



The Role of the Community in Teacher Preparation: Exploring a Different Pathway to Becoming a Teacher

Gary Harfitt*

Faculty of Education, University of Hong Kong, Pokfulam, Hong Kong

Viewing learning as a social and cultural process the premise of this paper is that learner teachers' developing expertise should not only reside in the knowledge domains typically established by universities and schools. A crucial knowledge domain that is often overlooked by schools and teacher education institutes (TEIs) is the community beyond the walls of the school classroom and university lecture hall. This paper attends to the question of what constitutes an effective teacher in an era of rapid change and throws light on the process of becoming a twenty-first century educator through examining an innovative curriculum design which has made experiential learning (EL) mandatory for all novice teachers at a TEI in Hong Kong. This challenging curriculum initiative in teacher training has enabled a powerful synergy between the core functions of our teacher-training faculty and the wider community. I seek to present findings that point to real impact on student teachers' professional development—or their sense of becoming—and also in the way TEIs work within their local communities which are positioned as a powerful knowledge space and knowledge holder in the teacher education process. I will also show how community partners such as non-governmental organizations (NGOs) play a highly significant role in the development of beginning teachers and how they might even be seen as “co-educators” in the complex but compelling process of teacher preparation.

Keywords: teacher preparation, community, experiential learning, teacher education, third space

OPEN ACCESS

Edited by:

Cheryl Joyce Craig,
Texas A&M University Texarkana,
United States

Reviewed by:

Paul Betts,
University of Winnipeg, Canada
Edward R. Howe,
Thompson Rivers University, Canada

*Correspondence:

Gary Harfitt
gharfitt@hku.hk

Specialty section:

This article was submitted to
Teacher Education,
a section of the journal
Frontiers in Education

Received: 01 May 2018

Accepted: 24 July 2018

Published: 17 August 2018

Citation:

Harfitt G (2018) The Role of the
Community in Teacher Preparation:
Exploring a Different Pathway to
Becoming a Teacher.
Front. Educ. 3:64.
doi: 10.3389/feduc.2018.00064

INTRODUCTION

This paper outlines the establishment of a mandatory experiential learning (EL) block across multiple subject disciplines on teacher preparation programmes (undergraduate and postgraduate levels) at a leading teacher education institute (TEI) in Hong Kong. During this EL block novice teachers are placed in local and regional non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and work alongside community partners who are dedicated to serving their local society across a range of issues and causes including caring for the elderly, working with the disabled, promoting awareness of child rights, environmental and conservation issues and promoting areas such as science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) through work with different NGOs. This challenging curriculum initiative in teacher preparation has enabled a synergy between the core functions of a teacher-training faculty and the wider community that exists outside the institutional walls of the teacher education institute (TEI) (see Harfitt and Chow, 2018). The study reported here

is underpinned by a research question which seeks to unpack the perceptions of novice teachers toward the impact of a compulsory EL block on their teacher preparation programme. Through the study it may be possible to see how community-based EL projects allow novice teachers to develop specific skills and knowledge which are transferrable to their subsequent teaching practice.

The study presented here is set against a complex backdrop in the field of teacher education today and attends to the question of what constitutes an effective teacher in an era of globalization. It throws light on the process of becoming a twenty-first century teacher with education playing a pivotal role in shaping the skills required by today's modern workforce including critical thinking, creativity, problem-solving, and effective collaboration. Initial teacher education (ITE) has been critically examined and found to be wanting (Darling-Hammond, 2006); it is no longer enough to simply replicate what student educators previously learned in the theoretical sense (Kissock and Richardson, 2010). Many TEs have been challenged for educating their teacher candidates with a primary focus on academic development and for preparing new teachers with a "one size fits all" approach to teaching pupils in schools; this can result in students being ill-equipped to teach diverse communities (Sleeter, 2008). One of the reasons for this challenging educational landscape is the growing neoliberal focus on the commercialization and accountability of the teaching profession which has undoubtedly taken pre-eminence over more rigorous ways of preparing and sustaining a culturally competent, social-justice oriented teaching force for today's rapidly changing society.

This neoliberal outlook runs contrary to the many requirements and responsibilities placed on today's teachers. Beginning and early career teachers are expected to take a more proactive role in constructing new meaning through active experimentation and reflection (Supovitz et al., 2000). At the same time, they need to have a deeper understanding of their individual students and be able to connect to their students' backgrounds and communities (Payne and Zeichner, 2017). Responding to these calls for a transformation in the way we prepare teachers for the twenty-first century, a clear shift is emerging. The move away from a rigid focus on new teachers' development of technical skills toward the integration of more community-based knowledge in teacher education has been reported in different contexts (Haddix, 2015; Zeichner et al., 2015; Harfitt and Chow, 2018). In many ways this calls for teacher educators to attend to the quality of the "third space" (Zeichner, 2010) whereby they open up new knowledge spaces for their teacher candidates away from traditional preparation sites such as lecture halls and school classrooms.

However, this move is not so new when one considers the words of Maxine Greene who called for new teachers to exemplify "wide-awakeness" and to be fully attentive to the world around them and away from the narrow confines of the classroom walls so that they could be effective role models to their own students:

A crucial issue facing us is the need to find ways of educating young persons to such sensitivity and potency. As important it seems to me is a matter of wide-awakeness for their teachers. It is far too easy for teachers like other people to play their roles and do their

jobs without serious consideration of the good and the right. I am convinced that if teachers today are to initiate young people into an ethical existence they themselves must attend more fully than they normally have to their own lives and its requirements; they have to break with the mechanical life, to overcome their own submergence in the habitual, even in what they conceive to be virtuous and ask the 'why' with which learning and moral reasoning begin (Greene, 1978, p. 46).

This paper suggests that carefully structured community-based settings can provide invaluable knowledge that not only connects but also supplements traditional university and school partnerships and offers hybrid or "third" spaces with diverse expertise to novice teachers (Hartley, 2007; Brayko, 2013; Zeichner et al., 2015); in sum, it posits the community as a rich and powerful knowledge space, which is non-hierarchical and where academics, teacher educators, school heads, and teachers and communities bring together different expertise that are conducive to the development of teachers in the Twenty-first century (Hartley, 2007; Zeichner, 2010).

Experiential Learning as a Pedagogical Tool in Teacher Education

Experiential learning (EL), sometimes referred to as service-learning or civically-engaged learning, is rooted in Deweyian principles linking education and experience, community and civic engagement, reflection, and social transformation. It also stems from a constructivist view that students should play an active role to construct their knowledge in a wider context of a community (Furco, 2001). Bringle and Hatcher (1996) offer this succinct definition of service-learning:

"... a credit-bearing educational experience... that meets an identified community need, reflects on the service activity in such a way to gain further understanding of the course content, and increases a sense of civic responsibility" (Bringle and Hatcher, 1996, p. 222).

The benefits of service-learning and EL in the context of teacher preparation has been well documented (see, for example, Dolgon et al., 2017; Meidl and Sulentic Dowell, 2018). Engaging in this active learning process with problems that may not always be well defined, students develop a more nuanced understanding of knowledge (Silverman and Casazza, 2000). EL and service-learning can help novice teachers apply key concepts from their lecture halls and classes, learn to work in diverse and ill-defined contexts, challenge social norms and access expertise from community members. Boyle-Baise and Zevin (2009) describe service-learning as pedagogy which allows for the enactment of culturally-relevant practice. Structured EL also has been found to enhance students' personal growth, knowledge, skills and attitudes required for successful transition into twenty-first century workplaces (Coco, 2000; Elam and Spotts, 2004). In another study, Kuh (2008) examined the "high-impact educational practices" that define college success in terms of knowledge, abilities and personal attributes in a nationwide project. Six out of the 10 best practices were found to be "EL" by nature: Learning communities, undergraduate research,

diversity/global learning, community-based learning, internships and capstone projects. Kuh (2008) recommendation to increase college success is simple: each student should participate in at least two-high impact educational activities before graduation.

Further studies have highlighted more specific and tangible benefits of EL and service-learning within the context of teacher education. Celio et al. (2011) conducted a meta-analysis on the positive impact of EL and concluded that students demonstrated significant gains in attitudes toward self, toward school and learning, civic engagement, social skills, and even academic performance. Coker et al.'s (2017) data also showed how the depth of an EL program (or, in other words, the time students spend on EL activities) is directly linked to high order thinking and overall educational experiences, while the breadth of the program (namely the types of EL that students engaged in) is more associated with work effectiveness and relationships with other students. Haddix (2015) describes a writing methods course involving secondary English and literacy pre-service teachers where students engaged with the coordination of a community writing event for local middle and high school students, or urban youth. The study revealed how the development of teacher identity through engagement with the community helped to reduce deficit ideologies about learners from urban communities of color (Haddix, 2015, p. 65).

Some research on the impact of service-learning, however, has revealed negative outcomes. Seban (2013) study of pre-service teachers working with at risk children, for example, showed how the impact of the type of project on new teachers' conceptualization of service-learning could result in differential outcomes for the participants including limited and discrepant thinking about community needs and the source of social problems. Chang et al. (2011) looked at multicultural service-learning (MSL) and discovered that teacher educators cannot assume that their prospective teachers all gain in the same way from engaging with MSL; indeed, for some participants the study found that there was no increased commitment on the part of the novice teachers to want to teach marginalized communities. One conclusion drawn from this study was that teacher educators involved with these types of EL projects must be careful to mediate and structure students' experiences in ways that reflect the particular histories, contexts and backgrounds of the specific social groups the teacher candidates worked with on these experiential programmes.

That said, while EL and service-learning have been shown to impact in multiple ways on novice teachers, there is still a paucity of research on the ways that EL can promote better subject knowledge in novice teachers (Richmond, 2017). Harfitt and Chow (2018) found that their teacher candidates developed a stronger awareness of key concepts in teaching and subject knowledge including learner-centeredness, collaboration, lesson planning, and peer learning through EL with different community partners on their 1-year postgraduate teacher preparation courses. Interestingly, some of their findings aligned with the work of Seban (2013) and Chang et al. (2011) in that they also came across some novice teachers who experienced EL projects in a very negative manner and hints at the need for a

closer examination of how EL and service-learning courses are organized and implemented and also on how individual learning contexts in EL can effect learning outcomes both in positive and negative ways. When structured poorly, that service-learning can reinforce stereotypical views (Boyle-Baise, 1998). More research and dialog in this regard is required.

Positioning the Community as a Powerful Learning Space for Novice Teachers

As seen, service-learning has the potential to be both generative and transformative. Bringle and Hatcher (1996) note that service-learning is a powerful pedagogical tool which enhances the complex process of teacher preparation while at the same time promoting and raising awareness about local community needs. That said it is also an approach that is fraught with difficulties because of the multi-faceted nature of experiential and service-learning projects. For one thing, teacher educators who organize EL and service-learning opportunities for their novice teachers have to invest time and effort to organize out of class learning through careful and sustained interaction with faculty colleagues, teacher candidates, and community partners. Hou (2009) studied one faculty's curriculum in EL and reflected on salient challenges faced by academic staff and their students; some of these included time commitments and the issue of student anxiety when engaging with EL projects. Then, of course, there is the vital reflective and feedback component which underpins EL but which adds another layer of complexity for those involved (Kolb, 1984; Kuh, 2008). It is not surprising, then, that some service-learning projects are less rigorous or well-structured than others. Haddix (2015), for example, chooses to coin the phrase "community engagement" instead of service-learning because of the way that the latter term is "negatively coopted within university structures-as brief stints of community service experiences where students volunteer their time" (2015, p. 66). Certainly, the sustainability of projects and a faculty's long-standing relationship with community partners is a crucial aspect of effective service-learning; otherwise service-learning can become volunteerism or at worse a box-ticking curriculum exercise with little or no benefit for participants or stakeholders. This would represent a missed opportunity when the community has been seen as a context containing rich "funds of knowledge" provided by its members (Gonzalez et al., 2013).

This was one reason why at the outset of the curriculum initiative reported in this paper (which aims to promote a mandatory EL project for every novice teacher) we sought to position our community partners as equals in the learning experiences provided to our novice teachers. In this aim we were aligning with Zeichner et al. (2012) who have advocated for new hybrid spaces in university teacher education where academic, school-based, and community-based knowledge come together in less hierarchical and haphazard ways to support teacher learning. Neither schools nor universities should think they can educate teachers alone; even together, schools and universities cannot educate teachers well without accessing the expertise that exists in the communities of which they are part. Through the establishment of a compulsory EL block as part of our

teacher preparation courses, we are imagining ways to access and collaborate with the knowledge and expertise situated in three spaces relevant to TE—university or other provider, school, and community. The community outside of our TEI therefore aligns with the boundary-crossing “third space” (Zeichner, 2010) where teacher educators, student educators, and community partners come together to promote an enhanced form of situated learning for better teacher education.

The inclusion of the community in the cycle of teacher preparation also brings to the fore two important questions for the field. Firstly *who* are the knowledge holders for teacher education in our community? Secondly and closely connected to the former is the question of *where are the places* of teacher education on today’s educational landscape? (see Tatto et al., 2016; Clandinin and Husu, 2017; Payne and Zeichner, 2017). In this paper, community partners are positioned as “co-educators” or co-creators of knowledge as they bring in their respective expertise alongside teacher educators. They can perform as role-models for student educators by demonstrating how formally learned educational theories and practices can be integrated through their extensive community work (Chang, 2015). Regarding the places of teacher education today it should be noted that while academic knowledge in teacher education is often associated with TEIs and practical knowledge is often attributed to schools, the contextualized knowledge of children, issues of diversity, culture, and learning reside, in part, in communities.

The benefits of boundary crossings with local communities have been well documented in the literature (Zeichner, 2012; Brayko, 2013; Harfitt and Chow, 2018). For example, through sustained engagement with community projects novice teachers have the chance to mature as “community teachers” who possess contextual knowledge of the community and learn to work more effectively with children and families of diverse backgrounds (Murrell, 2001). They can develop a more sophisticated understanding of diversity which, again, might be hard to actualize through more traditional lecture, teacher-led formats in universities or schools; tried and tested settings like teaching practicum schools do not always grant novice teachers access or exposure to the full cultural context of families and communities (McDonald et al., 2013). There are still some gaps in the literature however, and as mentioned earlier there is an urgent need to throw light on the question of whether a community-based teacher preparation model actually leads to tangible and observable benefits in terms of subject matter teaching skills (Richmond, 2017). Teacher candidates can learn particular sets of knowledge and skills within university classrooms and schools, but there are surely other sets of knowledge and skills that can only be found in the community outside. So what do these skill and knowledge sets look like and how do they inform teacher education?

The focus of this paper is not to present these community placements as an alternative to teaching practicum (or TP) which is generally acknowledged as *the* field experience in teacher preparation models. The importance of TP in shaping the pedagogies novice teachers need at the start of their teaching careers should never be underestimated. As Murray

(2017) has noted, teacher educators, too, are central to the field of teacher education and play the role of expert guides throughout life cycle of teachers. Their work with novice teachers in TEIs is aimed at role modeling good professional practice and should complement the supervisory role of mentor teachers who are often full-time teachers in schools and who work alongside novice teachers during TP. The premise of this paper, then, is not to dismiss the benefits of school-based mentoring and training for novice teachers learning their profession, but that off-campus learning, namely community-based placements for novice teachers presents a fundamental and complementary layer of learning that supports the work of teacher educators and school-based teacher mentors in developing and cultivating key attributes that teachers of the Twenty-first century need including specific subject content skills.

CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

This study stems from a TEI in Hong Kong that has recently made EL a *mandatory* component of a revised postgraduate diploma in education course (1-year in length) and on undergraduate teacher preparation courses. In late 2015 a small Experiential Learning team was established in the Faculty of Education with the responsibility for building an infrastructure for candidate teachers to engage with community-based learning projects. These projects were established through a series of meetings with different NGOs and community partners in Hong Kong and the region. Since that date links have been forged with more than 30 local NGOs and community partners in Hong Kong and South East Asia including some global advocates of social justice and education. These include: World Vision (HK), UNICEF (HK), OXFAM (HK), World Wildlife Fund or WWF (HK), Asia’s largest local marine theme park (HK Ocean Park), HK Science and Technology Park (HKSTP), and a range of Social Services groups in Hong Kong. We also draw on the expertise and knowledge residing in local schools and centers promoting an “alternative” education system for their students. Novice teachers can also nominate their own EL projects based on connections they might have with NGOs and similar organizations. This opens the door to new boundary crossings and learning opportunities for other students. More than 1000 teacher candidates from undergraduate (UG) and postgraduate diploma in education (PGDE) preparation courses have undertaken these projects since 2016 and all of our novice teachers are given the chance to work in inter-disciplinary teams under the supervision of local and regional NGOs, and then to work on community-based tasks closely linked to education and their dynamic role as educators. The EL projects are all credit bearing, carefully structured, curricula-based and linked to specific course goals and learning outcomes (but do not carry grades as we believe that participation in community-based projects should be motivated intrinsically and not by extrinsic grades or marks). In many ways, the projects are following Haddix’s (2015) example of sustained community engagement.

The revised curriculum places a heavier emphasis on the integration of theory and practice by combining school experience (where novice teachers spend 1 day a week in schools shadowing teachers and immersing in the culture of a school), a compulsory EL block of around 6 weeks and then an 8-week teaching practicum (TP) inter-connected by university-based classes and lectures. Underpinning the programme are eight concepts that are seen to encapsulate the qualities of an effective twenty-first century educator (see Bridges et al., 2018) and these concepts are as follows:

- *A passionate and caring facilitator* who nurtures all students and embraces diversity in the classroom;
- *An adaptive, creative, critical thinker and leader* who is committed to curriculum leadership;
- *A contextually-sensitive, socially-engaged and policy-aware educator* who strives for equity and social justice in their work;
- *A forward-thinking, ethical and reflective practitioner* who integrates theory with practice for student learning;
- *An innovative teacher* who is confident in disciplinary and pedagogical knowledge and who is comfortable with flexible inter-disciplinary “knowledges” in a technology infused, information-rich world;
- *A professional teacher* who is locally prepared and ready to serve Hong Kong but who is also internationally mobile and globally recognized;
- *A lifelong learner* with an inquiry-oriented vision of education; and,
- *A proactive and engaged collaborator* who is willing and able to contribute toward productive change.

These concepts are aimed at inculcating in our graduates a distinctive professional and personal identity, both locally and globally. Through the compulsory EL block, it is hoped that the learning processes experienced by each student will contribute to the actualization of these concepts and provide an important learning strand which connects and reinforces other parts of the curriculum. Apart from trying to foster in novice teachers creativity and passion, there is a determination, too, to nurture socially engaged and policy-aware educators who are all lifelong learners.

A summary of what the novice teachers did during their EL placements might help to contextualize the learning processes observed in this curriculum initiative. **Table 1** outlines five of the EL projects embedded into the curriculum and in these examples it can be seen how the projects are related to the teacher candidates’ learning and professional development. All projects take place in community settings and our community partners work with the Experiential Learning team which was set up at the TEI to support student learning in this way.

The overarching research question underpinning this study aims at investigating the perceptions of novice teachers toward the impact of a compulsory EL block on a teacher preparation programme. In such a way it is possible to see how community-based EL projects might allow novice teachers to develop specific skills and knowledge which will accompany them to their teaching practice period and then into their future careers as teachers.

METHODOLOGY

A qualitative methodology was adopted to address the above research question in order to obtain a more nuanced perspective of novice teachers’ experiences of a compulsory EL component in their teacher preparation programme. Through this approach it was possible to unpack some of the “unnoticed aspects of human life and learning” (Packer, 2010) and to generate a theory of human experience (Corbin and Strauss, 2015), both highly relevant to the effective implementation of EL. The study drew on perceptual data to study the experiences of 136 teacher candidates engaged in this particular EL project across two full academic years (2016–2018). Their experiences were organized around their participation in their respective EL projects and at different times; before the EL started, in the middle of the EL block and once more after the EL project had been completed. As one of the team members who visited all the students during their EL project and recognizing that grounded theory is a socially constructed process, the contextual influence from my own involvement is embedded in the analysis which follows (Clarke, 2005).

Participants

The beginning teacher participants from this study stemmed from two preparatory programmes, the 1-year postgraduate diploma in education (PGDE) and the 5 year double degree in Education and another major subject. Novice teachers were aged between 20 and 51 years of age and the majority of them were from Hong Kong and nearly all ethnically Chinese. Most were female which reflects the make-up the teaching profession in Hong Kong. A small percentage of students came from other countries including Canada, Korea, Thailand, Australia, and Japan. The teacher candidates in the PGDE programme spanned multiple subject disciplines including English Language, Chinese Language, Early Childhood Education (ECE), Economics, Mathematics, Liberal Studies, Science (Biology, Chemistry and Physics), and Geography. The undergraduate students also came from different majors as there are double degrees in Education and Arts (English and Chinese Language), Science and Social Science. These EL courses were initiated in Education, but were also open to students from other Faculties. Because students were encouraged to choose their own EL project from the range of projects provided by the Faculty, this ensured that many projects were inter-disciplinary in nature meaning that projects included students from different subject disciplines. This arrangement was a positive, but unplanned outcome and it transpired that the EL block across the teacher preparation programmes was one of the only times that students from across the spectrum of subjects worked with each other on the same task.

Data Collection

Our novice teachers were encouraged to write monthly journals and post written reflections to an online learning platform throughout the academic year. This allowed me to access novice teachers’ perceptions at different stages of the learning process: before the project, during the project, and once more a short time after the project had finished. Reflective practice in professions

TABLE 1 | Examples of community-based projects taken by novice teachers.

Nature of the community partner	Learning Outcomes and deliverables	Content knowledge	Pedagogical knowledge
1. A marine theme park that promotes education and conservation.	Novice teachers identify an endangered species in the park, design and implement a pop-up narration to engage Park visitors in promoting conservation.	Conservation and understanding more about endangered species and environmental issues.	Engaging local and overseas visitors through questioning skills and interaction via a pop-up narrative style presentation on different conservation themes in the Park.
2. A science and technology NGO that promotes STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) to local schools and organizations.	Novice teachers are asked to design and lead science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) workshops for primary and secondary schools visiting the NGO.	STEM Education.	Designing and conducting workshops based around specific aims and objectives relevant to the workshops and teachers'/schools' needs.
3. An NGO that works with local primary schools to promote "learning by doing" (a contrast to the examination-oriented local curriculum that dominates the school system in Hong Kong).	Novice teachers design workshops for primary school students based on the concept of "learning by doing" to engage them in kinesthetic learning activities out of the classroom (e.g., building robots, designing sports and engaging in cross-cultural activities to promote awareness of customs and traditions).	Learning by doing teaching approach and creativity.	Activity-based pedagogical approach "learning by doing."
4. An NGO that raises awareness on the issue of child rights	Novice teachers work with the NGO to research different topics on child rights and then design workshops and talks for local secondary schools.	Lesson planning and research on child rights and social issues related to children in Hong Kong and elsewhere.	Engaging with local secondary school students to disseminate talks and interactive workshops in schools.
5. An NGO that provides food and shelter for the homeless and orphans.	Novice teachers work with community partners from the NGO to prepare reading sessions and activities for the homeless and orphans.	Understanding more about the issue of homelessness and related social issues in Hong Kong.	Reading aloud to young children and engaging children and adults in group activities.

such as teaching is well recognized and long established (see, for example, Schon, 1983; Cochran-Smith and Lytle, 1999). Another important data source was the teacher candidates' feedback later in the academic year during their TP block. It was felt that this would provide for a more nuanced and critical response because by that time in the academic year participants in the study might be better able to recognize and understand key differences and commonalities between their practices in EL and subsequent TP in local schools. This was conducted partly through written feedback and partly through semi-structured interviews.

Reflective Writing

From the start of this EL initiative reflection became an integral part of the novice teachers' learning process. Our teacher candidates were also encouraged to exemplify their learning experiences through different media including the use of moving images, photos, drawings, letters, and even poems. This formative approach created the opportunity to shine a light on the process of change in novice teachers' learning and perceptions of EL. The following reflective prompts were given to the novice teachers in advance (but most chose to form their own):

1. Describe some of the successes and challenges you faced when learning in a different context to the university (meaning in your NGO or community partner);
2. Describe your significant learning over the duration of the project and your studies;

3. How can your learning experiences during the EL block be transferred to your teaching?

Semi-structured Focus-Group Interviews

Semi-structured interviews are a well-regarded approach in qualitative research (Packer, 2010) and interviews allow participants to discuss aspects of their experiences in an open and supportive environment and are a "very good way of accessing people's perceptions, meanings, definitions of situations, and construction of reality" (Punch, 2009, p. 144). A total of 26 focus-group interviews were conducted with participants and most interviews lasted between 30 and 60 min. Teacher candidates could select their own groupings (as mentioned above, many projects were inter-disciplinary and this was reflected in the composition of interview groups) and medium of language was English for all students (the TEI in the study teaches all of its subjects through English with the exception of Chinese language). Dyad groups (two participants) and triad (three participants) groups were employed; these allowed for more interactions between participants (Brinkman and Kvale, 2015).

Data Analysis

All interviews were transcribed verbatim and participants' names were removed. The first layer of analysis was provided through reading and re-reading the reflective journal entries along

with the focus-group interview transcriptions. This allowed for emerging and recurring themes to be identified. Data collection and analysis followed a grounded theory approach which facilitated the emergence of patterns and which was not aimed at testing any hypothesis against the data (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). Interview transcripts, reflective journals, and salient themes also underwent an iterative process of data reduction and verification (Miles and Huberman, 1994). Such a process ensured that the novice teachers' experience could be accurately reflected.

The creation of a coding system is in practice a form of theory building, as relationships are identified or established in the data, giving new meanings at a level beyond the surface of the words. Each line of the reflective journal and interview data was coded by labeling or categorizing the topic or phenomenon that was being described; this foregrounded the procedure of arranging the open codes which were related to each other. The creation of a coding system offers new meanings at a level beyond the surface of the words and forms organized constructions (Holliday, 2007). Three stages of data coding were adopted: open, axial, and selective coding (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). The open coding of responses was carried out by reading and analyzing the written reflections and the interview transcripts. This data was then reviewed once more to see if any relationships could be identified between the categories.

The grounded theory approach facilitated the inductive development of themes from the raw data (Corbin and Strauss, 2015). A number of salient themes across the participants emerged: (1) heightened sensitivity to learner-centeredness and attentiveness to students' needs; (2) pedagogical development, including lesson planning and subject knowledge; and (3) role modeling and co-constructing knowledge through collaboration, peer support, and mentoring from the community partners.

Strauss and Corbin (1998) tell us that selective coding leads to the identification of a core category that has "analytic power" and is able to "pull the other categories together to form an explanatory whole" (1998, p. 146). In the analysis of written reflections and interview data, the central category was very much the issue of learner-centeredness and attentiveness to students' needs.

Ethics Statement

Collecting qualitative perceptual data through eliciting students' experiences depends on strong levels of rapport between researchers and participants. Examining projects in which this researcher was involved brought challenges and the threat of potential bias. Nevertheless, I believe that the amount of time spent on these EL projects and the rapport which was developed with community stakeholders provides the groundwork for a detailed account of the learning that took place on these EL projects. This study was reviewed and approved by the Faculty Research Ethics Committee of the University of Hong Kong. All subjects (novice teachers, academic colleagues, and community partners) gave their written informed consent in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki. Teacher candidates' names have been removed at their request and respondent validity was ensured

by a process of member checking with all the participants in the study.

RESULTS

Data analysis yielded 51 units of data and these were further re-organized into three main categories: "learner-centeredness and attention to students' needs," "pedagogical development," and "role modeling." The dominant category identified was learner-centeredness and attention to students' needs. Each category was further divided into properties and characteristics (see **Table 2**).

Learner-Centeredness and Attentiveness to Students' Needs

The notion of learner-centeredness and attentiveness to students' needs was a dominant theme that emerged across the dataset. Our teacher candidates consistently made reference to the importance of the learner through their EL work even though many EL projects organized for the novice teachers were not school-based and did not involve working with young learners. In some cases, for example, our novice teachers worked with the elderly in social service centers and adults in a marine theme park (tourists as well as locals). In the following interview extract a student teacher talks about her growing awareness of the learners' needs through EL with an elderly center in the middle of Hong Kong:

When I worked with my mentor she showed me that it was important to get to know all the old people who used the centre. She knew them all by name and could tell me everything about them, even small details about where they lived and what they used to do in their jobs. She cared about these people and they were all important to her. After that I started to talk more with the elderly residents who visited the centre every day. They were so pleased that someone was showing an interest in them. I joined the PGDE programme to learn to teach and I guess I used to think teaching was about me, but it's much more complicated than that. It's about the students and I have to focus on their needs first. That's a big lesson for me. If I want to help my students I need to take an interest in them and their learning first. They are more important than me. (Novice teacher placed at a social services group attending to elderly citizens in Hong Kong)

In this extract there is an obvious concern on the part of the student teacher to get to know the elderly citizens she was working alongside during her 6-week placement at the center. We can also detect a strong sense of empathy in her reflection as she made the connection between building a rapport with her future school students and the way she was trying to connect to the elderly residents in her EL work. Another student teacher who traveled to Delhi, India, for his EL project talked about the importance of not making assumptions about students and about classrooms in general:

I learned many things on this trip but I think the main conclusion I have drawn is not to make assumptions about my students. I had such a narrow view of India and the way that students learn here, but I was so wrong. I think teachers, too, often make rash judgments about their classes and schools—I mean whether some students are

TABLE 2 | Overview of themes and codes.

Theme	Code	Sample quote
1. Learner- centeredness and attention to students' needs	Understanding teaching and learning from the students' perspectives and attending to learner diversity.	<i>I used to think teaching was about me, but it's much more complicated than that. It's about the students and I have to focus on their needs first.</i>
2. Pedagogical development	Development of subject knowledge, classroom skills and lesson planning skills.	<i>I learned so much more than I thought I would about teaching skills like giving instructions and the importance of clear objectives at the start of any task or activity. This has helped me in my own classes at school.</i>
3. Role modeling	Mentoring from collaboration with community partners and peers.	<i>My mentor (at the NGO) has so much passion for what he does every day and for what he believes in. It made me realize just how important commitment is in any career but especially in teaching and working with young minds.</i>

bright or lazy or hardworking—but it's not as easy as that. It's not what's on the surface but what's inside the students and the teachers. It's what is inside me that will make me the best teacher I can be. It's too easy to make quick assumptions but these are often wrong and they come about because we can't take the time to learn about our students and our teaching contexts in detail. I saw no luxuries in India but I saw so much more than that and that's what I will take into my future classrooms—it's what's inside that counts. (Novice teacher placed in a social services group working with a secondary school in Delhi, India).

This comment from the student teacher reveals greater sensitivity toward the wider world, cultural differences and heightened awareness of “self” as well as attending to the dangers of labeling students and schools based on assumptions. It also aligns with Green's (1978) call for teachers to be demonstrate wide-awakeness to the world around them and attends to Sleeter's (2008) point about novice teachers needing to learn about the diversity that exists in the wider community. It is also possible to see evidence of deep personal reflection in these comments as teacher candidates engage with their local communities and learn more about the people and issues which make up that community (Payne and Zeichner, 2017). For example, another student shared a similar point about the importance of “self” in motivating learners and this reflection highlights the significance of facilitation in a learner-centered environment:

My role as the teacher has a big influence on my students' learning. I can't just hope that the students behave and do what I ask in class. I have to demonstrate what it means to be a role model and I have to lead even though I'm not comfortable with that role yet. But I have learned that simply telling students what to do only gets you so far and a few times I was ignored completely. I have learned that good classroom management and successful tasks are about respecting the students and working with them—talking with them and not simply talking at them. In this project I have been impressed by the way that the school trusts the students and involves them in curriculum planning and lesson design. It means the students are part of the process which is not always the case in the regular school system. When students are engaged and feel empowered they do not create difficulties for the teacher in class. I am learning to take risks and believe in my students' voice more. (Novice teacher placed in a primary school which promoted a 'Learning by Doing' curriculum)

In this extract we can also see emerging evidence of a student teacher being able to transfer skills from her EL project promoting a more creative school-based curriculum to her future career in the classroom. In this particular project the pupils spent each afternoon “doing” class projects such as sports, artwork, design, field trips, drama sessions, and musical projects. These student-led activities complement the “regular” curriculum which is taught in the morning sessions at the innovative school. It is interesting to see the student teacher embracing the student voice and coming to a new understanding that her students should be at the heart of the learning process. The comment about taking more risks also points to a young teacher developing in confidence in her own pedagogical awareness.

Pedagogical Development

The theme of pedagogical development was mentioned earlier in this article when it was shown that there is very little literature on how EL and service-learning projects can actually promote greater awareness of teaching skills and in particular subject knowledge (Richmond, 2017). In the context of this paper where a mandatory EL block was embedded in to a teacher preparation course it was imperative to try and establish whether there were actually any transferrable skills from the EL block to the novice teachers' practicum (which took place about 2 months after the EL block finished). In the previous section we saw some examples of teacher candidates talking about taking more risks and learning not to make assumptions about their learners, but the following extract from our interviews reveals some important and more tangible benefits which relate directly to the theme of pedagogical development in our novice teachers:

Honestly speaking when I chose to go to Ocean Park (a marine theme park) to do my EL block I thought it would be fun more than anything. It's such an iconic place in Hong Kong and has been part of our culture so to go behind the scenes was an amazing opportunity to me. Very quickly I was working with trainers and biologists who were so good at presenting information to the public in an interesting way and they worked so hard to get their conservation messages across. I observed them working with groups of visitors, school groups and tourists and I think I learned so much more than I thought I would about teaching skills like giving instructions and the importance of clear objectives at the start of any task or activity. This has helped me in my own classes at school.

I realize the importance of communication and how crucial it is to hold people's attention. I know there is a lot of similarity between what the staff at the Park does and what teachers do in schools. (Novice teacher placed at HK Ocean Park).

This particular student teacher was actually an English language major working alongside marine biologists at a marine park. He acquired hands-on experience of learning subject matter completely detached from his own subject discipline and spent his EL block working in the polar section of the park, meaning that he needed to develop a specialized knowledge of penguins, seals and walrus. This student worked with Park staff to develop an educational workshop for visiting primary school students on the subject of raising awareness about threats to penguins and seals, a topic he had no prior knowledge of before taking this EL project. His awareness of how communication is so important in obtaining and then holding the public's attention was a clear parallel with what teachers also need to do. His comments about the importance of clarity when giving instructions and objectives also shows pedagogical awareness developing in a very different context to the usual "learning" environment of classrooms and lecture rooms. The next extract continues this theme of pedagogical awareness:

What was really surprising was how I learned questioning skills by running a workshop for a group of elderly residents on financial planning. On our course at university we learn about lesson planning and catering for diversity and this relates to the classroom we are doing our teaching in. But when I ran a presentation for some elderly residents I saw all these issues come to life as well. I realized I needed to keep the group (of elderly residents in the social services centre) on task and that some activities worked better than others. One old man wanted to read from the articles but another participant wanted to talk about the issues more because he didn't like reading. I also learned that I needed to elicit their prior knowledge before I could introduce any materials and they actually knew more than I expected when I asked them about their experiences with money and saving. I also experienced how to use different types of questions and how difficult it was to give feedback that encouraged participation and let me check their understanding. (Novice teacher placed at a social services group attending to elderly citizens in Hong Kong)

In this extract the student teacher, who was an Economics major, was organizing workshops for elderly residents on effective financial planning. His comments about drawing on the participants' prior knowledge, the challenges inherent in questioning and offering constructive feedback go to the heart of what it means to be an effective teacher and show how the EL block also complemented and reinforced the pedagogical input being given at the university.

Role Modeling

Another consistent theme which emerged from the data was role modeling. In sum, the novice teachers saw mentors and staff from NGOs as role models and learned from their own commitment toward a social issue or cause as well as from their sense of professionalism. The next novice teacher's comment summarizes this nicely:

My mentor (at the NGO) has so much passion for what he does every day and for what he believes in. It made me realize just how important commitment is in any career, but especially in teaching and working with young minds. Every day my mentor would remind me how lucky we are to be helping other people and remind his colleagues of their responsibility to offer support to the underprivileged. I have met some teachers with a passion for what they do, but not all teachers have so much dedication I feel. When we work with young people in schools we have to show why it's important to learn and how much we love our own subject. I hope I can carry some of my mentor's passion with me to my teaching practicum. (Novice teacher placed at an NGO that was set up to promote children's' rights in HK and Asia)

In this reflection we see how EL can connect impressionable novice teachers with role models from entirely different fields to their own and provide these teachers with more detailed knowledge of the communities that they are going to serve 1 day (Payne and Zeichner, 2017). It is normal for teacher candidates to be mentored by teacher educators and more experienced teachers when they embark on their teaching practicum (TP), but in the above example we see a student teacher reflecting on the qualities teachers should possess and comparing them with the mentor's lived example in the everyday work done by this particular NGO. It is interesting, too, that the student teacher identifies "passion" and "dedication" as two relatively simple qualities which can mean so much in terms of teaching and being an effective educator as she projects her own imagined teaching philosophy forwards. Other students on our preparation courses talked about acquiring important skills from their community partner mentors:

My mentor was there every day giving me advice and encouraging me to try new things in my work with the community partner. She never stopped supporting me and was always happy to answer my questions. I felt that I had someone who was pushing me in the most supportive way and who never made any judgments when I didn't do so well. She was also so quick to tell me about the organization and I felt part of the community. If ever I become a mentor to a student teacher I will try to be the same as my mentor was to me. (Novice teacher placed at HK Ocean Park)

In the above example we can see one of the unseen benefits of the EL projects on the teacher preparation programmes. Often, our novice teachers come to their initial teacher education (ITE) courses with very little experience of teaching or mentoring and an embodied personal practical knowledge (Connelly and Clandinin, 1985) where theories about diversity are not easily internalized (Mills and Ballantyne, 2010). Teaching is a learning profession after all, and knowledge making is surely the work of teachers learning; in this case the student teacher has experienced powerful mentoring at first hand, but not in the traditional context of a school or a university, but instead in a marine theme park. The novice teacher's stated desire to 1 day become a mentor like the one she met at the Park is important evidence that effective educators do not always reside in the twin knowledge domains of schools and universities. Such a comment helps to address the question posed earlier about who are the teacher

educators today and where the places of teacher education are on today's educational landscape.

Our novice teachers were also seen to learn from their own peers and in the third extract below related to this theme of role-modeling it can be seen that the inter-disciplinary nature of the projects allowed novice teachers to see each other as intellectual resources and to experience the importance of collaboration.

The four of us came from different disciplines but we all brought something to the project and we all contributed. I learnt so much about other disciplines and how we can integrate and combine our different strengths. It was also fascinating to observe my peers running the workshops as we are all different people with different approaches. But I think I learned more from our collaboration than from my own efforts. (Novice teacher placed at a local Science and Technology Park in Hong Kong)

At university, the effectiveness of professional collaboration among teachers is a point reinforced across programmes and courses, but the above comment demonstrates how our teacher candidates also learnt from each other even though in this case they were all from different subject disciplines. It is hoped that such an experience might encourage these novice teachers to take the initiative to work with other peers when they start their teaching practicum and then move full-time into teaching in the near future.

Discrepant Voices

These positive reflections notwithstanding, it should be stressed that there were discrepant voices, or counter-stories, to the positive views outlined earlier on the mandatory EL block and which echo previous studies of the effect of service-learning on novice teachers (Chang et al., 2011; Seban, 2013). A small, but a very vocal, group of teacher candidates argued throughout the year that the EL block was unnecessary and should be removed from the curriculum based on the embodied belief that teachers can only learn to teach by being placed in a classroom or school. The following comments from two novice teachers who undertook EL projects summarizes this sense of dissonance well. The first comes from a teacher candidate who participated in a project set in Cambodia:

I appreciated the trip and the work that we did but my honest answer to whether it helped me to become a teacher is definitely negative. Cambodia is Cambodia and Hong Kong is Hong Kong. What can I learn there that will help me here? To teach I need to have more classroom practice here...I came here to learn to teach not to do charity or service work. I believe it has very little connection to my future career and I think the EL block wastes valuable time which should be spent in schools learning from teachers and observing lessons. (Novice teacher placed in an NGO working in Cambodia)

Another two novice teachers who worked in Hong Kong queried the value of EL in the process of becoming a teacher, and again stressed the point that teachers can only develop personally and professionally through more pedagogical practice:

I am training to be a teacher but for 6 weeks I was working in an office in an NGO. Teachers need to teach in order to develop professionally and I think the EL block should be scrapped and replaced with more classroom practice in schools and at university. We should be doing microteaching and learning about classroom life not working in an office. (Novice teacher placed in an NGO engaged with local social services in Hong Kong)

I am sorry to say this, but I don't think I learned anything from my EL block which will help me in my teaching career. I was happy to work with some very passionate people who care about their work but I am not going to work in a marine park or teach what I have learned here. I want to be a teacher and I think the last 6 weeks was a waste of my time. Next year you should replace EL with another teaching practicum. (Novice teacher placed at HK Ocean Park)

These comments, though disappointing to read at first, were subsequently found to be just as important as the more positive feedback we received on the EL initiative. For one thing this type of feedback demonstrates that no curriculum initiative can hope to be completely successful or welcome and showed that more work was required, a point which will be developed further in the discussion section of this paper.

DISCUSSION

The focus of this research paper was to shine a light on how compulsory experiential learning (EL) courses integrated into teacher preparation programmes are perceived by participants. The overarching research question which triggered this study sought to investigate the perceptions of novice teachers toward the impact of EL on their development as teachers. The aim of the study was to see how community-based EL projects might allow teacher candidates to develop skills and knowledge which might accompany them to their teaching practicum and then into their professional lives as teachers. Insights gleaned from this study add to our deepening understanding of what the benefits of EL projects might look like (Root and Swick, 2001) and how they can be developed further. Findings also marry with Richmond's (2017) view that by engaging with community partners and NGOs who are so dedicated to the issues and concerns of their respective community members, TEIs will be better placed to prepare teachers for these specific contexts.

This study has demonstrated how community partnerships are at the heart of effective EL and service-learning. Findings point to shared responsibilities and reciprocal benefits for community partners, teacher candidates and faculty staff. A number of benefits can be gleaned from the study. Firstly, it is possible to argue that through this careful and extensive articulation of Zeichner (2012) "third space" this curriculum initiative has promoted a very meaningful and sustainable community capacity which provides novice teachers with an innovative and alternative pathway to their teaching careers; one that complements the teaching practicum schools and university classrooms that typically provide the foundation for novice teachers' training and preparation. Findings from the study also align with previous research which has shown that students should play an active role in constructing their knowledge within the broader context of a community (Furco, 2001)

and that when EL is carefully structured and organized then it can have a positive impact on students' personal growth, knowledge, skills and attitudes that are all deemed necessary for work in the modern workplace and world (Coco, 2000; Kuh, 2008). Significantly, in many of the comments from the teacher candidates in this research paper it is possible to detect traces of Greene's notion of "wide awakeness" (1978) to the world around them: in the students' sense of awakening on the overseas trips to India and his reflection on the dangers of making assumptions, in the novice teacher's awareness and sensitivity to her mentor's passion and commitment to social causes and in another student's realization that building rapport with elderly residents in a social services center allowed the teacher candidate to appreciate and understand their lives more. Novice teachers worked together on EL projects to co-construct workshops, field trips, materials and talks often with peers from completely different disciplines, something which did not happen on other aspects of the programme where students study courses that are carefully organized around certain subjects and disciplines.

Another salient finding came through the voice of the community partners with their comments on how our teacher candidates had contributed to the work and mission of the NGO. This reciprocity was an impressive outcome for both parties, namely the TEI and the community partners and supports the view of Zeichner et al. (2015) who advocated for the creation of new hybrid spaces in teacher preparation where academic, school-based, and community-based knowledge are connected, but in less hierarchical or top-down ways compared with the more traditional teaching practicum models of novice teachers being mentored in schools by experienced and senior educators.

That said the most significant outcome of the initiative to make EL a compulsory part of our teacher preparation programmes can be found in the way novice teachers described the teaching skills that they gleaned from their engagement with different NGOs. Aforementioned comments from our teacher candidates point to an increased awareness of learning and learners through their EL projects and a high degree of subject knowledge too, something missing from the existing literature on EL and service-learning initiatives (Richmond, 2017). In some of the earlier extracts it was noteworthy how novice teachers described their increased sensitivity toward questioning, giving instructions and setting objectives, all crucial skills teachers need to be effective in the classroom. Other transferrable skills seen as highly relevant to the teaching profession included social awareness, risk-taking and passion in their work. Personal and professional qualities came to the fore and could be seen in the way teacher candidates started to see teaching as being more about their learners than about themselves; something not always associated with new and inexperienced teachers who might focus more on teaching their lesson plans or textbooks rather than their students. But it is important to remember that these transferrable skills and mature perceptions about teaching did not stem from time spent in school settings but in community-based projects. The degree of trust and responsibility afforded to our novice teachers by these host NGOs was also illuminating with some novice teachers reporting that they were given more

responsibility and shown more attention during their EL block than during their teaching practicum.

The positioning of these community partners as "co-educators" in the development of our teacher candidates is not an exaggeration when we consider the comments made on some of the mentors who worked alongside the teacher candidates during these EL projects. These community partners from a range of NGOs were clearly seen as role models who were able to provide a unique type of expertise along the way. In the long and complex process of teacher acculturation there is surely a need for all teachers to keep learning; learning through their practice and from collaborating with peers. What this research paper has shown is that those peers do not necessarily have to be fellow teachers or educators. It is quite possible that role models from outside the traditional domains of teacher education can also articulate and develop the teaching philosophies and identities of our young teachers-to-be. This goes some way to answering the question about who are the teacher educators in today's complicated and tangled world (Clandinin and Husu, 2017). The boundary crossings reported in this paper demonstrate some rich and powerful relationships forged in the local community and away from schools and universities, but which have long-term benefits for novice teachers. More research is most definitely needed on how EL and community-based learning projects can complement teacher education practices and processes. Nevertheless, findings from this study show just how much potential there can be when building capacity between universities and community partners or NGOs (Payne and Zeichner, 2017).

That said there have to be tensions as there are in every curriculum reform, and I will now share some of these in the final section of this research paper. One of the most challenging aspects of the initiative was in fact its mandatory nature. It is not an exaggeration to say that while some novice teachers saw these situated learning opportunities as a chance to develop a new understanding of a community-based issue others saw it as an unwanted and unnecessary burden. These teacher candidates were quite vocal in their resistance to EL because their embodied belief about teacher preparation was that it should only occur in university lecture rooms and school classrooms. In their thinking teachers only learn to teach in classrooms; to these educators-to-be, teaching was about honing technical skills and there was little or no need for personal development when subject knowledge and sustained classroom practice constituted everything in their thinking. Such counter stories should not receive a superficial response. The negative responses from our participants suggest a critical position which requires unpacking. For a start, a better understanding of the contextual factors of EL is called for; teacher educators working with community members must learn to highlight the importance of community-based learning in TE and how the two are so intricately linked. Another solution would be to undergo a process of community mapping where faculty staff in TEIs develop a vision so that the needs of the local community (as seen through the eyes of NGOs) are embedded into pre-service teacher preparation courses at faculty and programme levels. There is also a need to work harder to forge more effective partnerships with NGOs and community partners so that novice

teachers and community members have a shared knowledge of common goals, communication strategies and measurable impacts. As previous studies have shown (Chang et al., 2011; Seban, 2013; Harfitt and Chow, 2018) it is wrong to assume that all students experience EL projects in the same way and so further mediation is needed.

This was reinforced by some Faculty colleagues who also struggled to see the links between community-based projects and their novice teachers' preparation for a career in the classroom. To some colleagues the compulsory block for EL was taking valuable time away from "real teaching" in the lecture rooms and halls. Worryingly, some school heads and mentors supported this view with one school leader arguing that his school's sole responsibility was to secure the highest possible academic grades for his pupils and that it was not to serve the community or even the development of novice teachers. This reflects the differences that exist in the educational community on how best to prepare tomorrow's teachers. Some discrepant cases are bound to occur in an initiative of this scale and it is therefore important to consider them carefully. It is imperative to keep exploring and unpacking the impact of EL on teacher candidates and on the community (of which teachers and their students are surely a part). A stronger research base needs to demonstrate that EL projects such as the ones described in this paper are not simply for social value, but that they are rich with educational value too.

CONCLUSIONS

This paper has attempted to show how carefully structured and organized EL and service-learning projects can bring a number of tangible benefits to the process of preparing teachers for the twenty-first century workforce. Some of these benefits relate to novice teachers' personal development including a heightened sensitivity and awareness toward learners and social causes in the community. In some cases novice teachers were seen to be

more awake and alive to the world around them and clearly learned from working alongside committed and passionate community partners who were for the most part working in non-school settings. Other benefits were more concrete and tangible. Skills that could be transferred by teacher candidates from their EL projects to their subsequent teaching practice included questioning skills, instructional skills, lesson planning, materials design and communication skills. The impact of EL and service learning on university students has been well documented globally, but we are still learning about the effectiveness of boundary crossings between community-based NGOs and TEIs. More needs to be done as the counter-stories in this study reveal. Indeed, a lesson from this study is that there needs to be a closer connection between schools, universities and community partners because while each represents a powerful knowledge base, the three powerful learning contexts rarely come together to truly share their expertise. The findings in this paper point to a generally positive picture, even if it is a very multi-layered one and I welcome further papers and research dissemination on this complex subject of boundary crossing between TEIs and the wider community outside the institutional walls of the university.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

The author confirms being the sole contributor of this work and approved it for publication.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author would like to thank the community partners from Hong Kong Ocean Park, Hong Kong Science and Technology Parks Corporation, Hong Kong Jockey Club 'Learning by Doing' Academy, Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui Welfare Council Vitalita Academy for Lifelong Learning and UNICEF (HK) for their support of the work described in this paper.

REFERENCES

- Boyle-Baise, M. (1998). Community service learning for multicultural education: an exploratory study with pre-service teachers. *Equity Excell. Educ.* 31, 52–60. doi: 10.1080/1066568980310207
- Boyle-Baise, M., and Zevin, J. (2009). *Young Citizens of the World: Teaching Elementary Social Studies Through Civic Engagement*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Brayko, K. (2013). Community-based placements as contexts for disciplinary learning: a study of literacy teacher education outside of school. *J. Teach. Educ.* 64, 47–59. doi: 10.1177/0022487112458800
- Bridges, S. M., Andrews, S., Tsui, A. B. M., Chan, C. K. K., Wang, D., Wang, T. Y. L., et al. (2018). "Designing for integration in initial teacher education (ITE) curricula: the Hong Kong Postgraduate Diploma in Education (PGDE)," in *Teacher Education, Learning Innovation and Accountability*, eds C. Wyatt-Smith and L. Adie (Singapore: Springer Publications). doi: 10.1007/978-981-13-2026-2
- Bringle, R. G., and Hatcher, J. A. (1996). Implementing service learning in higher education. *J. High. Educ.* 67, 221–239. doi: 10.2307/2943981
- Brinkman, S., and Kvale, S. (2015). *Interviews: Learning the Craft of Qualitative Research Interviewing*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Celio, C. I., Durlak, J., and Dymnicki, A. (2011). A meta-analysis of the impact of service-learning on students. *J. Exp. Educ.* 34, 164–181. doi: 10.1177/105382591103400205
- Chang, B. (2015). In the service of self-determination: teacher education, service-learning, and community reorganizing. *Theory Pract.* 54, 29–38. doi: 10.1080/00405841.2015.977659
- Chang, S. P., Anagnostopoulos, D., and Omae, H. (2011). The multidimensionality of multicultural service learning: the variable effects of social identity, context and pedagogy on pre-service teachers' learning. *Teach. Teach. Educ.* 27, 1078–1089. doi: 10.1016/j.tate.2011.05.004
- Clandinin, D. J., and Husu, J. (2017). "Mapping an international handbook of research in and for teacher education," in *International Handbook of Research on Teacher Education*, eds D. J. Clandinin and J. Husu (London: Sage), 1–23.
- Clarke, A. E. (2005). *Situational Analysis: Grounded Theory After the Postmodern Turn*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Cochran-Smith, M., and Lytle, S. L. (1999). "Relationship of knowledge and practice: teacher learning in communities," in *Review of Research in Education*, eds A. Iran-Nejad and C. Pearson (Washington, DC: American Educational Research Association), 249–306.
- Coco, M. (2000). Internships: a try before you buy arrangement. *SAM Adv. Manag. J.* 65, 41–43.

- Coker, J. S., Heiser, E., Taylor, L., and Book, C. (2017). Impacts of experiential learning depth and breadth on student outcomes. *J. Exp. Educ.* 40, 5–23. doi: 10.1177/1053825916678265
- Connelly, F. M., and Clandinin, D. J. (1985). “Personal practical knowledge and the modes of knowing,” in *Learning and Teaching the Ways of Knowing*, ed E. Eisner (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press), 174–198.
- Corbin, J., and Strauss, A. (2015). *Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory, 4th Edn.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Darling-Hammond, L. (2006). *Powerful Teacher Education: Lessons From Exemplary Programs.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Dolgon, C., Mitchell, T. D., and Eatman, T. K. (2017). *The Cambridge Handbook of Service Learning and Community Engagement.* Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Elam, E. L. R., and Spotts, H. E. (2004). Achieving marketing curriculum integration: a live case study approach. *J. Mark. Educ.* 26, 50–65. doi: 10.1177/0273475303262351
- Furco, A. (2001). Advancing service-learning at research universities. *New Directions High. Educ.* 114, 67–78. doi: 10.1002/he.15.abs
- Gonzalez, N., Moll, L. C., and Amanti, C. (2013). *Funds of Knowledge: Theorizing Practices in Households, Communities and Classrooms.* New York, NY: Routledge.
- Greene, M. (1978). *Landscapes of Learning.* New York, NY: Teachers College Press
- Haddix, M. (2015). Preparing community-engaged teachers. *Theory Pract.* 54, 63–70. doi: 10.1080/00405841.2015.977664
- Harfitt, G. J., and Chow, J. M. L. (2018). Transforming traditional models of initial teacher education through a mandatory experiential learning programme. *Teach. Teach. Educ.* 73, 120–129. doi: 10.1016/j.tate.2018.03.021
- Hartley, D. (2007). Education policy and the “inter-regnum.” *J. Educ. Policy* 22, 695–708. doi: 10.1080/02680930701625361
- Holliday, A. (2007). *Doing and Writing Qualitative Research.* London: Sage
- Hou, S. (2009). Service learning + new master of public health student = challenges for professor. *Int. J. Teach. Learn. High. Educ.* 20, 292–297.
- Kissock, C., and Richardson, P. (2010). Calling for action within the teaching profession: it is time to internationalize teacher education. *Teach. Educ.* 21, 89–101. doi: 10.1080/10476210903467008
- Kolb, D. A. (1984). *Experiential Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development.* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Kuh, G. D. (2008). *Excerpt From High-Impact Educational Practices: What They are, Who has Access to Them, and Why They Matter.* Washington, DC: Association of American Colleges and Universities.
- McDonald, M. A., Bowman, M., and Brayko, K. (2013). Learning to see students: opportunities to develop relational practices of teaching through community-based placements in teacher education. *Teach. Coll. Rec.* 115. Retrieved from: <http://www.tcrecord.org>
- Meidl, T. D., and Sulentic Dowell, M. (2018). *Handbook of Research on Service-Learning Initiatives in Teacher Education Programs* (Hershey, PA: IGI Global), 1–602. doi: 10.4018/978-1-5225-4041-0
- Miles, M. B., and Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative Data Analysis: An Expanded Sourcebook, 2nd Edn.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Mills, C., and Ballantyne, J. (2010). Pre-service teachers’ dispositions toward diversity: arguing for a developmental hierarchy of change. *Teach. Teach. Educ.* 26, 447–454. doi: 10.1016/j.tate.2009.05.012
- Murray, J. (2017). “Defining teacher educators: international perspectives and contexts,” in *International Handbook of Research on Teacher Education*, eds D. J. Clandinin and J. Husu (London: Sage), 1017–1033.
- Murrell, P. (2001). *The Community Teacher.* New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Packer, M. (2010). *The Science of Qualitative Research.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Payne, K. A., and Zeichner, K. (2017). “Multiple voices and participants in teacher education,” in *International Handbook of Research on Teacher Education*, eds D. J. Clandinin and J. Husu (London: Sage), 1101–1117.
- Punch, K. F. (2009). “Qualitative research design,” in *Introduction to Research Methods in Education*, ed K. P. Punch (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage), 129–135.
- Richmond, G. (2017). The power of community partnership in the preparation of teachers. *J. Teach. Educ.* 68, 6–8. doi: 10.1177/0022487116679959
- Root, S., and Swick, K. J. (2001). “A framework for conceptualizing and doing research on service-learning in preservice teacher education.” in *Service-Learning in Teacher Education: Enhancing the Growth of New Teachers, Their Students, and Communities*, eds J. B. Anderson, K. J. Swick and J. Yff (New York, NY: AACTE Publications), 141–152.
- Schon, D. (1983). *The Reflective Practitioner.* London: Ashgate.
- Seban, D. (2013). The impact of the type of projects on preservice teachers’ conceptualization of service learning. *Teach. Teach. Educ.* 32, 87–97. doi: 10.1016/j.tate.2013.01.009
- Silverman, S. L., and Casazza, M. E. (2000). *Learning and Development: Making Connections to Enhance Teaching.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Sleeter, C. (2008). Equity, democracy and neoliberal assaults on teacher education. *Teach. Teach. Educ.* 24, 1947–1957. doi: 10.1016/j.tate.2008.04.003
- Strauss, A. L., and Corbin, J. (1998). *Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory, 2nd Edn.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Supovitz, J. A., Mayer, D. P., and Kahle, J. B. (2000). Promoting inquiry-based instructional practice: the longitudinal impact of professional development in the context of systemic reform. *Educ. Policy* 14, 331–356. doi: 10.1177/0895904800014003001
- Tatto, M. T., Richmond, G., and Carter Andrews, D. J. (2016). The research we need in teacher education. *J. Teach. Educ.* 67, 247–250. doi: 10.1177/0022487116663694
- Zeichner, K. (2010). Rethinking the connections between campus courses and field experiences in college-and university-based teacher education. *J. Teach. Educ.* 61, 89–99. doi: 10.1177/0022487109347671
- Zeichner, K. (2012). *Two Visions of Teaching and Teacher Education for the Twenty-First Century*, Social Policy, Education and Curriculum Research Unit. North Dartmouth, MA: Centre for Policy Analyses.
- Zeichner, K., Payne, K., and Brayko, K. (2012). *Democratizing Knowledge in University Teacher Education Through Practice-Based Methods Teaching and Mediated Field Experiences in Schools and Communities.* (Seattle: University of Washington Center for the Study of Learning to Teach in Practice), 12–1.
- Zeichner, K. A., Payne, K., and Brayko, K. (2015). Democratizing teacher education. *J. Teach. Educ.* 66, 122–135. doi: 10.1177/0022487114560908

Conflict of Interest Statement: The author declares that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

Copyright © 2018 Harfitt. This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (CC BY). The use, distribution or reproduction in other forums is permitted, provided the original author(s) and the copyright owner(s) are credited and that the original publication in this journal is cited, in accordance with accepted academic practice. No use, distribution or reproduction is permitted which does not comply with these terms.