

2019

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Recommended Citation

Coles-Ritchie, Marilee; Eggington, Kalani; and Valdez, Trina M.. (2019). Enhancing Teacher Education and Community Learning Center Programs through Critical Participatory Action Research. *i.e.: inquiry in education: Vol. 11: Iss. 1, Article 8*.

Retrieved from: <https://digitalcommons.nl.edu/ie/vol11/iss1/8>

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i.e.: inquiry in education is published by the Center for Practitioner Research at the National College of Education, National-Louis University, Chicago, IL.

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Author Note

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Abstract

This paper describes the impact of using Critical Participatory Action Research (CPAR) to enhance a campus-community partnership. The key stakeholders, who are also the participants, share how learning from the reflective journals, collaborative sessions, and interview data analysis transformed their practice. The collaborative partnership was designed to allow prospective teachers from a School of Education at a U.S. liberal arts college the opportunity to teach Diverse language learners (DLLs) who were attending a summer program at a nearby community learning center. The teacher educators responsible for teaching the prospective teachers, the director of the community learning center, and a student researcher joined the project as collaborative participant researchers. Together they analyzed the data collected from various participating groups, which included their own work and reflections, as well as those of the prospective teachers and prevention specialists who were employed by the community learning center. The findings from this study revealed that all participants benefited from the campus-community partnership because it was built on trust, mutual respect, reciprocity, and the use of shared language among key stakeholders. This CPAR project provides specific ideas and steps implemented to develop a well-functioning and reflective partnership between a community learning center and a local college. Examples of the specific praxis involved in such partnerships are often absent from the literature.

Keywords: Reciprocity; Critical Service Learning; Teacher Education; English Learners; Diverse language learners, Critical Participatory Action Research; Critical Reflection.

Introduction

In the last 20 years or so, community and civic engagement has been highlighted in many college mission statements and referred to by university and college presidents as a pillar of their vision (Bringle & Hatcher, 2009; Butin, 2012; Furco, 2002). Websites and promotional materials regularly highlight an institution's commitment to community engagement and public responsibility, addressing its moral obligation to improve the lives of the surrounding community and promote social change.

According to Chen, Nasongkhla, and Donaldson (2015), "the point of education is to create a feeling of global responsibility" (p. 165). Therefore, institutions of higher education have a unique opportunity not only to prepare future leaders and encourage academics to have a socially just agenda, but also to become a tool that "links economic, societal and environmental concerns together under a sustainable development strategy and serves to move nations, communities, and households towards a more sustainable future" (p. 165). Service learning, civic engagement, and campus-community partnerships are all important factors that help determine a higher education institution's level of engagement with its surrounding community through respect for all institutions as places for educational growth.

Additionally, without thoughtful and careful consideration, power and privilege can turn well-intentioned community projects into partnerships that are not mutually beneficial. Too often, higher education institutions treat communities as "pockets of needs, laboratories for experimentation, or passive recipients of expertise" (Bringle, Games, & Malloy, 1999, p. 9). Boyer (as cited in Bringle & Hatcher, 2002) challenged any given higher education institution to "bring new dignity to community engagement by connecting its rich resources to our most pressing social, civic, and ethical problems, to our children, to our schools, to our teachers, to our cities" (p. 504).

Working with communities that have been the recipient of many "unsuccessful" campus-community partnerships requires critical consideration. Determining the community need, building trust, having a creative and flexible project design, setting realistic project goals, managing community expectations, ensuring continuity, and assessing impacts are all ways of ensuring a positive community impact (Strait & Lima, 2009).

The purpose of this paper is to detail ways in which a campus-community partnership was impacted by the implementation of Critical Participatory Action Research (CPAR) by key stakeholders. The following research questions guided this study:

1. How did the implementation of CPAR impact the collaboration of the stakeholders in the project?
2. How does CPAR's concept of intentional reflection transform practice?
3. What are the lessons learned from the experience of implementing the collaborative campus-community project for all stakeholders involved?

Literature Review

Venturing on our study, we attempted to achieve reciprocity with a goal of demonstrating a mutually beneficial partnership. Reciprocity is defined as a service learning experience that seeks “to create an environment where all learn from and teach one another” (Mitchell, 2008, p. 58). In order to achieve this we needed to determine the needs of all the stakeholders, emphasizing that the community partner voice is valuable. A partnership rooted in reciprocity creates a space for two-way learning to occur and can help prevent the imbalance of power and privilege.

This study provides a concrete example of how a community learning center director and teacher educators created a reciprocal and reflective partnership. Therefore, one of the goals of this study was to identify the gaps in existing research and scholarship on campus-community partnerships and related concepts such as identifying community needs and community partner voice. Thus, the review of relevant literature is organized around the following themes: meeting the needs of Diverse language learners, community based partnerships, and critical service learning.

Meeting the Needs of Diverse Language Learners

The need for quality teaching of Diverse language learners (DLLs) has increased nationwide in recent years. Nearly 10% of U.S. elementary and secondary students are in the process of learning English.

Many school districts are struggling to develop the capacity to meet the needs of these children. As Faltis and Valdés (2010) contend, “It is safe to say that few teachers nationwide are prepared or qualified to meet the needs of immigrant students, refugee children, and English language learners in their classrooms, schools and communities” (p. 285). Recruiting quality teachers for immigrants and refugees is a significant challenge (Sugarman, 2016; Garcia & Kleifgen, 2018). Therefore, teachers in local schools find themselves looking for ways to support DLLs’ unique socio-emotional needs, address community conflict, increase the range of English proficiency, maintain their home languages, and establish meaningful communication with parents. Mainstream education continues to fall short of providing equitable, relevant education for DLLs (Garcia & Kleifgen, 2018).

After-school and summer-school programs can be valuable places for DLLs to develop additional language literacy if these programs focus on their community strengths and linguistic resources. Reasons for this include lower staff-to-student ratios and more opportunities for informal interactions compared to mainstream experiences (Weisburd, 2008). Research has shown that economically disadvantaged students who regularly attend high-quality after-school programs experience significant gains in achievement (Paluta, Lower, Anderson-Butcher, Gibson, & Iachini, 2016).

Community-Based Partnerships

Community-based after-school and summer-school programs can benefit from partnerships with local higher education institutions. Fostering a successful campus-community partnership depends on strong relationship building and trust (Bingle & Hatcher, 2002). For these partnerships to be healthy, they must be reciprocal and respectful. These important components of a partnership can only be achieved with “effective communication among all parties” (Bingle & Hatcher, 2002, p. 505). This study

provides an exemplar of effective communication through critical sessions with the stakeholders about their transformative practice.

Critical Service Learning

Service learning can be defined as a community service action tied to specific learning goals and ongoing reflection about the service or experience. Anticipated student outcomes can include skill building by connecting theory to practice. Critical service learning pedagogy on the other hand:

fosters a critical consciousness, allowing students to combine action and reflection in classroom and community to examine both the historical precedents of the social problems addressed in their service placements and the impact of their personal action/inaction in maintaining and transforming those problems. This analysis allows students to connect their own lives to the lives of those with whom they work in their service experiences. Further, a critical service learning approach allows students to become aware of the systemic and institutionalized nature of oppression (Mitchell, 2008, p. 54).

Critical service learning programs encourage students to use their service experience to inform their practice and respond to the community injustice(s) taking place. Critical service learning also encourages students to see themselves as agents of social change and to critique the existing social order (Mitchell, 2008). Service learning without the critical piece may give students experience but often does not encourage them to think critically about their own realities and privilege and does not lead to social change.

Paris (2012) notes, “Critical service learning supports 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 as its explicit goal supporting multilingualism and multiculturalism in practice and perspective for students and teachers” (p. 95).

While reviewing available literature, we found few studies that highlight the community partner voice and no studies that describe a mutually beneficial partnership that also transformed the way a particular program practices. Therefore, it appears that more studies are needed that explore the campus-community partner perspective. This study can fill in important gaps in terms of providing firsthand accounts of a successful campus-community partnership that benefitted a community and transformed a college program’s practices.

Conceptualizing the Study: Critical Participatory Action Research (CPAR)

This study was substantially informed by Critical Participatory Action Research (CPAR), which we embrace and promote as a vehicle of promoting social change through engaged research and practice (Darder, Baltadano, & Torres, 2003). CPAR attends theoretically and practically to needs within a community where participants strategically examine the power between the members to benefit all. CPAR came about because of educational researchers’ “dissatisfactions with classroom action research which does typically not take a broad view of the role of the relationship between education and social

change” (Kemmis, McTaggart, & Nixon, 2014, p. 12). According to Kemmis et al. (2014), practitioners who investigate their practice through the use of the CPAR framework come to better understand their practice “from within” due to the following: (1) They are able to enter into critical conversation about their practice with key stakeholders through the use of a shared language; (2) Conditions are created which allow them to develop and initiate forms of action where their practice takes place; (3) A strong and safe community of practice is developed among those who are responsible for the practice; and (4) Their practice, and the consequences of it, are eventually transformed due to identifying ways it may have been irrational, unsustainable, or unjust toward any member involved in the practice.

Based on the aforementioned premises of CPAR, our goal was to avoid the outcomes of some campus-community partnerships that uphold the social reproduction (Gramsci, 2000) of the dominant social group in an effort to “help” another group, which could lead to feelings of patronization and distance (Butin, 2015; Mitchell, 2008; Weah, Simmons, & Hall, 2003).

To expand on the precepts of CPAR, because of the power imbalance, dominant groups can create either a worse situation or an unsustainable one in their attempts to create positive change for the underserved population. The work of Varlotta (1996) and Madsen-Camacho (2004) asks researchers to consider how power within the service experience shifts as needs of those within the context are being addressed. Their work asserts that the process of service learning can inherently create imbalance of power and privilege (Madsen-Camacho, 2004; Varlotta, 1996). Thus, the key stakeholders—the teacher educators, the director of the community learning center, and a student researcher—in this study worked intentionally to avoid this result.

Rather than relying on examples of traditional campus-community partnerships that tend to be unilateral and elitist, the stakeholders made a deliberate effort to raise consciousness about what would create a more reciprocal, beneficial partnership for all involved (Bingle & Hatcher, 2002). This approach is suited for educators who are interested in better understanding the inequitable social conditions in which their practice takes place. Identifying these “untoward consequences” allows educators to transform their practice to meet the needs of all those affected by it (Kemmis et al., 2014, p. 5).

Given the purposes of this study, we embraced CPAR as leading us into the core of the study and assisting us in crafting research questions and data-gathering tools such as an interview guide. We also made use of CPAR to analyze the data, reflect on the findings, and make conclusions.

Designing and Implementing the Study

This study stems from a 5-year campus-community partnership. The director of a local community learning center (CLC) in the western United States initiated the partnership. The director’s duties included overseeing an annual 8-week summer program for elementary-aged youth. She participated in a college-sponsored Learning Community with a teacher educator (TE) and expressed a need to the instructor for individuals who could assist with the summer program who had specific skills working with Diverse language learners (DLLs¹). This teacher educator, along with another colleague, was in

¹ All labels are problematic. The researchers chose the label Diverse language learners (DLLs) as it recognizes students as multilingual, multicultural, and multiliterate. Other terms often used to represent the same

the process of redesigning several Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) methods courses that were to be taught that summer. As part of this redesign, the two teacher educators sought ways for the prospective teachers in their courses to have face-to-face interactions with elementary-aged DLLs to provide practical experiences related to their course material. The TEs had the flexibility and resources available to fill the director's need by developing their methods courses around the summer program's schedule. As a result, they developed an innovative TESOL program that aimed to meet the needs of all involved.

Setting

The campus-community partnership described in this study took place in a western U.S. city with a population of just over 20,000 and a median household income of \$39,198 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012–2016). The majority of the city's population identifies as Latinx, but also includes African, Asian, and eastern European immigrants. The youth who participated in the eight-week summer program primarily attended the local elementary school where 85% of students are classified as DLLs and speak approximately 32 different languages.

In recent years, the city's mayor and several community organizations implemented significant strategies designed to better accommodate the city's residents, focusing on youth. Currently, 14 community learning centers operate throughout the city to implement these strategies. One of these is the CLC discussed in this study. This center has several goals aimed at assisting the youth, including offering an after-school and summer program to support youth's development in language arts and mathematics. Another goal of the CLC is to collaborate with local agencies and organizations to support youth and their families.

Based on these goals, the Community Learning Center Director (CLCD) approached a teacher educator (TE1) in the school of education at a nearby liberal arts college to find individuals who could assist with the center's upcoming summer program. This teacher educator involved a colleague (TE2), and together they created this civic engagement collaboration. This school of education's faculty was committed to offering prospective teachers field experiences that involve civic engagement through community collaborations. Because of these goal alignments, the campus-community partnership described in this study proceeded.

The TEs taught three redesigned TESOL methods courses, in succession, during the college's summer semester. The courses introduced prospective teachers to sheltered instruction as a way to support DLLs as they learn new academic content. The courses also taught prospective teachers' strategies for ongoing assessment, so the DLLs' individual needs could be addressed. The class met daily for 6 weeks. At the beginning of the semester, the prospective teachers were each assigned to work with a group of students who were attending the summer program at the CLC. Time was provided during the week for the prospective teachers to plan a 1.5-hour lesson for their group of elementary-aged DLLs.

population are EL (English learner), ELL (English language learner), ESL student (English as a Second Language Student).

These lessons included teaching and assessment strategies that were simultaneously discussed in the methods courses. Twice a week, the prospective teachers and either TE1 or TE2 would meet at the CLC. The prospective students would teach their planned lessons to their assigned group of DLLs, which gave them the opportunity to implement newly acquired strategies into their teaching practice. The TEs and the prospective teachers would refer to these meaningful teaching experiences during class, which increased the relevancy of the course content.

Participants

Three main groups participated in this study: the participant researchers, the prospective teachers who were enrolled in the TESOL methods courses, and the prevention specialists who worked at the CLC during the 8-week summer program. Below is a more thorough description of each group, including a brief description of the summer program youth.

Researchers as co-participants. The researchers of this study include the CLC's director (CLCD), the teacher educator who the director first approached (TE1), and the second teacher educator (TE2) who joined the collaboration soon after its inception. The researchers invited a student researcher (prospective teacher) (SR) to collaborate with them so they could learn from her. She took on a role as participant observer by enrolling in all the summer TESOL courses taught by TE1 and TE2. She also conducted interviews with her classmates during and after the experience. Because SR interviewed her peers, the TEs found that particular data to be less filtered than if they had talked directly to them, due to the power dynamic being less prevalent. Table 1 presents information about the researchers.

Table 1

Participant researchers

Name	Gender	Self-identified Race/Ethnicity	Position at the Time of Study
CLCD	F	Chicana	Community Learning Center Director
TE1	F	White/Euro American	Teacher Educator
TE2	F	White/Australian	Teacher Educator
SR	F	French/Vietnamese	Student Researcher

Prospective teachers. The prospective teachers who were enrolled in the methods courses during the summer of 2015 agreed to participate in this study. Some were undergraduate students working toward a teaching degree with a TESOL minor, and others were graduate students enrolled in a master's program. Table 2 presents information about these participants.

Table 2**Prospective teachers**

Name	Gender	Self-identified Race/Ethnicity	Position at the Time of Study
Quinn	F	White/Mexican American	Undergrad, Junior
Leah	F	White	Undergrad, Senior
Whitney	F	Biracial African American/White	Undergrad, Senior
Laura	F	White	Undergrad, Senior
Nicole	F	French/Vietnamese	Undergrad, Senior
Rachel	F	Biracial African American/White	Graduate
Will	M	White/Mexican American	Graduate
Henry	M	White	Graduate
Ruth	F	Guatemalan/Mexican American	Graduate

Prevention specialists. Several young adults with the title of “prevention specialists” worked at the CLC during the summer program. Their main role was to provide positive leadership to the youth who attended the summer program by interacting with them on a daily basis. This interaction included the planning and delivering of academic and enrichment activities. Each prevention specialist was assigned to oversee one of the small groups that the prospective teachers would instruct twice a week. The prevention specialists were either attending high school or college at the time of this study and had no specific training related to teaching DLLs. Table 3 presents information about these participants.

Table 3**Prevention specialists**

Name	Gender	Self-identified Race/Ethnicity	Currently Attending at Time of Study
Michelle	F	White	College
Penny	F	Greek	College
Natasha	F	Latina	High School
Ralph	M	Latino	College

Diana	F	White/Latina	College
Cathy	F	Chilean	College

Summer program youth. Program youth attended the free, voluntary, 8-week program, located at their neighborhood CLC. The program operated Monday through Friday, with field trips on Fridays. The local school district provided lunch at the park each day. The CLC's philosophy emphasized a focus on listening to youth participants and their families. Although the researchers did not formally interview the summer program youth, the CLC director and her staff continually asked and noted their concerns and topics that interested them. This feedback was brought to the collaboration sessions.

Data Sources

As researchers of this study, we systematically collected data in our respective courses and at the CLC. By using CPAR, we were committed to developing practices that could be instrumental in creating more just and inclusive classrooms for students at the college and for DLLs in the K–12 setting, who often do not receive adequate instruction. It consisted of one-on-one, semistructured interviews; collaborative, critical sessions between the key stakeholders/researchers of the campus-community partnership; and reflective journal entries completed by the prospective teachers and the TEs. Each data source is described in more detail below.

Interviews. We conducted one-on-one, semistructured interviews to better understand the needs and experiences of all the group's members in the campus-community partnership. Guided by CPAR, they designed the interview questions to gather information about how the collaborative experience was working for them from a variety of perspectives. A TE interviewed the CLCD, a student researcher interviewed prospective teachers at the midpoint and endpoint of the semester, and the CLCD interviewed the prevention specialists at the end of the program. Interviews lasted between 30 and 40 minutes. Each researcher made audio recordings of the interviews they respectively conducted and then transcribed them.

Collaborative sessions. As researchers (CLCD, TE1, TE2, SR), we met three times during the summer of 2015 for collaborative sessions. The purpose of these sessions was to open up critical spaces to discuss, critique, and share preliminary findings and to identify ways all participants could improve the joint project for all. These sessions were also recorded and transcribed.

Reflective journal entries. The prospective teachers who were enrolled in the TESOL courses during the summers of 2014 and 2015 kept a reflective journal. TEs provided class time to reflect on their experience working with the youth at the CLC. The TEs each maintained a reflective journal as well. The journal entries from 2014 provided initial data that informed the creation of an action plan for the following summer. The CLCD, student researcher, and TEs analyzed the journal entries for the present study during the critical sessions. Each member coded the journals and then we discussed prevalent themes.

Research Process

CPAR researchers must initially approach their own situations in the way an historian would approach them (Kemmis et al., 2014). While informed by the CPAR framework, we realized the need for this study's participants to understand the way roles functioned in that context, including how these roles came to be and what kind of consequences were produced by their practice(s). Throughout the project, we as researchers critically investigated and reflected on the ways our practices were or were not "rational, sustainable or just."

The Community Learning Center Director was aware that although the summer program was a safe, fun place for youth, it was not providing them the critical academic support to improve their math and language arts proficiencies. Like most after-school and summer school programs, hiring undertrained prevention specialists with no previous teaching experience, is common (Blattner & Franklin, 2017; Cole, 2011). To create a more just and sustainable learning environment, CLCD needed to change this by improving instruction time. She decided that this could be improved by inviting those with professional culturally sustaining teaching experience to the center. Culturally sustaining pedagogy challenges educators to promote, celebrate, and even critique the multiple and shifting ways that students engage with culture. With the TEs, the CLCD developed a shared, asset-based language that viewed DLLs as "holders and creators of knowledge" (Delgado-Bernal, 2002, p. 106).

As Kemmis et al. (2014) suggest, they (1) closely examined their practices and understandings within the community conditions, (2) asked critical questions about their practices and consequences, (3) engaged in communicative action with others to reach unforced consensus, (4) took action to transform their practices, and (5) documented and monitored what happened (p. 68). In our study, the process did not happen in perfect order. It was messy; it involved continued reflection and reevaluation about how our practice was just and sustainable.

Data Analysis

We intentionally wanted our research team to include the student researcher, community learning center director, and teacher educators because each contributed his or her perspective and expertise on a continued and ongoing basis, to create not just one analysis but one that was rich and nuanced. Implementing the relevant first-cycle coding methodologies outlined by Saldaña (2009), we coded and recoded the field notes, interview transcripts, and student work to develop categories and then themes. This process began with each one of us engaged in open coding all the interview data and the transcripts of the collaborative sessions using the research questions as a guide. Next, we read through the reflective journal entries of the prospective teachers and the TEs to identify codes that were prevalent and interesting. Finally, we coded the aggregated data for common themes. What follows is a discussion of the findings based on our commonly identified themes.

Discussion of the Findings

The findings are organized according to the following themes: (1) collaborative process enhanced through CPAR; (2) identification of community needs through intentional CPAR reflection; and (3) transforming practice to enhance the TESOL program and community center practices.

Collaborative Process Enhanced through CPAR

The systematic, though nonlinear, process of conducting CPAR research created positive change. The researchers intentionally scheduled meetings and documented these sessions. Without the CPAR research component, the discussions would have most likely been less frequent, less critical, and not recorded. The themes of (1) reciprocity and (2) communicative power emerged as relevant through our collaborative analysis between the CLCD and the TEs.

Reciprocity: "I knew the college students would be coming in with some knowledge of community cultural wealth, funds of knowledge, and culturally relevant pedagogies."

Previous to this collaborative partnership, CLCD and TE1 had participated in a Learning Community sponsored by the local liberal arts college. This Learning Community explored opportunities for the college to better incorporate diversity and civic engagement by deepening campus-community partnerships and expanding service learning opportunities with a particular focus on historically underrepresented communities. Critical service learning (Mitchell, 2008) informed the theoretical underpinnings of the Learning Community. The desire of the Learning Community, with critical service learning as a focal point, was to develop long-lasting and authentic relationships among students, faculty, and community partners. These goals align with the principles of CPAR.

A discussion that took place between the participant researchers during one of their collaborative sessions highlights how TE1 and CLCD developed trust together because of their shared Learning Community experience.

TE1: One of the reasons I felt more comfortable [reaching out to you] is that we had that [name of college] Learning Community and that you came to that. I liked that because then I got to know you better, I got to understand a little bit more of your background, and then just what you valued as far as community cultural wealth in those aspects. So, it made it a little bit easier to say, 'Oh, this is a person I'd really like to work with, I think we have similar philosophies of how things should happen,' instead of somebody that I would just cold-call me and say, 'I hear you have some refugee students, can we come?'

CLCD: Normally, there's a little bit of hesitation because [. . .] you don't know who these people are.

TE1: I can see you care about the students, and you don't know, are they just trying to check a box off, [or] are they really interested in the whole process. I liked that we had that time to meet and I really appreciated that you made an effort to come up to [name of college] to do that.

This exchange clearly demonstrates building relationships matter when a college collaborates with a community organization. The CLCD states that when a group approaches her to work with the youth at the center, there is usually a "little bit of hesitation, because you don't know who these people are." Without a foundational start, good intentions from those on the outside can be disruptive. Kemmis et

al. (2014) discuss developing a shared language and entering into a critical conversation. Even before the partnership, TE1 and the CLCD had the opportunity to engage in deep discussions concerning critical service learning (Mitchell, 2008), desire vs. damage when working with marginalized communities (Tuck, 2009), community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005), and funds of knowledge (González, Moll, & Amanti, 2005). Doerr (2011) suggests intentionally focusing on questions of power and developing authentic relationships with the community to address the specific root causes of social inequities. TE1 and CLCD knew they wanted to approach the exchange with respect, reciprocity, and valuing the assets the youth brought to the program, as demonstrated by this exchange in our focus group meeting:

TE1: What were some of the reasons you were comfortable with students from our program?

CLCD: Because I felt like we could use the extra help. I thought it would be great for my staff to either shadow the college students and/or spend more one on one time with the youth in their group. Also, I feel like, with English language learners, it's always great to have them broken up into smaller groups. However, the main reason was that I knew that the professors used similar theoretical frameworks. I knew the college students would be coming in with some knowledge of community cultural wealth, funds of knowledge, and culturally relevant pedagogies. I understood that you felt it was very important for your students to see English language learners through an asset-based lens and as "holders and creators of knowledge."

TE1: What were some things that, anything else specifically that you think that really worked well with the partnership?

CLCD: It was consistent and predictable. We knew [your group] would be here from this time to this time. They don't like surprises. Because you guys started with us from the very beginning, it wasn't an add-on. Because sometimes we get these volunteer groups or people that will come in and they are a little bit more disruptive than helpful. Also, and probably most importantly, the professors stayed for the duration of the time the college students were teaching at [name of center]. This is key because the professors were able to make very quick, real-time changes that improved the process for everyone involved. It took the responsibility of overseeing the students off of me and I was able to concentrate on the prevention specialists and the logistics of the center.

As this conversation demonstrates, the aspects of reciprocity that worked for this campus-community partnership were shared philosophy, consistency, meeting an authentic need for students to get small-group literacy support and the importance of the prospective teachers working directly with DLLs. In addition, the TEs were present during the interaction. Many times in service learning exchanges, instructors assign students to go to a center, but they do not oversee the process, make connections, or observe for feedback.

Communicative Power: "I should have done that, but I didn't. I think I only saw her once."

Kemmis et al. (2014) explain the importance of entering into a critical conversation with those involved in a project. While the director and TE1 had developed a sense of trust because of the shared experience of the Learning Community on the college campus, the other faculty member, TE2, did not initially. The following is one of the first recorded faculty exchanges about the collaboration:

TE1: I went to see [CLCD] first thing when I got to there each morning to set down my things. We would touch base, and then I'd do my rounds to look at the students and then come back and make some notes.

TE2: I should have done that, but I didn't. I think I only saw her once.

TE1: Really? Every day she was there in her office.

TE2: I saw her the first day, and she introduced me to the supervisor of the prevention specialists. And then I saw her the day of the interviews with the news.

TE1: Part of it could be that we were in a Learning Community together and so we already had a relationship beyond this experience. So we had lots of conversations beyond what was happening at the school.

This was an eye-opening exchange to TE2. When she realized that TE1 had daily conversations with CLCD, she made a goal to also check in with CLCD more regularly. During one of the collaborative sessions, CLCD and TE2 reflected on why they had limited contact. TE2 felt that she did not want to bother CLCD, so she would consult with one of the prevention specialists if she needed anything. The researchers discussed possible benefits that could have resulted if TE2 had stopped by CLCD's office more often (e.g., understanding the dress code, giving more specific directions to the prevention specialists, locating more quiet spaces, etc.). The critical space created through these collaborative sessions generated what Kemmis et al. (2014) coined *communicative power*, in which the viewpoints arrived at through open discussion and unforced consensus allow for respect of all participants. The practice changed because the participants were open and honest with each other. The TE and the CLCD shared this experience during our critical sessions with all the stakeholders as a way to build a foundation for communicative power during the continued work.

Identification of Community Needs through Intentional CPAR Reflection

The researchers made the intentional decision to ask a prospective teacher from the class to be a researcher (SR) in the project. The purpose was to create authentic conversations between SR and her peers as she interviewed each one to learn of his or her insights about the project. Even though all of the prospective teachers knew the TEs would be listening to their responses, the researchers thought the conversations would be more fluid and open if they were not present. During these interviews, two key needs of the prospective teachers emerged: (1) identifying abilities and unique backgrounds of DLLs takes practice, and (2) reflection needs to be critical and timely.

Identifying abilities and backgrounds of DLLs takes practice: "Even though I knew a lot of my kids [. . .] it was interesting to see how they identify their use of language."

The first theme associated with the prospective teachers was the difficulty they had in identifying the DLLs' levels in the summer program. Through the ongoing interactions between the prospective teachers and the students in the summer program, TEs and CLCD recognized how difficult it was for them to identify abilities and strengths. The following quotes demonstrate this:

Nicole: Originally, I thought my students weren't ELLs, but then I realized it was just that their BICS [Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills] were great. They couldn't read and write, though. I struggled trying to work on that without having them check out.

Ruth: It [the home language survey] showed that speaking ability was high for English, but the reading and writing was not.

These comments resonated with other prospective teachers in the program. At the beginning of the summer, they were not aware of the way some DLLs could mask their need for academic language development because of their advanced and nuanced conversation (Cummins, 2001; García & Kleifgen, 2018). Nicole's comment informed the TEs of the need to emphasize ways to identify prospective teachers' struggles and design lessons to support them. One of the tasks TE1 assigned was to design and administer an adapted home-language survey with additional questions that illuminate their students' use of languages in different contexts (Gottlieb, 2006). When SR asked Whitney what was most meaningful during the program, she thoughtfully responded:

Whitney: The home language surveys. Even though I knew a lot of my kids, [...] it was interesting to see how they identify their use of language. [...] It was interesting to see where in their life they use different languages and if they use it with their grandparents or their siblings. I found out that one kid speaks Russian. I had no idea! [...] I found a lot of the students do a lot of translating for their parents, which is something I expected, but at the same time, I was like, damn! These kids are already struggling to learn [a new language] in school and then they are under the pressure of doing it for their parents, too.

The opportunity for meaningful exchange between the DLLs and Whitney highlighted not only the strengths the youth brought, but also areas where Whitney, as a teacher, could design her lessons in ways to directly support her students' language growth. Reading and analyzing the data demonstrated the need for the TEs to be more explicit at the beginning of the experience about how to identify DLLs' needs. The two TEs had this conversation during one of the collaborative sessions:

TE1: Home language survey—I have the students do this the first day of my assessment course so they can see how the survey works and what are the challenges with it. They read a critique and then develop their own to administer. . . . to look at the results of an HLS and then create their own more in-depth one to get accurate information.

TE2: So should I be doing that in my methods courses?

TE1: You could, but it does fit better in the assessment class. If we could switch it up . . . in an ideal world, then I would teach two days of assessment, and you would teach your

course, and then I would come back and finish with assessment. You know what I mean? It's too messy.

TE2: But what I could do is make sure I assign a writing assignment at the beginning of the class so that they have a variety of samples throughout. What could I do to help facilitate the productive/receptive skills?

TE1: Maybe if they just knew the difference, and while you want to teach the four skills mostly, you sometimes need to isolate the domains so that you can see where the strengths and weaknesses are.

The conversation above is typical with many instructors who are working to coordinate and align their curriculum to better support the goals of their classes and programs. What is less frequent is that TEs would record and transcribe the conversation, analyze it in the frame of accepting responsibility for practice and then working to collectively transform the practice to meet the needs of all the members (Kemmis et al., 2014). All the participant researchers in this study had the underlying goal of researching to create change, so they were open to critical self-analysis and willing to engage in academic agility that help prospective teachers connect with civic engagement activities (Suarez, 2017).

Critical and timely reflection: "I heard from the students that you had them reflect about their teaching right when they got back to the classroom."

From the beginning, the researchers knew that all participants in the program needed to be committed to deep reflection. The TEs stressed the process of moving from experience to thought and back again as learners construct and organize knowledge (Kolb, 1984). In critical civic engagement, reflection becomes even more important because it allows participants to consider how they come to believe what they believe and how their beliefs impact their interactions with others. Reflection encouraged the prospective teachers to think critically about the learning process that connects the theoretical learning read in the college classroom to their teaching practice at the CLC (Schön, 1983, 1995). Yancey (1998) further explains that through critical reflection, learning can be "coherently theorized, interactive, [and] oriented to agency" (p. 8). For us, that critical reflection made "possible a new kind of learning as well as a new kind of teaching" (p. 8) for the prospective teachers and the TEs (Yancey, 1998).

Within this immersive learning experience at the CLC, reflection encouraged the prospective teachers to critically consider their positionality—how they were engaging within the learning environment, how they considered the children they interacted with, and how they interacted with others at the learning center. Even with this stated goal and awareness, the TEs needed to enhance how and when the prospective teachers reflected. The following conversation took place during a collaborative session between the two TEs:

TE1: I heard from the students that you had them reflect about their teaching right when they got back to the classroom, so I started to give them class time to do that also. I thought it was a lot more effective.

TE2: I had them do that while it was fresh, and then I'd have them go around and share on what they were working on for themselves. Whether it was speaking slower or . . .

Eyler (2002) emphasized the effectiveness of civic engagement when reflection is intentional and connects to the experience in a timely way. When prospective teachers not only write their reflections but also verbalize them with other prospective teachers, they “develop the capacity to understand and resolve complexity; reflection is the mechanism for stimulating cognitive development” (p. 522). TE2's suggestion to TE1 encouraged a doable way for TE1 to adapt her method of assigning reflection so that prospective teachers could make sense of their surprises or “aha” moments and teach each other how they moved through their instruction to better meet the youth's needs.

Transforming Practice to Enhance the TESOL Program and Community Learning Center Practices

Some of the most insightful aspects of the collected data were the interviews the CLCD conducted with the prevention specialists who worked at the CLC. The prevention specialists revealed that (1) they wanted and needed more strategies for working with the children at the center, and (2) the interaction through the partnership with the college's prospective teachers taught them about engaged and culturally sustaining pedagogy. The following statements from the interviews with the prevention specialists demonstrate their desire for effective tools when working with DLLs.

More strategies for working DLLs: “I could be better equipped. I think receiving specific training on that would be really beneficial.”

All the researchers were pleasantly surprised by the prevention specialists' desire for more “training” or education about how to meet the needs of the DLLs at the setting. They were asked during their one-on-one interviews if there was something that could have helped them with their position as prevention specialists. The following quotes highlighted a need:

Michelle: I could be better equipped. I think receiving specific training on [teaching DLLs] would be really beneficial.

Penny: I think more in-depth stuff, like, ‘Oh here is how to work with this kind of kid,’ and these kinds of languages.

When the CLCD brought this data back to the group, the researchers started making program changes. Though the TEs, CLCD, and SR observed the prevention specialists' lack of teaching strategies, it was not until the CLCD conducted the interviews that she knew they also desired training. During this particular collaborative session, the group decided to expand the time of the opening meeting on the first day of the semester so the TEs could give the prevention specialists more background on working with DLLs, and the prospective teachers could interact more with the prevention specialists.

Connecting, engaging and learning: “There’s just such minimal interaction!”

During the TEs’ rounds of observation of the small groups at the learning center, the TEs noted that the prevention specialists seemed disengaged and aloof. Some prospective teachers also mentioned this in their reflective journals and during their one-on-one interviews. Henry, one of the prospective teachers, reflected on the following during his interview:

Henry: It was interesting. On Thursday when we were rotating, I noticed the other student helpers [prevention specialists] for the other groups, and oh my gosh! [It’s as if they were saying]: ‘I’m here; this is the worst thing in the world for me to have to do!’ There’s just such minimal interaction! I think the learning center could really improve the dynamics and the relationships with the kids.

In addition, the CLCD shared the following in one of the collaborative sessions:

CLCD: I would like to see my staff a little bit more involved. I don’t want them to feel like they get a break [when the prospective teachers come]. I would also like to do some sort of mini-training with them beforehand, so that they have the skill set so they don’t feel intimidated working with the [prospective teachers]. I think we have the opportunity to better shape their training and be more intentional.

Interestingly, the data CLCD collected through interviews revealed that the prevention specialists were more engaged than they appeared, but were unsure of how to get involved and were intently observing. One of the most exciting and promising data revealed that the prevention specialists were learning a lot from interacting in the small groups with the prospective teachers. The following quotes are a representative sample of what almost every prevention specialist shared:

Natasha: I learned more about how children think, like how they process things, what they pick up from what the teachers say, what they remember, and how they put that knowledge into other situations, and that just all depended on how the college students would present the knowledge to them and how well they could pick up on our students’ interests.

Dunya: When reading a book, you should [. . .] tell them like the title and [. . .] say what they think it will be about and so they can [. . .] predict things to have a better reading comprehension.

When CLCD presented this data at a collaborative session, the TEs, CLCD, and SR were all pleasantly surprised. The data indicated the prevention specialists were gaining a foundation for teaching DLLs

through their interaction with the prospective teachers as they taught lessons to the youth at the learning center. This realization prompted the researchers to encourage more interaction between them. The prospective teachers were not aware of how much their implementation of culturally sustaining practices had impacted the employees who spent the most amount of time with the youth during the summer program.

Implications for Practice and Conclusions

In this study, the educators moved more deeply into the questions posed at the beginning of this engagement. The Teacher Educators, Community Learning Center Director, and Student Researcher all provided significant data and acted as agents of change through their discussion of the data, interpretation, development of curriculum and programming, and self-reflections.

The data informed our practices in important, contextual ways. First, the Teacher Educators found ways to encourage critical reflection of the prospective teachers, adapt and improve their instruction, and recognize the value of communicative power. Second, the Community Learning Center Director gained a greater understanding of the needs of prevention specialists at the center and what she could do to encourage more meaningful interaction with the youth at the program through specific training. Third, the prospective teachers acknowledged that they benefited greatly from being able to apply the theory of sheltered instruction into actual practice with DLLs, and learned the importance of identifying and highlighting the DLLs' strengths. Finally, the prevention specialists, through their observations and participation in the lessons taught by the prospective teachers, understood the advantages of employing a student-engaged approach when teaching DLLs and the importance of drawing on the youths' background and lived experiences to enhance the learning experience.

The data also revealed some untoward consequences of our practice that were unjust (Kemmis et al., 2014). We found our practices sometimes limited the individual and collective self-determination of those involved in and affected by the practice. These untoward consequences were due to a lack of communication and unawareness of the prevention specialists' desires. In addition, the Teacher Educators needed to better equip the prospective teachers with tools to facilitate culturally sustaining pedagogies to challenge systems of inequity. In addition, their study would have benefitted from including the prevention specialists, prospective teachers and program youth in the analysis process. Their voices would have illuminated more specific examples of the inequity found within program and wider societies' educational structural systems.

This community project provides specific ideas and steps implemented to develop a well-functioning and reflective partnership between a community learning center and a local college. Examples of the specific praxis involved in such partnerships are often absent from the literature. As Torre, Fine, Stoudt, and Fox (2012) recommend, this project contested and expanded traditional views of expertise as well as recognized situated knowledges and systemic relationships. Community researchers claim that those participants who reflect on various positions within the research and contribute to the research team can collaboratively collect data, decide on methods, analyze, and determine ways to share data to transform practice and create change that positively impacts all involved. The shared research data contributes to this phenomenon by inviting an Student Researcher to illuminate her

classmates' needs through interviews, a Community Learning Center Director to inquire about the needs of the prevention specialists who interact most directly with the youth at the community learning center, and the TEs to construct spaces where all openly share and revise methods and curriculum to better address the needs of the prospective teachers who will ultimately have the most impact on DLLs in schools. Going forward, the researchers hope to involve more youth at the Community Learning Center and Student Researchers in college in the research process to disrupt notions of research belonging only to the academy. To better inform their practice "from within" they also hope to involve the prevention specialists in future critical discussions (Kemmis et al., 2014). All participants in social contexts need to have the opportunity, knowledge, and support to engage in complex critical dialogue to enact social transformation.

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