

Whose Voice Is Present?: An Examination of Power and Privilege in Service-Learning in  
Ontario Universities

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## **Abstract**

This research paper examines themes of power and privilege that occur within service-learning as described by 3 Ontario universities on their service-learning websites. Due to size and time restrictions, this paper was able to examine only 3 Ontario universities: Brock, Wilfrid Laurier, and Lakehead. The purpose of this study is geared towards service-learning practitioners in order for the universities and students to become more self-aware of their immense place of privilege within the service-learning context. Qualitative narrative analysis research methods were employed in this purposeful sample to examine how each university's story of service-learning reflected themes of power and privilege. The research found that each university posed a unique narrative of service-learning representing various stakeholders' voices and presence in different ways on their website. Brock largely focuses on faculty and student voices. Laurier intentionally attempts to include all three stakeholder voices, although still favours students and the university as an audience over the community. Lakehead's unique program includes a plethora of voices and intends much of their information for the community members, students, and the university. The implications of this research demonstrate that universities have a large amount of power and privilege, which is carried through to the students within the service-learning partnership.

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## CHAPTER ONE: BACKGROUND

This study examines university power and privilege as exhibited through the service-learning narratives produced by three Ontario universities. Service-learning in Canada has been applied in various forms in higher education for several years, but its institutionalization has occurred largely within the past decade. Therefore, there has been only a small amount of literature that speaks to the national or even provincial nature of service-learning in Canada.

The term service-learning was brought to life by Robert Sigmon in 1979 in his seminal text, "Service-Learning: Three Principles." He organized the idea that service-learning was based on the notion of "reciprocal learning" (Sigmon, 1979). Sigmon wrote at a time when the term service-learning was thrown around to mean any type of voluntary or experiential education. However, there were few guidelines that practitioners could refer to in any type of service-learning program. Thus, Sigmon established three principles for institutions developing service-learning programs.

Since the 1980s, American service-learning literature has paid attention to the three stakeholders: the university, students, and community. Service-learning literature has often focused (from the 1980s until present) on student benefits in order to show the success of experiential programs (Kolb, 1984; Sandy & Holland, 2006). Literature in the 1990s concentrated on the university's role as institutionalization of service-learning became popular across America (Cruz & Giles, 2000). Since 2000 few scholars have attempted to examine community perspectives on service-learning (Butin, 2007; Sandy & Holland, 2006).

Canadian literature on service-learning has developed largely within the past decade. The major institutionalization of service-learning in Canada started only in 1996 when St. Francis Xavier University implemented their first community service-learning program (Cameron, 2010). Similar to the developmental time-line of American literature focusing on the university in the 1990s, after a decade of established institutional service-learning programs, much of the Canadian literature currently explores the institutionalization of service-learning and what that means in the Canadian context.

This research is designed to examine the institutional representation of service-learning that has taken place in a small sample of Ontario universities: Brock, Wilfrid Laurier, and Lakehead.

### **Problem Statement**

There are two major gaps in the literature on service-learning. First, there is a lack of research conducted from the community in terms of their voice and perspectives on service-learning matters. Second, there is a very small portion of Canadian literature that is not easily found on the topic of service-learning.

These two limitations have implications on Canadian service-learning in higher education that I have been grappling with during my time as a graduate student. First, the lack of community voice and community perspectives in the literature suggests that the university and students in the service-learning paradigm hold a place of power and of privilege. Over the past 30 years of research in the field of service-learning, there is a trend where scholars usually examine the institutional development or student benefits while providing limited scope on community perspectives.

Second, the institutional development of service-learning across Canadian universities suggests that scholars are now researching how universities can create service-learning programs that are distinct to a Canadian context. For this reason some Canadian universities have opted to put the word “community” in front of service-learning. The word “community” denotes the fact that Canada is attempting to have a greater focus on the element that is often left out of service-learning (Smith, 2010).

Thus, with the gap in the literature looking at community voice and lack of Canadian literature, I have performed a study that examines the two problems explicitly. This study focuses on the issue of power and privilege that institutions have when operating service-learning programs with explicit attention of examining the presence of community voice. My research focuses on a content/narrative analysis of both discourse and visual images that appear on service-learning websites from three Ontario universities. This analysis was theoretically examined through Foucault’s various understanding of power and how that reflects privilege.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to develop research for service-learning practitioners that can be used to guide them through creating a program that deals with the issues of university and student privilege. It is easy for faculty and students to view the service-learning programs in terms of how they suit their own needs. However, awareness needs to be built into the system of giving their own community voice in these programs. Each university through their public website, offers a narrative on service-learning. This study examines exactly what that narrative is, who it encompasses, and what the implications of the narrative are.

## **Research Questions**

Research questions will be addressed as follows:

1. How easy is it to find and locate service-learning information?
2. How does each institution define service-learning?
3. Whose voice is present? Who is the intended audience of that voice?
  - (a) Community partners,
  - (b) Students,
  - (c) Faculty,
  - (d) Other.

## **Rationale**

My passion for researching service-learning grew out of my personal experience in having a community service-learning placement during the third year of my undergraduate degree. It was one of the best experiences of my undergrad. Once I attended graduate school, I started to reflect on my past educational experience. When I researched service-learning as a topic, I critically reflected on my experience in light of theory, and I began to grapple with the issue of power and privilege. I realized that during my service-learning placement, I was oblivious to the privilege I held as a student “helping” in the community. Therefore, my interest in service-learning first derives out of my personal experience with it and my critical reflection of it. As I continued to reflect this past year and performed research, I discovered similar gaps in the service-learning literature.

My main concern is the lack of attention paid towards community perspectives in combination with a small amount of literature written by Canadian scholars about the

nature of Canadian service-learning. These concerns have broader implications relating to university and student awareness. Higher education and service-learning practitioners, in particular, often cite that the purpose of education is to create “good citizens” (Einfeld & Collins, 2008; Kezar, 2002). Service-learning in practice, however, can sometimes reinforce the divisions in society between the “have/have nots” or between “giver/receiver” (Henry & Breyfogle, 2006). Thus, part of education for citizenship through service-learning has positive benefits in theory, but in practice service-learning may sometimes reinforce university and student privilege. This is why discussing issues such as privilege and critically reflecting on one’s place of power is direly important not only for student transformational learning but also for tangible transformation to occur in the community.

I selected Brock, Wilfrid Laurier, and Lakehead Universities for specific reasons. Brock was selected because of my personal experience of weekly interacting with activity on campus related to changes made to service-learning at Brock. I also attended some service-learning sessions in their brown-bag lunch series. Wilfrid Laurier was also selected for personal reasons. I completed a service-learning placement during my undergraduate degree. I want to examine their narrative and representation of community service-learning now that I have had a chance to reflect on my experience. Lakehead was selected not for personal reasons, but because the Canadian literature noted it as a university that has had success in their community service-learning programs through their Food Security Research Network (Nelson & Stroink, 2010).

### **Scope and Limitations**

This study examines the public service-learning websites of Brock, Wilfrid Laurier, and Lakehead Universities. These are just three universities from Ontario, which does not allow this study to encompass a broad understanding of a national service-learning narrative. This study does however serve as a small sample to shed light on the depiction of service-learning through the eyes of a few Ontario institutions.

Due to time and resource restrictions, this study will also be a content analysis of public text and images that these universities post on their service-learning websites. This study is keenly interested in examining whose voice is present in the universities' narratives of service-learning.

This study could be used as a pilot project to first understand the university narrative of service-learning and to have evidence showing whose voice is present. A larger empirical study researching community partner perspectives would be the follow-up research to this study. It could be a study that ideally would examine community perspectives, separate from the university. Researchers could conduct sets of interviews, surveys, or focus groups with community partners in order to hear the community narrative on service-learning. Due to the resources and time, this study was limited to examining online public content on three Canadian universities' websites.

## CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The American and Canadian literature on service-learning provides insight into the comparison of their developments within their national contexts. Service-learning in higher education theoretically encompasses three key stakeholder groups. Usually they are labeled and outlined in the order of: (a) the university, (b) the students, and (c) the community. Theoretically and practically, these three stakeholder groups make up what has come to be known as the partners in service-learning. However, within service-learning literature there is little research and writing about the community as a stakeholder. Since there is a large dearth in the service-learning literature concerning community perspectives, this review will first focus on what the literature has said about the community, followed by students, and last, the university. It will be divided up into six parts all in relation to service learning:

1. American Literature on Community
2. Canadian Literature on Community
3. American Literature on Students
4. Canadian Literature on Students
5. American Literature on University
6. Canadian Literature on University

This literature review is organized this way to represent the differences and similarities in the development of service-learning in both countries to inform the development of research which is designed to fill in the gap of assessing the institutionalization of service-learning in Canadian universities through the lens of power. This literature review will first discuss the issues of power and privilege and then attend

to power and privilege within the discussions of the three stakeholder groups: community, students, and the university.

### **Power and Privilege**

This section is framed to examine issues relating to power and privilege that take place in service-learning programs. To guide my theoretical understanding of power, I studied Michel Foucault's various perspectives of it and how it operates within a society.

The challenge about understanding Foucault's thoughts on power is that he does not give a definitive theory or explanation of the phenomenon. Most scholars will argue this about Foucault as well when trying to understand his construct of power (Gallagher, 2008). Foucault makes it clear that he does not want to analyze or theorize the phenomenon of power, rather he states, "my objective, instead, has been to create a history of the different modes by which, in our culture, human beings are made subjects" (Foucault, 2000, p. 326).

The challenge I have decided to tackle is putting together a theoretical framework using two of Foucault's key understandings of power relations. First, Foucault often indicates that power is a set of networks that operate in a sociocultural context. He does not conceive power in terms of being a linear, hierarchical approach (Gallagher, 2008). Second, Foucault does not view power as a commodity or something of economic worth (Gallagher, 2008). Power works as an entity whether that is in individual human subjects or in institutions like higher education. Power as a network and power as an entity are key theoretical concepts that will be used to examine each university's narrative on service-learning.

Foucault is important because he brings attention to systems of relation, whether that is power, hierarchy, or dominance (Foucault, 1972, p. 4). He notes that because of

our Western context, when power is exercised it is done as “juridical and negative rather than as technical and positive” (Foucault, 1980, p. 125). Power exists not as an object in the service-learning dynamic, but is exercised in various ways by three stakeholders: community, students, and the university. Power within the dynamic does not necessarily have to be judicial and negative but can be technical and positive. There are certain kinds of privileges that come about as a consequence of power being exercised in various ways. I am interested in how power is exercised through this unique network and how three universities narrate their stories of service-learning, which is why my main research question asks, “Whose voice is present, and who is the intended audience of that voice?”

### **American Literature on Community**

American service-learning literature over the past 10 years has paid greater attention to researching community outcomes and the nature of community partnerships. I found three key themes regarding community in service-learning: (a) Scholars note the lack of research regarding the community for political, intellectual, and practical reasons, (b) the community is not necessarily benefiting from service-learning, and (c) educating students first through a social justice lens may be a better way to relate to the community.

A few scholars have attempted to explain why there is a gap of community perspectives in the literature. However, Cruz and Giles (2000) attempt to explain why there is a lack of community perspective in the literature for political, intellectual, and practical reasons.

Politically, service-learning literature has broadly focused on the institutionalization in the 1990s because service-learning gained popularity across North American universities (Cruz & Giles, 2000). Butin (2006a) notes that because service-

learning is seen as an “add on” in the institution, research that focuses on the community is sometimes seen by nontenured faculty as a low priority. Since the university is a competitive institution, the priority shifts to funding, as schools have to prove service-learning outcomes in terms of student success, not necessarily community success.

Cruz and Giles (2000) argue that American liberal views of intelligence also play a role in the explanation of why there is a lack of community research. They argue that the discourse on community is changing in America. Historically, with the onset of industrialization, American communities were separated. This is why John Dewey argued in the 1920s that America was lacking in communal orientation (Dewey, 1946). Since industrialization, it has been difficult to pinpoint who, what, and where encompass community. Dewey (1946) did not look at community, but what had eroded community. Since community was no longer about a geographical location, scholarship essentially could not clearly define it; therefore, the study of it became difficult.

Similarly, Sandy and Holland (2006) argue that most service-learning literature speaks of “community” but rarely defines what is meant by it. They state that communities cannot be looked at as monolithic units and that they embody a host of complex structures. Sandy and Holland argue that sorting out a clear definition of community is a task scholars need to tackle first before delving into research from the “community perspective.”

Since intellectually community is not understood well, scholars therefore find it difficult to research on the practical level. Scholars have noted that service-learning as a pedagogy is difficult to engage in because it is a counternormative pedagogy (Butin, 2006b; Clayton & Ash, 2004; Cruz & Giles, 2000). Consequently, the complex nature of

service-learning has scholars and funders asking “where is the service in service-learning?” (Cruz & Giles, 2000, p. 29). This question is asked because in order to receive funding, institutions have to show, in quantifiable terms, that students are engaged in the community and are having positive learning outcomes. Cruz and Giles (2000) and Sandy and Holland (2006) both argue that community is difficult to quantify; therefore research examining community outcomes is not very common in the service-learning literature. This is why Cruz and Giles (2000) argue that research should be less focused on community outcomes and more focused on the relationship between universities and communities. My research focus then serves as a tool in order to produce research that demonstrates how work can be accomplished through these partnerships.

In the past ten years, scholars have noted the lack of research on community partners, outcomes, and benefits in service-learning (Butin, 2003, 2006a, 2007; Cruz & Giles, 2000; Sandy & Holland, 2006). Butin (2003), and Sandy and Holland (2006) are scholars who have attempted to examine community outcomes and have found that the community is not necessarily benefiting from service-learning.

In many of Butin’s articles (Butin, 2003, 2006a, 2006b, 2007), he asserts that the lack of empirical evidence on community outcomes demonstrates that service-learning actually does not benefit the community. Butin (2003) argues for a reconceptualization of service-learning and offers four paradigms: technical, cultural, political, and poststructural. These four paradigms can assist in addressing the limited impact on the community. Technically, schools need to reevaluate and increase the amount of time students serve at their placements. Culturally and politically, students also need to be aware of their place of privilege and power before they start their placements. Thus, he

notes that shifting to a political paradigm means that institutions have to assess themselves and develop greater strategies to produce students who are learning mutually with the community.

While Butin addresses the issue of community outcomes, Sandy and Holland (2006) conducted a large qualitative study of 99 community partners in eight different California communities. They note that the problem in the literature is that it claims the community is helped by the universities and students; however, service-learning practitioners do not know when or how these outcomes are achieved. Thus, they performed a study on community perspectives from the view of the community partners. The study had 15 focus groups. They were facilitated by a third party that had no affiliation with any university institutions. These groups met at community locations and not at the universities.

Sandy and Holland (2006) discovered that community partners highly valued relationships and viewed them as foundational; however, students and faculty did not necessarily have the same type of goals in their relationship (according to the community partners). These community partners conveyed five key ways that their relations could improve: (a) communication among partners, (b) understanding partner perspectives, (c) increased personal connections, (d) coplanning, training, and education, and (e) accountability and leadership. While they saw room for better relations, community partners expressed an appreciation for service-learning because they felt it was a way they could educate the next generation. All community partners expressed a desire to work with campus and other community partners in the future. Sandy and Holland's is

one of few studies that examine community partnerships as opposed to community outcomes.

Scholars who are concerned about the community in the literature will often lean towards a social justice orientation as a service-learning pedagogy. Scholars writing about the need for social justice education will address themes such as charity versus activism, addressing oppression, and opposing a discourse of deficit (Boyle-Baise & Langford, 2004; Butin, 2007; Einfeld & Collins, 2008).

The most common theme talked about in the social justice literature is a clarification of the charity versus social justice paradigms. The charity paradigm understands service-learning as “doing good” (Boyle-Baise & Langford, 2004). Social justice on the other hand is about activism (Boyle-Baise & Langford, 2004). Moely, Furco, and Reed (2008) argue that between these two paradigms, students often believe that service-learning is about charity. Einfeld and Collins (2008) go on further to discuss that students offering charity can reinforce their dominant positions over marginalized community members. They conclude by arguing that the role of the educator is important in guiding students in expanding their knowledge. The institution can help in the construction of the social justice paradigm as opposed to students’ charity-based paradigm.

Part of using service-learning as a social justice force in the community means addressing oppression. Boyle-Baise and Langford (2004) argue that social justice examines oppressions “at individual, cultural, and institutional levels” (p. 55). Communication and collaboration between the institutions and community partners are also necessary to ensure that the university understands the systems of oppression that

work within the community. This is why Boyle-Baise and Langford argue that if students want to engage in meaningful activism, then educating students first for social justice should include multiple lenses of race, gender, class, and sexuality. Einfeld and Collins (2008) believe that in order not to repeat oppression at individual and institutional levels, students need to commit themselves to a long-term service-learning placement. This in turn will help students learn firsthand the oppressive experiences faced by others. Similarly, Butin (2007) defends that self-awareness in knowing your own oppression is key to providing social justice to the community. In comparison to students' acknowledgement of oppression, the literature also speaks to the concept of teaching against deficit thinking.

Often community groups are viewed as marginalized because they are viewed by educators and scholars as being disadvantaged in some form. Boyle-Baise and Langford (2004) argue that White students in particular need to challenge deficit thinking. Butin (2007) similarly argues that social justice education was born from the 1960s civil rights movement. This was a time when activism was about vocally challenging and reversing implied deficits. Boyle-Baise and Langford and Butin (2003) argue that service-learning is a pedagogy influenced by political power of the institution.

If the institutions hold the power, they help the community at their own rate and might nonintentionally end up hurting the community. Thus, many of the scholars that examine the community in service-learning focus on why there has been a lack of research, how the community may not necessarily be benefiting, and work towards a social justice orientation that addresses activism, oppression, and deficit thinking.

### **Canadian Literature on Community**

Since community service-learning is very recent to Canadian universities, the research and literature have primarily focused on its institutionalization in light of student outcomes as opposed to community outcomes. Nonetheless, there are three themes that come from the Canadian literature about community: (a) Canada's specific focus on "community" in community service-learning, (b) what defines "community" and "community partnerships" in the Canadian context, and (c) approaches the institution can take to have meaningful relationships that impact Canadian communities.

Some Canadian institutions have adopted "community" in front of service-learning in order for it to have a greater communal orientation, especially in comparison to America. The Canadian Alliance for Community Service-Learning (CACSL) defines community service-learning as "an educational approach that integrates service in the community with intentional learning activities. Within effective CSL efforts, members of both educational institutions and community organizations work together toward outcomes that are mutually beneficial" (Cameron, 2010, p. 7). Smith (2010) focuses on the rhetoric behind the word "community" placed in front of service-learning. She argues that Canadian rhetoric in service-learning does not root its ideology in democracy like American service-learning. Rather, the Canadian rhetoric appears to be "driven by the success of our diverse partnerships and the needs of local and global communities" (Smith, 2010, p. 5). She also notes that not all Canadian universities place the word "community" in front of service-learning.

The second theme in the Canadian literature is a need for a definition of community relevant to the Canadian context. Gemmel and Clayton (2009) believe that community should be inclusive of location, national, and international contexts. They

define communities both in terms of geographic location and communities in cultural and ethnic terms. Canadian representative at the Sixth International Service-Learning Research Conference in 2006, Margo Fryer, attributes the drive for community as part of Canada's historical values (Fryer et al., 2007), using examples such as the development of the welfare state after World War Two and universal health care developed in the 1960s. Fryer also attributes Canadian rural society and the cold climate as another way that Canada has driven the historically cherished communal values. Gemmel and Clayton and Fryer et al. (2007) have a very limited and surface level definition of community; however, Smith (2009) and Cameron (2010) begin to dig beneath the surface level definition and the Canadian niceties about "community."

As a scholar in rhetoric studies, Smith (2009) argues that American and Canadian service-learning has "devil terms" and "god terms." She defends that "community" is a "god term" that Canadian CSL literature likes to throw around without properly defining it. She draws on the work of Anthony Cohen to look at the discourse behind community and how it is negotiated and defined. She views community as having a "symbolic construct" and therefore not distinctive of merely a physical location (Smith, 2009, p. 10).

Analyzing problematic notions of "community partnerships" also is an important "god term" to examine. The Canadian literature starts to outline what "community partners" are in the community service-learning context. Gemmel and Clayton (2009) argue that community partners are not volunteer managers but act as mentors and facilitators of new learning in a shared process with the student. Cameron (2010) discusses how there is a problem with this understanding of community partnerships. He

argues that “partnership” is not necessarily the right word because institutionally the way CSL is currently set up, the community is often “exploited” by the university (Cameron, 2010, p. 40). For example, there are some Aboriginal communities in northwestern Ontario that do not want to have any relationships with universities because they have felt used. A 20-hour time commitment over the course of 3 to 4 months is not enough time to establish a meaningful relationship with community partners, let alone for students to have a meaningful learning experience.

The third major theme found in the Canadian literature related to the community is finding a community service-learning approach that serves the needs of the community. Since service-learning in Canada is fairly recent, the literature is focused on the institutionalization; thus research has not been performed on community outcomes. However, Chambers (2009) offers three approaches that fit communities in the Canadian context. These approaches include: philanthropy, social justice, and social transformation. Chambers argues that institutions need to take up predominantly one of these three schools of thought if they want to have meaningful relationships and engagement with Canadian communities, because each community has different needs. He notes that while they overlap, each has a specific direction and a philosophy of making certain accomplishments in the community.

A philanthropic approach to community service-learning would eliminate the need for charity. Chambers (2009) distinguishes charity from philanthropy. Charity is assistance, where philanthropy is about being intentional about giving resources while having an awareness of the imbalance of power. Philanthropy in theory is supposed to

end the need for charity because while charity addresses problems as they come up, philanthropy deals with ending systemic oppression.

Social justice is another approach outlined by Chambers (2009) that involves a more direct relationship between students working with individuals and site-specific social groups. Social justice requires a great amount of reflection as the students have to think about their own privilege and societal injustices. Specifically, this model of community service-learning would be to “increase social capital, enhance diversity, and, most crucially, engage all participants in problem solving” (Chambers, 2009, p. 89).

Social transformation has two components. First, to prepare for transformative process, a host of sociopolitical factors have to be accessed in order to determine the root cause of inequitable patterns. Second, faculty and students need to examine the assumptions and stereotypes of the everyday people that help sustain and reinforce these systems of oppression. Social justice is about “fighting a wrong” where social transformation is about “altering the system, the assumptions, the mindsets, and the relationships” (Chambers, 2009, p. 90). Social transformation addresses the issue of power more readily and being able to address power within the institution in order to make change to the systemic oppression in society.

These three approaches that Chambers outlines target “community” in the community service-learning context. Although there is little Canadian literature that examines community outcomes specifically, the Canadian literature has three key themes of exploring “community” as part of Canadian rhetoric, defining “community” and “community partnerships,” and outlining some approaches that are collectively oriented.

### **American Literature on Students**

The American service-learning literature predominantly focuses on student learning outcomes and assessment around three themes of (a) democratic citizenship, (b) critical reflection, and most recently in the literature, (c) examining the concept of reciprocity in light of student privilege. A large portion of literature focuses on student outcomes because service-learning was created for student learning. It is also easier to measure student outcomes as opposed to community or university outcomes through qualitative or quantitative research. Students are also the focus in the literature for political reasons as well because universities receive funding when they can produce students who have benefited from a service-learning experience.

The most commonly discussed theme, particularly in the American literature, is students' role they play as democratic citizens in service-learning. It is most commonly quoted by scholars that the goal of higher education is to create "good citizens" (Boyle-Baise et al., 2006; Boyle-Baise & Langford, 2004; Butin, 2003; Einfeld & Collins, 2008; Kezar, 2002; Moely et al., 2008). Service-learning is seen to be the perfect opportunity for students to engage in a democratic forum. Part of being a "good citizen" also has a Judeo-Christian rhetoric that promotes a strong sense of morality in students as well (Kezar, 2002).

Research that has been conducted around student assessment and learning outcomes will often have a category related to democratic engagement. Einfeld and Collins (2008) performed a qualitative study that examined students that were a part of a long-term service-learning program. Their study focused on assessing students in their understandings of social justice, multicultural competence, and civic engagement. They

found that students believed that a good citizen was an active citizen. Students discussed how they wanted to be “other oriented” and continue to “give back” to the community (Einfeld & Collins, 2008, p. 104). The problem with this research is that the questions that guided the study were based on the agenda of AmeriCorps. The question they asked in regards to civic engagement reads, “What effect does participation in AmeriCorps have on participants’ attitudes, values, and beliefs toward civic responsibility?” (Einfeld & Collins, 2008, p. 98).

Similar research in Einfeld and Collins (2008) finds that there are a variety of student outcomes related to students’ civic responsibility including, awareness of community, commitment to serving others, and desire to work for a nonprofit agency (Astin & Sax, 1998). Other research has shown that students who volunteer weekly in their final year of university will continue to volunteer after their university career (Astin, Sax, & Avalos, 1999). In comparison, Clague (1995) found that service-learning did not increase students’ self-awareness and action towards civic responsibility more than a course without a service-learning component. Through the literature and research on student outcomes, American service-learning promotes the idea of students as democratic citizens as a key benefit of service-learning.

The literature also predominantly focuses on critical reflection as a benefit students gain from service-learning (Ash & Clayton, 2004; Butin, 2003; Clayton & Ash, 2004; Giles & Elyer, 1999). Ash and Clayton (2004) reflect on definitions of reflection and ultimately argue that reflection is a way for students to “explore and express” what they are learning (p. 138). Ash and Clayton (2004) first use Dewey’s (1910) description of reflection as “active, persistent and careful consideration of any belief or supposed

form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it, and the further conclusions to which it tends” (Dewey, 1910, p. 6). However, Ash and Clayton (2004) note that meaningful reflection is more elusive than Dewey’s understanding. They draw from Rogers (2001) who believes that reflection is about interrogation of one’s experience in order to create some kind of internal and external change. They note that because the elusive nature of defining reflection that faculty should not assume that reflection is not an easy task for students.

In another article, Clayton and Ash (2004) appropriately note that the term “reflection” is a word that is often used by faculty and staff who teach service-learning rather than by the students. Clayton and Ash base their study from information they collected from their students at North Carolina University. They note that the students caused “shifts in perspectives” for the faculty. Educators began to understand that students felt some discomfort about their new learning environment (Clayton & Ash, 2004, p. 61). From the students’ perspectives, the instructors learned how to facilitate student learning through critical reflection as they encountered uncomfortable situations. Clayton and Ash provide an outline of how to engage students in meaningful critical reflection in five components. (a) First class students should have an introductory reflection and outline their expectations of the course. (b) They are to continue journaling every week throughout the semester. (c) Have in-class discussions about the problems they are encountering and the shifts in perspectives. (d) It helps if the facilitator brings in another student to share his or her experience. (e) Finally, ask students to read and respond to scholarly articles that talk about shifts on perspectives in service-learning.

Student reflection is seen as an essential component that weds service with learning (Ash & Clayton, 2004), which is why it is a common theme discussed in the literature.

The idea that service-learning is a reciprocal learning relationship between students and community members is the core of what service-learning is (Butin, 2003; Sigmon, 1979). The literature within the past 10 years has unpacked what reciprocity is to look like within this relational dynamic. From this inquiry, there has been a growing awareness that reciprocity is not necessarily mutual because students are largely unaware of their place of immense privilege (Boyle-Baise et al., 2006; Boyle-Baise & Langford, 2004; Henry & Breyfogle, 2006).

Boyle-Baise & Langford (2004) performed a study based on an alternative spring break service-learning experience at a children's camp. While educating through a social justice pedagogy, they carefully assessed students' learning experience and highlighted issues of power and privilege that most students were largely unaware of. One observation they made is that most of the White students among the group held a discourse of deficit about the children and families they worked with while at the camp. These White students looked at the children and their families individually without placing them in the broader contexts of inequity. Most students of colour had an activist mindset, looking at these children as agents of change, when most White students held firm to viewing the children as disadvantaged. Moely et al. (2008) performed a study assessing student outcomes of service-learning and similarly found in a broader context that students' personal identities and experiences play a role in their perspectives and therefore learning outcomes during their service-learning placements. Thus, studies that have been performed looking at student outcomes find that the relationship between

students and the community may not be mutual because of the power imbalance that students of privilege hold.

Boyle-Baise et al. (2006) and Henry and Breyfogle (2006) similarly examined issues related to reciprocity and privilege that inevitably take place in any service-learning context. Boyle-Baise et al. explored theoretically what it means to “learn service” in service-learning. They tackle issues of charity versus action. The charity approach to service-learning often creates binaries such as “have/have nots,” or the “giver/receiver” (Boyle-Baise et al., 2006). Therefore, they argue that students’ understanding of positionality is important to “learning service.” Positionality has to do with understanding one’s multiple identities and privileges as well as the multiple identities of those they encounter in their service-learning placements. They note that students’ understanding of their place of power and privilege is the difference between thick and thin service-learning. Thick service-learning is about organizing and changing the systemic structures through meaningful relationships, while thin service-learning maintains the norms that reinforce systems of oppression.

Similarly, Henry and Breyfogle (2006) use Boyle-Baise’s understanding of thick and thin service-learning to argue that reciprocation in service-learning should be based on Dewey’s notion of evolutionary change of action in a democratic society (Dewey as cited in Henry & Breyfogle, 2006). They note that service-learning cannot be examined as a one-way street, but rather through the lens of multiple identities. Dewey’s theory of cooperative intelligence is part of this thick service-learning model they promote. In cooperative intelligence, it is believed that individuals are affected by mutual interaction, whether that action is purposeful or not; thus working together is the only way to outline

the problems, come up with possible outcomes, test these outcomes, then implement these outcomes. In this mutual engagement, Henry and Breyfogle believe that reciprocity should be about holding each other accountable and responsible for their actions. In theory, the concept of reciprocity in service-learning seems quite simple; in practice, these scholars note that issues of power and privilege play a role in the relationships that occur in the service-learning context.

The agenda in the American service-learning literature about students focuses on democratic citizenship, critical thinking, and recently an expansion on reciprocity that examines student privilege. While the issue of power and privilege are starting to be explored in the literature on students, examining the power and privilege of the university as an institution needs further discussion. Thus, my research will later detail the power that institutions have, as their voice is one of authority on their university service-learning websites.

### **Canadian Literature on Students**

Since literature on service-learning has been a recent area of study in Canada, the main theme that Canadian scholars focus on is student development in service-learning as articulated through the need for (a) theoretical development on student learning and (b) rubrics and assessment. One study performed by Nelson and Stroink (2010) examines student outcomes and benefits in a case study conducted at Lakehead University in Ontario.

The Canadian literature, like the American literature, focuses first and foremost on student development, because service-learning is designed for their learning. Fryer believes the primary goal of service-learning in Canada is to enhance a student's

university experience (Fryer et al., 2007). Similarly, Gemmel and Clayton (2009) introduce service-learning as a benefit to students' university experience as well as their future career opportunities and professional development. Chambers (2009) uses Giles and Eyler's (1999) definition of service-learning as a starting point to support a student development orientation to service-learning. Their definition states:

Service-learning is a form of experiential education where learning occurs through a cycle of action and reflection as students work with others through a process of applying what they are learning to community problems and, at the same time, reflecting upon their experience as they seek to achieve real objectives for the community and deeper understanding and skills for themselves. (Giles & Eyler, 1999, p. 7)

This definition follows a very student centric interpretation of service-learning. Chambers's use of Eyler and Giles's definition is followed by an exploration of four developmental frameworks in an attempt to situate service-learning in a pedagogical approach: involvement theory, quality of effort, theory of student departure, and experimental education.

Involvement theory is one of these four frameworks he delves into on student development in order to understand the potential impacts and benefits service-learning education can have on students (Chambers, 2009). This theory defends that students' physical and psychological investment will be the determining factors in their academic career. Involvement is not just mechanical, but emotions are involved. This theory articulates that if educators facilitate a learning endeavour that is creative both inside and outside the classroom, student participation and growth will occur.

Quality of effort is another framework that can aid in enhanced understanding of the potential benefits of service-learning (Chambers, 2009). Quality of effort is based on individual growth. If students invest in something outside their standard comfort zone, their energy will translate into growth. Thus, the quality of the service-learning involvement in combination with student effort will be determining factors in students' value of experience.

Theory of student departure argues that it is more about the institutional system and how it is set up prior to students' entering the program that has a role in valuing students' service-learning experience (Chambers, 2009).

The most commonly referred to theoretical framework through which service-learning is investigated is experiential learning theory. Experiential education was mainly developed by Dewey (1938) and much later Kolb (1984). Some Canadian scholars such as Chambers (2009) and Gemmel and Clayton (2009) believe that students' experience in service-learning helps develop a student both cognitively and socially.

These four theoretical models (involvement theory, quality of effort, theory of student departure, and experiential learning theory) explained by Chambers (2009) are a way for institutions to frame what is most important to them in terms of student development.

Theoretical frameworks are one area of discussion when it comes to students' development. However, Canadian scholars Gemmel and Clayton (2009) have designed a rubric assessment for students that highlights the importance of student outcomes from their service-learning experience. The rubric includes categories such as leadership, learning opportunities, curricular CSL opportunities, cocurricular CSL opportunities,

support and recognition, and cogeneration of knowledge (Gemmel & Clayton, 2009, p. 16). Their rubric development comes from a holistic understanding of benefits in higher education, drawing from the Ontario Council of Academic Vice-Presidents (OCAV) and Council of Academic Standards. They use these councils' outlines and incorporate their ideas of learning outcomes in higher education to outcomes in service-learning through three categories: academic, societal and civic, and personal growth learning outcomes. Since the literature is in the developing stage of theoretical and rubric assessment, there are very few Canadian studies explicitly related to student outcomes. However, Nelson and Stroink (2010) performed a large qualitative study that examines student benefits through a food security model at Lakehead University in Ontario.

Through a contextually fluid partnership model, Nelson and Stroink (2010) found that students in their community service-learning placements increased their knowledge both academically and in the community as measured through a student survey pre- and postplacement. Their survey measured student academic experience, student academic skill set, students' levels of civic engagement, civic responsibility, civic awareness, knowledge of current events, community belonging, and barriers to community involvement (p.184). They note that within the past few decades there has been a wealth of positive feedback that suggests that service-learning is an engaged pedagogy. They found that there was positive feedback in students' academic skill set, civic awareness, knowledge of current events, and community belonging. They note that their study is also unique for researching the nature of perceived barriers that students faced in the service-learning context, these perceived barriers mainly being academic and work commitments as well as financial restraints. Nelson and Stroink believe that given higher education is

costly in the first place, this reduces students' ability to work and make income. In their conclusion, they assert that their study confirms that community service-learning challenges traditional pedagogies and epistemologies.

Since community service-learning exists for student learning, theoretical frameworks and rubric assessments in Canada have recently focused on student development. Nelson and Stroink (2010) argue that service-learning is an engaged pedagogy that allows students to think and create meaning in different ways. While empirical research has started to develop within the past 5 years, the Canadian literature does not discuss issues of student power and privilege.

### **American Literature on University**

Since the boom of service-learning in America during the 1990s, a large amount of literature has focused on various frameworks supporting the institutionalization of service-learning (Cruz & Giles, 2000). Themes that arise in examining the university's role in service-learning are (a) scholars inquiring into institutionalized assessment, (b) the limitations of the university in service-learning, and (c) the role of faculty support.

Major American scholars who discuss institutional frameworks and assessments include Furco, Holland, and Butin. Furco's (2002) self-assessment rubric is most often cited by American and Canadian scholars alike (Butin 2006b; Gemmel & Clayton, 2009). The core of his assessment outlines five dimensions that institutions need to engage in: (a) philosophy and mission of service-learning, (b) faculty support for and involvement in service-learning, (c) student support for and involvement in service-learning, (d) community participation and partnerships, and (e) institutional support for service-learning. This framework is a tool designed to measure the status of institutionalization.

Scholars in their institutions can use this to assess what the school has done well and to figure out what needs changing.

Furco (2002) focuses on one quintessential framework for institutional assessment, where as Holland (2001) provides a comprehensive assessment that gives faculty at any given university a way to create their own assessment from a holistic perspective. Holland defends that data collection has to happen under a specific analytical framework or else there is no purpose to research. Therefore, before any faculty design an assessment, they should be asking themselves what their purpose is in creating an assessment. Who needs this information? What resources are there to complete the assessment? How is this assessment going to produce usable results?

Once these questions have been asked, her theory of assessment takes a goal–variable–indicator–method design. Goal: What do we want to know? Variable: What will it look for? Indicator: What will be measured? Method: How will it be measured? (p. 55), then the specifics of what will be measured. For example, hours of participation, reactions to service-learning, and challenges to service.

Once it is known “what” will be measured, the final process is knowing “how” it will be measured. Methods include survey, observation, journals, or focus groups. This framework for a comprehensive assessment does not only serve the institution, but it needs to take place early in the institution’s partnerships in order to have sustainable relationships with the community.

Despite the work scholars have put into creating assessments and frameworks, there are considerable limits on the institution in their service-learning endeavours. Holland (2001) and Butin (2003) both acknowledge the limits. Holland specifies that it

may be hard to find an audience, resources, faculty, or time to follow through an assessment. Butin argues that assessment often becomes quantified and universal. However, he still asserts that a good place for universities to start is with Furco's rubric to help in the process of institutionalization (Butin, 2006b).

Butin's big endeavour is exploring the ethics and limitations behind the institutionalization of service-learning. Butin (2006b) argues that service-learning's biggest challenge is that the institutional rhetoric is not a realistic depiction of service-learning. One example is that service-learning in theory is reciprocal between the institution and the community, but in reality the university has an immense amount of power and privilege. He articulates, "specifically, service-learning scholarship and practice privileges volunteer activities done by individual students with high cultural capital for the sake of individuals with low cultural capital within the context of an academic class with ameliorative consequences" (Butin, 2003, p. 1678). He notes that part of this privilege the university perpetuates is because all concepts of service-learning are liberal epistemologies (i.e., Eurocentric). Butin, like other scholar such as Boyle-Baise et al. (2006), Boyle-Baise and Langford (2004), and Henry and Breyfogle (2006) recognize the amount of power that the institution carries that automatically puts limitations on service-learning's ability to be a transformative pedagogy.

Butin argues that the "honeymoon" stage of service-learning is over (Butin, 2006b, p. 475). The few service-learning directors that exist are part time, the budgets are small, there are nontenured faculty offering service-learning courses, and it is often in fields that are considered "soft skills." He also notes that most often, the faculty running service-learning are women and people of colour. He believes that the way to overcome

service-learning's place in the institution as an "add-on" is to give service-learning a permanent discipline home under "community studies" (Butin, 2006a).

Carving out space for service-learning as a discipline to be housed by the university will allow service-learning to flourish. Butin (2006a) argues that theoretically higher education is torn between scholarship and civic engagement, but if service-learning were disciplined, then faculty as well as students would not face this double bind. Community studies would also allow for service-learning pedagogy to be more easily afforded by various kinds of students. Currently service-learning pedagogy assumes that students are young, single, without children, and are full-time. Rather, in America, a third of students in university are over 25 and are part-time, and this population is growing (Butin, 2006a). Service-learning as a discipline would therefore broaden service-learning's student population. It would also help faculty as nontenured professors would not be worried about service-learning taking away their time from their research to try to make tenure, but instead it could be a part of their research to reach tenure. Also, institutionally, having an established home for service-learning would not put as many demands on service-learning researchers to produce quantifiable outcomes because service-learning as a discipline would already have legitimacy in the academy. Butin strongly believes that disciplining service-learning is the next step to removing major theoretical, pedagogical, and political barriers that are often discussed in the service-learning literature.

Another key theme in the American literature is the growing importance towards faculty support in the institutionalization of service-learning. Butin (2006a) touches on it frequently in his argument for community studies, as faculty often lack support and

funding in a service-learning context. Additionally, faculties have a daunting task of facilitating student learning from a very counternormative pedagogy (Clayton & Ash, 2004). Since a large amount of university teaching methods are about transmission of information, it can be difficult for some faculty to give up control and facilitate students in their own learning and meaning-making journey. Especially as students encounter uncomfortable situations in their placement, educators are to guide students in the process of critical reflection. This is why it is important that the institution allot reflection time for the educators themselves. Faculty teaching service-learning courses require more organizational time and resources for their classroom than the traditional classroom; thus the institution needs to take into consideration this barrier and allow for greater faculty support (Butin, 2006b).

For the past 2 decades, service-learning has focused on articulating ways to institutionally assess service learning. Only within the past 10 years have scholars paid more specific attention to the political limitations of service-learning as well as the growing attention towards how to provide faculty with greater support.

### **Canadian Literature on University**

Institutionalization of service-learning has been the major focus in the Canadian literature over the past decade. The first major institutionalization started in 1996 with the start of community service-learning at St. Francis Xavier University and has since been growing across Canada. The first key theme that arises from the discussion in the literature is over “community service-learning” as a term, and the definition of service-learning that follows. The second theme that is present is the need for a rubric of assessment for Canadian institutions. The third minor theme is examining the importance

of faculty support in service-learning. Another minor theme is examining institutional pedagogical approaches to service-learning. The final theme that a few scholars examine is the political power and prestige that institutions gain from service-learning and how this leads to an imbalance of power and a nonmutual learning relationship between the university and community partners.

Many Canadian articles discuss the long-standing history as well as the recent movement towards community service-learning in Canada and how it has grown from witnessing St. Francis Xavier's success of implementing a program in 1996 (Cameron, 2010; Fryer et al., 2007; Smith, 2010). In 1999 the university received funding from a Montreal based private organization, the J. W. McConnell Family Foundation (Cameron, 2010). In 2004, the Canadian Association of Community Service-Learning (CACSL) was established and later (in 2007) replaced Association with Alliance to reflect its decentralized structure, as it is mostly fueled by volunteers (Keshen, Moely, & Holland, 2010). In 2005 the J. W. McConnell Family Foundation had a national competition providing millions to universities who established community service-learning programs. Ten universities across Canada receive funding including the Universities of Alberta, British Columbia, Lakehead, Nippising, Ottawa, Sherbrooke, St. Francis Xavier, Trent, Trois-Riveres, and Wilfrid Laurier. In 2009 Canada hosted the first International Association for Research on Service-Learning and Community Engagement (IARSLCE) conference (Keshen et al., 2010). Keshen et al. (2010) highlight how, out of 300 attendees, a third of the presenters were Canadian. Currently, community service-learning exists in over 50 Canadian universities, which is two thirds of the national total. However, these programs have developed in the past 5 years. Therefore, it is important to

keep in mind that while institutionalization of community service-learning is a recent development, its pedagogical roots extend back much further into North American educational history. Thus, the literature explores how community service-learning operates as a term and what it means.

In the Canadian context, “community service-learning” as a term has been interrogated by some scholars. Cameron (2010) and Smith (2009, 2010) for example point to the word “service” in service-learning as being highly problematic. Cameron notes that “it [service] inadvertently reinforced for some the notion that benefits flowed only from the university to the community whereas experience has shown that frequently it is the university, both faculty and students, that benefits disproportionately” (p. 5). Smith notes that both Americans and Canadians have grappled with the term, as it evokes old colonial thinking instead of reciprocal learning. She also argues that the word “service” is problematic to use for three key reasons. First, it is not taken seriously, particularly by faculty who believe “service-learning” or “experiential education” connotes some sort of “touchy-feely” exercise (Smith, 2010, p. 27). Second, the word “service” outside the university in North American society often refers to capitalist terms of “customer service” or paying someone for something in return. Third, service can also be confused inside the university as some form of volunteerism, when service-learning in theory is much more complex. The word “service” is first problematic for the university; however, Smith (2010) also argues that the Canadian rhetorical emphasis on “community” within community service-learning can also be contested.

The use of the word “community” in Canada was possibly an attempt to give more legitimacy to national rhetoric, making Canada appear more unified. CSL as a term

helps give more prestige to the university because it is more than volunteerism (Smith, 2010). Fryer believes using the word “community” as an important aspect of the institutionalization process (Fryer et al., 2007). She argues that Canada’s harsh climate and rural history make community an important aspect of Canadian culture. However, Fryer notes that creating real and meaningful community is a challenge to do in a national context in Canada because it is such a large country that spans five and a half time zones. Therefore, the rhetoric behind using the word “community” is a way to institutionalize service-learning that is unique to the Canadian context. Scholars have grappled with the term, but also how the term is defined at the institutional level.

As previously stated in the Canadian Literature on Community section (p. 14), most Canadian scholars will use CACSL’s definition of community service-learning. Some of these scholars take this definition and attempt to apply it, while others challenge it. Cameron (2010) notes that it is often difficult for universities to explain what that definition means. However, he finds it helpful when schools define what community service-learning is not. It is not a co-op placement, job-shadowing, research practicum, or internship (Cameron, 2010, p. 9). He argues that CSL is a combination of student learning in the classroom accompanied by a field experience. However, in the institution, this can take on many forms. Gemmel and Clayton (2009) believe institutional implementation can be in any discipline, program, or course, as long as its values line up with student learning, community needs, and mission of the university. Thus, implementation of service-learning can take on a variety of forms. Furthermore, since implementation of service-learning is in the works, a Canadian assessment rubric has not fully been created yet.

An institutional assessment that is unique to the Canadian context of service-learning is not a well-developed area within the literature. Gemmel and Clayton (2009) probably provide the most detailed and comprehensive rubric for all three elements of service-learning: students, community, and the university. Their five key areas of institutional assessment are: philosophy and mission, leadership, faculty support and involvement, coordination, and recognition of community-engagement scholarship (Gemmel & Clayton, 2009, p. 17). They make a footnote that for a more detailed and comprehensive rubric, practitioners should see Furco's self-assessment for institutionalization of service-learning in higher education. Smith (2009) also recommends service-learning faculty to examine Furco's detailed institutionalization framework.

Smith's position as a faculty member who teaches service-learning courses at the University of Calgary also provides her some insight on the role faculty has in the service-learning context. Smith (2009) argues that faculty need to change the way they talk about service-learning. Similar to Butin's concerns for ethics within institutionalization, Smith believes that rhetorical criticism is needed in order to promote critical thinking and to shift the balance of power that the institution has. She notes that her Canadian colleagues are frustrated by the reality of Butin's concern for ethics; however, she argues that his work is important. Other scholars note other troublesome problems with faculty. Fryer et al. (2007) argue that faculty members in Canada have little or no experience working in community settings or working in collaboration with people who have a different agenda than the university. For example, faculty may be working with a community partner that may want students to do certain tasks that are different

than the tasks that the faculty had in mind. Since community partners are looking to complete tasks on a day-to-day setting; they do not necessarily want to create new projects for incoming students. Cameron (2010) also speaks to faculty's role in supporting students in the service-learning context. He notes that academic culture does not like failure, but service-learning by nature is experiential education. Thus, failure is inevitable, and faculty members have to be open to this innovation.

Another theme in the literature moves towards developing a service-learning pedagogy or an approach that institutions can follow. Chambers (2009) spends a great deal of his article fleshing out three approaches that institutions can use to frame their service-learning mission. He argues that philanthropic, social justice, or social transformation approaches are three distinctive, yet linked approaches to service-learning and should be examined as a continuum. More important, he argues that each institution needs to choose a path for a specific reason because each community will have different needs. Chambers makes a note that it is important that each school constructs a policy and that this is most important for the community's sake as the policies will reflect what kind of bridges the school wants to build with the community. He notes that in the Canadian context, with the increasing immigrant population, service-learning can be a positive force in local Canadian communities. However, Chambers does not critically address the imbalance of power that can occur in service-learning, as the institution at the end of the day still holds power over the relationships they want to form with community members.

The final theme that very few Canadian scholars touch on is the issue of power that the university has with the students and particularly with the community. Smith

(2009, 2010) in both articles touches on this power dynamic, but from the theoretical perspective of rhetoric studies she argues that the institution needs to change the way they talk about service-learning. She defends that service-learning is too focused on the university. She states,

For this reason I would recommend that local CSL partnership-brokering offices ideally exist outside of the university, with strategic oversight, funding and human resources provided equally by each major partner. This is currently the situation at Trent University, where it works very well. The external location will better enable it to treat various faculties and programs equally, and will prevent the CSL alliances from focusing too much on the university side of the partnership. (Smith, 2010, p. 16)

Smith (2010) sees the amount of power she has as a faculty member of the university. Thus, she argues that the university needs to redraw boundaries of their relationship with the community. Similarly, Cameron (2010) examines the barriers that the institution has in creating service-learning. This includes the lack of student impact on the community and how the university can sometimes be an exploiter of community members. He even states that some Aboriginal communities refuse to have a partnership with service-learning faculty. Cameron and Smith address the limits to institutionalization of service-learning, while other scholars such as Gemmel and Clayton (2009), Chambers (2009), and Fryer et al. (2007) fail to critically examine the political power structure behind the institution that privileges the university.

Gemmel and Clayton (2009) examine university outcomes in terms of prestige. Universities are competitive; therefore, service-learning is another way of competition. If

universities can acquire enough attention in the community for their service-learning programs, they may be able to receive funding. Gemmel and Clayton do not acknowledge that this competitive nature of the university means that service-learning outcomes become about funding rather than the mutual reciprocal learning between students and community members. Similarly, Chambers (2009) argues for a philanthropic, social justice, and social transformation approach without entirely acknowledging issues of multicultural diversity and White privilege that dominate the university and students over community members. Fryer et al. (2007) also discuss how the goal of service-learning is to enhance students' university experience, but at what cost? Usually, it is at the cost of "marginalized" community members that may not benefit from a short-term service-learning placement (Cameron, 2010).

Given this gap in the literature, my research will interrogate this issue of university voice and privilege more fully through Foucault's understandings of power. To do this, my research will investigate what information Ontario universities are giving publically about service-learning. Each university has a narrative about service-learning, and I want to interrogate what voices are present in their service-learning story: Is it the university staff talking? Is it the faculty? Is it the students? Is it community partners? Is it community members? This research is designed to fill in that gap in the institutionalized framework that is lacking in service-learning within Canadian universities.

## CHAPTER THREE METHODOLOGY

This chapter outlines the methodological approach, research design, sample, data collection and analysis, methodological assumptions, and ethical considerations of the study of service-learning narratives in three Ontario universities. This study uses qualitative research methods in a purposeful sample of three universities using content analysis by engaging with the universities' stories of service-learning as described by information made available on their public websites. Throughout this chapter, I will refer to my study as content or narrative analysis. I will use the terms interchangeably, as I explain why below.

### Research Design

My study is conceptually designed as a blending of traditional content and narrative analysis, since I am examining the public content related to service-learning in order to understand each university's constructed narrative on service-learning. According to literary scholars, my research design takes the form of both directed content analysis and paradigmatic analysis of narrative (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005; Oliver, 1998).

My research is designed around a qualitative model of directed content analysis. According to Hsieh and Shannon (2005), directed content analysis is an approach used in qualitative research when theory is used to guide the given research question. Conventional content analysis is often used to understand a given phenomenon. Since service-learning as a phenomenon is already well established, understood in the literature, and often defined by service-learning websites, I am using Foucault's ideas on power as my directive approach to help describe the phenomenon. His ideas on power were used to help form my main research question which examines "Whose voice is present? Who is

the intended audience of that voice?” Since, the research design is directed by this question, it already outlines key areas of research and the sets of relationships that will establish the variables. Theory is foundational to my research design and the initial coding scheme.

Oliver’s (1998) description of paradigmatic analysis of narrative is similar to the theoretical understanding used in directed content analysis. Paradigmatic analysis of narrative takes in the documented stories and identifies the stories in terms of the theoretical categories that have already been established at the beginning of the research (Oliver, 1998).

Therefore, both directed content analysis and paradigmatic analysis of narrative perform qualitative research methods through using theory to help frame the research questions used. Understanding the description of the narrative is powerful, as Oliver (1998) writes, “stories show whose voices are heard, and whose are silenced; whose histories are valued, and whose are devalued” (p. 245). My research is designed using the lens of power to shape my question about understanding whose voice is present and who is the intended audience of that voice (i.e., community partners, students, or faculty).

### **Sample and Population/Site**

The samples I have chosen for my content analysis are the public service-learning websites posted by Brock, Wilfrid Laurier, and Lakehead Universities. These schools were chosen as part of a purposeful selection in creating my sample of collected case studies from Ontario universities. Each site was selected for specific reasons.

Brock University was purposefully selected for my personal connection of attending it during my graduate studies. As a Master of Education student interested in

learning more about service-learning, I observed Brock's experience with service-learning as a preliminary start into my insight on the topic. As part of my interest I attended some sessions from the brown-bag lunch series put on by the Service-Learning Resource Centre. The sessions I attended discussed the reflections on international service-learning partnerships and institutional measures of pedagogical excellence. During the past year, I also sought information from the resource centre to assist in my preliminary research for my data collection. From my own research, I struggled finding Canadian resources that spoke to the nature of service-learning from a national perspective. The service-learning coordinator provided me with multiple references to start my research on Canadian service-learning literature. Additionally, being a part of the email list, I received newsletters and monthly updates about what was happening with service-learning at Brock. Thus, I chose Brock University because of my personal investment in the school.

Wilfrid Laurier University was also purposefully selected because I completed a community-service learning placement through Laurier during the third year of my undergraduate degree in winter 2011. I took a Religion and Culture course called Multiculturalism in Canada. It was a third year course with 10 students in the class. For my community service-learning placement I selected working as an English as a second language assistant in a Kitchener high school. I thoroughly enjoyed the experience, making it one of my personal favourite learning opportunities during my time at Laurier. I felt that community service-learning provided me with knowledge that could help me write a detailed final paper about what I learned in the course. Additionally, I was pleased that I could add the experience to my resume. I enjoyed it so much that in my graduate

studies I often researched it as a topic. However, the more I read and the more graduate courses I have taken through the lens of social and cultural contexts in education, I began to realize my place of privilege and power that I had as a student ESL assistant in the community. My personal experience and my reflection upon that experience made Wilfrid Laurier a purposeful selection to include in my sample of schools.

Lakehead University was chosen because its community service-learning program has often been cited within the small amount of Canadian service-learning literature (Cameron, 2010; Nelson & Stroink, 2010). Lakehead has a unique Food Security Research Network that runs its programs with the university, students, and community partners through community-service learning (Cameron, 2010). I purposefully selected Lakehead because of the attention drawn to the uniqueness of its community service-learning, and I wanted to investigate how their website narrates the story of community service-learning.

As part of this sample of three university websites, I will use all content related to service-learning as data to analyze. This includes all text, images, quotes, format, outline, additional web links, and documents.

### **Data Collection**

The raw data from the service-learning websites was collected systematically. I did this by typing into Google search engine “*Service-learning Brock University,*” “*Community Service-learning Wilfrid Laurier University,*” and “*Community Service-learning Lakehead University.*”

I had success, immediately finding the service-learning homepage for Brock and Wilfrid Laurier, but not with Lakehead University. Their homepage was more difficult to

locate because “Community Service-Learning” is not the key phrase, but through “Food Security Research Network” page, I was able to find their content on their community service-learning program.

I collected and saved these data. This process involved saving every webpage that was on each university’s service-learning website. Over the summer I realized that some schools might be in the process of updating their websites. Therefore, I thought it would be more credible to save all content from each school on the same day, for the sake of impartiality. I saved all information on May 17, 2013. Anything that was posted on any page of their service-learning website I considered valid information for my research on the universities’ representation of service-learning. Once I had all data saved, I was then able to code and analyze the data.

### **Data Analysis**

I examined the raw data I had saved and collected systematically. I first wrote down my initial impressions of each school website. Was the information easy to find? Was it presented in user-friendly format? Was the website appealing?

After noting my preliminary impressions, I wrote down a description of each webpage. I started with the opening homepage from each school’s website. I went through each page and coded the data accordingly. I made notes describing the content and then a list of emerging themes. I looked for themes from the content in terms of key words, ideas/concepts, and semantics in order to establish an open coding system (Berg, 2004). I coded the data this way while keeping in mind my key research question framed by Foucault’s understanding of power: Whose voice is present? Who is the intended audience of that voice?

I coded the data first by finding key words within the content. As noted in my literature review, Smith (2010) states that within the American and Canadian service-learning literature there are key “god terms” and “devil terms.” She specifically notes how “community” is one of the “god terms” used by Canadian service-learning practitioners to mark Canada as a giving and caring nation (Smith, 2010). Examining for key words is pertinent to my analysis because I am looking for whose voice is present, with a particular interest in community because the literature on service-learning often leaves community partners’ voices secondary to the voices of the university and students.

I also coded the data examining for key ideas and concepts. Like most qualitative content analyses, the goal is to look for emerging themes that occur within the raw data (Berg, 2004). I chose three purposeful samples to examine the representation of each university’s narrative on service-learning. Therefore, I made note of the themes connected to what the voices in the narrative were saying, but I also kept my mind open and made note of themes that did not fit into my original research question.

Semantics is the final emerging category I used to code my raw data. In narrative analysis of documented content, part of the role of the researcher is to examine the meaning behind the words (Berg 2004). This is why my core research question also asks who is the intend audience of that voice.

Through an analysis coded in terms of key words, ideas/concepts, and semantics, emerging themes spoke to the narrative of service-learning.

### **Methodology Assumptions (Scope and Limitations)**

Qualitative directed content analysis operates under the assumption that the theoretical concept used to interrogate the raw data will have a strong bias finding

information that is related to its original question. This methodology offers a narrow scope which is not without its limitations, challenges, and disadvantages.

Content analysis by nature is limited to what has been recorded (Berg, 2004). It is also limited in terms of testing casual relationships between variables in experimental research, which is why content analysis is more suited for descriptive research (Berg, 2004). Therefore, I am automatically limited by content analysis because I am using it to describe an aspect of service-learning as a phenomenon. I also had to be careful in my research not to overuse theory. According to Hsieh and Shannon (2005), “an overemphasis on the theory can blind researchers to contextual aspects of the phenomenon” (p. 1283).

My research is also limited in terms of raw data. There may be some information that is protected that cannot be posted publically on the schools’ websites (Creswell, 2009). There might be information about service-learning that is hidden or posted elsewhere on the university website that is not located through the service-learning page. Another consideration that must be made in any document analysis is the fact that information I come across may not be authentic or accurate. Therefore, before my research, I made the methodological assumption that any information that was put on each university’s service-learning website was fair to my research, since it was likely vetted before being posted online.

### **Ethical Considerations**

Since my research is a document analysis of public content posted on university websites, I did not need ethics clearance for my research. Nevertheless, my own personal

position and bias must be accounted for in order for the reader to have an accurate account of my personal disposition.

In the winter of 2011, I completed a community service-learning placement in a Religion and Culture course called Multiculturalism in Canada offered through Wilfrid Laurier University. During my placement I assisted in an ESL classroom in a Kitchener high school and completed 20 hours of placement from January to April 2011.

I thoroughly enjoyed the course, particularly because of the community service-learning component. I appreciated the fact that my education placed my learning outside of the traditional classroom. I liked working with the 10 young adults who were in the ESL classroom and learning about their lives. I also appreciated being able to ask my ESL teacher supervisor questions about her experience with education, ESL programming, and working alongside immigrant students. From the experience, I was able to write a paper on multiculturalism in the context of Ontario education. It was one of the papers I wrote in university that seemed to matter because I was not merely using secondary sources, I was writing from what I had learned and observed during my community service-learning placement. From the experience, I became an advocate for the benefits for students in community service-learning.

When I entered graduate school studying Social and Cultural Contexts of Education two years later, I wanted to research and learn more about service-learning in higher education. In combination from my personal research and graduate courses I began to reflect on my service-learning experience in light of my place of privilege and the power I carried as a student in service-learning. I wrote of my struggle with this issue

through a critical reflection piece called Understanding My Place of Privilege:  
Reflections from a Former Service-Learning Student,

What did I wish I knew then, that I know now? I wish I were educated about my place of power and privilege. I was the one coming to “serve,” yet I exploited. To put it crudely, I was able to come in like a scientist, use the students as lab rats, write about them, then exit conveniently when I desired. Here, I was supposed to help them? Really I was just helping myself because of my place of power and privilege. (Glenn, 2013)

Delving into the issue of power that occurs in the service-learning context has been one of the greatest struggles I have grappled with this past year learning and reflecting. Thus, it inspired me to want to examine the university’s role and awareness of power and privilege. It is important for the reader to keep in mind that this is an issue I have dwelled on for the past year, and I have launched inquiries into my own experience with power and privilege. Since this is my disposition, I will be reading each school’s service-learning narratives through the lens of power.

As a researcher, I come with a specific research question and intent to find information, but I do not want to become set on seeing only what I want to see. While my goal is to answer my research question, I am keeping my eyes open when analyzing the raw data to let the information I collect tell its own story. As previously mentioned, I am aware of the challenges and disadvantages of direct content and paradigmatic narrative analysis. I take these methodological assumptions and my own disposition into my research, as I attempt to be aware of my bias to not let it hinder the validity and the importance of this research.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS**

The goal of this study was to answer the original three research questions for the purposes of understanding power and privilege that operate within the service-learning context. The three questions asked:

1. How easy is it to find and locate service-learning information?
2. How does each institution define service-learning?
3. Whose voice is present? Who is the intended audience of that voice?
  - (a) Community partners,
  - (b) Students,
  - (c) Faculty,
  - (d) Other.

Thus, the findings will be presented with the answers to these questions as found after examining each university service-learning website. The findings will be presented school by school in the order of Brock, Laurier, and Lakehead.

### **Brock University**

#### **1. How easy is it to find and locate service-learning information?**

Brock's service-learning website is very small in terms of content but is laid out in an easy-to-follow, user-friendly format. Brock's website (Brock University, n.d.) was accessed on May 17, 2013. The homepage is listed as the first link "SERVICE LEARNING," followed by two links on the left-hand side, "SERVICE LEARNING COURSES" and "SERVICE-LEARNING RESOURCE CENTRE." Their homepage has three images, accompanied by text. And each image and text rotates through. The three service-learning pages are easy to understand, although there is a lack of consistency in the text concerning grammar. Two of the links say "SERVICE LEARNING" and the

final link has a dash “SERVICE-LEARNING.” Brock’s service-learning website is easily accessible and user-friendly, but they have not paid attention to the finer details.

## **2. How does Brock University define service-learning?**

Brock University defines service-learning at the beginning of their homepage as “service-learning combines academic study, community involvement and critical reflection. Through service-learning, students collaborate with others within or beyond the university, engaging with public issues in ways designed to develop particular knowledge, skills or abilities” (Brock University, n.d., accessed May 17, 2013). This is the only clearly outlined definition of service-learning throughout Brock’s website. They articulate that service-learning is comprised of three components: course work, community engagement, and self-reflection. Its subsequent description of service-learning reflects that it is a new educational experience designed to enhance learning amongst undergraduates and graduates students.

## **3. Whose voice is present?**

### **Community**

The presence of community voice is hidden and almost nonexistent throughout Brock’s service-learning website and its provided links. However, community presence can be found in two images. The first image appears on the homepages and includes what is assumed to be children in the community. In the picture there are several children and four university students. They are all standing in a circle, holding onto a blanket and tossing a ball in the air. The children in the photo appear to be from a variety of racial backgrounds, and the students are all White (three female, one male).

The second image is on the page describing some sample service-learning courses that students may take. The image coincides with the course, International Perspectives on Development through Sport, Health, and Physical Education. The image is of several children and a few students running around pylons. The two students in the image appear to be White and female, while the children are of both genders and appear to be Hispanic.

It can be assumed that the children are community members and therefore their presence online to an observer of the website denotes that these children, mostly from a variety of racial backgrounds, are part of the service-learning endeavour that takes place at Brock. These images are the only visible presence of community members on the website.

### **Students**

There is a small student voice that comes across from Brock's narrative on service-learning. From the eight images associated across the three service-learning pages, all appear to have students present in them.

The three photos that rotate through on the homepage display two different roles students could have in a service-learning placement. In the first photo the six White students (four female, two male) are posing around a large potted plant that they appear to be working on. The second photo is of the four White students (three female, one male) who are in a circle with several children that appear to be racially diverse, holding a blanket and throwing a ball in the air. The third image is of several students in two rows, posing for a group photo in front of three large potted plants. All the students are White, 10 are female and five are male. The small amount of text that accompanies these

images brings out themes that these students are being active and are creating meaningful community engagement.

Additionally, there are four small images that appear on the sample of service-learning course selection webpage. These images have students appearing in various roles as food servers, garden planters, children's leaders, and in business positions. The first image appears to be all White students serving food in a larger community kitchen. The image is too small to tell if the students are female or male. The second image is of a group of students working in a garden with their backs turned. It is difficult to see the race and gender of the students. The third image displays what appear to be two White female students and several Hispanic children running around pylons. The last image is a posed photo of four students (two female and two male) and perhaps a professor or community member, standing in professional attire. All of them appear to be White and there for business purposes, as the text discusses how the faculty of business incorporates service-learning into their program.

The final image appears on the Service-Learning Resource Centre webpage. The image is of two White students (one female, one male), who are sitting at a table reading a book. There appears to be a study area in the background, with other tables and students in the background.

Visually, students appear to have a voice attached to their physical presence that is represented on the service-learning webpage. However, their voice is limited to appear just in the images and not as much in the text. Their voice appears to display service-learning as an active and engaged learning experience that is meaningful to themselves and their community.

## **University**

The university's voice is dominant throughout the service-learning homepage, disproportionate to the other two stakeholders in the service-learning endeavour. It is important to note that as this is the university's interpretation of service-learning, therefore their voice by consequence would be most present in describing their story on service-learning. Their voice is present in their homepage, their sample of service-learning courses, and the Service-Learning Resource Centre. Thematically, the university's voice narrates service-learning at Brock to be faculty centered and student centered.

### **Who is the intended audience of that voice?**

The intended audience of the website appears to be geared mostly at faculty and students and, to a very small extent, community partners. On the homepage, the university offers a list of faculty names that have won 2013 Incentive Grants. The university is voicing a point of accomplishment of the instructors who have either performed research or incorporated aspects of service-learning into their classrooms. The list of faculty receiving grants for 2013, displayed on the service-learning homepage, is an example of this faculty-centeredness. It appears that this section is a way to show other faculty members that they too could receive funding if they incorporated service-learning into their classrooms. The other audience besides faculty could be towards investors and community partners to show that Brock is receiving funding for their efforts in service-learning.

The description of four service-learning courses voices a very student-centric narrative of service-learning. The description of Foundations for Community

Engagement presents the course to be one where students are able to choose their path of learning based on their own “convictions.” Another course, Experiential Education in Recreation and Leisure, discusses how the course is “student-directed.”

The Service-Learning Resource Centre webpage articulates the university voice that predominantly highlights the resources available for faculty support and at times emphasizes the resource centre for student support. The resource centre lists four ways they can help, through (a) service-learning course design, (b) projects and partnerships, (c) support for staff and students, and (d) a variety of resources. These four resources largely target faculty and do not specifically talk about support for community partners or clients.

Thus, the large majority of Brock’s service-learning website targets faculty members and students through offering information about incentive grants, courses for students, and resources directed mainly at faculty and students.

### **Wilfrid Laurier University**

#### **1. How easy is it to find and locate service-learning information?**

Laurier’s community service-learning (CSL) website is easy to find and user friendly. Laurier’s website (Wilfrid Laurier University, n.d.) was accessed May 17, 2013. Their website is laid out with tabs on the left-hand column to direct the reader to fields of interest. It listed from top-down “Staff Listing, Documents, Forms, About Community Service-Learning, Course List, Students, Faculty, Community Partners, Resources, About the Centre, Location, and Volunteering.” Each of these links went to a direct page and sometimes provided additional links related to the topic.

I would often come across several pdf and word documents that were linked as additional resources on different pages, but their section called “Documents” housed all 23 of the attachments used as additional support material.

Thus, the layout of the website and accessibility of materials was well thought out for any given user, whether that is students, faculty, or community partners. These 23 documents will be described in further detail in the following sections.

## **2. How does Wilfrid Laurier University define service-learning?**

Laurier’s community service-learning (CSL) website offers a consistent reminder of their definition of service-learning, with little variation. They offer a definition of service-learning on their homepage, in their CSL video, in several documents, and their strategic planning.

Most definitions used to define what CSL is at Laurier often state that it is a combination of course work, community engagement, and critical reflection. The website’s first sentence on the homepage defines CSL as “meaningful community service with classroom instruction and critical reflection” (Wilfrid Laurier University, n.d., accessed May 17, 2013). The video on the homepage explains that CSL “is engaged community-university partnering that integrates teaching, learning, and research with meaningful community service and collaboration.” In the “About Community Service-Learning” portion of the website, they redefine CSL. They state “Community Service-Learning (CSL) integrates meaningful community service with classroom instruction and critical reflection to enrich the learning experience and strengthen communities for the common good.” Additionally, the Student Handbook, Faculty Handbook, and Getting Started with Community Service-Learning document put together by the Laurier Centre

for Community Service-Learning (LCCSL) and Teaching Support Services (TSS) use the same definition. The only other time they use a different definition of CSL is in the CSL procedures for Brantford Campus document, where they use the definition from the Canadian Alliance of Community Service-Learning. Their definition states “Community Service-Learning is an educational approach that integrates service in the community with intentional learning activities. Within effective CSL efforts, members of both educational institutions and community organizations work together toward outcomes that are mutually beneficial.”

Although Laurier offers four definitions of CSL throughout their website, there are key consistencies on how they define service-learning. CSL to Laurier includes: course work, community placement, and self-reflection.

Additionally, Laurier attempts to define CSL by clarifying what it is not. In the Faculty Handbook they state that CSL is not a volunteer or community service program because these do not include a reflective component. Service-learning is also not a practicum, internship, or co-op because the students, within these contexts, benefit from career connections. Also, mutual learning and giving to the community are not components of practicums, internships, or co-ops.

Thus, Laurier remains largely consistent with their definition of CSL throughout their website by repeatedly defining what it is and what it is not.

### **3. Whose voice is present?**

#### **Community**

Community voice has a fairly visible presence in Laurier’s narrative on CSL, although it is slightly secondary to the voices represented by the university and students.

Laurier's CSL homepage, course descriptions, and community partner pages offer the largest representation of community voice. Where community voices are almost completely absent is in the additional resource documents. However, overall, the voices of community partners are present throughout a large majority of Laurier's CSL website.

The Laurier CSL homepage provides a balance of community partner voices along with faculty and student voices as evidenced in their video on CSL, where a community partner is quoted, and the main sign-in for community partners on their homepage.

The video introducing CSL at Laurier provides the names of 12 people and their experience with CSL. From these 12, five of them were community partners with Laurier's CSL. During the video they discussed themes of their organization's success and appreciation of the students for their dedication. Another community partner spoke to the struggles they were having with government funding for their organization and how the student presence at their workplace was a form of building community.

Community partner voice is also evidenced by the quote from one partner listed along the right-hand column of the homepage. The quote from a community coordinator discusses similar themes that other partners had alluded to in the video of organizational success and appreciation for the students' role in that. The community partner states:

We have found working with CSL student volunteers to be an interesting and useful experience. It has been interesting because the students bring a novel perspective to our efforts and are conscientious in working out how to reach an objective. It has been useful because they have done work that has helped us to fulfill our mandate. (Wilfrid Laurier University, n.d., accessed May 17, 2013)

The last component where community presence is visible on the homepage is that the sign-in for community partners is conveniently located at the bottom of the page. Additionally, as part of the designated sign-in area, Laurier has provided a link to their main section dedicated to providing information to community partners. There is a large community partner presence on the homepage of Laurier's CSL website. Their presence is not as strong throughout the CSL website, although the university does make an effort to include their voice where student and faculty voices are present.

Community partner voices are present randomly throughout CSL course descriptions. Laurier provides a list of courses that offer a CSL component at both the Waterloo and Brantford campuses. For some of the courses, there is an icon that links to a detailed course description. Within these descriptions, there are usually one to four quotes from students, instructors, and community partners describing their thoughts on the course. There were 12 courses that offered a detailed description and included 24 quotes from CSL members. From the 24 quotes, six quotes were from community partners. One of these six was a community partner who also was an instructor for one of the courses. While community voices are less heard overall throughout the course descriptions, the university is intentional by including quotes from community partners.

Within the community voices, they often talked about CSL being beneficial for both students and their organization, and occasionally praised the university. Community voices, listed in the course descriptions, often talked about how students were able to learn from the community organization because it gave students an outlet to put the theory they were learning into practice with firsthand experience. Many of the partners also spoke to students becoming more aware, advocates for social justice, and becoming

engaged citizens. The community voices also provided a sense of appreciation for the students because they were able to either run or expand their programs. A few partners also made specific reference of appreciation to the university for preparing the students but also for handling a significant amount of the logistics in the CSL operation, such as holding a clinic for the students to get their tuberculosis skin tests. The community voices presented in Laurier's narrative of CSL mostly discussed the students, the success of their organization, and thankfulness to the university for their resources.

The voices of community partners are also evident on the website for community partners. The main page for community partners includes goals and benefits of CSL accompanied by a quote from a community partner. From the three goals listed for community partners, there is only one goal that exclusively could benefit a community organization and the clients that they serve. The other two goals are more beneficial for the students. The quote at the bottom of the page from the community partner highlights the positives of service-learning, making reference to the importance of the students' presence in their organization for the sake of their clients and their program's success.

Community partner voices are most evident in the FAQs page for Community Partners. This webpage asks and answers questions that community partners would have if they were interested in being a part of Laurier's CSL experience. The 12 questions listed are followed by simple, but detailed answers. It is evident that community voice is given high priority on this page. Overall, considering that the university is narrating the CSL page, they attempt to give community presence and voice to those examining the Community Partners webpages.

There is an online presence of community partner voices which is most evident on the homepage, course list, and community partners section. However, community voices are minimal in the additional documents that are posted throughout the website but are all catalogued in their documents section. Laurier's CSL has provided additional pdf and word document support materials and forms. From the 23 documents listed, none explicitly offered community voices as a part of these materials.

Nonetheless, community voices were well represented and were balanced respectively with student and university voices throughout Laurier's CSL website.

### **Student**

Student voices are given a high priority throughout Laurier's CSL narrative. Student presence is usually the first to appear, whether that is on the homepage, course descriptions, in the additional documents, or the student section. Student voices are not present however on the "How to make it awesome" webpage. This is a place where I was surprised not to find student voices. I expected to see student voices here because they are often present in the form of quotes on most other service-learning pages.

On the homepage, student voices are evident in the video, images, the student quote, the link to facebook and twitter, and the sign-in to their CSL information.

Within the video, three student voices are present and discuss the benefits of CSL. The two themes they discuss the most are how CSL helped them understand theory because they put it into practice, and how CSL helped their future career goals. Although the video mostly has professors and community partners discussing Laurier CSL for marketing purposes, the student voices were still prevalent in the video.

It also appears that students have a strong presence and voice on the homepage as evidenced by the images they have posted. From the six images posted, four have pictures of people in them, and in all four of these pictures, it appears that students (i.e., young, 20s, male or female, various ethnicities) are in these photos.

Additionally, student quotes appear first on the right-hand side of the homepage. The student quotes, “Community Service-Learning is a refreshing university experience because it dares to colour outside the lines of the classroom” (Wilfrid Laurier University, n.d., accessed May 17, 2013).

The right-hand side of the page also contains links to Laurier’s CSL happenings on facebook and twitter. On these websites, student presence is evident both in 33 “likes” and 96 “followers” but also in images and texts of student accomplishments and activity within CSL that have taken place since the creation of these websites in February 2013.

The homepage also contains the sign-in for the students to access. Additionally, they have provided a link to the student main page for questions and exploration around CSL at Laurier. Throughout the homepage, students’ voices are prominent in the video, images, leading quotes, links to facebook and twitter, and the student sign-in portal.

Student voices are present throughout the detailed course descriptions, discussing themes of theory to practice, creating meaningful social justice, having fun, and helping them with networking and future careers. From the 24 quotes used in 12 course descriptions, 11 quotes were from students. Most students discussed how CSL was a new and beneficial learning experience for them because they were able to go beyond the classroom and see how theories operated in real-life situations. Many also noted that they felt like they were making a meaningful contribution to their local community and were

becoming advocates of social justice. A few students talked about how the experience created some excitement and fun to their learning as opposed to reading course material and writing exams. Another common response of students was to talk about how their placement provided them with personal insight about their career goals. Student voices commonly presented a narrative of service-learning that highlighted their experiences that benefited and enriched their academic and personal lives.

Student voices also were apparent to a lesser extent throughout some of the additional documents and resource material that the LCCSL provided. Although the voice was mainly that of the university through the LCCSL or TSS, they often included segments of students' quotes at the beginning or throughout their documents.

Student voices are evidenced throughout the section of the CSL page for students. On the student main page there is a student quote, a link to the student handbook, and a section where students have voiced their FAQs. The student voice on the main page talks about CSL in light of how exciting it was and how it influenced future career plans. Similarly, the student quote that starts the handbook made reference to CSL being a deeply personal learning experience that she will carry into her future career. The FAQs section hosts 10 common questions students would have concerning CSL, followed by answers to those questions. There is a visible presence of student voice on the student section of the website.

Where student voice is limited is in the how to make it awesome section of the CSL page for students. It is a page dedicated to providing tips to help students have a positive CSL experience. The page however does not list students' thoughts on how to make it awesome; it is tips from the university staff on how to make it awesome.

Overall, student voices are given high priority throughout the website and are often represented first in Laurier's CSL narrative.

### **University**

Since Laurier's CSL website is the university's narrative, it is natural to assume that their voice would be dominant of all three stakeholder voices. However, this section will highlight where voices within the university, such as faculty instructor or LCCSL and TSS staff, are prominent. The university voice is most noticeable in the additional documents and resources, the about the centre section, the faculty section, in the course descriptions, and on the homepage.

From the 23 pdf and word documents listed, almost all were entirely the voice of the university, either through LCCSL or TSS staff. The themes discussed in these documents were related to information and handbooks for faculty, and forms for faculty, students, and community partners. Most were related to educational information for instructors interested to advance their careers and be engaged within the community or strategies and ideas they could use within their classrooms such as ideas for student involvement, reflection, and communication. Thus, most documents are the voice of LCCSL or TSS voicing strategies and implementation resources for faculty.

Another place where the university has a prominent voice is the about the centre page. This page lists the centre's vision, mission, values, and goals. This section is the heart of the university voice, to talk about their strategic planning as an institution. The voice of the university expresses a desire to give Laurier students the best possible learning experience in combination with assisting community needs. However, the university's desire to assist the community is secondary to that of the students.

Laurier's five key goals: program quality, increased accessibility, build reciprocal, meaningful partnerships, leadership, and strategic management, all speak to the betterment and advancement of students. They also argue that community support can be offered through program quality, build reciprocal, meaningful partnerships, and strategic management. However, when discussing their goals of increased accessibility and leadership, they both fail to discuss how they want to increase accessibility for community partners and clients and create opportunities for leadership among community partners. Thus, the about the centre webpage voices the university's key goals and understanding of their CSL narrative and in their voice at times neglect to discuss goals related mutually to both students and community partners.

The faculty section of the website is another section where the university voice is present to help guide faculty members in the benefits of student learning, plus provide them with materials. Faculty member voice is present on the faculty main page with a quote from an instructor relaying gratitude to the resources the LCCSL offers and how that translated to successful engagement of the students. The three questions asked in the FAQ section were additionally related to logistical questions instructors may have. The additional support documents voiced their concerns to help instructors become engaged in the community, in combination with helping them perform research that will help them make tenure. The voice of the LCCSL and TSS was more prominent than the voice of actual instructors in this section.

The instructor voices among the course descriptions presented a strong voice to the university narrative of service-learning. From the 24 quotes in the 12 course descriptions, eight were quotes from instructors. (One of these eight instructors was also

a community partner who taught part of a course.) From these eight instructors, they voiced their concern about creating community, helping students put theory into practice, and helping create a meaningful learning environment for students.

Last, the university voice is present, although not as prominent as the students', on the CSL homepage. Instructor voices are present in the video, quote section, and faculty sign-in. The LCCSL voice is present through the link to facebook and twitter. The LCCSL is the main voice on Laurier's CSL facebook and twitter sites, updating on what's going on in the community and on campus on a fairly regularly basis (every couple of days).

The voice of the university is most prominent throughout the website, particularly in the documents, the about the centre, the faculty section, the course descriptions, and the homepage. The university voice often advocated for faculty participation, enhancement of student learning, and meeting the needs in the local community. The university voice was more vocal concerning how to help instructors become more involved in CSL for the sake of their careers and providing resources for the students to succeed, more than it voiced its concerns about community partner needs, capacity, and leadership. This is not to say that their voice did not view community partners as less necessarily, it just did not come up as often in their discussion.

### **Who is the intended audience of that voice?**

Laurier's intended audience reaches out to each stakeholder within service-learning. Mostly the intended audiences appear to be the students, followed by faculty and the community.

It is evident that the website's first priority is the students. This is displayed through the order in which information appears on the website. On the homepage, the student quote is listed at the top. The sign-in is also listed first on the bottom of the page. The website is laid out presenting information to each stakeholder in the order of students, faculty, then community partners. It can also be assumed that the creation of social media facebook and twitter accounts for CSL is also targeting students, the university, and the community population.

The faculty is also targeted in terms of content and resources. Most of the 23 documents listed throughout the website were directed at faculty to help them familiarize themselves with CSL, tools to help them make tenure while doing important community research, and resources they can use in the CSL courses they teach. Faculty are also targeted on the "About the Centre" webpage that outlines CSL's strategic planning including mission, vision, and goals. They talk about their mandate as a university, how they want to achieve specific goals, and how faculty and staff can work together to help achieve those goals.

Community partners are also a major target audience, although secondary to students and the faculty. The CSL video Laurier created appears to target all three stakeholders on the homepage, but since community partners are given a significant voice in the video, the intended audience could be community partners. A quick youtube video is a great way to advertise Laurier's CSL program to those outside the institution, whether that is community partners or external funders. The community partner section as well offers a great amount of information for community members, particularly the detailed FAQ page. The resource page and documents however do not offer community

members a great amount of information about how they can get involved and the steps to take to become a CSL community partner.

Each of the stakeholders in Laurier's CSL partnership is given a fair amount of information that would help them in learning more about CSL. The website mainly targets the students over faculty and community partners. This is most likely done as part of their mandate to help provide students with a memorable experience at Laurier. Faculty is a major target audience in terms of providing them with assistance so that the service-learning endeavor can improve and expand, but also help faculty in their own professional development. Finally, there is a significant amount of space dedicated to community partners, although more of the information in terms of content targets students and faculty more. Community partners are shown the benefits that CSL could provide their organization and gives beginning steps of how they can get involved. Laurier's CSL website is thorough and intentionally makes each stakeholder an audience member on their website.

### **Lakehead University**

#### **1. How easy is it to find and locate service-learning information?**

It was more difficult to initially find information about community service-learning (CSL) on Lakehead's university website from Google search engine because CSL is the method of education used in Lakehead's Food Security Research Network (FSRN). It is through their FSRN webpage that information relevant to CSL is found at Lakehead. Lakehead University's website (Lakehead University, n.d.) was accessed May 17, 2013. Once on the FSRN website, their information is easy to find and is very user friendly. Their information is provided from left to right at the top of the page. From left

to right, the five links provided are, “About, CSL, Research, Network Participants, and Community Campus Garden.” The information that is presented is mostly relevant to the CSL initiative from 2006 until 2012. Lakehead’s FSRN was funded through a 5-year grant that was extended an additional year, provided by the J. W. McConnell Family Foundation. Thus, most information that I could find was most recently updated from 2012 with the exception of the what’s new webpage. The what’s new page highlighted two events that were occurring in the winter of 2013. While the information is readily available and user friendly, the majority of the website was not necessarily up to date and relevant to 2013.

## **2. How does Lakehead University define service-learning?**

Lakehead defines CSL clearly on their FSRN webpage both in terms of what it entails but also how CSL operates at Lakehead, through what they have called the contextual fluidity partnership model. Under their CSL heading they clearly articulate what they mean by CSL and how it works as part of the Food Security Research Network program. They state:

Community Service Learning or “CSL” is a mutually beneficial learning program which broadens and enriches the university experience, allowing faculty and students to engage with the community. At Lakehead University, our CSL focuses exclusively on food security and our knowledge sharing supports community leadership in building a social environment that nurtures local food systems. (Lakehead University, n.d., accessed May 17, 2013)

Lakehead views CSL in terms of its reciprocal nature of learning for both the students and the community. All their CSL projects and placements occur within the

realm of learning about food security. Lakehead also highlights how their definition of CSL operates within this unique food context. The website often discusses CSL as practiced through the contextual fluidity partnership model.

Their contextual fluidity partnership model articulates interdisciplinary learning through building community with partners, students, and faculty. There are five key aspects that occur cyclically in this CSL model; these are: fluid process, web of networks, context based, vision, and strange attractors. Partners including the community partners, community clients, students, faculty, and researchers take part in what is a fluid process. It is their formal and informal interactions that form a variety of social and communicative networks. These networks occur within the context of everyday activities related to issues surrounding food security. Their vision is rooted in providing students with opportunities to engage in the local issue of food security with the hope of creating good citizens as well as address an important community need. Strange attractors are also part of this model. These are the formal and informal, planned and spontaneous actions that occur as part of this learning process within the web of networks. This is a fluid process that is constantly ongoing.

Lakehead also articulates three goals of CSL's operation through this model. They discuss how the goals are to encourage the community to teach students, to support student learning, and to encourage faculty to initiate development in this partnership of networks.

Thus, Lakehead clearly defines not only what CSL is as a theoretical definition but the model in which it is practiced, showing that it is mutual learning that operates within a system of networks that allows for an interdisciplinary learning experience.

### **3. Whose voice is present?**

#### **Community**

Community voices are present throughout Lakehead's FSRN website as listed most prominently in their initiatives, fall newsletter, final report, in Northern Grown documentary, network participants, and as part of the campus community garden. The common voices highlight themes of building relationships, educating students, creating awareness, and being active in creating change. It is also important to note that these community voices are not just voices from the community partners but voices from local community members and clients.

The main website explaining FSRN provides a webpage that lists 13 initiatives. Each initiative is listed and hyperlinked which opens into a different page explaining the details. In each initiative, the community mostly voices their role and how students can be a part of building that relationship. One initiative, Regional Community Gardens, quotes the President of the Port Arthur Rotary Club. He describes how direction from the FSRN has helped the local residents be able to learn and to eat affordably. Community leaders are present in voicing the positive impact FSRN has within their local region.

The Fall 2012 newsletter included community voices through stories which detailed themes of positive network relations with the university and students as well as supporting activities that have created change in their local settings. These community voices came from main community partners, community members that were a part of the task force, or board members from organizations. Thus, these voices did not come just from community partner coordinators but from a variety of community participants.

Lakehead's final report detailing the history, mission, accomplishments, and feedback from the 2006–2012 Food Security Research Network, given to the J. W. McConnell Family Foundation, includes quotes from community partners in the feedback section. From the eight quotes included, three were from community partners. While the quotes were brief, all three community partners expressed the positive benefits they received, how they enjoyed teaching students, and how the students' active partnership was pivotal in creating change.

Community voices are also present in *Northern Grown: How is Thunder Bay Feeding Itself?* documentary. This is a documentary where research teams from the FSRN interviewed farmers about the challenges of farming in northern Ontario. The school has produced this in DVD format. I was unable to obtain a copy, but from the synopsis, the documentary appears to centre on the voices of five northwestern Ontario farmers.

The website also hosts links to the main homepages of the community partners they are involved with under their network participants section. From the 29 community partners listed, 26 provide links to their websites. This page allows visitors of the website to view the network of participants in an organized manner and to give the partners an equitable voice in the partnership.

The last main section where community members are present is in the photo gallery of the campus community garden. The four photo albums displayed mostly showed images of produce in the garden; however, the photos with people in them appear to be community members. It is important to note that these photos were not accompanied by information of who is in the photos; I perceived these people to be

community members as opposed to students mainly because there were children amongst the group. These people in the photos were a mix of ages including small children as well as the elderly. Most of them appeared White or Aboriginal, with a few other visible minorities. From the campus community garden photos, the themes of engagement and being active largely stand out as indicated by the community members' presence in the garden.

It is important to note one area where community voices were absent, but that the university was aware of their absence. Lakehead posted three annual reports from 2007, 2008, and 2009 on their website. In the 2009 report, they noted that while community voices were not distinctly part of their findings, surveys were being conducted amongst community members and would appear in the 2010 report. The 2010 annual report was never posted; however, Lakehead was conscious of the previous absence of community voices in their reports.

Throughout the FSRN website, community voices were constantly present as one of the main partner voices. Most of the partners talked about what they were able to teach the students, but also the change that they created together as a network with the students and researchers. The types of community voices present include coordinator types as well as community clients in both text and images throughout the website.

### **Students**

Students have a minimal presence on Lakehead's FSRN website, especially in comparison to the community and university voices. Students are fairly present in images on the what's new and what's CSL webpages, followed by a smaller presence in the Fall 2012 newsletter and final report. There is also an absence of student voices on the

Network Participants page for students. When student voices are present, they articulate how CSL was a new and active learning experience for them.

Images throughout the website will occasionally show what appear to be Lakehead students in action. The what's new webpage highlights student presence helping create CSL collective kitchens. They provided a link of the powerpoint and handbook that students created from their experience with the collective kitchens. The handbook contains several pictures and quotes of student activity and learning during their time there. The students appearing in both posed and candid images were taken at gardens, kitchens, or student presentations. The text and images demonstrate that students have an active participation and voice in the CSL partnership.

The Fall 2012 newsletter highlighted a story where students in a Forest Economics class went to areas of northwestern Ontario to create focus groups with farmers and professionals looking at current and future employment rates and opportunities. The students presented their findings and wrote a formal report. Their report and several photos of their presentation were noted online. Their voice detailed what they had learned related to food security and employment.

Student voices are also represented in the feedback section of the final report. From the eight quotes stated, two were from students. Both quotes from the students discussed CSL as an engaged and active learning experience, different from their previous learning experiences in the classroom.

The student voices that are more visibly present in Lakehead's CSL narrative highlight the uniqueness of CSL as a learning experience; however, student voices were not present on key areas of the website. The main page for network participants provides

a link to “students,” but the link does not provide any information from or about the students.

Therefore, while student voices are minimally present and represent CSL as an exciting learning endeavour, their presence is substantially smaller than the community and university voices throughout the website.

### **University**

Since the FSRN website is published through Lakehead University, it is natural to assume that their voice is most present throughout the website. Proportionally to the other two stakeholders in CSL, the university and the community have a significant presence on the website, followed by students’ voice to a lesser degree. University voices frequent the major documents and proposals, including annual and final reports, the CSL webpages, publications, and information about the community campus garden. The themes that come across in the university’s voices are the importance of the university being an engaged community member, learning from the community, providing opportunities for students, and the importance of sharing, learning, and growing together.

The university voice is most prevalent in the documents and proposals listed throughout the website. These documents include proposal, annual, and final reports to the J. W. McConnell Family Foundation and the contextual fluidity partnership model. Within these documents to the J. W. McConnell Family Foundation, the university articulates their voice promoting the importance of communal forces working together on the local issue of food security.

The document articulating the contextual fluidity partnership model was written by faculty at Lakehead University. The faculty voices their unique model and their desire

to address local food security issues by learning from the community and being a forum where all community voices can be heard.

The CSL webpages addressing the nature of CSL and its benefits and vision articulate CSL as a pedagogy of engaging and meaningful learning. The university voices the benefits of CSL to primarily the students and the community. They voice how CSL creates opportunities for students to become civic minded.

It appears that the university voice is also prevalent through the lists of publications from faculty and PhD, Master, and honours undergraduate students. The broad list of publications shows that the university's voice is present not only in terms of being an active part of CSL, but faculty are writing, as well as students, about the learned experience as CSL and food security relate to their area of study.

Information regarding the community campus garden is hosted by the university's voice. Their information provided in the community campus garden handbook and their garden blog are two major webpages where promotion of community collaboration and thinking, learning, and growing were encouraged.

Thus, the presence of university voices is most visible throughout the website. The voices communicate the importance of the university as a community partner, the importance of the university and students learning from the community, providing students with new learning experiences, and growing, thinking, and learning together.

### **Who is the intended audience of that voice?**

A large portion of the CSL narrative is directed at community members, including community partners, community clients, the general public, and potential research investors. The students are also another target audience in terms of providing them with

general information about how to get involved with CSL through specific faculty teaching CSL courses. Finally, a small portion of the website is intended for university faculty.

A large portion of the website focuses on reaching out to the community population. This is evident in the proposals and reports, initiatives, newsletters, network participants, and the community campus garden. All these webpages have content that is directed toward a community audience. The website usually targets the community audience in two ways.

First, it acts as a marketing tool to appeal to the community members as an audience. The proposal and reports to the J. W. McConnell Family Foundation for example are demonstrating to the foundation their progress and their future plans for their CSL food security program in order to receive and maintain funding. These documents also market the benefits of CSL to other potential community partners or potential funders like the J. W. McConnell Family Foundation.

Second, the website often provides information on how to become a community partner with CSL. Initiatives and newsletters appeal to community partners, clients, and the general public by listing what CSL projects they are currently involved in. Many of the initiatives and stories in the newsletter provide an open house invitation for the general public to attend. The network participants webpage and community campus garden provide general information about how to be a part of the growing network of community partners.

Marketing to potential community partners and funders as well as providing information to community members and the general public are the main ways that the community and university voice target community members as their main audience.

Students, to a slightly lesser degree, are the intended audience of much of the content. The newsletter, what's new, community campus garden, and the CSL webpages all target students as major stakeholders in the service-learning endeavour. The newsletter, the what's new, and community campus garden pages appeal to a student audience. These pages highlight the exciting events students have been a part of in the past and upcoming future CSL learning they could participate in. The CSL webpages target students for their potential involvement as well by providing basic information of what a CSL project might entail.

Last, a small portion of the website targets faculty as an intended audience. The network participants webpage for Lakehead faculty notes that instructors are free to build their own relationships with the community members. They note that because of the independence faculty have, it may cause some concern for the sustainability of the CSL food security program. However, there is incentive for faculty to do so because of the possibility of being provided research grants. Thus, because of the autonomous nature that faculty have in their participation as stakeholders, the faculty is not a major intended audience throughout the website.

Although there is a visible presence of community, student, and university voices, the intended audience includes a myriad of community members, some students, and few faculty. The community seems to be the most important audience member in terms of content and the broad amount of people CSL caters to in the community. The students are

a primary audience as well in terms of promoting CSL as an exciting program option. Since the faculty are autonomous in their relationship with the CSL program, most of the content on the website is not directed at the university as a central audience. Thus, community and students appear to be the intended target audience of Lakehead's CSL food security program.

### **Summary**

This chapter has examined Brock, Wilfrid Laurier, and Lakehead Universities' service-learning websites for answers to the posed research question. Each university provides a user-friendly website, unique definition of service-learning, and presents community, student, and university voices differently within the service-learning narrative.

Brock University has a large university voice, and audience, secondary to that of student and community voices, although their target audience appears to be both university faculty and staff as well as students.

Wilfrid Laurier University presents a fairly balanced combination of community, student, and university voices. Although, a large amount of their content listed is directed at students, a large amount of documents and resources are directed at faculty and instructors, and less directed at community partners.

Lakehead University has a large community and university voice; however, their main target audience appears to be various members of the community, students, and not the faculty.

Thus, each university gives voice and targets audiences in different ways and with different priorities. Chapter Five will detail implications of these findings as they relate to concepts of power and privilege.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCLUSIONS**

The focus of this research is to access three universities' narratives of service-learning as it relates to each stakeholder's power and privilege. My conclusion will highlight some of the summarized findings and discuss their implications in light of power and privilege. Additionally, this research will provide a few recommendations for Canadian university staff and faculty interested in improving their universities' service-learning narratives. Last, this chapter will end with some concluding thoughts highlighting the importance of this research to university self-awareness.

### **Implications**

The findings answering the three posed research questions have implications on each university's knowledge and understanding of their place of power and privilege. I am interested in how power is exercised through the various networks in service-learning and how three universities narrate their story of service-learning.

#### **Brock University**

Brock University's narrative provides a faculty- and student-focused representation of service-learning. The university appears to possess a great amount of power and privilege as a stakeholder in the service-learning endeavour. Foucault has two key concepts on his view of power (Gallagher, 2008). One is that it operates through a set of social and culturally constructed networks. Two, power is an entity, whether that is an individual subject or an institution. From the guided research, it appears that Brock University visibly represents the university faculty, staff, and students as key stakeholders who have a great amount of privilege in the service-learning endeavour.

This inference is evidenced by the website's definition of service-learning, the prominent faculty voices, and the faculty and students as the intended audiences of the website.

Their definition of service-learning is very student centric, as it defines service-learning as a form of student learning which combines course work, community service, and critical reflection (Brock University, n.d., accessed May 17, 2013). The continuation of Brock's definition details how students will also be able to teach and learn from others outside the university. The definition relays information as if a student is reading the definition, therefore isolating students as a key stakeholder in service-learning.

The university faculty and staff are the main voices in the text, and student presence was most commonly found in the images throughout the website. The intended audience was mainly for university members, with the homepage including a list of faculty who have received incentive grants and the resource centre page geared towards supporting faculty and service-learning infrastructure. Since faculty has the dominant voice within the narrative, by consequence it appears that the university has more privileges as a stakeholder in service-learning. The research cannot comment on the validity of the university's power within service-learning practice; however, from the narrative they present on service-learning, they appear to operate under a substantial amount of privilege, disproportionally to community partners.

### **Wilfrid Laurier University**

Wilfrid Laurier University provides a detailed and extensive narrative of community service-learning. Their website represents a balance of community, student,

and university voices, although, in terms of audience, the website caters more towards students and faculty, more so than community partners.

The various definitions of CSL listed throughout Laurier's website articulate the reciprocal nature of service-learning. Like Brock University, they note that CSL contains three features for students: academic work, community service, and critical reflection. However they use words such as "community-university partnering" and "collaboration" in their definitions. Theoretically, these words show how CSL as a definition is more inclusive of all the stakeholders (Wilfrid Laurier University, n.d., accessed May 17, 2013). Thus, Laurier's definition of CSL is intended for students but also for a variety of audiences, as they attempt to provide a type of learning that is reciprocal in nature.

It appears that Laurier is very conscious about whose voice is present and who is the intended audience of their voices. Throughout, their website, including their homepage, course descriptions, pages for students, faculty and community partners, represents a myriad of voices in the form of direct quotes from each of the three stakeholders. Laurier's attention to each stakeholder's voice signifies that there is an awareness of power that operates through various networks. However, since the audience of voices appears to be geared at students and faculty over community partners, Laurier represents a narrative that still slightly privileges these two stakeholders.

A large amount of the general content is geared at students throughout the website. This targeting is apparent even from the order in which information appears. Student quotes are listed first on the homepage, and the student main page is listed first before the other two stakeholders. Faculty are targeted as well in terms of assisting faculty in their CSL courses and their personal careers. A large part of the service-

learning literature notes that service-learning faculty have more difficulty making tenure and are often in fields that are described as “soft skills” (Butin, 2006a). Thus, it appears that Laurier is aware of this tendency and provides a variety of documents for faculty to use that will not only help them plan and execute their service-learning courses, but also assist them individually in their careers to make tenure. The amount of additional support documents provided to faculty and the lack of additional resource materials for community partners or interested community members signifies that there is a large amount of privilege that the university faculty carries within CSL.

Laurier’s CSL website provides a host of voices and to a large extent is aware of their place of privilege and student privilege within CSL which is why they attempt give an equivalent voice to community partners within the service-learning endeavour. It is however apparent that faculty and students are privileged in the information and resources they receive.

### **Lakehead University**

Lakehead University narrates a very different approach and style of community service-learning than the other two universities examined in this study. Lakehead’s website narrates CSL as an approach to learning for all three of the stakeholders, representing a myriad of community, student, staff, and faculty voices, intended for both individuals and groups in and outside the university. Unlike Brock and Laurier, Lakehead approaches CSL through the theme of addressing one local issue: food security. Their contextual fluidity partnership model demonstrates that the relationships and power dynamic between the stakeholders operate cyclically through the web of networks. In Brock’s and Laurier’s narratives, power appears to operate through a hierarchy in the

order of: university and students, and then to the community. Evidence of Lakehead's cyclical power structure is evident in how they present their CSL information, their definition of CSL, their contextual fluidity partnership model, and the broad voices and audiences they incorporate in their website.

The information presented on Lakehead's Food Security Research Network is not listed from top down, but rather horizontally at the top of the page from left to right. Displaying the information horizontally as opposed to vertically is a subliminal way of representing their narrative of CSL as a cycle of relations rather than a hierarchal structure to service-learning.

Similarly, Lakehead's definition of CSL and subsequent approach to it through their contextual fluidity partnership model gives a description of partnership and collaboration of a network of peoples. Lakehead as a university describes themselves as a "community member" and not separate from the community as the other two universities do. In the contextual fluidity partnership model, they describe how CSL operates in a system of networks as opposed to a top-down hierarchy. The visual representation of the five factors (fluid process, web of networks, context based, vision, and strange attractors) within this model, are depicted in a circle. Thus, the theoretical definition and model of CSL operate in a way in which power between stakeholders is constantly changing and flowing back and forth from one to the other.

Lakehead's narrative incorporates the university, community, and a few student voices. The presence of these voices shows that Lakehead is aware of their position as stakeholders and makes a conscious effort to give fair voice to those that the university partners with. Although student voice is not as prominent, students, like the community,

are key audience members of a large amount of content on the website. It is important to note that the university faculty do not appear as the intended audience throughout the website. The implications of this show that because of the autonomous relationship that faculty have within CSL, there is not necessarily a power struggle within the university networks themselves to produce more CSL classes. If a faculty member chooses to become part of the CSL network, he or she becomes another piece of the puzzle in the contextual fluidity partnership model.

Thus, Lakehead narrates a very different story of service-learning in terms of their operational relationship between the stakeholders. It is a narrative where the community partners have more of a visible presence that was comparable to student and university voices. This balance demonstrates that power operates horizontally, running through each stakeholder, as opposed to a more hierarchical approach.

### **Summary**

Each university presents a different, yet similar narrative of service-learning. Brock, Wilfrid Laurier, and Lakehead present three varying stories of service-learning. However, there were patterns between schools. The main commonality between the three schools is that the university's voice is most present throughout the website. It is natural to assume that their presence would be the most dominant because they are describing service-learning as part of their institution's mission and vision.

Brock's narrative was radically different from Laurier's, and Lakehead's in terms of amount of content. Brock hosts three pages related to service-learning, while the others had multiple pages and various links to other pages. Additionally, Brock's main voice was largely that of the university—disproportionate to the other two stakeholders.

On the other hand, Brock and Laurier had similar hierarchical approaches, giving university and students higher priority than community voices or communities as audience. Lakehead's contextual fluidity partnership model gave more of an equal voice to each stakeholder, and their relationships operated under a cyclical model. Lakehead's information, definition, voices, and audiences, overall, represent a university that is more self-aware of its place of privilege and set up a power structure that attempts to operate giving an equal partnership to each stakeholder. Thus, there were a few patterns that operated similarly between two of the schools, indicating that university and student voices had a tendency to be privileged over community voices and audiences.

### **Recommendations**

The goal of this research is to assist Canadian universities in the institutionalization of service-learning by helping them draw attention to voices present on their service-learning websites. To each Canadian university that offers service-learning, it is important for university staff to concentrate on how they want to tell the story of service-learning on the university website, particularly with whose voice and for what audience. As the literature on service-learning has shown, universities and students are often privileged stakeholders in service-learning (Butin 2006a; Sandy & Holland, 2006). Canadian institutions in particular will often use the word "community" in their descriptions of service-learning (Smith, 2010). Smith (2010) carefully notes that within the Canadian context, the use of the word "community" acts as a "god term" in order for service-learning in the Canadian context to appear as more caring and benevolent. Thus, while Brock, Laurier, and Lakehead often used the word community in terms of "community involved," "community engagement," and other similar phrases, it is

important that they actually give credence to tangible community voices throughout their narrative. By Canadian universities focusing on community and student voices alongside university voice in their narratives, they will be taking the first step to applying theory of service-learning into practice. As a consequence of paying attention to whose voice is present, the university will realize the great amount of privilege that it carries as an institution that is able to fund these projects, but realize that without their relationships with the community and students, service-learning would not exist. Constant self-awareness as an institution is the first step in creating a culture of openness and willingness to teach and to learn from others. This allows for power to operate in a healthy system of networks in a positive way.

Any Canadian institution that hosts service-learning with students and community partners will have a significant amount of power. However, it is that system of power and the relationships between the three stakeholders that is critically important to the health and vitality of service-learning programs. My hope is that this research serves as a beginning step for universities to examine their narrative of service-learning so that they can go about creating a service-learning program that gives equal voice to each of the stakeholders.

### **Conclusion**

This research has examined three Ontario universities' service-learning websites to provide insight into issues of power and privilege that operate within the dynamic of the three service-learning stakeholders. To help understand power and privilege, a guided theory based on two of Foucault's key understandings of power was constructed. One, power operates within a set of social and cultural networks, and two, power is an entity in

and of itself. A narrative analysis of a collected case study of Brock, Laurier, and Lakehead's university websites found that the content and narrative of service-learning varied widely at each Ontario university. Each university allowed various stakeholders to voice their information on the website. Brock largely focused on university and student presence as well as audience members rather than community partners. Laurier made a conscious effort to include a balance of voices, although targeted students and faculty more than the community in a large amount of their content. Lakehead provided a myriad of community voices, along with students and university voices, and had intended much of their content for community members and the student population. Brock and Laurier had a tendency to let community voices be secondary to those of students and university faculty and staff, while Lakehead did not because their CSL operates within a more balanced network of power structures in their contextual fluidity partnership model. This implies that universities have a large amount of power and privilege, which is carried through the students within this partnership. My hope is that this research will help educate university staff about power and privilege that they have and make them aware of how the service-learning partnership in theory translates into actual practice, particularly within the narratives they create on their websites.

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