize education as the practice of freedom.

CHAPTER SIX: IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSION

We have a transformative moment before us that starts with telling the truth, but it requires sacrifice, a rethinking of moral values, and dismantling systems of oppression. Deputize yourselves to figure out where you are in the fight.
(Monica Lewis-Patrick, 2018)

Vignette: Visualizing and Practicing Adult Allyship

In the summer of 2019, I traveled to the Twin Cities of Minnesota with intergenerational colleagues and friends from Detroit for the Free Minds, Free People Conference, "a national conference convened by the Education Liberation Network that brings together teachers, young people, researchers, parents, and community-based activists/educators from across the country to build a movement to develop and promote education as a tool for liberation" (2020). At the conference, youth organizers from Youth Liberation Army, including Riley and Alaska, presented with Dr. David Stovall from the University of Illinois at Chicago and their adult ally, Lilith, on "New Approaches to School Abolition". As I was walking to the location site for Youth Liberation Army's presentation, I bumped into Alaska outside who appeared anxious and flustered. I asked if she needed support, so we found a bench under the shade to discuss her upcoming presentation. Alaska shared questions she had about the participants who would attend the presentation and she wondered aloud if they would be receptive to school abolition and the ideas of the youth organizers. Alaska's questions allowed me to offer guidance and advice, but I was also able to encourage and support her through the trustworthy relationship we had built. After our conversation, Alaska seemed to be re-energized and confident, which was reflected in her contributions throughout the presentation.

As I sat in the audience during "New Approaches to School Abolition", I noticed that the room was overflowing with children, young people, and adults who enthusiastically leaned in as they heard about the work of Youth Liberation Army and their approach to school abolition. I also

noticed the allyship of Lilith and Dr. Stovall as they dialogued alongside youth organizers and joined in solidarity with the youth-centered focus of the presentation. After the presentation, attendees stayed behind to brainstorm ideas for school abolition and to meet Lilith, Dr. Stovall, and the youth organizers from Youth Liberation Army. I continued my supportive role by taking photographs, sharing business cards, making introductions, and providing feedback, all while my heart beamed with pride. It was in these particular moments – dialoguing with Alaska beforehand, observing the adult allyship of Lilith and Dr. Stovall, and assisting Youth Liberation Army with logistics after the presentation – that I further understood and enacted my role as an adult ally. My actions, similar to Lilith and Dr. Stovall, were small, yet significant as they demonstrated a commitment to collaborating with youth-centered initiatives for long-term, systemic shifts within education. Furthermore, these actions demonstrated the power of relationships founded upon trust, respect, and love between adults and young people for transformative social change.

Introduction

> School did turn me into more of an activist. I can say that because this is not right, and this is in a school and this is happening in a school. So, it pushed me to not just sit back and say, "This is wrong", but to actually do something about it. I can't keep doing this because I'm forced to be here every day. So, something has to happen, something has to change. (Mary, Participant Interview)

In stark contrast to the support they received at the Free Minds, Free People Conference, the youth organizers of Youth Liberation Army and En Los Sueños often face resistance to their calls for humanizing and liberatory education. For example, youth organizers from Youth Liberation Army have faced suspensions, police presence, and agitated school staff when they led school walkouts for water justice in Detroit. Similarly, youth organizers from En Los Sueños often encounter teachers and administrators who do not understand or negate the urgency of immigration justice within their school community. Nevertheless, the youth organizers remain strident in their

efforts to both name and challenge systems of oppression that murder their spirits within and outside the classroom. With persistent determination, the youth organizers work toward intersectional social justice through the strengths of their inherent knowledge, cultural heritage, and local communities.

Within this context, this action research project asserts the power and necessity of collaborating with youth organizers as essential partners in teacher education. Moreover, this action research project presents the transformative possibilities of bringing youth organizers and teacher candidates (TCs) together for critical dialogue and reflection through community-based teacher education. Returning to the initial ambition of this research project, I aimed to examine the process of curating a community-based social studies methods course informed by the voices and lived experiences of youth organizers in Youth Liberation Army and En Los Sueños. Additionally, this research project intended to understand the impact of the youth organizers facilitating adult ally trainings in order to raise the critical consciousness of TCs for culturally sustaining and place-conscious practices within their classroom field placements and their own future classrooms. In turn, the methodology of critical qualitative action research prompted the analysis and discussion of youth organizers, TCs, and adult allies reimagining education through a community-based pedagogical framework.

To this end, I utilized the critical theoretical framework of community-based pedagogy and community-based action research to advocate for and contribute to paradigm shifts within culturally sustaining and place-conscious teacher education programs. As such, chapters one and two situated the necessity of community-based pedagogical and curricular practices within teacher education in order for TCs to see local people, places, and ecosystems as essential partners for classroom teaching and learning (Gruenewald, Fall 2003; Popielarz & Monreal, 2019). Thus,

chapters one and two discussed how community-based learning experiences in teacher education encourages the purposeful disruption of harmful and exclusionary practices within PreK-12 classrooms as TCs come to identify with the knowledge, cultural heritage, and strength of children and young people within local communities (Guillen & Zeichner, 2018; Haddix, 2015; Lowenstein, Grewal, Erkaeva, Nielson, & Voelker, 2018; Zygmunt & Clark, 2016). Additionally, chapter three resolutely outlined how relationships, accountability, and reciprocity of community-based theoretical frameworks informed the participatory and humanizing methodology of this critical qualitative action research project (Bang, Faber, Gurneau, Marin, & Soto, 2015; Kimmerer, 2013; Paris & Winn, 2014; Tuck & McKenzie, 2015; Tuhiwai-Smith, 2012; Weis & Fine, 2004).

Significantly, chapter four examined the findings of this action research project through a community-based theoretical lens in order to reimagine education as a method to both challenge systemic oppression and cultivate intersectional social justice (Block, 2008; King, 2000; Martusewicz, Edmundson, & Lupinacci, 2015; Tuck, McKenzie, & McCoy, 2014; Ransby, 2003). Thus, chapter five argued that the potential of learning from the possibilities, contradictions, and limitations of this action research project may support efforts to realize education as the practice of freedom (Freire, 1970; hooks, 1994). Purposefully, the theories of youth activism (Conner & Rosen, 2016; Ginwright, Noguera, & Cammarota, 2006) and youth resistance (Tuck & Yang, 2014) as discussed in chapter two are embedded throughout this action research project in order to demonstrate how the long-term, proactive, and radically loving work of youth-centered and intergenerational grassroots community organizing fosters meaningful collaboration for transformative social change. Furthermore, culturally sustaining and place-conscious pedagogies model how teacher education programs, PreK-12 classrooms, and community spaces may (re)center the identities, strengths, and needs of children and young people within curricular and

pedagogical practices (Ebarvia, 2018; Lowenstein & Erkaeva, 2016; McCarty & Lee, 2014; Paris & Alim, 2017). I contend that the analysis and discussion of the findings presented in this research project contribute to the ongoing literature and scholarship amongst critical pedagogues who aim to cultivate sustainable and effective community-based teacher education programs for the benefit of children and young people in schools and communities (Lee, 2018; Murrell, 2001; Noel, 2013; Zeichner, 2016).

Specifically, the findings of this research project acknowledged the complexities of youth organizers as essential partners within community-based teacher education by focusing upon the design, facilitation, and impact of the two distinct adult ally trainings led by Youth Liberation Army and En Los Sueños. In turn, the findings focused upon three over-arching themes that engaged the youth organizer, teacher candidate, and adult ally participants in dialogue with one another: (1) youth organizers as impassioned disruptors in teacher education, (2) youth organizers as realistic visionaries for social change, and (3) youth organizers as reflective learners through praxis. To this end, the findings amplify the youth organizers call for adult allies – classroom teachers, teacher educators, community leaders, elders, etc. – to join them in working together for transformative social change. Significantly, the findings of this action research project forefront the nuanced realities of collaborating with youth organizers and their adult allies for the development of community-based learning experiences in teacher education. As such, chapter five discussed the possibilities, contradictions, and limitations of the social studies methods course at the heart of this research project in order to inform the meaningful development of community-based teacher education.

I acknowledge the uniqueness of this action research project, particularly my relationships with Youth Liberation Army and En Los Sueños, which led to the design and implementation of

a community-based social studies methods course. I also acknowledge the distinctiveness of the youth organizers and adult allies who are involved with Youth Liberation Army and En Los Sueños as they work toward intersectional social justice. However, this is not a limitation for the implications of this research project because I know there are children and young people like Alaska, Mary, Tia, Patrick, Riley, Lily, Blue, and Allison in every single classroom within Detroit and beyond. Furthermore, I know there are adult allies like Harry, Lilith, and Rae throughout schools and communities who are actively (re)learning what it means to be an adult, educator, and community member living for change. As discussed in the first three chapters, youth-centered, youth-led, and intergenerational collaboration for transformative social change continue to manifest through a variety of community-based pedagogical and curricular practices. In turn, I argue that teacher educators, no matter their location, have the ability to foster community-based practices within teacher education by building loving, accountable, and reciprocal relationships with youth-centered grassroots community organizations and intergenerational community members. In this way, teacher educators have the profound opportunity to cultivate methods courses and classroom field placements that are informed by and advantage local schools and communities.

In order to foster community-based teacher education programs where children, young people, and intergenerational partners are actively involved, the findings and discussion of this action research project offer implications for teacher educators who are committed to being accountable, critically conscious, and action-oriented adult allies and community members. These implications challenge teacher education programs to *truly* nurture student-centered and community-based practices for the benefit of children and young people within schools and communities. In turn, chapter six will share examples of TCs enacting community-based

pedagogical and curricular practices within classroom field placements in order to amplify where adults are responding to the call to allyship. Furthermore, this chapter will discuss implications for immediate and long-term work to develop such sustaining and revitalizing ambitions. This is work we may begin today – whether it be in our curriculum or in our relationship building with intergenerational community members – and also requires slow and purposeful efforts in the lifelong struggle for education as the practice of freedom. Lily's words offered here act as a paired text to the calls to action by both Lewis-Patrick and Mary at the beginning of this chapter:

> I want people to know that I am in this for the long run. I want to see the education crisis solved and I want to see people working towards it. I just want change and I just want to look back on this and feel good about the change that I helped with. I just want people to know that I'm here to stay. So, I'm working hard. I'm gonna keep working hard and I want to help you.

Framing the Possibilities

Chapters four and five explicitly detailed the racist, sexist, and classist top-down power dynamics that youth organizers aim to disrupt within the facilitation of their adult ally trainings. Furthermore, chapters four and five provided examples of community-based pedagogical and curricular practices enacted by youth organizers, TCs, and adult allies in order to demonstrate the possibilities of reimagining education as place-conscious and culturally sustaining. While the analysis and discussion of the findings clearly point to the harm that youth organizers have endured within PreK-12 classrooms, I do not intend to place the full blame of such toxicity upon future and current educators. Rather, as a former classroom teacher and current teacher educator, I affirm the immense challenges and harrowing adversities of the teaching profession. Therefore, I aspire to (re)center and encourage the inherent agency of TCs, teacher educators, and classroom teachers through this research project in efforts to stand in solidarity with children and young people for the benefit of our shared futures.

The publication of *A Nation at Risk*, a 1983 federal report that disparaged public education, catapulted neoliberal education reforms and policies such as No Child Left Behind and Race To The Top (Au, 2013; Ladson-Billings, 1999). In the current global marketplace era of the United States education system, competitive and individualistic capitalist ideologies base school funding and teacher merit pay upon the performance of students on high stakes standardized testing (Ravitch, 2014). As a result, teachers are often attacked for the "low performance" and "failure" of PreK-12 students, which is unjustly intensified within low-income Black, Indigenous, and communities of color such as Detroit, Chicago, and New Orleans (Lipman, 2011). Additionally, teachers' unions have been vehemently blamed by mainstream media throughout the 21st century as the state and federal government distance their responsibility to public education (Goldstein, 2010). Moreover, current Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos is actively working to decimate the United States education system through the competitive marketplace that has been curated via the bipartisan privatization of public education (Popielarz, 2019). Rather than acknowledge the palpable effect of racial and socioeconomic segregation upon the inequities in public education and seriously work to interrupt such oppressive systems (Hurston, 1955), state and federal governments coalesce with corporate and philanthropic partners to implement deceitful reforms and policies (Buras, 2011; Dumas, 2016; Pedroni, 2007). Educational research demonstrates how the stress and anxiety of working in the toxicity of the United States schooling system leads many classroom teachers, especially Black, Indigenous, and educators of color, to burnout, exit, or be pushed out of the profession (Darling-Hammond, 2006; Pitts, 2019).

Within this context, it is necessary to amplify educators who are actively contributing to the public good for the benefit of their holistic well-being and identities, as well as their students. This can be seen in the groundswell of mass teacher strikes in recent years, which may be signaling

a paradigm shift in public education as classroom teachers recognize their agency and mobilize for transformative social change (Karp & Sanchez, 2018). For example, the Michigan Caucus of Rank-and-file Educators – a collective of "social justice educators and unionists committed to creating schools and workplaces that advance economic justice, racial justice, and democracy" – are actively organizing alongside parents, families, and community members in order to ensure equitable public education for all Michigan students (MI CORE, 2020). In another instance, on October 19, 2016, 3,000 Seattle public school teachers wore t-shirts to school that said "Black Lives Matter, We Stand Together" while also implementing anti-racist pedagogical and curricular practices within their classrooms (Watson, Hagopian, & Au, 2018). This transformative day of action has now inspired the now nation-wide Black Lives Matter at School Week of Action in which teachers join students, families, and community members in the struggle for intersectional social justice.

At an everyday practice level, I introduce TCs to community-based pedagogical and curricular practices in order to support them in the co-creation of empowering and purposeful classroom learning communities. In particular, I have collaborated with TCs in the design and implementation of community-based lesson and unit plans during their classroom field placements through my role as a teacher educator. Through this process, TCs begin to develop the critical consciousness and socio-cultural awareness that is necessary for cultivating dynamic learning environments in which the knowledge, literacy, and cultural heritage of multicultural and multilingual students is celebrated. Here, I provide specific, tangible examples of TCs[22] flying, as

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[22] Names have been changed and pseudonyms have been provided. These particular TCs are not participants in this action research project, but they have all previously provided consent to share in their teaching practices through written publications and formal presentations.

discussed in chapter one, with their students in classroom field placements through the use of place-conscious and culturally sustaining pedagogy in the social studies:

Zora

Zora utilizes care, respect, and affirming love to build authentic relationships with her students. By seeing and treating her students as whole human beings with a wealth of skills, knowledge, and interests to contribute to the classroom, Zora co-plans and co-teaches with her 6th grade students in Detroit in order to amplify their identities through multi-modal social studies learning experiences. For example, in a lesson that I observed as an instructional coach, Zora co-taught a lesson on environmental justice in relation to the Amazon Rain Forest with two 6th grade students. Following the observation, I engaged in critical reflection and dialogue with Zora and her two students about ways to enhance co-planning and co-teaching in the middle-grades social studies classroom.

Howard

Howard connects local history to his Detroit-based high school social studies classes in order to focus students' local histories and lived experiences into the curriculum. Through collaborative jigsaw activities, Howard supports his students in visualizing what key moments in United States and global history looked like within their communities, and how this affects daily life in the current times. For example, during a unit plan on World War II, Howard centered the impact the war had on the United States home front for African Americans living and working in Detroit by utilizing resources from the Detroit Historical Society and the Zinn Education Project. Students engaged in a rich discussion related to the racial, cultural, and socioeconomic causes and effects of World War II into the present day. In this way, story-telling and personal knowledge are connected to the social studies content standards in Howard's classroom.

Eliza and Madeleine

Through intentional co-planning and co-teaching, Eliza and Madeleine collaborated to establish a classroom community in which their 10th grade students in Detroit are seen as facilitators and co-equal teachers. Eliza and Madeleine connect the NCSS C3 Framework and the local school district subject area requirements into their world history curriculum through peer-to-peer learning opportunities. For example, Eliza and Madeleine scaffolded small group critical inquiry and discussion activities that directly linked students' interests into a variety of lesson and unit plans pertaining to ancient civilizations. This greatly encouraged students to collaborate through the analysis of nuanced primary and secondary sources, along with other multi-modal resources, in order to understand current issues and realities in today's world.

Grace

Grace recognized that her Detroit-based 6th grade social studies students were eager to learn about local and global issues in order to propose solutions for more equitable futures. Being so, Grace designed an interdisciplinary unit on the Five Themes of Geography and the Earth's weather and climate systems around the passionate humanitarian interests of her students. In order to fully understand how humans and the environment interact, Grace connected the Michigan K-8 science and social studies standards, along with the school district mandated curriculum, to the local Detroit water crisis through an immersive multi-modal unit. In addition, Grace's students employed their agency in order to propose and present solutions for the Detroit water crisis to their peers and teachers within the school community.

Hope in the Possibilities

I share in the teaching practices of TCs I have instructed in order to demonstrate how future educators are actualizing what education may be and, in many instances, is already within PreK-

12 classrooms. Furthermore, I share in the efforts of MI CORE and Black Lives Matter at School in order to affirm how educators are enacting a new imaginary for public education within these current times. These hopeful examples are a reminder to classroom teachers, teacher educators, and TCs of their agency to collaborate alongside children, young people, and community members in the reimagination of the classroom as a space capable of far-reaching transformative social change. Significantly, there is joy and love within these hopeful illustrations, which speaks to the radical possibilities of the teaching profession. In turn, the following implications of this research project offer strategies to fulfil the paradigm shifts necessary to ensure the effectiveness and sustainability of such radical, democratic, loving, feminist, and participatory possibilities.

Implications

Invite Youth Organizers and PreK-12 Students to the Table

Chapters one and two described the significance and purpose of community-based teacher education for the preparation of critically conscious and socially aware TCs. Furthermore, chapter two identified how various teacher education programs are developing partnerships between universities and community organizations in order to foster community-based courses and field experiences. While an array of adults – teacher educators, community leaders, elders, classroom teachers, administrators, etc. – are often included in the development of community-based teacher education, children and young people are rarely involved, if at all. Many colleges of education espouse the mission that they are student-centered and community-engaged, yet they fail to include local youth organizers and PreK-12 students in the strategic planning and collaborative design of teacher education.

If teacher education programs are to foster culturally sustaining and place-conscious pedagogical and curricular practices within methods courses and classroom field placements, the

voices and perspectives of youth organizers and PreK-12 students must be (re)centered at the tables where decision making regarding their education occurs (Rosen, 2018). Significantly, collaboration with youth organizers and PreK-12 students should not be performative gestures made by teacher education programs. Rather, teacher educators must actually listen to and value the input of children and young people in order to actualize paradigm shifts in PreK-12 schooling and higher education. Furthermore, such contributions provided by youth organizers and PreK-12 students should be met with monetary stipends and course credits.

The youth organizers of Youth Liberation Army and En Los Sueños are examples of everyday children and young people who desire to be involved in the preparation of future educators. Although the youth organizers explicitly collaborated with myself, their adult allies, and the TCs for the purposes of this action research project, their involvement in the social studies methods course underlines how youth organizers and additional PreK-12 students may participate in community-based teacher education programs. The Southeast Michigan Stewardship (SEMIS) Coalition and Eastern Michigan University's place-based teacher education program are current models for embedding the leadership, expertise, and experience of PreK-12 students who are community leaders and grassroots organizers within teacher education programs (Lowenstein, Grewal, Erkaeva, Nielson, & Voelker, 2018). By inviting youth organizers and PreK-12 students to the table as essential partners, teacher education programs would begin take the action steps necessary to develop student-centered and community-based practices for transformative social change.

Establish Trustworthy and Reciprocal Relationships

By learning about and participating in the social justice initiatives led by local grassroots community organizations, teacher education programs have the ability to develop trustworthy and

reciprocal relationships with intergenerational community members (Watson, 2012). While this particular action research project focused upon my collaboration with youth organizers and their adult allies, the underlying framework of community-based pedagogy and community-based action research affirms the knowledge and experience of community elders and leaders who have been involved in grassroots community organizing for years, if not decades. Significantly, many of the community-based teaching and learning strategies implemented by the adult allies, youth organizers, and myself are lessons gained from Detroit-based movement elders and leaders. To this end, teacher education programs have much to learn from grassroots community organizations that are fueled and guided by intergenerational people-power.

As discussed throughout each chapter, my relationships with the youth organizers and the adult allies were fundamental to the design and enactment of this action research project. Because my relationships with Youth Liberation Army and En Los Sueños were rooted in love, we were able to cooperate together in ways that strengthened our various endeavors within teacher education, PreK-12 classrooms, and local communities. As such, the findings and discussion of this action research project encourage teacher education programs to cultivate relationships with local grassroots communities, rather than venture corporate philanthropists or problematic nonprofit organizations, in order to learn and act upon what is best for children and young people from intergenerational community members. The Banks Center for Educational Justice in the College of Education at University of Washington is an example of the invigorating impact such intentional relationships have for the work of intersectional social justice within schools and communities (Center for Educational Justice, 2020).

Implement Program-Wide Opportunities for Teacher Candidates

As teacher education programs participate in the paradigm shifts necessary to develop reciprocal partnerships with grassroots community organizations and intergenerational community members, teacher educators must implement program-wide opportunities for TCs to both learn and practice community-based pedagogy. As discussed in chapter two, community-based pedagogy is informed by critical pedagogues such as Paulo Freire and bell hooks, and grassroots community organizers such as Ella Baker and Grace Lee Boggs. Embedded in place-conscious and culturally sustaining frameworks, community-based pedagogy connects the places, people, and ecosystems that surround students to the classroom. Furthermore, community-based pedagogy is a praxis for teachers and students to respond to the social, economic, cultural, and environmental needs of a local place through the community cultural wealth of students. For the TCs of this action research project, the use of community-based pedagogy in the social studies methods course prompted them to further reconceptualize education as a critical civic initiative in which students and teachers are agents of change.

Chapter five acknowledged the contradictions and limitations of this action research in order to inform areas of growth for the social studies methods course and teacher education programs as a whole. Significantly, the analysis and discussion of the findings pointed to the restricted opportunities TCs have to both ascertain and practice community-based pedagogy. As such, in order to provide TCs the ability to develop their self-efficacy, teacher educators must collaborate with one another in the design of methods courses that are continuously community-based in approach. Importantly, teacher educators should provide professional development for mentor teachers and partnering school districts in order for TCs to have necessary support for their emerging community-based pedagogical and curricular practice. Furthermore, teacher educators

ought to model and facilitate community-engaged learning experiences alongside grassroots community organizations and intergenerational community members in order to deepen the critical consciousness of TCs for classroom teaching and learning. The Alliance for Community-Engaged Teacher Preparation and Schools Within the Context of Community Program at Ball State University illustrates how TCs may participate in stimulating experiences alongside critical scholars, community partners, and local PreK-12 students when community-based teacher education practices are program-wide (Zygmunt & Clark, 2016).

Engage in Community-Based Action Research Projects

As outlined in chapter three, the theoretical framework of community-based pedagogy informed the methodology of this critical qualitative action research project. Through participatory and community-based methods, this action research project was grounded in love, trustworthiness, respect, belonging, and accountability. I recognize that this research project would not have been possible without my relationships with each of the participants. Due to our shared commitment to critical inquiry and reflection, the participants and I utilized the process of praxis to grow as youth organizers, educators, and community members. More specifically, by engaging in critical reflexive processes alongside research project participants, the possibilities, contradictions, and limitations of the social studies methods course inform the implications discussed in this chapter for the development of community-based teacher education.

Initially, I had anticipated that I would conduct a youth participatory action research project (YPAR) alongside youth organizers from Youth Liberation Army and En Los Sueños. However, the youth organizers were clear with me that their participation in the social studies methods course would not be through YPAR, but instead through collaborative planning, the facilitation of the adult ally trainings, and critical reflection through interviews. In addition, the youth organizers

desired feedback on the adult ally trainings based upon their own critical reflections, as well as those of the TCs and adult allies, in order to further their specific ambitions as change agents. Thus, I curated and provided Youth Liberation Army and En Los Sueños summaries of useful and accessible data sources, which are now being used for the improvement of their adult ally trainings and social justice initiatives within their schools and communities (Appendix F and G). As a participant-researcher, this negotiated partnership with Youth Liberation Army and En Los Sueños prompted me to reflect upon my own assumptions and personal interests when collaborating with young people and intergenerational community members for purposeful research projects (Bang, Faber, Gurenau, Marin, & Soto, 2016). In turn, the action research project challenged me to respond to the participants' axes of need, rather than my own. Jasmine Ulmer elucidates (2017):

> It is through unforeseen encounters that axes of need speak to methodology and methodology speaks back. Researchers might not begin with a question, *per se*, but find a space that pulls and pushes and provokes and invites. Spaces of difference call for methodologies of difference, just as fluid spaces call for fluid methodologies. (p. 381, emphasis in original)

To this end, I argue that teacher education programs must engage in community-based action research projects that are informed by and benefit classrooms and communities directly. This requires teacher educators to (re)center culturally sustaining and place-conscious frameworks within critical qualitative methodologies in order to humanize educational research. Furthermore, we must refuse deficit and implicit biases that assert we must intervene in local schools and communities as "expert" educational researchers. In turn, teacher educators may focus upon the slow and intentional process of developing genuine relationships with partnering school districts and grassroots organizations. Within this humanizing approach to educational research, teacher educators and scholars may share in their expertise, resources, funding, etc. in order to support the inquiries, needs, and ambitions of teachers, students, and community members. Through this

participatory and community-based approach to critical qualitative research, teacher educators may acknowledge and disrupt barriers for more shared and loving futures. The Transformative Justice in Education Center (TJE) at the University of California Davis is an example of community-university partnerships utilizing community-based methodologies to support school districts and educational organizations who are actively working toward intersectional social justice (2020).

Further Research, Analysis, and Discussion of Community-Based Teacher Education

There are a growing number of teacher education programs who are implementing community-based pedagogical and curricular practices (Guillen & Zeichner, 2018; Lee, 2018). In turn, TCs have the ability to cultivate a sense of belonging and ground their developing practice as future educators to the schools and communities in which they will teach (Haddix, 2015; Noel, 2013; Zygmunt & Clark, 2016). In order to broaden the development of community-based teacher education programs, further research, analysis, and discussion must contend with the intersections of race, class, age, gender, and socio-cultural background as teacher educators, classroom teachers, PreK-12 students, and community members collaborate for the preparation of future teachers (Durden, Dooley, & Truscott, 2016; Haddix, 2015; Picower, 2009; Zygmunt, Malaby, & Clausen, 2010; Zeichner, Bowman, Guillen, & Napolitan, 2016). Furthermore, additional research, analysis, and discussion of community-based teacher education within rural, urban, and suburban contexts would enhance understandings of fostering a multiplicity of place-conscious programs around the country (Lee, 2010; Lowenstein, Martusewicz, & Voelker, 2010; Smith & Sobel, 2010; Rural School and Community Trust, 2005; Zygmunt & Clark, 2016).

I acknowledge that a limitation of this research project is my own insufficient analysis of the ways in which race, gender, and age, in addition to other intersecting identities such as language,

class, and place differences, impacted how the participants experienced the adult ally trainings and the social studies methods course. Moving forward, I intend to more deeply acknowledge, contend, and negotiate how various participants with unique and dynamic identities of this and future research projects experience community-based learning opportunities. Such scholarship would invite reflective and critical inquiry of the ways in which teacher educators, TCs, classroom teachers, PreK-12 students, and community members position themselves, if at all, in the work of community-based education for transformative social change. Furthermore, these advancements in the literature would allow for an examination of how various populations of people potentially engage in the development of critical consciousness, sense of belonging, and accountability to the places and ecosystems in which they live, work, and teach through community-based practices (Halvorsen et al, 2019; Lowenstein et al, 2018; Smolkin & Suina, 1999; Staples, 2010). For example, the annual Place-Based Education Conference is hosted by the Great Lakes Stewardship Initiative (GLSI) and "is for K-12 educators and students, university faculty and students, non-formal educators, natural resource professionals, staff of community organizations, business leaders, policy makers, and funders" (2019). The national Place-Based Education Conference provides a blueprint for the proliferation of research, analysis, and discussion that is necessary to advance the curation of community-based teacher education programs in a variety of contexts and in collaboration with diverse populations.

Foster Teacher Education Programs as Co-Liberators through the Practice of Anti-Racism

Teacher education programs must engage in anti-racist systemic reforms if community-based pedagogical and curricular practices are to become common-place. As previously discussed, nearly 80% of today's classroom teachers are white, while 51% of today's PreK-12 students in the United States are non-white (Geiger, 2018). Educational research has demonstrated that educators

of color enhance student achievement and holistic well-being in the classroom, particularly for Black, Indigenous, and students of color (Miller, 2018). However, recruiting and retaining more educators of color is just one step in the process of cultivating equitable, justice-oriented, and diverse PreK-12 classrooms and teacher education programs (Dixon, Griffin, & Teoh, 2019). In turn, it is essential for teacher educators to recognize and act upon the necessity to develop anti-racist and critically conscious programs for the immediate and long-term benefit of TCs, PreK-12 students, and community members. Grassroots community organizer and author, Tawana "Honeycomb" Petty (2018), discusses how the work of anti-racism is a life-long, collaborative effort that aims to disrupt how both white and Black, Indigenous, and communities of color are continuously harmed by whiteness and white supremacy:

> If white people don't begin to look at the impact the system of white supremacy has had on white people, those who have committed themselves to anti-racist organizing will continue to purse undoing racism as a pet project that they can pick up and put down. Undoing racism has to become a lifelong commitment white people make in order to humanize themselves. It cannot be something they do in the Black community. Racism is not a Black or Brown community problem. Racism is something that is inflicted upon the Black and Brown community. (p 6)

While I utilize "ally" in this research project to acknowledge and affirm the decisions of the youth organizers, anti-racist organizers like Petty call upon white people to be co-liberators. For white teacher educators, this is a challenge to recognize their inherent agency to collaborate in the work of intersectional social justice in order to eradicate systems of oppression that harm children and young people within schools and communities. Significantly, being a co-liberator, much like being an ally, is a verb and practice. In turn, it is not enough for teacher educators to simply listen to their school and community partners who live within vulnerable and marginalized spaces. Rather, teacher educators must model through program-wide methods courses and classroom field placements how TCs may foster their own self-efficacy as anti-racist and critically

conscious classroom teachers (Matias, 2013). Thus, teacher education programs may begin to navigate educational spaces that require them to embody radical, democratic, loving, feminist, and participatory pedagogies, curricula, and methodologies.

It must be acknowledged that many teacher educators, particularly Black, Indigenous, and teacher educators of color, who engage in anti-racism work, such as community-based pedagogical and curricular practices, are often isolated or alienated (Picower & Kohli, 2017). In turn, additional literature and public scholarship that highlights how teacher educators are advancing intersectional social justice by acting as co-liberators is essential (Love, 2019). For example, research in which teacher educators engage in longitudinal self-study, autoethnographic, narrative-based, and action research methodology related to the decisions they make as anti-racist educators in a variety of settings may have the ability to inform the development of justice-oriented and place-conscious teacher education programs (Barnes, 2017; Lowenstein, 2010). As such, we may better understand how teacher educators, teacher education programs, and TCs position themselves, if at all, in the struggle for transformative social change from positions of both strength and humility within schools and communities (Matias, 2013).

It is important to note that anti-racist practices within teacher education programs should be carefully curated through a trauma-informed lens (Venet, 2017), which acknowledges the significance of authentic care and critical consciousness – *caríno conscientizado* – in order to "[reconceptualize] what it means to belong in school" (DeNicolo, Yu, Crowley, & Gabel, 2017). Importantly, "such work involves active participation in struggles toward achieving justice for all students, particularly within teacher education" (DeNicolo et al, 2017). The development of anti-racist and trauma-informed teacher education programs, and ultimately PreK-12 classrooms, is challenging and complex work. In turn, further research and literature related to the ways in which

teacher educators cultivate caríno conscientizado within methods courses and classroom field placements would enhance the progression of purposeful, meaningful, and accountable community-based teacher education programs. As previously cited and discussed, the SEMIS Coalition through Eastern Michigan University's College of Education is an exemplar for teacher educators seeking to foster caring and critically conscious partnerships with local schools, community members, and grassroots organizations (Lowenstein & Erkaeva, 2016). Importantly, the SEMIS Coalition demonstrates how teacher education programs may go beyond simply listening to school and community partners in order to act as co-liberators in the struggle for education as the practice of freedom.

Advocate for Community-Based Policy Reforms and Legislation

Without paradigm shifts in our education system through policy and legislation reforms, community-based pedagogical and curricular practices will be unable to eradicate the relentless oppression that children and young people experience within schools and communities. Although community-based teacher education programs have the opportunity to push forward new ideas through the publication of educational research, teacher educators have a responsibility to utilize scholarship to advocate for policy and legislation reforms that enact a liberatory and humanizing imaginary for a renewed education system (Winn, 2014). However, such advocacy must be strategic in message and pointed in audience in order for the findings of community-based and participatory critical qualitative research to be accessible for policymakers, elected officials, and broader PreK-12 educational audiences (Dumas & Anderson, 2014). For these reasons, it is essential that teacher educators collaborate with and assert the knowledge of people-powered movements at the grassroots level in order to push forward systemic reforms that will truly benefit children and young people within local school communities (Cammarota & Fine, 2008).

For example, Youth Liberation Army is active in the Detroit-based environmental justice grassroots community in order to advocate for water safety and water affordability. As a teacher educator-scholar-community organizer, I have the ability to utilize the findings of this action research project to develop public scholarship on behalf of Youth Liberation Army that will inform policymakers and elected officials about the socioemotional and physical harm that PreK-12 students experience due to water contamination and mass water shutoffs in local schools and communities. Moreover, I have the agency to collaborate with youth organizers from Youth Liberation Army in backing the passage of Michigan Senate Bills 240, 241, 242, and 243, which aim to "establish shutoff protections, create an affordability plan for water, and decriminalize water reconnection" (Chang, 2019). Being so, I will join Youth Liberation Army when they travel to Lansing, Michigan in April 2020 to lobby their elected officials for water safety and water affordability in Detroit school communities and beyond.

In another example, En Los Sueños is involved in the Detroit-based immigration justice grassroots community in order to protect the dignity and humanity of immigrants, refugees, migrants, asylum seekers, and undocumented people. Currently, En Los Sueños is preparing for a campaign that will encourage charter school districts in Detroit to adopt sanctuary school policies that are similar to those of the Detroit Public Schools Community District (Khaleel, 2019). The personal testimony and critical counternarratives asserted by youth organizers from En Los Sueños during the social studies methods course and throughout this action research project have the potential to purposefully address policymakers and elected officials who do not see the relevance and significance of sanctuary schools within our current socio-political climate under the Trump presidential administration. As such, either on behalf of or in collaboration with En Los Sueños, I could develop issue papers or policy briefs that encourage charter, parochial, and public school

districts to implement sanctuary policies for the holistic well-being of immigrant, refugee, migrant, asylum seeking, and undocumented students and their families.

These examples provide strategies for teacher educators to remain accountable and reciprocal to participants well after research projects are complete. While these examples are unique to this particular action research project and my relationships with youth organizers from Youth Liberation Army and En Los Sueños, I contend that the aim and scope of critical qualitative research must contribute to paradigm shifts beyond our classroom curriculum and manuscript publication. As teacher educators, we have the exceptional privilege to engage in educational research and scholarship that will "slowly dismantle and erode systems of oppression" (Benjamin, 2019) in order to join social change movements that are fighting for futures we have not yet seen (Kaba, 2019). For instance, Cyphers for Justice based in New York City brings young people and TCs together in order to research and advocate for transformative social change within schools and communities (Lyiscott, Caraballo, & Morrell, 2018). Such youth-centered organizations demonstrate the potential for community-based teacher education programs to work alongside PreK-12 students and future educators in developing policy reforms and legislation initiatives that address the most urgent issues facing local communities.

Conclusion

This action research project brought together youth organizers and TCs for critical dialogue and reflection within a social studies methods course. The intention behind these relational learning experiences was to enhance TCs' understanding and use of community-based pedagogy while also supporting youth organizers in their social justice work within schools and communities. In turn, I collaborated with Youth Liberation Army and En Los Sueños, two youth-centered grassroots community organizations in Detroit, for the purposes of the social studies methods

course and the action research project. As such, my course syllabus was informed by the voices and lived experiences of the youth organizers in order to provide TCs the opportunity to conceptualize place-conscious and culturally sustaining practices for classroom teaching and learning. Through community engaged learning experiences and course assignments, the TCs were heartened to develop a sense of belonging for and accountability to the local communities in which they will teach. By providing opportunities to learn from and with youth organizers during the facilitation of adult ally trainings, the social studies methods course encouraged TCs to reimagine their classrooms as spaces for transformative social change.

Through the use of community-based pedagogy during the adult ally trainings, the youth organizers discussed the ways in which systems of oppression harm them within schools and communities. Resolute in their critical counternarratives and personal testimony, the youth organizers pushed forward new visions for reimagining education as a humanizing and liberatory endeavor. While the experiences of the participants during the social studies methods course and the adult ally trainings were complex and nuanced, the findings of this action research project address the possibilities of youth organizers as essential partners in community-based teacher education. As the implications outline, such partnerships would bring together children, young people, classroom teachers, teacher educators, teacher candidates, and intergenerational community organizers to collectively act upon their inherent agency to disrupt harmful practices within schools and communities, become realistic visionaries for social change, and grow as reflective learners through praxis. Grounded in hope and love, these collaborations will purposefully nurture community-based education as the practice of freedom for the benefit of shared futures.

APPENDIX A: SOCIAL STUDIES METHODS COURSE SYLLABUS

Course Syllabus
Social Studies Curriculum P-8 Course Syllabus
Division: Teacher Education
Program Area: Elementary Education, Social Studies
Instructor: Kaitlin Popielarz, MA (She/Her/Hers)

"These are the times to grow our souls."
- Grace Lee Boggs

Acknowledging Indigenous Land, Water, and Peoples
Teaching and learning in Detroit, Michigan requires us to acknowledge that our education resides upon the Native land and water of the Peoria, Anishinabewaki, Potawatomi, and Miami Peoples. Our university is placed within the midst of the Great Lakes waterways and the Detroit River, which Indigenous communities named *Wawiatonong*, or "where the river goes 'round". In our course, we will (re)learn together about the ways we can commit our teaching and learning to the places and spaces where we live and work. In turn, we will (re)imagine education as a collaborative community effort for social justice and transformative social change.

Course Description
The mission of the College of Education is to cultivate the "Effective Urban Educator", which is a teacher who is committed to innovation, reflection, and equity in diversity. As such, this course will conceptualize the importance of the social studies classroom in the development of an effective urban educator. Importantly, teacher candidates will study community-based and culturally sustaining pedagogy and curriculum within the social studies. Additionally, teacher candidates will engage with young people who are active change agents in the local community in order to envision and implement collaborative, humanizing, and empowering social studies learning environments.

"Detroit Portrait Series"

By Nicole Macdonald
5729 West Grand River
Detroit, MI

Essential Questions
1. What is social studies education? Why does social studies education matter?
2. What does community-based pedagogy look like in the social studies classroom? How might this encourage place-conscious and student-centered learning opportunities in the social studies?
3. What does culturally sustaining pedagogy look like in the social studies classroom? How might this inspire humanizing and empowering learning opportunities in the social studies?
4. How can social studies in the elementary grades foster students to be active citizens and social change agents within their communities?
5. In what ways can the emphasis of social studies in the elementary grades hearten teaching and learning for social justice?

Course Outcomes
1. Recognize and examine the disciplines that make up the social studies as well as foundational documents of social studies education.
2. Understand and demonstrate respect and appreciation for human diversity in the content taught and the ability to work with others within and outside the classroom to recognize the needs of diverse populations.
3. Develop a personal conceptual framework and pedagogical philosophy of the social studies based upon research, course learning experiences, and reflection.
4. Understand the local community as an equal teacher and partner for social studies teaching and learning; learn how to establish relationships with the community in order to co-create relevant and meaningful learning environments.
5. Reimagine the role of young people in student-centered teaching and learning in the social studies; learn how to establish relationships with students in order to co-create humanizing and empowering learning communities.
6. Examine assumptions and biases pertaining to race/ethnicity, gender, socio-economic status, sexuality, ability/disability, religion, environment, etc. in order to engage intentionally and critically about the social studies.
7. Understand, reflect upon, and conceptualize community-based and culturally sustaining curriculum and pedagogy in the social studies classroom.
8. Comprehend the ways in which social studies education can be utilized for social justice and transformative social change.

Course Reading Requirements
You will be required to read Renée Watson's *This Side of Home* for a course book club: Watson, Renée. (2015). *This Side of Home*. New York, NY: Bloomsbury. I encourage you to check out a copy of the book from your local public library or purchase the book from a local bookstore. You could also listen to an audio-version of the book. All other course reading, multi-media, audio, and visual requirements will be uploaded and shared via our Canvas website. Additional resources will be provided through Canvas and Google Drive as we co-create a classroom community library.

University Policies and Procedures
[Removed for purposes of this dissertation manuscript and action research project]

To teach in a manner that respects and cares for the souls of our students is essential if we are to provide the necessary conditions where learning can most deeply and intimately begin.
- bell hooks

A Note to Teacher Candidates
I am so grateful that you have enrolled in this course! I am excited to (re)learn and (re)imagine the social studies alongside you this semester. Please know that your identity, voice, and experiences will be valued within our course. It is my hope that we may collaborate together, along with our communities and students, for a better world through the social studies. As social studies teachers, we know that engaging and meaningful learning opportunities are most impactful when they center the lived realities and experiences of the world around us. Because of this, I recognize that our (re)learning and (re)imagining of the social studies in our course may have moments of discomfort and vulnerability. In turn, love and compassion will be the foundation of our course in order to co-create an affirming and inclusive classroom community.

I would like to thank the following educators for their inspiration in the development of this course syllabus and my teaching praxis: The Beloved Community of We The People of Detroit, MIStudentsDream, Detroit Area Youth Uniting Michigan, and American Indian Health and Family Services; my former and current students, my grandparents, the Great Lakes waterways, the ski hill, Dr. Justine Kane, Dr. Min Yu, Dr. Chavon Jameel, Dr. Thomas Pedroni, Dr. Ethan Lowenstein, Dr. Jasmine Ulmer, Dr. Sandra Gonzales, Beyoncé, Jodi Willard, Cami Touloukian, Dr. Sarah Shear, Dr. Michelle Jacobs, Dr. Chris Crowley, Mary Neville, Leah Taraskiewicz, Frida Kahlo, Dr. Kevin Burke, Dr. Alisa Kesler-Lund, Ursula Wolfe-Rocca, bell hooks, Dr. Eve Tuck, Dr. Django Paris, Dr. Gloria Ladson-Billings, Dr. Wayne Au, Paulo Freire, Dr. Carla Shalaby, Teaching Tolerance, Rethinking Schools, Zinn Education Project, Maya Angelou, Zora Neale Hurston, Julia Cuneo, Matt Homrich-Knieling, Grace Lee Boggs, Avett, and my mom.

"No DAPL"

By Sintax
Eastern Market
Detroit, MI

Course Assignments

There is a maximum of 350 points available for this course. Please see our Canvas website, Google Drive, and the course syllabus for detailed information, resources, assessment rubrics, and due dates for course assignments.

Readings, Reflections, and Participation – 100 points

Your presence and participation in every class is essential in our growth as a community of learners. Each student will earn participation points for every class session, which may include:

1. Preparation for class reading and assignment requirements
2. Engaging in loving and critical dialogue relating to social studies education
3. Initiating thoughtful questions, prompts, or insights to foster engaged professional inquiry pertaining to social studies education

At the start of each class, Teacher Candidates will engage in critical inquiry, reflection, and dialogue with peers about the assignment reading, podcast, digital media resource, etc. This will be an opportunity for Teacher Candidates to deeply engage in required multi-modal assignments, which are the foundation of learning opportunities in the course. Differentiated forms of critical inquiry, reflection, and dialogue will prompt Teacher Candidates to demonstrate their perceptions, understandings, and knowledge of course readings. In addition, Teacher Candidates will be responsible for contributing resources to the classroom community library.

Community Engaged Lesson Plan Project – 125 points

Part I: Community Engaged Learning Experience and Community Asset Mapping (50 points)

For this portion of the project, you will participate in a community engaged learning experience by taking the opportunity to learn about a specific person, event, neighborhood, community site, and/or social issue within Detroit. Through your community engaged learning experience, you will generate a community asset map that will directly connect to your community-based and culturally sustaining lesson plan. This will require you to focus on the assets and needs of a particular aspect of the Detroit community, which you can directly connect to your own (re)learning as an elementary social studies teacher. In addition, your community engaged learning experience will have generative implications for your curricular and pedagogical praxis in the social studies classroom. Please utilize the guided framework and organizer to participate in your community engaged learning experience and community asset mapping.

Part II: Community-Based and Culturally Sustaining Lesson Plan (75 points)

For this portion of the project, you will create a lesson plan for a specific grade level in the P-8 social studies classroom. This lesson plan will require a purposeful spin because it will incorporate the local community of Detroit with the learning of your social studies students. In this way, your lesson plan will provide your students the opportunity to connect the content knowledge to their own community through community-based and culturally sustaining pedagogy. Your lesson plan should aim to have social, emotional, and aesthetic learning experiences, which allows students to grow holistically. Furthermore, your lesson plan should center the assets and strengths of the local community in order to cultivate a meaningful and relevant social studies learning opportunity.

By utilizing a specific person, event, neighborhood, community site, and/or social issue within Detroit, your lesson plan will allow students to take a hands-on approach through their social studies classroom. This will provide them the opportunity to make meaning out of their city, liberate themselves from the confinements of traditional schooling, and reclaim space within their learning process. Your lesson plan should push your students to think critically about their own community within Detroit and how their role as active citizens can make a lasting influence. For your lesson plan project:

- Utilize the lesson plan framework
- Include a reflection that connects your lesson plan to your community engaged learning experience and community asset mapping
- Design the lesson plan for future, current, or former students in Detroit

Journey Box Project (125 points)
Part I: Social Studies Standards Critical Inquiry and Analysis Activity (25 points)

For this portion of the project, you will engage in critical inquiry and analysis pertaining to a designated area of the Michigan P-8 social studies and National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) standards. You will respond to guided questions and share information/resources via Google Docs and Google Spreadsheet. You will also share in your critical inquiry and analysis in class to support your peers in understanding a specific portion of the state and national standards. This particular activity will serve as inspiration for your cumulative Journey Box project.

Part II: Journey Box Project (100 points)

Informed by the work of Dr. Shear (2019) and Drs. Alarcon, Holmes, and Bybee (2015), you will cultivate a "Journey Box" as a cumulative representation of your (re)learning in our elementary social studies methods course. Based upon your critical inquiry and analysis of the Michigan P-8 social studies and National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) standards, you will choose a topic that will demonstrate your (re)learning journey throughout the semester. You will participate in a gallery walk on the last day of class during our Community Celebration in order to present your Journey Box. You will also upload your Journey Box materials to a shared Google Drive folder to engage in professional collaboration with your peers.

For your Journey Box, you will (re)learn about a person (ex: Wilma Rudolph), a time period (ex: Disability Rights Movement), and/or event (ex: International Worker's Day/May Day) that could be taught in an elementary social studies class. Your Journey Box topic should (re)center someone/something that is traditionally left out of the master narrative in the United States. In turn, your Journey Box will share a counter narrative in reimagining the social studies as meaningful, relevant, and empowering.

Your Journey Box will include a variety of primary and secondary sources in order to portray a holistic counter narrative about your topic. You will respond to specific questions and share information/resources for each source within your Journey Box in order to discuss how your peers could teach the topic in the social studies classroom. In addition, your Journey Box will include a reflective paper that will summarize and connect your topic to cumulative (re)learning opportunities throughout the semester.

"Never Stop Dreaming."

"Nunca Dejes de Sonar."

By Jen Boya
Matrix Theatre, Detroit, MI

Course Schedule

Please note: The course schedule is subject to change and Teacher Candidates will be notified

Session	Topic/Preparation	Due
1 5/6/2019	*Introduction* Syllabus overview Community meeting and community building	
2 5/8/2019	*What is Social Studies?* NCSS *Powerful and Purposeful Social Studies* NPR Code Switch Podcast Episode *Behind The Lies My Teacher Told Me* Zinn *Why Students Should Study History*	Personal Artifact Due Today in Class Student Introduction Survey Due Today via E-Mail
3 5/13/2019	*What are the Social Studies standards? What do we notice and wonder about them?* NPR Latino USA Podcast Episode *Love and Walk Outs* Au *Decolonizing the Classroom* Picower *Using Their Words*	
4 5/15/2019	*What is Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy and what does it look like in the Social Studies?* Paris & Alim *Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy* Ladson-Billings *Crafting a Culturally Relevant Social Studies Approach* Alrubail *How Teachers Can Support Students During Ramadan*	Social Studies Standards Analysis Due Today via Canvas/Google Spreadsheet Link and in Class
5 5/20/2019	*What does it mean to teach elementary Social Studies in Detroit?* Community Engaged Learning Experience: Ken Coleman from History Lives Detroit Documentary Film *Detroit 48202: Conversations Along a Postal Route*	"I Notice" observations and "I Wonder" Inquiries Due Today in Class

6 5/22/2019	*What are the assets and who are the partners in our local community that can strengthen our elementary social studies classrooms?* Community Engaged Learning Experience: Burton Historical Collection (Detroit Public Library) Kenyon et al. *Hey! I've Been There* Wade *Social Action in the Social Studies* Walbert *Oral History Projects*	Journey Box Topic & Outline (Step 1) Due Today via E-Mail
5/27/2019 *No Class Memorial Day*	*None*	
7 5/29/2019	*What is Community-Based Pedagogy and what does it look like in the Social Studies?* Lowenstein & Smith *Making a Difference By Looking Locally* Campbell *Expressions of an Emerging Community* Thames *Looking for Justice at Turkey Creek*	
8 6/3/2019	*What are difficult, complex, and "controversial" issues in elementary Social Studies and how might we engage them in the classroom?* HenkleBerry & Waters *The Most Gentrified City of the Century* Hess *Controversies about Controversial Issues in Democratic Education* Renée Watson *This Side of Home*, Sections Summer and Fall, pages 1-128	Community/Asset Mapping Due Today via Canvas and in Class Book Club Discussion Part 1 Today in Class
9 6/5/2019	*What are master and counter narratives and how do we address them in the elementary Social Studies classroom?* NCSS *Toward Responsibility* Shear, Sabzalian, & Buchanan *Affirming Indigenous Sovereignty* All My Relations Podcast Episode *Native Appropriations*	Journey Box Update and Check-in Due Today via E-Mail and in Class (Outline Steps 2 and 3)
10 6/10/2019	*How do elementary students and young people talk, think, and act critically about politics, social issues, and their work as community members and citizens?* Community Engaged Learning: Youth Liberation Army Shafer *The (Young) People's Climate Conference* Campbell *Youth Activists Test For Water Safety*	

	Youth Liberation Army Social Media Pages	
11 6/12/2019	*How do we cultivate relationships and community for affirming and inclusive elementary Social Studies education?* Touloukian *Little Children Have Big Hearts* Lifshitz *Someone, Somewhere* Cruz & Bailey *An LGBTQ+ Inclusive Social Studies*	Lesson Plan Project Due Today via Canvas and in Class
12 6/17/2019	*How do elementary students and young people talk, think, and act critically about politics, social issues, and their work as community members and citizens?* Community Engaged Learning: En Los Sueños Hiatt *How My 4th Grade Class Passed a Law on Teaching Mexican "Reparation"* Teaching Tolerance *Supporting Students From Immigrant Families* (Choose 2 resources/articles) En Los Suenos Social Media Pages	
13 6/19/2019	*What does anti-racist teaching and learning look like in the elementary Social Studies classroom?* Adams & Busey *They Want to Erase That Past* NPR 1A Podcast Episode *How Do You Teach Slavery?* Renée Watson *This Side of Home*, Sections Winter – Summer, pages 131-323	Book Club Discussion Part 2 Today in Class
14 6/24/2019	Community Celebration (Room 10/30 of the COE)	Journey Box Projects Due Today via Canvas, Google Drive, and in Class

APPENDIX B: YOUTH LIBERATION ARMY ADULT ALLY TRAINING MATERIALS

Textual Analysis

1. Identify the underlying problem or conflict in this text
2. Underline the do's and don'ts present in this text

On Children Kahlil Gibran

Your children are not your children.
They are the sons and daughters of Life's longing for itself. They come through you but not from you,
And though they are with you yet they belong not to you.

You may give them your love but not your thoughts, For they have their own thoughts.
You may house their bodies but not their souls,
For their souls dwell in the house of tomorrow, which you cannot visit, not even in your dreams.
You may strive to be like them,

but seek not to make them like you.
For life goes not backward nor tarries with yesterday.

You are the bows from which your children
as living arrows are sent forth.
The archer sees the mark upon the path of the infinite, and He bends you with His might
that His arrows may go swift and far.
Let your bending in the archer's hand be for gladness; For even as He loves the arrow that flies,
so He loves also the bow that is stable.

Letter from a Birmingham Jail
16 April 1963 (almost exactly 56 years ago)

My Dear Fellow Clergymen:
While confined here in the Birmingham city jail, I came across your recent statement calling my present activities "unwise and untimely." Seldom do I pause to answer criticism of my work and ideas. If I sought to answer all the criticisms that cross my desk, my secretaries would have little time for anything other than such correspondence in the course of the day, and I would have no time for constructive work. But since I feel that you are men of genuine good will and that your criticisms are sincerely set forth, I want to try to answer your statement in what I hope will be patient and reasonable terms.

You deplore the demonstrations taking place in Birmingham. But your statement, I am sorry to say, fails to express a similar concern for the conditions that brought about the demonstrations. I am sure that none of you would want to rest content with the superficial kind of social analysis that deals merely with effects and does not grapple with underlying causes. It is unfortunate that

demonstrations are taking place in Birmingham, but it is even more unfortunate that the city's white power structure left the Negro community with no alternative.

In any nonviolent campaign there are four basic steps: collection of the facts to determine whether injustices exist; negotiation; self purification; and direct action. We have gone through all these steps in Birmingham. There can be no gainsaying the fact that racial injustice engulfs this community. Birmingham is probably the most thoroughly segregated city in the United States. Its ugly record of brutality is widely known. Negroes have experienced grossly unjust treatment in the courts. There have been more unsolved bombings of Negro homes and churches in Birmingham than in any other city in the nation. These are the hard, brutal facts of the case. On the basis of these conditions, Negro leaders sought to negotiate with the city fathers. But the latter consistently refused to engage in good faith negotiation.

You may well ask: "Why direct action? Why sit ins, marches and so forth? Isn't negotiation a better path?" You are quite right in calling for negotiation. Indeed, this is the very purpose of direct action. Nonviolent direct action seeks to create such a crisis and foster such a tension that a community which has constantly refused to negotiate is forced to confront the issue. It seeks so to dramatize the issue that it can no longer be ignored. My citing the creation of tension as part of the work of the nonviolent resister may sound rather shocking. But I must confess that I am not afraid of the word "tension." I have earnestly opposed violent tension, but there is a type of constructive, nonviolent tension which is necessary for growth. Just as Socrates felt that it was necessary to create a tension in the mind so that individuals could rise from the bondage of myths and half truths to the unfettered realm of creative analysis and objective appraisal, so must we see the need for nonviolent gadflies to create the kind of tension in society that will help men rise from the dark depths of prejudice and racism to the majestic heights of understanding and brotherhood. The purpose of our direct action program is to create a situation so crisis packed that it will inevitably open the door to negotiation. I therefore concur with you in your call for negotiation. Too long has our beloved Southland been bogged down in a tragic effort to live in monologue rather than dialogue.

We know through painful experience that freedom is never voluntarily given by the oppressor; it must be demanded by the oppressed. Frankly, I have yet to engage in a direct action campaign that was "well timed" in the view of those who have not suffered unduly from the disease of segregation. For years now I have heard the word "Wait!" It rings in the ear of every Negro with piercing familiarity. This "Wait" has almost always meant "Never." We must come to see, with one of our distinguished jurists, that "justice too long delayed is justice denied."

I must make two honest confessions to you, my Christian and Jewish brothers. First, I must confess that over the past few years I have been gravely disappointed with the white moderate. I have almost reached the regrettable conclusion that the Negro's great stumbling block in his stride toward freedom is not the White Citizen's Counciler or the Ku Klux Klanner, but the white moderate, who is more devoted to "order" than to justice; who prefers a negative peace which is the absence of tension to a positive peace which is the presence of justice; who constantly says: "I agree with you in the goal you seek, but I cannot agree with your methods of direct action"; who paternalistically believes he can set the timetable for another man's freedom; who lives by a mythical concept of time and who constantly advises the Negro to wait for a "more convenient

season." Shallow understanding from people of good will is more frustrating than absolute misunderstanding from people of ill will. Lukewarm acceptance is much more bewildering than outright rejection.

I had hoped that the white moderate would understand that law and order exist for the purpose of establishing justice and that when they fail in this purpose they become the dangerously structured dams that block the flow of social progress. I had hoped that the white moderate would understand that the present tension in the South is a necessary phase of the transition from an obnoxious negative peace, in which the Negro passively accepted his unjust plight, to a substantive and positive peace, in which all men will respect the dignity and worth of human personality. Actually, we who engage in nonviolent direct action are not the creators of tension. We merely bring to the surface the hidden tension that is already alive. We bring it out in the open, where it can be seen and dealt with. Like a boil that can never be cured so long as it is covered up but must be opened with all its ugliness to the natural medicines of air and light, injustice must be exposed, with all the tension its exposure creates, to the light of human conscience and the air of national opinion before it can be cured.

But despite these notable exceptions, I must honestly reiterate that I have been disappointed with the church. I do not say this as one of those negative critics who can always find something wrong with the church. I say this as a minister of the gospel, who loves the church; who was nurtured in its bosom; who has been sustained by its spiritual blessings and who will remain true to it as long as the cord of life shall lengthen.

When I was suddenly catapulted into the leadership of the bus protest in Montgomery, Alabama, a few years ago, I felt we would be supported by the white church. I felt that the white ministers, priests and rabbis of the South would be among our strongest allies. Instead, some have been outright opponents, refusing to understand the freedom movement and misrepresenting its leaders; all too many others have been more cautious than courageous and have remained silent behind the anesthetizing security of stained glass windows.

Youth Liberation Army Archive

 "Mom: How's it going?
Student: Mmhh... I'm tired of dealing with empathy lacking adults and administrators.

Mom: Good. Focus on finishing HS as a superstar, all american scholar and athlete; and then go on to college and change the world as an adult." - Text exchange between Youth Liberation Army student and parent

"I am so glad to see youth getting compassionate about this issue. I have been concerned since my eyes were opened by the first earth day in the 70s. However, I must beg you to please please please change your paradigm. Look at all the fossil fuel being used for climate events. To use the house on fire analogy, you are throwing gasoline on your burning house. Yes, it will get attention, but, do you really want to through [sic] gasoline on your burning house? This is not discouragement. This is support. We are community. I am cheering you on. I am running with you." - Comment left on Youth Liberation Army post

Do's and Don'ts

Don't
Patronize:
- "When I was young we would have..."
- Interrupting and shooting down ideas
- Saying you're "proud" of us when you didn't do anything to help
- Taking credit for our accomplishments
- Asking us to speak at an event we had no input planning and that no youth are attending

Micromanage:
- Expecting more research and preparation from youth organizers than adult organizers
- Giving us talking points or debating us like we don't know what we're talking about
- Correcting our behavior
- "Respect your elders"

Make assumptions:
- Assuming we agree with you
- Assuming we want to run for office
- "You're all going to be leaders one day!" or "I can't wait until you're all leaders!"
- Asking us to run your social media account
- "We need young people's energy!"

Do

Ask Questions:
- Listen more than you talk
- "What can I do to help?" and tell us what your skills are!
- Ask permission to give us input! This makes us feel respected and turns a lecture into friendly advice.
- "Can I make a suggestion about your media campaign? I went to school for public relations."

Support:
- Come to our meetings if you want stuff!
- Show up to our events!
- Help publicize our events!
- Share solutions when you have critiques
- "Sounds like you'll need a microphone! I have one you can use, I'll bring it!"

Give us Space:
- Follow our lead
- Let us make mistakes
- Be accountable for next steps
- "I'll text you" versus "text me"

APPENDIX C: EN LOS SUENOS ADULT ALLY TRAINING MATERIALS

Attending: Blue, Allison, Harry

start abruptly
Warm Up: What are your ideas on making your classroom a safe environment? (2 minutes)
 Share out: 30 seconds of sharing with a partner; 1 minute of sharing out loud
Now we are going to explain Student Action Club and En Los Sueños. → **Allison**

We know it was a little weird how we started this, but we'll come back to that later. → **Blue**

Explain Action Club / En Los Sueños: Student Action Club is a student led group who try to make changes and improvements in our school and community. Examples of our work include hosting 2 know your rights trainings, leading a training for all of the teachers in our school, helping to plan and participate in a student led teach in on immigration, helping to plan an immigration justice rally, and most recently we have organized an assembly at our school with congresswoman Rashida Tlaib. → **Allison**

En Los Sueños is a coalition of Detroit educators, students, parents, and youth organizers fighting for immigration justice as a part of education justice. Each month we have a potluck with everyone in the organization. The meetings are always fun and interesting. Allison and I are the 2 youngest people in the group and everyone has always accepted us and never treated us like children. They talk to us like they talk to everyone else there, like an equal. The people in the group make it feel like a safe place and like a family. → **Blue**

Before we move on does anyone have any questions about Action Club or En Los Sueños? → **Blue**

Agenda:
Here is our agenda: The purpose of our training today is to explore ways to make positive relationships with your future students & community in your future classroom. First we are going to talk about examples of negative situations that we have experienced that made us feel unappreciated and not cared for in hopes that you will avoid doing these things when you become teachers. Then we will show some of those examples by acting them out. After this, we are going to talk about positive things that you can do in your future classrooms. → **Allison**

Negative Examples
Now we are going to explain specific experiences that we have gone through that make students feel not respected or cared for. If you have any questions, you can share them out after we're finished reading the list: - **Blue**

- Not allowing students to have normal conversations in Spanish, or any other home-language, with their friends. We acknowledge that not all teachers speak a language other than English and this can make them feel uncomfortable, but language is part of our culture. - **Allison**

- When teachers use data walls to make students move their pin based on their test score in front of the class, it can make students feel uncomfortable, ashamed, and not smart. We understand most teachers are required to have data walls, but they could post class averages and give students their own individual test scores - **Blue**
- When teachers come to school in a bad mood or are not feeling well and they take it out on the students, instead of explaining that they are having a bad day. **- Allison**
- When teachers point out a minor "negative" behavior publicly or yell to "make an example" of that person, instead of talking to that student one-on-one. For example, if a student isn't paying attention but is **not** disruptive, the teacher should quietly re-focus the student. - **Blue**
- When a student is helping a classmate with an assignment and the teacher scolds that student because they assume they are off-task, instead of asking what's going on. - **Allison**
- When teacher make comments that disrespect students identities, for example if a teacher makes an anti-LGBT+ comment it can make the student feel uncomfortable, disrespected, and unwelcomed. - **Blue**

Before we move on, we want to give you a minute to look back on this list and we will answer any questions you may have about them. - **Allison**

Acting Portion:
So now we are going to act out some of these examples based on real-life events. As we act out the scenario, think about what went wrong and what could be done better.
For this scene, we need one volunteer who is comfortable speaking Spanish.- **Blue**
Scene #1: Not allowing students to have normal conversations in their own language with their friends.
[Students are finishing their work and the teacher is giving instructions]
Blue = Teacher
Teacher: We have 5 minutes of class. Raise your hand if you still have your paper.
[No students raise their hand]
Teacher: Ok, everyone is done. You can talk among yourself for the remainder of class. Good job today!
[Students turn around and start talking with their friends. One group of students start speaking Spanish]
Student A (Mr Harry): Que vas hacer este fin de semana?
Student B (Teacher Candidate): Nada solamente voy a mirar una pelicula con mi familia.
Student C (Allison): (excitedly) Y yo voy mirar el chavo del 8!!!!!
[All three students laugh]
Teacher: (slightly annoyed) Hey guys, you know the rule: no Spanish.
Student C: pero porque??

[It's later that same day in the evening, and student C is at home eating dinner with their mom] - **Blue**

Mom (Kaitlin): Qué hiciste hoy en la escuela?
Student C (Allison): hoy en matematicas aprendimos ….ohh I don't remember how to say the word in spanish!!!….no me acuerdo como decir esta palabra. Ughh it's not important… olvidalo no es importante!

Discussion:
Take 2 minutes to talk with someone next to you about what went wrong in this situation and what could be done better? (discuss - 2 minutes) - Allison
Now does anyone want to share what they discussed?

after discussion

Now we're going to act out our second scenario: - **Blue**

Scene #2: When teachers use data walls to make students move their pin based on their test score in front of the class, it can make students feel uncomfortable, ashamed, and not smart.
For this scene, we need three volunteers. – **Allison**

[A teacher is sitting at her desk and calling students up to tell them their grades on a recent test they took. After the teacher tells the students their grade, they have to move their pin on the data wall to show what their score was, in front of the whole class]

Teacher (Allison): Matthew, please come up here.
(*Matthew walks up to the teacher's desk. A few people are staring*)
Teacher: You got an 96% on this test. Good job!!! Go move your pin.
Matthew (Teacher Candidate): Let's gooooooo!!!!
(*Matthew excitedly moved his pin toward the top of the data wall*)
Student A (Teacher Candidate): Matthew is so smart!!!!

Teacher: Sammy, please come up here.
(*Sammy **(Teacher Candidate)** walks up to the teacher's desk, looking embarrassed. A few people are staring again)*
Teacher: Hi Sammy (*sounding disappointed*). You got a 62% on this test. Go move your pin.
(*Sammy looks sad and ashamed. She puts her pin on the bottom portion of the data wall. Sammy starts walking back to her seat).*
Student A talking to Student B: I thought she was smart!!!
(*Sammy sits down and puts her head on her desk).*
Discussion: -
Take 2 minutes to talk with someone next to you about what went wrong in this situation and what could be done better! (discuss - 2 minutes)
Now does anyone want to share what they discussed? **- Blue**

Positive list:
Even though we have gone over a list of negative experiences we have had to deal with in hopes that you will keep these in mind when you start teaching, we want to acknowledge positive

actions that we've experienced in school and in hopes that you can look back on these in the future and use them as positive examples to use in your future classroom.. - **Allison**

<u>Here is a list of positive actions:</u>
- Ask students if they're okay if they look down (one-on-one) - **Blue**
- Reward effort (instead of making you rush through an assignment all the time then marking you down, give time and reward/recognize effort) - Allison
- Give options/choices for how to learn - **Blue**
- Give ways to help students personally – **Allison**
- When teachers are involved in the community and knowing what's going on in the community outside of school - **Blue**
- Jokes around (not in a mean way) - **Allison**
- Understand some people don't feel comfortable sharing an answer out loud, so don't force them to but then talk with them one-on-one about why they're uncomfortable - **Blue**
- Taking time to know the students' stories - **Allison**
- Talk about yourselves personally → be yourself, be vulnerable - Blue

Now we're going to act out a positive way to teach. Think back to the beginning of our training and how we started it. We sort of rushed into it and didn't really interact with you guys. How did that make you feel? [write down responses on poster]. Now we're going to act out the way we **should** have started the training and the way you should start your future classrooms.

Teacher (Mr. Harry): Alright folks, how are you guys? How was your weekend?
take responses from WSU students
Student A (Blue): It was so fun! I learned how to drive. And then I got ice cream!
Student B (Allison): My dog died…
Teacher: Ohh… I'm so sorry!! Is there anything we can do to support you right now?

<u>Discussion:</u>
Can someone explain what we did differently at the beginning of the lesson? How did this make you feel? [write down responses on poster to contrast]

<u>Exit ticket</u>:
We hope you learned something that can help you build relationships and connections with your future students. To close, what is one thing you can do in your future classroom that will benefit both you and your students? → **Allison**
→ **Share out:** 30 seconds of sharing with a partner; 1 minute of sharing out loud → **Allison**

<u>Closing Statement</u>:
Thank you for this opportunity and we hope you have taken something away from this that you can use in your future classroom! - **Blue**

Warm Up: What are your ideas on making your classroom a safe environment?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Negative Examples

- Not allowing students to have normal conversations in Spanish, or any other home-language, with their friends. We acknowledge that not all teachers speak Spanish or a language other than English and this can make them feel uncomfortable, but language is part of our culture.
- When teachers use data walls to make students move their pin based on their test score in front of the class, it can make students feel uncomfortable, ashamed, and not smart. We understand most teachers are required to have data walls, but they could post class averages and give students their own individual test scores
- When teachers come to school in a bad mood or are not feeling well and they take it out on the students, instead of explaining that they are having a bad day.
- When teachers point out a minor "negative" behavior publicly or yell to "make an example" of that person, instead of talking to that student one-on-one. For example, if a student isn't paying attention but is **not** disruptive, the teacher should subtly re-focus the student. -
- When a student is helping a classmate with an assignment and the teacher scolds that student because they assume they are off-task, instead of asking what's going on.
- When teacher make comments that disrespect students identities, for example if a teacher makes an anti-LGBT+ comments it can make the student feel uncomfortable, disrespected, and unwelcomed.

Positive Examples

- Ask students if they're okay if they look down (one-on-one)
- Reward effort (instead of making you rush through an assignment all the time then marking you down, give time and reward/recognize effort)
- Give options/choices for how to learn
- Give ways to help students personally
- When teachers are involved in the community and knowing what's going on in the southwest Detroit community
- Jokes around (not in a mean way)
- Understand some people don't feel comfortable sharing an answer out loud, so don't force them to but then talk with them one-on-one about why they're uncomfortable
- Taking time to know the students' stories
- Talk about yourselves personally → be yourself, be vulnerable

Notes:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Exit ticket: What is one thing you can do in your future classroom that will benefit both you and your students?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

APPENDIX D: PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORMS

Adult Participant Research Project Informed Consent
Title of Research Project: Community Sustaining Pedagogy: Reimagining Teacher Education at the Intersection of the PreK-12 Classroom and the Grassroots Community for Transformative Social Change
Researcher's Name: Kaitlin Popielarz, MA, PhD Candidate

We will describe this project to you and answer any of your questions. Participation in this project is a choice and is completely voluntary.

1.) What is this research project about?
Culturally sustaining and community-based pedagogies are important tools in transformative education as they work to build strong partnerships with schools and communities. By connecting the classroom to the knowledge, cultural heritages, and ecosystems of the local community, culturally sustaining and community-based pedagogies enhance the holistic development of students as learning experiences are cultivated through an asset-lens. The potential interconnection of culturally sustaining and community-based pedagogies has not yet been adequately documented and theorized within the transformative teacher education literature. In turn, this research project proposes a synthesized *community sustaining pedagogy* at the intersection of teacher preparation, the PreK-12 classroom, and the grassroots community. The reciprocal collaboration in this research project will aim to cultivate equitable learning opportunities alongside young people who have become active social change agents within their communities. As such, the research project inquires, how does centering the voices of and partnering with students reimagine teacher education for transformative social change?

The primary purpose of the research project is to center and analyze the perceptions of young people who will be influential in the realization of a community sustaining methods course. Secondly, this research project examines the process of teacher candidates developing their understanding of students' everyday lives due to deepening connections with the community. Finally, this research project will document and examine the process of young people and adult allies collaborating in the preparation of teacher candidates. Thus, the research project will report on the use of a community sustaining pedagogy for student-centered and place-conscious teacher education. In turn, the findings will contribute to ongoing efforts by urban research universities to engage in the comprehensive growth of local students and communities.

This action research project will critically analyze and problematize the process of designing and implementing a teacher education course with young people and adult allies who are active members in the local community. Thus, the research project will discuss the implications of collaborative partnerships within a community sustaining pedagogy for teacher preparation, the PreK-12 classroom, and the grassroots community. In turn, the findings of the research project will inform teacher educators and urban research universities who are reimagining their collaborative role with students, schools, and communities for more loving futures.

2.) What are participants asked to do?

This research project will analyze a social studies methods course within a specific semester at a local metropolitan college of education. The course is designed around student-centered and community-based teaching and learning experiences. As such, the research project will implement a *community sustaining pedagogy* within teacher preparation. Potential research participants and their collaborative contributions are:

1. X and X: This first community partnership would provide teacher candidates an opportunity to actively learn from young people and the local community. In addition, this community partnership would assist teacher candidates in visualizing the community sustaining social studies methods they are learning within the course. Importantly, teacher candidates would collaborate with X and students from X through a community engaged learning experience. Participants would support the research project in collaborative planning meetings, observations/field notes (only during collaborative planning meetings and community engaged learning experiences), individual and focus group interviews, journal prompts, and surveys.

2. X and X: This second community partnership would provide teacher candidates the opportunity to see a classroom teacher and his students actively co-create a place-conscious and culturally sustaining pedagogy in an intergenerational community organization. Importantly, teacher candidates would have the opportunity to visit with X and students from X in order to participate in a community engaged learning experience. Participants would support the research project in collaborative planning meetings, observations/field notes (only during collaborative planning meetings and community engaged learning experiences), individual and focus group interviews, journal prompts, and surveys.

3. Teacher Candidates: Teacher Candidates would engage with both sets of community partnerships through community engaged learning experiences. This will be an opportunity for them to actively learn, visualize, and actualize community sustaining pedagogy in the classroom. Participants would support the research project in observations/field notes (only during community engaged learning experiences), individual and focus group interviews, course assignments (after all grades are finalized and submitted for the semester), and surveys.

4. X: The participant would collaborate with youth leaders and youth organizing groups in the design of a social studies methods course. The particpant would support in the analysis of a community sustaining pedagogy by participating in the community engaged learning experiences of the social studies methods course. The participant would support the research project collaborative planning meetings, observations/field notes (only during collaborative planning meetings and community engaged learning experiences), individual and focus group interviews, journal prompts, and surveys.

5. X (College of Education Faculty): Participants would support in the analysis of a community sustaining pedagogy in a social studies methods course through individual interviews.

Choosing to or not to participate in the research project will in no way impact student grades, performance, and/or relationship with the teacher/researcher. Kaitlin does not want participants to feel at risk or uncomfortable in their involvement with the research project. No special treatment or accommodations will be provided to participants. Participant identity, records,

and/or grades will not be used at anytime during the research project. Participants will have the opportunity to create a pseudonym, or "code name", for the research project in order to protect their anonymity. Participants will have multiple opportunities to provide feedback on research project data analysis and findings. The title of the course, the semester of the course, and institution names will not be used in the research project. It is important to know that Kaitlin will be moral and ethical in the conducting of this project because relationships with participants are of the upmost importance. Participants may decline participation and redact any of their contributions to the research project at any time. Participants should contact Kaitlin, Dr. Pedroni, and/or the Wayne State University IRB Office at any time if they have questions, concerns, or comments regarding the research project.

3.) Are there any risks or discomforts?
We do not see any risks or discomforts by participating in this research project.

4.) Are there any benefits to participating?
There will be no material or tangible benefits to participation. There will be no compensation or monetary gifts for participation.

5.) Research Data Methods:
This will be a qualitative action research project that is informed by humanizing, participatory, and community-based methods. By engaging with participants in reciprocal and collaborative ways, this research project will implement a variety of qualitative data collection methods and report on the development, implementation, and impact of a community sustaining pedagogy. As the Principal Investigator (PI) under the guidance of her advisor, Kaitlin will build in necessary precautions in order to conduct an ethical and valid research project with vulnerable participants.

For this research project, Kaitlin will apply the relationships she has with community and classroom educators, in addition to students and youth leaders, in the design of a specific social studies methods course. Through this collaborative process, young people and their adult allies will co-design the assignments, readings, and community engaged learning experiences of the course. In this way, young people, along with their adult allies and community, will become co-teacher educators as they influence the curriculum of the social studies methods course. During the semester itself, young people and their adult allies will participate with teacher candidates in community-engaged learning experiences. In this way, a social studies methods course becomes a community in which participants collaborate together for transformative education.
As the PI, Kaitlin will first inform all potential participants about the research project and obtain their approval before beginning the collection of data. With participant consent, she will commence active observations and take field notes during the design and the enactment of the social studies methods course. During the course, Kaitlin will conduct observations and take field notes only during the community engaged learning experiences. After community engaged learning experiences, Kaitlin will provide participants with journal prompts in order to engage in multi-modal reflection. At the end of the semester, after all grades have been submitted and finalized, Kaitlin will seek completed assignments from voluntary Teacher Candidate participants in order to understand how course experiences influenced their developing teaching praxis. Kaitlin will provide an anonymous survey to be completed by all participants in order to learn from their perceptions of the student-centered and community-based social studies methods

course. Following the completion of the semester, after all grades are submitted and finalized, Kaitlin will contact the research project participants to initiate individual and focus group interviews. The primary purpose of these interviews will be to engage young people, educators, and teacher candidates in critical inquiry and collaborative dialogue about the course experiences.

All individual interviews will be audio recorded and transcribed. All collaborative planning meetings and focus group interviews will be audio recorded before being transcribed. Kaitlin will share the transcriptions with participants in order to receive their feedback and input. Participants will have the opportunity to revise or redict anything shared in the data collection and analysis process.

6.) How will privacy and confidentiality be ensured?
All data used will be de-identified. Participants will remain anonymous and will be given the opportunity to choose a pseudonym of their choosing. Course and institution information will be de-identified. All data sources will be held on non-cloud sharing technology devices. Data will be kept confidential to the ability of the technology being used. De-identified data from this project may be analyzed and shared with the research community at large to further benefit teacher education programs. We will do our best to de-identify you from any of the findings shared in potential publications.

Adult Participant Research Project Informed Consent
Title of Research Project: Community Sustaining Pedagogy: Reimagining Teacher Education at the Intersection of the PreK-12 Classroom and the Grassroots Community for Transformative Social Change

Statement of Consent
I have read the above information, and have received answers to any questions I asked. I consent to take part in the research project.

Your Signature   Date

_____   _____
Your Name (printed)   Date

_____   _____
Signature of person obtaining consent   Date

_____   _____
Printed name of person obtaining consent   Date

_____   _____

Parent Supplemental Information Letter with "Decline to Participate" Option
Title of Research Project: Community Sustaining Pedagogy: Reimagining Teacher Education at the Intersection of the PreK-12 Classroom and the Grassroots Community for Transformative Social Change
Research's Name: *Kaitlin E. Popielarz, MA, PhD Candidate*

Purpose
You are being asked to allow your child to be in a research project that is being conducted by Kaitlin E. Popielarz from X. This research project will analyze the impact of student-centered and community-based teacher education. Your child's participation in the research project will be during after school hours and conducted through organizations they are involved with in Detroit. Your child has been selected because of their involvement with one of the following grassroots community organizations: X or X.

The goal of the research project is to center and analyze the experiences of young people who will be influential in the co-creation of a student-centered and community-based teacher preparation course. The collaboration in this research project between young people and adult allies will aim to cultivate equitable learning opportunities. The young people who are partners in this research project are active community members and influence positive social change. The role of young people in this research project will influence future teachers as they learn how to create student-centered and community-based classrooms. As such, the research project asks, how does centering the voices of and partnering with students reimagine teacher education for transformative social change?

This research project will document and examine the process of young people and adult allies collaborating in the preparation of teacher candidates. This research project will analyze the process of designing and implementing a teacher education course with young people and adult allies who are active members in the local community. This research project examines the process of future teachers developing their understanding of students' everyday lives due to deepening connections with the community. The research project will report on the use of student-centered and community-based teaching and learning within teacher preparation. In turn, the findings will contribute to the development of university and community partnerships for positive social change in education.

For this research project, Kaitlin will apply the relationships she has with community and classroom educators, in addition to students and youth leaders, in the design of a specific teacher preparation course. Through this collaborative process, young people and their adult allies will co-design the assignments, readings, and community engaged learning experiences of the course. In this way, young people, along with their adult allies and community, will become co-teacher educators as they influence the learning experiences in a teacher preparation course. During the semester itself, young people and their adult allies will participate with teacher candidates in one or two community-engaged learning experiences. In this way, a teacher preparation course becomes a community in which participants collaborate together for transformative education.

Research Project Procedures

If you decide to allow your child to take part in the project, your child will be asked to participate in the research project in the following ways:

6. X (with X): This first community partnership would provide teacher candidates an opportunity to actively learn from young people and the local community. In addition, this community partnership would assist teacher candidates in visualizing student-centered and community-based teaching and learning. Importantly, teacher candidates would collaborate with X and students from X through a community engaged learning experience. Participants would support the research project in collaborative planning meetings, observations/field notes (only during collaborative planning meetings and community engaged learning experiences), individual and focus group interviews, journal prompts, and surveys.

7. X (with x): This second community partnership would provide teacher candidates the opportunity to see a classroom teacher and his students actively co-create student-centered and community-based learning experiences in a multi-generational community organization. Importantly, teacher candidates would have the opportunity to visit with X and students from X in order to participate in a community engaged learning experience. Participants would support the research project in collaborative planning meetings, observations/field notes (only during collaborative planning meetings and community engaged learning experiences), individual and focus group interviews, journal prompts, and surveys.

Choosing to or not to participate in the research project will in no way impact student grades, performance, and/or relationship with the teacher/researcher. Kaitlin does not want participants to feel at risk or uncomfortable in their involvement with the research project. No special treatment or accommodations will be provided to participants.

Participant identity, records, and/or grades will not be used at anytime during the research project. Participants will have the opportunity to create a pseudonym, or "code name", for the research project in order to protect the privacy of their identity. The title of the course, the semester of the course, and institution names will not be used in the research project.

Participants will have multiple opportunities to provide feedback throughout the research project process. It is important to know that Kaitlin will be moral and ethical in the conducting of this project because relationships with participants are of the upmost importance. Participants may decline participation and redact any of their contributions to the research project at any time. Participants should contact Kaitlin, Dr. Pedroni, and/or the IRB Office at any time if they have questions, concerns, or comments regarding the research project.

As the PI, Kaitlin will first inform all potential participants about the research project and obtain their approval before beginning the collection of data. With participant approval, Kaitlin will engage youth and adult ally participants in planning meetings, interviews, surveys, journal prompts, and focus group discussions. Kaitlin will take observation notes of the participants during the research project. Kaitlin will also audio record participants during interviews and focus group discussions.

All individual interviews will be audio recorded and transcribed. All collaborative planning meetings and focus group interviews will be audio recorded before being transcribed. Kaitlin will share the transcriptions with participants in order to receive their feedback and input. Participants will have the opportunity to revise or redact anything shared in the data collection and analysis process.

Benefits
- o The possible benefits to your child for taking part in this project are the continued development of their professional and academic skills. Additionally, information from this project may benefit other people now or in the future.

Risks
- o There are no known risks at this time to your child for participation in this project.

Costs
- o There are no costs to you or your child to participate in this project.

Compensation
- o You or your child will not be paid for taking part in this project.

Research Related Injuries
- o There is no known potential for research related injuries at this time to your child for participation in this project.

Confidentiality
All information collected about your child during the course of this project will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by law.
- o All information collected about your child during the course of this project will be kept without any identifiers.

Voluntary Participation /Withdrawal:
Your child's participation in this project is voluntary. You may decide that your child can take part in this project and then change your mind. You are free to withdraw your child at any time. Your decision about enrolling your child in the project will not change any present or future relationships with Wayne State University or its affiliates, your child's school, your child's teacher, your child's grades or other services you or your child are entitled to receive.

Questions
If you have any questions about this project now or in the future, you may contact Kaitlin Popielarz at the following phone number: X or one of her research team members, Thomas Pedroni, at the following phone number: X. If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant, the Chair of the Institutional Review Board can be contacted at X. If you are unable to contact the research staff, or if you want to talk to someone other than the research staff, you may also call the Research Subject Advocate at X to discuss problems, obtain information, or offer input.

Optional Tear Off
If you do not wish to have your child participate in the project, you may fill out the form and return it to your child's community educator and/or adult ally facilitator.

I do not allow my child _____to participate in this research study.

Name

_____
Printed Name of Parent

_____   _____
Signature of Parent   Date

[Behavioral] Documentation of Adolescent Assent Form
(ages 13-17)
Title of Research Project:
Community Sustaining Pedagogy: Reimagining Teacher Education at the Intersection of the PreK-12 Classroom and the Grassroots Community for Transformative Social Change
Research's Name:
Kaitlin E. Popielarz, MA, PhD Candidate

Why am I here?
This is a research project. Only people who choose to take part are included in research projects. You are being asked to take part in this project because you are involved in one of the following grassroots community organizations: X or X. Please take time to make your decision. Talk to your family about it and be sure to ask questions about anything you don't understand.

Why are they doing this study?
This project is being done to find out how young people may influence future teachers in creating student-centered and community-based classrooms. The research project will ask this question: how does centering the voices of and partnering with students reimagine teacher education for transformative social change?

For this research project, Kaitlin will apply the relationships she has with community and classroom educators, in addition to students and youth leaders, in the design of a specific teacher preparation class. Through this partnership, you and your adult allies will co-design the assignments, readings, and community engaged learning experiences of the teacher preparation class. The goal is for you and your adult allies to become co-teacher educators as you influence the learning experiences in a teacher preparation course. During the semester itself, you and your adult allies will participate with teacher candidates in one or two community-engaged learning experiences. The hope is that your involvement in the preparation of future teachers will help to create more loving, respectful, caring, and meaningful learning opportunities in classrooms and schools. In this way, a teacher preparation course becomes a community in which participants collaborate together for positive social change through education.

Another goal of the research project is to center the voices and experiences of young people in the co-creation of a student-centered and community-based teacher preparation course. You have been asked to participate in this research project as partners because you are active community members and influence positive social change in your community. The role of young people like you in this research project will influence future teachers as they learn how to create student-centered and community-based classrooms. The findings of this research project will contribute to the development of university and community partnerships for positive social change in education.

What will happen to me?
If you decide to participate in the research project, you will be asked to participate in the following ways:
1. With your adult ally in your community organization, you will be asked to collaborate with Kaitlin in the design of a teacher preparation class. You will participate with Kaitlin

in a planning meeting in order to share your ideas and feedback on the learning experiences in a teacher preparation course. At this planning meeting, you will help to design a community engaged learning experience for future teachers in a local college of education.

2. With your adult ally in your community organization, you will help to lead the community engaged learning experience that you co-created. During this learning experience, you will interact and learn with future teachers. You will teach future teachers about issues, places, people, and/or events that are important to you. You will help inform future teachers about what they should know about creating loving, caring, respectful, and meaningful classrooms.

3. You and your adult ally will respond to an open-ended journal prompt about your experiences with the teacher preparation course. You will take an anonymous survey to share your thoughts about your experiences with the teacher preparation course. You will also be interviewed by Kaitlin as an individual and in a small group with your peers in order to share in your experiences with the teacher preparation course.

How long will I be in the research project?
You will be in the research project for 4 months. During that time, you will:
1. Meet 1 time for 2-3 hours for a collaborative planning meeting
2. Meet 1 time for 2-3 hours to help facilitate a community engaged learning experience
3. Complete a journal prompt (1 hour) and online survey (30 minutes)
4. Meet 1 time for a 1-hour individual interview
5. Meet 1 time for a 2-3 hours small group interview

Your involvement with the research project will be based around your schedule. Kaitlin will always be flexible to your needs. The research project will be from April/May – August, depending on your availability. Transportation costs, snacks, and water will be provided when we get together.

Will the research project help me?
The possible benefits for you in taking part in this project are the continued development of your professional and academic skills. Additionally, information from this project may benefit other people now or in the future.

Will anything bad happen to me?
There are no known risks at this time for your participation in this project.

Do my parents or guardians know about this? (If applicable)
This research project information has been given to your parents/guardian and they said that you could be participate. You can talk this over with them before you decide.

What about confidentiality?
Every reasonable effort will be made to keep your records (medical or other) and/or your information confidential, however we do have to let some people look at your participation in the research project.

We will keep your records private unless we are required by law to share any information. The law says we have to tell someone if you might hurt yourself or someone else. Kaitlin, the researcher, can use the project results as long as you cannot be identified.

What if I have any questions?
If you have any questions about this project now or in the future, you may contact Kaitlin Popielarz at the following phone number: X or one of her research team members, Thomas Pedroni, at the following phone number: X. If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant, the Chair of the Institutional Review Board can be contacted at X. If you are unable to contact the research staff, or if you want to talk to someone other than the research staff, you may also call the Research Subject Advocate at X to discuss problems, obtain information, or offer input.

<u>Do I have to be in the research project?</u>
You don't have to be in this research project if you don't want to or you can stop being in the research project at any time. Please discuss your decision with your parents/guardians and researcher. No one will be angry if you decide to stop being in the research project.

AGREEMENT TO BE IN THE RESEARCH PROJECT

Your signature below means that you have read the above information about the research project and have had a chance to ask questions to help you understand what you will do in this research project. Your signature also means that you have been told that you can change your mind later and withdraw if you want to. By signing this assent form you are not giving up any of your legal rights. You will be given a copy of this form.

_____   _____
Signature of Participant (13 yrs & older)   Date

_____
Printed name of Participant (13 yrs & older)

_____   _____
**Signature of Witness (When applicable)   Date

_____
Printed Name of Witness

_____   _____
Signature of Person who explained this form   Date

_____
Printed Name of Person who explained form

** Use when participant has had consent form read to them (i.e., illiterate, legally blind, translated into foreign language).

APPENDIX E: INTERVIEW PROTOCOLS

Planning Meeting Protocols

Participants: Lilith, Harry, and Youth Organizers
Data Collection Source: Semi-Structured Collaborative Planning Meeting(s) Protocols

Thank you for your willingness to participate in this research project. I have asked you to be a part of this research project because I think that, as students, adult allies, and community leaders, you all have valuable insights into student-centered and community-based teaching and learning. I also think you have expertise and knowledge that is important in the preparation of future teachers, which is why I have asked your support in co-designing a social studies methods course. This planning meeting will initiate our collaboration together throughout the semester, and you should always feel free to ask me questions about this process at any time. To begin,

1. What are your names?
2. What is the name of the group that you all collaborate with and what are your goals?
3. Why do you think it's important for future teachers to know about your organization and the work that you do in schools and your community?
4. What is your favorite and least favorite part about school?
5. Who are your favorite and least favorite teachers? Why?
6. What do you think future teachers should know about teaching and learning?
   a. More specifically, what do you think future teachers should know about teaching and learning in Detroit?
7. Description of course (we will look over the tentative syllabus for the course):
   a. What do you like about this course? How do you think it will help teachers create student-centered and community-based classrooms?
   b. What improvements need to be made for this course? What do you think is missing and what would you add?
8. Community engaged learning experience (we will plan the community engaged learning experiences for the course):
   a. What type of learning experience would you like to facilitate for the future teachers in this course?
   b. In what ways will this learning experience help future teachers develop student-centered and community-based classrooms?
   c. How can I be supportive in making this community engaged learning experience come together for you and the teacher candidates?
9. How can your collaboration in this research project and in the social studies methods course be helpful for your own experiences in school and the community?
10. Is there anything else you'd like to share that we didn't talk about yet? Are there any questions you have for me?

Interview Protocols

Participants: Lilith, Harry, and Youth Organizers
Data Collection Source: Semi Structured Individual Journal Prompt Protocol

We have just completed our community engaged learning experience with the social studies methods course. Thank you so much for your support in designing and implementing this learning opportunity for the future teachers in the course. Your insights have been so helpful for me as I instruct this course and continue the research project. This journal prompt will focus more on your responses to the community engaged learning experience. Your response can be done in any way that is best helpful for you to reflect – narrative writing, drawing, word mapping, poetry, creative writing, photography, etc. As always, feel free to ask me any questions. Please feel free to respond to one, all, or none of the prompts,

How do you feel about the community engaged learning experience?

What did you enjoy about teaching and learning with future teachers?

What was challenging about teaching and learning with future teachers?

How do you feel when you are able to share your identity and your community with others?

Do you think the community engaged learning experience will support the future teachers in the course to create student-centered and community-based classrooms?

Interview Protocols

Participants: Youth Organizers
Data Collection Source: Semi-Structured Individual Interview Protocol

Thank you for your willingness to participate in this research project. I have asked you to be a part of this interview because I think that, as a student, you have valuable insights into student-centered and community-based teaching and learning. I also think you have expertise and knowledge that is important in the preparation of future teachers, which is why I have asked your support in co-designing a social studies methods course and co-facilitating community engaged learning experiences. This interview will be one of two over the course of the research project, and you should always feel free to ask me questions about this process. The first interview focuses upon your perspective on the design, implementation, and impact of a social studies methods course. To begin,

1. What is your name? How old are you and what grade are you in?
2. What do you want people to know about you when they read about this research project?
3. How long have you been participating with [insert organization name]?
4. Why do you participate with [insert organization name]?
5. Why do you think [insert organization name] is important in schools and in communities?
6. What do you think is needed for [insert organization name] to keep growing as an organization?
7. What do you like about school?
8. What do you dislike about school?
9. What do you think is the purpose of school?
10. What do you need from school?
11. What does a student-centered classroom look like to you?
12. How can teachers connect the community to the classroom?
13. Why did you volunteer to help plan the social studies course and the community engaged learning experiences?
14. Do you think it's important for new teachers to learn from students? Why or why not?
15. What did you think of the community engaged learning experience(s)?
16. What do you think was successful about our collaboration for the social studies methods course this semester?
17. How could our collaboration be improved for the next semester of the social studies methods course?
18. In our collaborative planning meeting, you said/did, [insert collaborative planning meeting observation(s). Could you tell me more about that?
19. In your journal prompt response, you said, [insert journal prompt response]. Could you tell me more about that?
20. As I am analyzing all of interviews and observations in this research project, I am finding these patterns: [insert discussion of emerging patterns]. What do you think about these? What comments do you have? What would you revise or redact?
21. Is there anything else you would like to share with me today?

Interview Protocols

Participants: Lilith, Harry, and Youth Organizers
Data Collection Source: Semi Structured Focus Group Interview Protocol

Thank you for agreeing to be a part of this focus group interview for my research project on student-centered and community-based teaching and learning. I have collaborated with all of you and met with each of you individually already, and I now would like to have a conversation in a group setting today. Sometimes group discussions can help us think of new insights that one-on-one interviews might not uncover. There will also be a "backchannel" discussion on the large post it notes where you can write and/or draw in response to our discussion today. However, you should always feel free to refrain from discussing something in this group setting if it makes you uncomfortable in any way. Also feel free to stop the interview if you have questions as we go. To begin,

1. How are all of you doing? [If in the summer, I will ask how summer break is going. If in the fall, I will ask how the school year is going.]
2. How is [insert organization name] going? Are you working on any current action plans, campaigns, or projects?
3. What was surprising about supporting the design and implementation of a social studies methods course?
4. What was beneficial about the community engaged learning experience?
5. What impact do you think [insert organization name] had on the future teachers in the social studies methods course?
6. What was challenging about supporting the design and implementation of a social studies methods course?
7. What ideas do you have to improve community engaged learning experiences?
8. What impact did the future teachers have on you throughout your participation with the social studies methods course?
9. How do you think this experience will impact you as a student in school?
10. How will this experience effect your role as a social change maker in the community?
11. What would our schools look like if they were student-centered?
12. What would our classrooms look like if they were community-based?
13. In our collaborative planning meeting, you said/did, [insert collaborative planning meeting observation(s). Could you tell me more about that?
14. As I am revisiting the course (we will look over the syllabus together), I found these were areas of success [insert discussion] and challenges [insert discussion]. What are your thoughts and what are your suggestions for improvement?
15. As I am analyzing all of interviews and observations in this research project, I am finding these patterns: [insert discussion of emerging patterns]. What do you think about these? What comments do you have? What would you revise or redact?
16. Is there anything else you would like to share with me today?

Interview Protocols

Participants: Harry and Lilith
Data Collection Source: Semi-Structured Individual Interview One Protocols

Thank you for your willingness to participate in this research project. I have asked you to be a part of this interview because I think that, as an adult ally, you have valuable insights into student-centered and community-based teaching and learning. I also think you have expertise and knowledge that is important in the preparation of future teachers, which is why I have asked your support in co-designing a social studies methods course and co-facilitating community engaged learning experiences. This interview will be one of four over the course of the research project, and you should always feel free to ask me questions about this process. The first interview focuses upon who you are and your role as an [insert educator or youth organizer]. To begin,

1. What is your name?
2. Describe your profession/vocation.
3. Tell me about yourself. What would you like people to know about you when they read this research project?
4. What does a typical day and/or week look like for you?
5. How long have you been participating with [insert organization name]?
6. Why do you participate with [insert organization name]?
7. Why do you think [insert organization name] is important in schools and in communities?
8. What do you think is needed for [insert organization name] to keep growing as an organization?
9. When you were a student, what did you like about school?
10. When you were a student, what do you dislike about school?
11. What do you think is the purpose of school?
12. What do you think students need from schools?
13. What does a student-centered classroom look like to you?
14. What does a community-based classroom look like to you?
15. When you hear the term "community sustaining pedagogy", what comes to mind?
16. How can teachers create a community sustaining pedagogy?
17. Why did you agree to participate in the planning of the social studies course and the community engaged learning experiences?
18. Do you think it's important for teachers to learn from students? Why or why not?
19. What do you think future teachers should know before beginning their teaching experience in Detroit?
20. What are your hopes for our collaboration in this research project and social studies methods course?
21. Is there anything else you would like to share with me today?

Interview Protocols

Participants: Lilith and Harry
Data Collection Source: Semi-Structured Individual Interview Two Protocols

Thank you for your willingness to participate in this research project. I have asked you to be a part of this interview because I think that, as an adult ally, you have valuable insights into student-centered and community-based teaching and learning. I also think you have expertise and knowledge that is important in the preparation of future teachers, which is why I have asked your support in co-designing a social studies methods course and co-facilitating community engaged learning experiences. This interview will be the second of four over the course of the research project, and you should always feel free to ask me questions about this process. The second interview focuses upon your perspective on the design, implementation, and impact of a social studies methods course. To begin,

1. How are you? What have you been up to lately?
2. How is your work with [Insert organization name] going?
3. What do you think was successful about our collaboration for the social studies methods course this semester?
4. How could our collaboration be improved for the next semester of the social studies methods course?
5. What did you think of the community engaged learning experience(s)?
6. In what ways do you think the community engaged learning experiences raised the critical consciousness of teacher candidates? Why is this important?
7. We learned about meaningful and relevant social studies in our course. What challenges do you anticipate in creating this type of classroom for new teachers?
8. Do you believe it is important for teacher education courses to create partnerships with students and the local community? Why or why not? How so?
9. How do you think this collaborative experience impacted students in [Insert organization name]?
10. What impact did this collaborative experience have upon you?
11. In our previous interview, you described "community sustaining pedagogy" in this way: [insert response here]. Did you visualize this in our social studies methods course and community engaged learning experiences?
12. In our collaborative planning meeting, you said/did, [insert collaborative planning meeting observation(s). Could you tell me more about that?
13. In your journal prompt response, you said, [insert journal prompt response]. Could you tell me more about that?
14. As I am analyzing all of interviews and observations in this research project, I am finding these patterns: [insert discussion of emerging patterns]. What do you think about these? What comments do you have? What would you revise or redact?
15. Is there anything else you would like to share with me today?

Interview Protocols

Participants: Lilith and Harry
Data Collection Source: Semi-Structured Individual Interview Four Protocols

Thank you for your willingness to participate in this research project. I have asked you to be a part of this interview because I think that, as an adult ally, you have valuable insights into student-centered and community-based teaching and learning. I also think you have expertise and knowledge that is important in the preparation of future teachers, which is why I have asked your support in co-designing a social studies methods course and co-facilitating community engaged learning experiences. This interview will be the final of four over the course of the research project, and you should always feel free to ask me questions about this process. The final interview focuses upon your overall experience with this research project and I will seek your feedback on the emerging themes of the research project findings. To begin,

1. How are you doing? Is anything new happening with you?
2. In one of our interviews, you said, [insert comment/response]. Could you tell me more about that?
3. In our focus group interview, you said, [insert comment/response]. Could you tell me more about that?
4. As I am revisiting the course (we will look over the syllabus together), I found these were areas of success [insert discussion] and challenges [insert discussion]. What are your thoughts and what are your suggestions for improvement?
5. As I am analyzing all of the data sources in this research project, I am finding these emerging themes: [insert discussion of emerging patterns]. What do you think about these? What comments do you have? What would you revise or redact?
6. Is there anything else you would like to share with me today?

Interview Protocols

Participant: Rae
Data Collection Source: Semi-Structured Individual Interview One Protocols

Thank you for your willingness to participate in this research project. I have asked you to be a part of this interview because I think that, as a student teacher, you have valuable insights into student-centered and community-based teaching and learning. I also think you have expertise and knowledge that is important in the preparation of future teachers, which is why I have asked your support in co-designing a social studies methods course and co-facilitating community engaged learning experiences. This interview will be one of four over the course of the research project, and you should always feel free to ask me questions about this process. The first interview focuses upon who you are and your role as a student teacher. To begin,

1. What is your name?
2. Tell me about yourself. What would you like people to know about you when they read this research project?
3. Describe your role as a student teacher.
4. What does a typical day and/or week look like for you?
5. Why do you want to be a teacher?
6. What teachers have made an impact on your life? Why and how so?
7. When you were a student, what did you like about school?
8. When you were a student, what do you dislike about school?
9. What do you think is the purpose of school?
10. What do you think students need from schools?
11. What does a student-centered classroom look like to you?
12. What does a community-based classroom look like to you?
13. When you hear the term "community sustaining pedagogy", what comes to mind?
14. How can teachers create a community sustaining pedagogy?
15. Why did you agree to participate in the planning of the social studies course and the community engaged learning experiences?
16. Do you think it's important for teachers to learn from students? Why or why not?
17. What do you think future teachers should know before beginning their teaching experience in Detroit?
18. What are your hopes for our collaboration in this research project and social studies methods course?
19. Do you think student-led grassroots organizations are important in schools and in communities? How so?
20. What do you think is needed for student-led grassroots organizations to keep growing in schools and communities?
21. Is there anything else you would like to share with me today?

Interview Protocols

Participant: Rae
Data Collection Source: Semi-Structured Individual Interview Two Protocols

Thank you for your willingness to participate in this research project. I have asked you to be a part of this interview because I think that, as a student teacher, you have valuable insights into student-centered and community-based teaching and learning. I also think you have expertise and knowledge that is important in the preparation of future teachers, which is why I have asked your support in co-designing a social studies methods course and co-facilitating community engaged learning experiences. This interview will be the second of four over the course of the research project, and you should always feel free to ask me questions about this process. The second interview focuses upon your perspective on the design, implementation, and impact of a social studies methods course. To begin,

1. How are you? What have you been up to lately?
2. What did you think of the community engaged learning experience(s)?
3. What do you think was successful about our collaboration for the social studies methods course this semester?
4. How could our collaboration be improved for the next semester of the social studies methods course?
5. In what ways do you think the community engaged learning experiences raised the critical consciousness of teacher candidates? Why is this important?
6. We learned about meaningful and relevant social studies in our course. What challenges do you anticipate in creating this type of classroom for new teachers?
7. Why do you believe it is important for teacher education courses to create partnerships with students and the local community?
8. How do you think this collaborative experience impacted the youth organizers
9. How do you think the youth organizers impacted the teacher candidates?
10. What impact did this collaborative experience have upon you?
11. In our previous interview, you described "community sustaining pedagogy" in this way: [insert response here]. Did you visualize this in our social studies methods course and community engaged learning experiences?
12. As a current student teacher, what ideas do you have for cultivating a community sustaining pedagogy in your classroom?
13. As a current student teacher, what challenges do you anticipate in developing a community sustaining pedagogy in your classroom?
14. In our collaborative planning meeting, you said/did, [insert collaborative planning meeting observation(s). Could you tell me more about that?
15. In your journal prompt response, you said, [insert journal prompt response]. Could you tell me more about that?
16. As I am analyzing all of interviews and observations in this research project, I am finding these patterns: [insert discussion of emerging patterns]. What do you think about these? What comments do you have? What would you revise or redact?
17. Is there anything else you would like to share with me today?

Interview Protocols

Participants: Teacher Candidates
Data Collection Source: Semi-Structured Individual Interview Protocols

Thank you for your willingness to participate in this research project. I have asked you to be a part of this interview because I think that, as a teacher candidate, you have valuable insights into student-centered and community-based teaching and learning. I also think you have expertise and knowledge that is important in the preparation of future teachers, which is why I have asked your support in analyzing the impact of our course. This interview will be one of two over the course of the research project, and you should always feel free to ask me questions about this process. The first interview focuses upon your perspective and impact of our social studies methods course. To begin,

1. What is your name?
2. Tell me about yourself. What would you like people to know about you when they read this research project?
3. Describe your role as a teacher candidate.
4. What does a typical day and/or week look like for you?
5. Why do you want to be a teacher?
6. What teachers have made an impact on your life? Why and how so?
7. When you were a student, what did you like about school?
8. When you were a student, what do you dislike about school?
9. What do you think is the purpose of school?
10. What do you think students need from schools?
11. What does a student-centered classroom look like to you?
12. What does a community-based classroom look like to you?
13. When you hear the term "community sustaining pedagogy", what comes to mind?
14. How can teachers create a community sustaining pedagogy?
15. Do you think it's important for new teachers to learn from students? Why or why not?
16. What did you think of the community engaged learning experience(s)?
17. What do you think was successful about our collaboration with the youth organizers for the social studies methods course this semester?
18. How could our collaboration with young people and the local community be improved for the next semester of the social studies methods course?
19. In what ways did our course enhance your understanding of student-centered and community-based social studies?
20. What challenges do you anticipate in cultivating a student-centered and community-based classroom in your student teaching semester? What support would you need?
21. What particular course assignments, readings, or experiences encouraged you to grow as a social studies teacher? May I have your permission to look at any of your assignments as part of my analysis of this research project?
22. Is there anything else you would like to share with me today?

Interview Protocols

Participants: Teacher Candidates
Data Collection Source: Anonymous & Individual Structured Anonymous Survey Protocols

Thank you for your willingness to participate in this research project. I have asked you to be a part of this anonymous survey because I think that you have valuable insights into student-centered and community-based teaching and learning. I also think you have expertise and knowledge that is important in the preparation of future teachers, which is why I have asked for your feedback on our social studies methods course. Please feel free to ask me any questions about this process before/during/after you complete the survey.

Please mark one response for each statement:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I see how social justice issues connect to teaching and learning					
I see the importance of a student-centered classroom					
I understand how the local community can be a partner in teaching and learning					
Local community members see teaching and learning as important					
I understand how local community members are important for teaching and learning					
Students feel affirmed when their local community is connected to the classroom					
Students feel affirmed when their interests and strengths are connected to the classroom					
I looked forward to participating in our community of learners					
I found participating in our community of learners to be challenging					
I learned more about teaching and learning through our community engaged learning experiences					
I was personally impacted by our community engaged learning experiences in a *positive* way					

I was personally impacted by our community engaged learning experiences in a *negative* way					
I can visualize how students can also be teachers in the classroom					
I can visualize how young people are current leaders in the community					
I liked social studies before participating with this course					
I grew to like social studies after participating with this course					
I can see how social justice issues connect to teaching and learning in the social studies					
Participating with this course challenged how I view teaching and learning					
Participating with this course encouraged me to develop collaborative relationships between students, community groups, and teachers					
I would participate in this community of learners again					

Please share comments, reflections, and thoughts pertaining to the survey if applicable.

How has our course impacted your identity as an educator?

How has our course influenced your teaching practice?

Think back to our two adult ally workshops with Youth Liberation Army and En Los Sueños. Is there anything in particular that still resonates with you? Why or why not? How so?

Do you have any comments or questions regarding the themes that are emerging from the research project?

APPENDIX F: YOUTH LIBERATION ARMY ADULT ALLY TRAINING FEEDBACK

Why is Youth Liberation Army important in schools and communities?
- To learn and practice democracy
- Shift the power balance in schools from adult centered to youth-centered and intergenerational-focused
- Liberate learning from the confines of school
- To learn and practice student organizing and community organizing
- Transform culture and schools
- Empowerment
- Safe space
- Intersectional social justice
- Filling the gap of youth organizations run and led by youth
- Respect youth
- Knowledge and critical consciousness growth
- Curiosity
- A platform for youth voice
- Recognize and foster the agency within youth
- Uncensored
- Demanding
- Fun
- Community of cool people

What do you think is needed for Youth Liberation Army to keep growing as an organization? What are your hopes for Youth Liberation Army in the present and in the future?
- A physical meeting space (room, building, home) that belongs to Youth Liberation Army
  - Bean bag chairs
  - Couches
  - Projector
  - Snack area
  - Host events
- Stipends for youth organizers
- Funding for Youth Liberation Army
- Recruitment for Youth Liberation Army
  - Engage other young people and peers to get involved
  - Continuing collaborating with other organizations when hosting events
  - Reach out to younger students beyond high school-aged students
- More recognition and uplift from other Detroit-based organizations
  - Opportunity to collaborate with youth, intergenerational, and adult organizations
- Support other youth organizations
  - Guide and mentor youth-centered organizations
  - Open up Youth Liberation Army's space for youth-centered organizations
  - Provide funding and act as an umbrella organization

- Continue to establish connections and relationships with people and organizations who you wouldn't normally think would be about the work of Youth Liberation Army
  o Engage in dialogue and reflection
  o Share ideas and strategies
- Implement a system where Youth Liberation Army consistently has new members while other older members age out
- Establish opportunities for members to continue collaborating with Youth Liberation Army even after ageing out of the organization
- Adult Allies
  o With skill set and knowledge ready to be useful and beneficial
  o Adult ally training and workshops
  o Adult ally preparation within teacher education
  o Adult ally affinity group

What is important to Youth Liberation Army in collaborating and planning with adult allies?
- Flexibility
- Dynamic and emergent
- Food and drinks that young people enjoy
- Respect
- Trust
- Embracing discomfort in order to learn and grow
- Enhance reciprocity, for example: adult allies can facilitate workshops, mentor young people, make connections/network, connect to resources, etc.
- Continue connecting adult ally trainings to teacher education

Why is it important for teachers and teacher candidates to learn from young people?
- Critical consciousness and social awareness of the ways systemic oppression intersects with education
- Build skills and knowledge to facilitate
- Disrupt white saviorism
- Anti-racism
- Relearn the history and sociocultural context of Detroit
- Center the experiences, perspectives, voices, and knowledge of students
- Counter misunderstandings and misconceptions
- Dismantle power structures
- Assist and guide students rather than control students
- Learn about and cater to the needs of students
- Co-create a comfortable and safe environment
- Questions from students lead to different ideas and ways of doing things

Why did you agree to facilitate an adult ally workshop for teacher candidates?
- Practice adult ally training
- Practice facilitation skills
- Preventative work

- Demonstrate capability to collaborate with teachers
- Engage in dialogue to disrupt the oppressive system of school
- Relationship with Kaitlin
- Passion project
- New opportunity
- Curiosity
- Change the mindset of teachers and future teachers
- Learn from teacher candidates and hear their experiences
- Challenging
- Remind teacher candidates about creativity, passion, and love within teaching and learning
- Introduce community organizing to teacher candidates
- Share in student-centered learning
- Show off

What was Youth Liberation Army's experience in facilitating the adult ally training?
- Interesting
- Awkward
- Scary
- Desired more participation from teacher candidates
- Lingering questions and feelings about impact on teacher candidates
- New
- Excited for teacher candidates to respond and engage
- Flexibility based on the questions and insights shared by teacher candidates
- Teacher candidates were receptive and open
- Embracing discomfort to learn and grow
- Empowering
- Leadership
- Unique
- Opportunity to share in own lived experiences and perspectives
- Amazing
- Hopeful

What are Youth Liberation Army's ideas for how to improve the adult ally training?
- Clarity in instruction, purpose, activities, etc.
- Continue to practice facilitating small group discussions
- Connect content more specifically to classroom teachers and/or teacher candidates
- Relate the content to the specific age group the teacher candidates will be teaching
- More time for Q/A
- Potentially have multiple interactions with teacher candidates and young people, both on campus and in the community
- Continue role play scenarios, but plan out and prepare more in depth
- Continue small group discussions, but think about:
    - Guided questions

  ○ Disrupting white fragility and white woman saviorism
  ○ Disrupting patriarchal power dynamics
  ○ Clarity in text analysis activity

What was the Teacher Candidates' experience in learning through the adult ally training?

- Inspired
- Proud
- Grateful
- Influential
- Authentic and genuine
- Eye-opening
- Supportive
- Scary, intense, and challenging (in a generative and helpful way)
- Courage
- Patience
- The necessity of student-centered curriculum and pedagogy
- New and different
- Valued and respected
- Super cool
- Important for elementary education teacher candidates in order to support them in beginning the work of adult allyship early
- Role play scenarios and skits were extremely helpful, especially because it was an opportunity to practice
- Examples from lived experiences were really helpful and impactful
- The texts utilized in small groups were useful and informative
- The opportunity to dialogue with young people in small groups was memorable
- Encouraged and supported growth in critical consciousness and sociocultural awareness
- Connected the adult ally training to PreK-12 classroom teaching and learning
- New awareness to resources available to classroom teachers
- Growing understanding of the importance of being a part of your students' communities and connecting that to the classroom
- Ideas for ways to disrupt traditional curriculum
- The importance of discomfort to learn and grow
- Modeled how to disrupt toxic power dynamics between adults and young people
- Creative ideas for teaching and learning in the classroom
- Ability to make direct connections to social studies methods course curriculum (assignments, readings, podcasts, learning experiences, etc.)
- Provided space for students to take the lead and practice their agency
- The importance of learning from and with young people in the college of education and in a teacher education program

What are the Teacher Candidates' ideas for how to improve the adult ally training?

- Clarity in instruction, purpose, activities, etc.
- More time to discuss the do's and don'ts

- Connect to specific subject areas and grade levels that teacher candidates will be teaching
- Multiple sessions to learn from and with Youth Liberation Army
- Opportunities to collaborate with Youth Liberation Army on specific projects, campaigns, or initiatives
- More specifics on how Youth Liberation Army develops and implements activism work; for example: provide step-by-step process of walk outs and freedom schools
- Desire to hear more from Lilith and her role as a youth organizer and adult ally
- Information on how to support, get involved, and collaborate beyond following on social media
- Continue small group discussions, but think about clarity in instruction and purpose
- Continue role play scenarios, but plan ahead more to further involve teacher candidates

APPENDIX G: EN LOS SUENOS ADULT ALLY TRAINING FEEDBACK

Why is En Los Sueños important in schools and communities?
- Connection to communities
- Engagement in social justice work
- Leadership development
- Cultivate confidence
- Amplify and center youth voice and experiences
- Encouragement to grow and evolve
- Challenge power dynamics between young people and adults

Why is it important for teachers and teacher candidates to learn from young people?
- Encourage teachers to transform views and mindsets
- Understand impact versus intention
- Involvement
- Reflection
- Relearning
- Recognizing and cultivating youth agency
- Resources beyond the classroom for teaching and learning
- Being a part of students' communities to foster connections, comfort, and relationships
- Dismantle power structures
- Center the experiences, perspectives, voices, and knowledge of students
- Counter misunderstandings and misconceptions
- Relearn the history and sociocultural context of Detroit and students' communities
- Critical consciousness and social awareness of the ways systemic oppression intersects with education

What do you think is needed for En Los Sueños to keep growing as an organization? What are your hopes for En Los Sueños in the present and in the future?
- Create more leadership opportunities for young people in order to move from active participants to active leaders
- Recruitment of more young people
- Bilingual and multilingual skills and proficiency
- Enhance parent/guardian and family involvement
- Accountability to parents/guardians and families
- Utilize En Los Sueños as a building block to bring about youth activism in schools and connect youth activists together
- Coalition building between educators, students, and families to disrupt oppression and violence in schools
- Foster community in order to build bridges and dismantle boundaries
- Develop and encourage the growth of adult allies' skills, knowledge, and efficacy

Why did you agree to facilitate an adult ally workshop for teacher candidates?
- Leadership development
- Cultivate confidence

- Amplify and center youth voice and experiences
- Connect roles as community organizer, youth organizer, and educator
- Reflection and growth
- Further develop community
- Influence teacher candidates before they get too deep into their teaching careers
- Practice workshop/training facilitation skills

What was En Los Sueños' experience in planning the adult ally training?
- Intention in collaborative planning process
- Accountability and reciprocity
- Autonomy
- Agency
- Opportunity for adult allies to practice facilitation and scaffolding
- Super cool
- Initial discussions were too broad; prompts and specifics would have been helpful
- Need more time to prepare and practice

What was En Los Sueños' experience in facilitating the adult ally training?
- Space to connect with teacher candidates through the sharing of lived experiences and discussing various perspectives
- Flexible and dynamic dialogue
- Scary
- Nervous
- Challenging
- New
- Feared the judgement and wondered about the impact
- Validating and affirming
- Rewarding
- Gratitude
- Vulnerability
- Youth voices were centered, amplified, and important
- Helpful to learn from the experiences and perspectives of teacher candidates
- Skits and role play scenarios were useful and impactful
- Opportunity to demonstrate and practice leadership skills
- Disrupt power dynamics
- Model culturally sustaining pedagogy
- Engaged in the work of education justice
- Beautiful merging of folx who are not often in spaces together but who need to be in community together
- Grateful to hear about the impact on teacher candidates
- Visualize examples of humanizing and student-centered teaching and learning
- Co-create space to sustain students' identities

What are En Los Sueños' ideas for how to improve the adult ally training?
- Finding time to prepare and to debrief
- Consider the audience and reframe training for teacher candidates
- Support young people in developing facilitation skills
- Move beyond reading from the script and practice facilitation techniques
- Clarity in plans, activities, etc.
- Expand beyond one-time training
- Inspired more ideas for the ways young people can affirm and enact their agency in schools and communities

What was the Teacher Candidates' experience in learning through the adult ally training?
- Inspired
- Proud
- Grateful
- Influential
- Authentic and genuine
- Eye-opening
- Supportive
- Courage
- Patience
- The necessity of student-centered curriculum and pedagogy
- New and different
- Valued and respected
- Super cool
- Important for elementary education teacher candidates in order to support them in beginning the work of adult allyship early
- Role play scenarios and skits were extremely helpful, especially because it was an opportunity to practice
- Examples from lived experiences were really helpful and impactful, particularly on the connections from language and culture to education
- Encouraged and supported growth in critical consciousness and sociocultural awareness
- Connected the adult ally training to PreK-12 classroom teaching and learning
- New awareness to resources available to classroom teachers
- Growing understanding on the importance of being a part of your students' communities and connecting that to the classroom
- Ideas for ways to disrupt harmful classroom practices such as data walls
- The importance of discomfort to learn and grow
- Modeled how to disrupt toxic power dynamics between adults and young people
- Relationships and community are essential
- Creative ideas for teaching and learning in the classroom
- Ability to make direct connections to social studies methods course curriculum (assignments, readings, podcasts, learning experiences, etc.)
- Provided space for students to take the lead and practice their agency

- Learning from Harry's experiences as an educator and community member was beneficial
- The importance of learning from and with young people in the college of education and in a teacher education program

What are the Teacher Candidates' ideas for how to improve the adult ally training?
- Clarity in instruction, purpose, activities, etc.
- Allison and Blue were quiet and sometimes hard to hear; increase speaking voice volume
- Move beyond the script
- More time to discuss the positives and negatives
- Multiple sessions to learn from and with En Los Sueños
- Opportunities to collaborate with En Los Sueños on specific projects and initiatives
- More specifics on how Harry engages in social justice teaching and learning

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ABSTRACT

YOUTH ORGANIZERS AS ESSENTIAL PARTNERS IN TEACHER EDUCATION: IMPLICATIONS FROM A COMMUNITY-BASED ACTION RESEARCH PROJECT

by

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The primary purpose of this critical qualitative action research project is to analyze the possibilities, contradictions, and limitations of youth organizers as essential partners in teacher education. More specifically, this research project examines the impact of designing and implementing a community-based social studies methods course alongside youth organizers and their adult allies. There is limited research in teacher education literature about partnering with youth-centered and youth-led grassroots organizations. In addition, research pertaining to community-based teacher education does not adequately affirm and center the voices and lived experiences of youth organizers who are social change agents in schools and communities. In turn, this action research project acknowledges and disrupts existing systemic barriers in order to bring teacher candidates and youth organizers together through dialogue and reflection for transformative action. This process enhances teacher candidates' understanding and use of community-based pedagogy while supporting youth organizers in their social justice work within schools and communities.

Informed by participatory and community-based methodologies, the findings of this action research project provide implications for teacher educators who are seeking to foster collaborative

partnerships with youth-centered community organizations and intergenerational community members. In this way, teacher educators may curate community-based teacher education programs that are stimulated by and benefit local schools and communities. Importantly, the collection and analysis of data sources is reciprocal and accountable to participants in order to support their ongoing efforts to grow as organizers, educators, and community members. Such practices are informed by place-conscious and culturally sustaining pedagogies in order to seek and sustain transformative social change through education.

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL STATEMENT

Kaitlin Popielarz is a PhD Candidate and teacher educator at Wayne State University's College of Education. Kaitlin is a former secondary and adult education social studies teacher, which is where she developed her passion for empowering learning communities. Kaitlin's research and teaching interests include connecting teacher education programs to the local grassroots community in order to provide future educators the opportunity to learn community-based and culturally sustaining pedagogies for education rooted in intersectional social justice. She is a recipient of the 2019-2020 Graduate Research Assistant Competition Award at Wayne State University. Kaitlin is an advocate, action researcher, and community organizer for education justice in Detroit where she collaborates with We The People of Detroit, MIStudentsDream, and Detroit Area Youth Uniting Michigan.