Helping Youth Venture Into Volunteerism:

A Resource for Ontario Secondary School Educators

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Abstract

This study sought to create a curriculum resource for Ontario secondary school educators that addresses the inadequate preparation of students prior to their involvement in community service. Specifically, *Helping Youth Venture Into Volunteerism: A Resource for Ontario Secondary School Educators* was designed to help grade 10 Civics and Citizenship teachers prepare students for the 40 hours of community service that are a prerequisite for the Ontario Secondary School Diploma. The resource discusses problems with the current unstructured program, outlines researchers' recommendations to address such problems, and provides comprehensive unit and lesson plans to help educators meet curriculum expectations for grade 10 Civics and Citizenship. In addition, the study examined the rationale and development of the community service program and reviewed related literature corresponding both to Ontario's community service program as well as service-learning programs in schools. Study results and the accompanying resource will help improve the community service program's effectiveness by integrating it into school practices and curriculum and making it more relevant, structured, and meaningful to students. By improving the community service program, students will be more engaged in community service and more likely will become lifelong volunteers and active members of their community.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

This project is intended to be a resource for Ontario secondary school educators to help them incorporate lessons about engaging students in meaningful community service while teaching to the current grade 10 curriculum expectations. Since the 1999-2000 school year, Ontario public secondary school students have been required to fulfill 40 hours of voluntary community involvement over the course of 4 years as a condition for the completion of their secondary school diploma (Ontario Ministry of Education and Training, 1999). In reviewing the current research about community service programs in schools (e.g., see Schwarz, 2011), it seems evident that there is room for improvement with regards to the structure of the Ontario community involvement program (Farahmandpour, 2011; Meinhard, Foster, & Wright, 2005). In addition to the 40 hours of community involvement, students are expected to complete a half credit in civics education by taking a grade 10 Civics and Citizenship course (Ontario Ministry of Education and Training, 1999). This project seeks to enhance the community involvement program by utilizing an existing compulsory class and integrating information and lessons about meaningful volunteer service into the classroom while still fulfilling the curriculum expectations for the course. The resource is intended to assist Ontario secondary school educators to incorporate lessons about engaging students in meaningful community service while teaching to the current grade 10 curriculum expectations.

Situating Myself as a Researcher

As a 2008 Ontario public secondary school graduate, I was subject to the 1999 requirements for graduation and had to complete the mandated 40 hours of community

involvement. Coming from a family that was very involved in our community's minor hockey association, I was very engaged in volunteerism without really being conscious of the service I was providing. In retrospect, I believe that my involvement in community service has shaped me as a person and led me to where I am today, which includes being inspired to complete this research paper. When looking back on the implementation of the mandated community involvement program in my secondary school, I realize that there was a lot of room for improvement and it is my intention to assist in enhancing programs such as the one in my secondary school so that the program can reach its full potential.

It was my experience that my school's program was very individualized and fragmented. I arranged my volunteer positions independently without any assistance from the school. I then received the proper paperwork from my guidance counsellor, had it signed by my supervisor and parent, and handed it in prior to graduation. I did not complete all of my hours in a single placement or distribute my hours over the course of 4 years, which fragmented my experience and could be the cause of why I mostly engaged in menial duties, such as handing out programs and making posters, rather than positions of leadership and responsibility (Farahmandpour, 2011). Had I committed my time and efforts to a single organization, I could have developed deeper relationships and it is possible that I may have been given more skilled positions of leadership.

With regards to the school's contributions to the program, there was little encouragement for students to seek meaningful opportunities and to reflect on their experiences. The school guidance counselor provided an occasional memo or announcement about volunteer opportunities, but only when community organizations

contacted him/her and often times these were mundane temporary positions, such as collecting supplies or supervising a booth at an event. Word of mouth about organizations needing helping hands seemed to be the typical process for finding volunteer positions, rather than students seeking appropriate and meaningful positions suited specifically to them. In my experience, I never sought out support from school staff to plan my community service placement because the help was not advertised or ever explicitly offered to me.

In discussing the subject with my peers, it seems evident to me that my experience was typical of many other students. From conversing with my peers and even observing my siblings, I have been told that many students did not legitimately complete their hours. Research conducted by Harrison (2012) has stated that educators have also acknowledged that a small percentage of students likely cheat, but time constraints meant that educators do not likely follow up on the validity of student hours. Allmendinger (2006) interviewed students and studied the implementation of the Ontario community involvement program only to find that there is little accountability for the program due to lax distribution and collection of planning and completion forms, as well as the unlikelihood that educators will verify student hours.

The community service requirement has great potential to help students develop interpersonal skills and gain valuable experiences (Hall, Lasby, Ayer, & Gibbons, 2009; Perera-Diltz, 2010), as well as to encourage subsequent service which could contribute to social change (Farahmandpour, 2011), but that potential is being missed by not supporting students and not having a structured program in schools (Harrison, 2012; Meinhard et al., 2005). My experience and reflection has inspired me to research methods

to help improve the mandatory community involvement program in secondary schools so that it can meet its fullest potential.

Background to the Problem

Barbara Harrison's (2012) research titled "Valuable but Flawed" focuses on her investigation of stakeholders' perceptions when asked about the mandatory community service program in Ontario secondary schools. Despite being valuable because the program provides incentive for students to participate in volunteer work in their communities, stakeholders (including students, parents, and educators) believe that the potential is being missed with a structure that is far too lax and poorly applied (Harrison, 2012). This problem is not only evident when specifically asking about the Ontario policy, but is also reinforced when comparing the current Ontario model to research on what makes an effective community service program (see Meinhard & Brown, 2010).

Meinhard et al. (2005) report that since the election of Mike Harris in 1995, there has been a drop in social expenditure and provincial and federal governments have increasingly supported programs to encourage volunteerism in communities. When the Ontario secondary school curriculum was revamped in 1999, the Ontario Ministry of Education implemented the mandatory 40 hours of community involvement requirement as a way to socialize youth to be more involved in their communities. However, research has concluded that "simply appending community service hours to graduation requirements without linking it to learning objectives is not optimal" (Meinhard et al., 2005, p. 9). The current policy is introduced to students as an independent requirement to be completed outside of the school prior to graduation, leaving no integration into any of their other school activities (Allmendinger, 2006; McLellan & Youniss, 2003).

Despite the mandatory nature of the program offering students equal opportunity to engage in community service, lack of structure and support challenges students to find transformative meaningful placements. According to Meinhard and Brown's (2010) evaluation of effective community service programs in Canada, the program needs to have enough structure to ensure quality experiences and reflection for students, as well as to provide support for teachers to enforce proper execution and learning. These requirements are being missed by a program that simply expects students to independently complete 40 hours of volunteer service over the course of 4 years and be solely accountable for where, when, and how those hours are fulfilled without ensuring that the service is engaging and valuable (Ontario Ministry of Education, 1999).

When analyzing which students were engaged in meaningful community service rather than menial tasks, Farahmandpour (2011) also found that it was more common for students who completed more than the required 40 hours to report engaging in meaningful service and these students tended to be female, have parents who engaged in volunteer initiatives, and came from a religious family that participated in religious services. It is likely that students with this type of background would have already sought to engage in their civic duties as volunteers in the community without having been mandated to do so (Metz & Youniss, 2005). Based on the finding that a student's gender and family circumstances influence the likelihood of participating in meaningful volunteer placements, it is evident that some students may have more difficulty finding quality positions and therefore might settle for any menial job they can find (Perera-Diltz, 2010) or jobs that they consider to be "easy" (Allmendinger, 2006, p. 135). Volunteer Canada (2012) has recognized that meaningful positions are not in abundance and

unskilled labour tend to be the jobs that are available in organizations, which makes it even more important to assist students in understanding what makes a valuable volunteer position and the benefits it can have on both their recipients and themselves personally.

Henderson, Brown, and Pancer (2012) critique the Ontario secondary school community service program because of its program structure. The program was implemented during large-scale reforms to the secondary school curriculum and transitions were hectic for educators. Implementation of educational policies was rushed, focused on accountability, and fiscally restrained, which consequently led to simplified procedures (Leithwood, Fullan, & Watson, 2003). In order for community service to be effective, students need to have meaningful placements that are appropriate for their needs, abilities, and interests, and are committed positions rather than short term and random (Henderson et al., 2012). The current program structure leaves students responsible for their placements, without teaching them what meaningful community service means and guiding them on the right path towards a positive engaging experience. Therefore, it is evident that despite great intentions, the unstructured nature of the community involvement program is flawed (Harrison, 2012) and more thorough inclusion of learning objectives need to be integrated into the program.

Statement of the Problem Context

Researchers have acknowledged the factors that contribute to student engagement and meaningful volunteer service, such as relevance to future career, connection to personal interest, and a feeling of positive contribution (Meinhard & Brown, 2010; Taylor & Pancer, 2007). However, despite not meeting many of these requirements for success, the ministry and majority of school boards have done little to reform or improve

the functionality and effectiveness of the program since its implementation in 1999 (Farahmandpour, 2011).

Teachers and school administrators are accountable for fulfilling numerous roles and responsibilities that make their time and resources scarce and treasured. Research has suggested that schools implement more structured programs; however, "because the Ontario mandate makes no mention of structure, many schools, for lack of capacity and resources, have defaulted to implementing the program according to the latter model" (Meinhard et al., 2005, p. 11). Community service programs require assistance such as financing, administrative support, and professional development for staff in order to achieve the full potential of the policy (Meinhard & Brown, 2010). Perkins-Gough (2009) even goes so far as to suggest that "Every school district should have a service learning coordinator who helps teachers implement: effective programs and who encourage students" (p. 93) through the volunteering process. Despite usefulness of these suggestions, more immediate reforms should be proposed that do not demand extensive resources.

Using the research data from the 2010 *Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating*, *Volunteer Canada* (2012) completed a research report entitled *Bridging the Gap: Enriching the Volunteer Experience to Build a Better Future for Our Communities* that investigated the needs and experiences of Canadian volunteers in order to determine how organizations can improve the experience they offer to their volunteers and ensure continued service. Findings showed that people look for volunteer positions and contributions that not only help others in need but are also suited to their own personal goals, develop their skills, and provide them with experiences that could benefit

them in their own lives (Volunteer Canada, 2010). The report concludes by stating that meaningful volunteer engagement requires organizations to strategically evolve to meet the needs of volunteers (Volunteer Canada, 2010). Currently, educators are frustrated with the lack of time to even check the validity of students' community hours (Harrison, 2012), thus it may be that school personnel are not able to provide students with the level of awareness and support that they need in order to participate in meaningful service within the organization.

In a comprehensive literature review of more than 200 published works about community service programs, Meinhard and Brown (2010) concluded that 20 features are essential for successful community service programming in schools. Meinhard and Brown organized their findings into four themes: quality of student experience, reflection and relevance, program structure, and support for teachers. Research has demonstrated that schools need financial, administrative, and collegial support in order to effectively implement a community service program. Meinhard and Brown state that the lack of support—particularly financial, which influences all other supports—in the province-wide mandated program in Ontario "have not only constrained the development of well-structured programs containing the best practice elements ... but they also led to simplifying requirements in schools" (p. 223). Without proper resources and training, the program structure as currently implemented does not meet its full potential and leaves students to their own doing.

Various studies have evaluated the benefits of youth engaging in community service and the benefits of Ontario having a mandated community service program. However, when comparing the current structure of the community service program in

Ontario secondary schools to research that has evaluated the criteria for an effective community service program in schools (e.g., see Meinhard & Brown, 2010), the Ontario program is simply not meeting the criteria for successful, engaging community service, which means its potential is being placed in jeopardy. In particular, the students who have the most to gain from engaging in meaningful community service are the ones who are more likely to participate in functionary work, due to lack of support from school staff to arrange and reflect on their placements (McLellan & Youniss, 2003).

Some research recommends that the Ontario Ministry of Education reform the program to make it more like service-learning, which incorporates community service into the classroom practices and corresponds to curriculum expectations (Harrison, 2012). By integrating the program into the students' education in the classroom, they are better able to see the relevance of the program and teachers can assist them in learning what makes a meaning placement and reflect on their learning and experiences. Yet, research did not indicate any plans for reform or improvement efforts by the Ontario Ministry of Education.

This project seeks to be an alternative to policy reform by integrating the current program into the curriculum and providing more support for students in their volunteer planning. Students are required to complete a grade 10 Civics course entitled Civics and Citizenship (Ontario Ministry of Education and Training, 1999). The curriculum expectations for this course are divided into three streams: political inquiry and skill development, civic awareness, and civic engagement and action. Specifically looking at the stream of civic awareness, educators are expected to teach students about the ways that they can become engaged in their communities and contribute to the common good

(Ontario Ministry of Education, 2013). The Civics curriculum expectations correspond seamlessly with the intentions of the mandated community service program in Ontario secondary schools, yet currently they are not integrated; educators have no delegated roles or responsibilities with regards to the implementation or practice of the community service program as outlined by the Ontario Ministry of Education (1999).

By not appropriately integrating the community service program with the Civics and Citizenship course, educators are missing an opportunity to demonstrate to students the relevance of their education and assist them in a task they need to graduate. When students were asked to give general comments about the community involvement program, the majority of students included negative comments such as "being a waste of time, that it was a hassle, that it was not very meaningful, and that students should not be forced to volunteer" (Allmendinger, 2006, p. 118). Thus, it seems evident that students currently do not see the relevance and benefits of the program in their lives and do not understand why it is included in their requirements to graduate. By integrating the program into their studies, students can see how the initiative relates to their education and educators can have an opportunity to teach students the positive effects of volunteering both on the community and in their lives outside of school.

The resource developed as part of the current study provides educators, specifically grade 10 Civics and Citizenship teachers, with the knowledge that they need to integrate the 40 hours of community service requirement into the mandatory grade 10 Civics and Citizenship course in Ontario secondary schools. Teachers will be informed about what makes a valuable community service program and be provided with a resource that not only meets curriculum expectations but also prepares students to venture

into volunteerism. By utilizing the already established classroom time, teacher, and curriculum, the program can be better integrated into the schools without requiring any new resources or funding. With the guidance of this resource, educators can address some of the concerns that have been raised about the program while also teaching to the curriculum and performing their regular duties. The ultimate goal is to expose students to their civic responsibilities in hopes of increasing their level of civic engagement throughout their lives (Ontario Ministry of Education, 1999).

Purpose of the Study

The community service requirement is designed to be an independent assignment for students to complete over the course of 4 years. Given that "the program was intended to run itself, with students holding the bulk of the responsibility for completing and recording their 40-hours after receiving approval from their school principal" (Allmendinger, 2006, p. 24), this project seeks to use the compulsory grade10 Civics and Citizenship course to integrate necessary information and support for students to help them effectively carry out their community service hours.

Objectives of the Resource

The primary objectives of the resource developed as part of this study are as follows:

1. To provide Grade 10 Civics and Citizenship educators with a context for and an understanding of the current issues existing within the mandated community involvement program in Ontario secondary schools.
2. To demonstrate how the Civics and Citizenship curriculum can be used to assist in improving the effectiveness of the community involvement program.

3. To provide educators with the knowledge and tools necessary to know how to make community service more meaningful, relevant, and engaging for students in order to make the program more effective and to encourage continued civic engagement.

Rationale

As I have come to investigate what makes a community service program effective and purposeful for students, as well as to evaluate the current Ontario secondary school model based on both academic research and my own personal experience with the program, it has become evident to me that the requirement is missing its potential based upon its lack of structure and support (e.g., see Harrison, 2012). Given the financial constraints of Ontario's community service program (Meinhard & Brown, 2010), I feel that educators should be provided with a resource that utilizes available class time and curriculum to better support students in the completion of the program without increasing demands of schools and educators.

The community involvement requirement has been fully implemented and I found no evidence to suggest that it will be reformed in the near future. Educators, parents, and students have acknowledged that the program holds a lot of promise, but disagree with its current model (Harrison, 2012). Teachers have expressed frustration with the lack of time and financial support for the program in schools (Meinhard et al., 2005). Given the current circumstances and recent research, this project seeks to strengthen the implementation and process of the community service requirement within schools by connecting the requirement to the curriculum and using classroom time to help prepare and support students in thinking about and planning their 40 hours of involvement.

The purpose of the mandated community involvement expectation is to “encourage students to develop awareness and understanding of civic responsibility and of the role they can play and the contributions they can make in supporting and strengthening their communities” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 1999, para. 1). In addition to this requirement, students are also expected to take a compulsory grade 10 Civics and Citizenship course, which seeks to expose students to “the rights and responsibilities associated with being an active citizen in a democratic society ... [and develop] their understanding of the role of civic engagement” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2013, p. 147). Thus, both of these requirements are in place to encourage students to see themselves as valuable members of their community and to promote civic engagement.

I have decided to create a resource that will utilize the current Civics and Citizenship course to help support students in planning their community service activities and seeing the value of the mandatory 40-hour requirement. It is my hope that by providing educators with the information and understanding of what makes effective community service programming, students will learn about quality volunteerism and become more engaged in the program so that they can reap the rewards of community involvement. Some students can easily find placements through their friends or family, but by using a compulsory course to implement this resource, educators can reach out to students who may have more difficulty finding placements and make the program more equitable by offering additional support to those who need it.

In creating a resource that will assist educators in teaching both to the needs of the community service program and to the course expectations, this project delves into research focused on what makes an effective community service program and what is

needed to make placements meaningful and engaging for students. The factors for successful community service will be presented to teachers and will correlate with lesson objectives and ideas in a comprehensive resource that will create awareness for students. By providing students with the knowledge and support that they need to understand and arrange their community service placements, educators can help to ensure that students are aware of the benefits that come from the program and are engaging in meaningful service rather than indirect unskilled jobs to simply meet the requirement and graduate.

Youth volunteering has the potential to increase civic engagement into adulthood, assist in making career decisions and employment, as well as aid students through the process of development and identity formation, while ultimately gaining them life experiences (Perera-Diltz, 2010; Taylor & Pancer, 2007). School personnel could be using this requirement to ensure that students are exposed to positive volunteer opportunities, rather than to risk having them partake in indirect, dull, unskilled jobs that they then associate with volunteerism. The potential benefits for youth that could come from this program are immense and this resource strives to provide educators and students with the preparation needed to reap all the positive outcomes that volunteering has to offer.

Surveys of secondary school graduates revealed that “students who had a meaningful service experience tended to have a higher likelihood of committed to future service” (Farahmandpour, 2011, p. 43). By not having a program structure that supports and monitors students in finding quality placements, the policy created by the Ontario Ministry of Education not only may fail to fulfill its objective, but also may hinder future volunteerism from students who may have negative experiences during the completion of their hours and be discouraged to continue their service.

The community service program in Ontario secondary schools has the potential to enhance students' community engagement, but needs to be reformed to offer more time, training, and resources to teachers so that they can ensure students are prepared and supported in their initiative. I have developed a resource to help school personnel work with the current policy as it is mandated. By integrating the resource into the existing curriculum, students can seek support and are better able to see the relevance of the policy to their lives both in and outside of school. Teachers will also benefit from this resource by being better able to utilize their time to help their students and provide them with an enriching and meaningful learning experience through an integrated design approach.

Scope and Limitations of the Study

Due to the fact that the community involvement program has only been in effect for 14 years, there is only select research available on the effects of the program and nothing evaluating the long-term results of mandated community service in Ontario secondary schools. Although there might not be very many publications evaluating the long-term effects of the community service program in Ontario secondary schools, there is some research on the more immediate effects. For example, Henderson, Brown, Pancer, and Ellis-Hale (2007) evaluated the attitudes of students towards community service based on comparisons of the double-cohort population that occurred as a result of the secondary school requirements being shortened from 5 to 4 years. Available research such as this has provided me with an understanding of how the program is currently functioning in schools and the perceptions of students.

As a result of this limitation, I expanded my research to include service-learning and programs outside of Ontario in order to evaluate what makes a quality community

service program. There are numerous other examples of community service programs available for investigation, including a substantial amount of research in the United States on service-learning (e.g., Wilczenski & Coomey, 2007).

The resource itself has a limited scope because it is specifically designed for Ontario secondary schools. The information in the resource could be useful for any educator looking to better understand the needs of students when engaging in community service programs, but the logistics of the resource are designed specifically for Ontario secondary school Civics and Citizenship classroom teachers who are interested in integrating the mandated community involvement program into their learning goals and instructional practices. This resource is also designed around the current community service program (Ontario Ministry of Education, 1999) and Civics and Citizenship curriculum expectations (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2013). Therefore, if either of these policies changes, the resource runs the risk of becoming obsolete.

Outline of Remainder of the Document

This project is divided into five sections that are organized as chapters. This first chapter seeks to introduce readers to the problem at hand and the study itself. The chapter outlines the purpose and objectives of the study, as well as the rationale and framework that it will use to attend to the problem being addressed.

Chapter 2 comprises a literature review that presents a critical review of existing knowledge about the community service program in Ontario secondary schools, as well as corresponding research to justify the claims that are being made about the effectiveness of the program. The community service program is not unique to Ontario

and therefore previous research on community involvement in schools and subsequent programming can be useful to understand Ontario's situation.

In organizing my research, I looked at the program itself as currently structured, the motives behind implementing the program, and the benefits that come from students engaging in community service. The majority of the literature I looked at involved effective community service programming. I assessed some areas of concern based on what research tells us about effective community service, the perspectives of stakeholders as described in the literature, and the current model for Ontario's mandated secondary school program. The literature review then concludes with suggestions for effective programming to create meaningful community service based on the literature about community involvement and concerns that have been raised.

The following research project is a developmental work, which seeks to create a resource for grade10 Civics and Citizenship educators in helping them to understand the need and ability for them to incorporate the 40 hours of mandated community service program into their classroom teaching. Chapter 3 describes the procedure for developing the project in terms of assessing the need for the product, process for development, evaluation, and criteria for revisions. Chapter 3 justifies the value of this project and includes detailed step-by-step descriptions of how the project was developed, and outlines the criteria used to evaluate the project. Chapter 4 presents the actual resource.

Chapter 5 summarizes the project and includes an overview of the problem being addressed and the purpose of the resource. An educator provides comments and recommendations for the resource, which is included in a section describing recommendations for further research and program adjustments.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

In this chapter I review the literature that has been published on the community involvement program in Ontario, as well the relevant literature that seeks to evaluate the purpose and effects of volunteerism on youth. I then proceed to analyze volunteer programs with research that provides suggestions for effective and meaningful volunteer service programs. As an addition to research on community involvement programs, I include discussions of service-learning, which is an initiative mostly found in the United States, but given that the programs have the same intentions, investigating service-learning can be useful in understanding the benefits of community service programs in schools. Current research has claimed the community involvement program in Ontario public secondary schools is missing its full potential (Farahmandpour, 2011; Harrison, 2012; Meinhard et al., 2005). Therefore it is valuable to analyze various other approaches to community service initiatives—such as service-learning—in order to see where revisions could be made that would make the program more effective and meaningful for student learning.

The Intent and Benefits of Mandated Community Involvement

The following section of the literature review describes the context which has inspired the community involvement program in Ontario secondary schools. The research includes a look at influences such as the philosophy behind the program, the political climate, and motivation for individual growth. This portion of the literature review seeks to provide some understanding of what motivated the Ontario Ministry of Education in 1999 to implement the mandatory community involvement program in secondary schools.

Philosophy Behind the Program

The inspiration for the community involvement program as a solution for teaching civic engagement can be dated back to the works of John Dewey (1916/2005). Dewey

(1916/2005) believed that the main purpose of education “is to prepare the young for future responsibilities and for success in life” (p. 18). Dewey believed in pragmatic education and felt that learning should be experiential and educators should be guides for students to help them develop their own personal experience and grow as learners and citizens.

The philosophy of pragmatic experiential teaching has been strongly adopted in the United States over the past two decades with the concept of service-learning as a tactic to address the decline of civic participation (Meinhard & Brown, 2010). The National and Community Service Act (1990) defines service-learning as learning that extends beyond the classroom through opportunities for students to use their knowledge and skills and participate in organized experiences in their community that can be integrated into the academic curriculum (as cited in Wilczenski & Coomey, 2007). Service-learning is a form of experiential learning that combines Dewey’s pragmatism with reflection to create an authentic learning experience that includes actual hands on service (Stewart, 2011).

Service-learning in the United States has been adopted in programs such as the 1993 implementation of a major federally funded program called Learn and Serve America which links classroom activities to meaningful service in the community (Meinhard et al., 2005). In the United States, 24% of public high schools require community service or service-learning as a prerequisite for graduation (Metz & Youniss, 2005). In Canada, the Ontario community involvement program mimics service-learning in the sense that it also seeks to allow for students to experience their civic duties in

hopes that they will be inspired and their service will open the gate ways to future involvement in the community.

Political and Personal Influences on Volunteering

The purpose of the community involvement program is to expose students to their civic duty and in order to understand why the Ontario Ministry of Education implemented the program in public secondary schools, it is relevant to look at the government's interest and increasing concern with trends in civic engagement. In Canada, surveys are completed to evaluate volunteer activity across the nation, including the National Survey of Volunteer Activity in 1987 and then the more comprehensive Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating (CSGVP) that was developed in 1996 to analyze trends over time in the volunteer sector of Canadian society (Statistics Canada, 1998). These reports help demonstrate who is volunteering and who needs to be encouraged to participate.

Since 1995, there has been a drastic drop in social expenditures and the government has increasingly encouraged and valued volunteerism in communities through initiatives such as the 1998 Ontario Voluntary Forum and the 2001 International Year of Volunteers (Meinhard et al., 2005). With a growing need for volunteers in communities due to financial cutbacks, organizations such as Volunteer Canada have conducted and closely evaluated research to highlight trends in volunteering, as a way of informing Canadians of their society and assisting institutions and governments in developing social policies to encourage civic participation (Statistics Canada, 1998).

Volunteering in Ontario has evolved over the decades due to various influences such as global economy, technology, changing demographics, and shifts in social

policies. Research documenting the trends in volunteerism in Ontario helps organizations and volunteers understand how to effectively organize and engage in volunteer initiatives. This research also includes the types of volunteer positions available and the quality of volunteer experience in Canada (Volunteer Canada, 2012). Hall et al. (2009) highlight the trends in Canadian volunteerism through results from the 2007 CSGVP. Governments have become increasingly concerned with the trends of volunteering in Canada; especially so with statistics such as a 6% decrease in the number of volunteers between 1997 and 2000. This is a concern because with the cutbacks to social expenditure, volunteers are needed to help communities thrive (Meinhard et al., 2005).

With the cutbacks in government funding, programs such as the mandated community service requirement in Ontario public secondary schools have been developed to encourage volunteerism in Canada and to replenish some of the losses to social funding (Meinhard et al., 2005). The CSGVP published in 2007 found that “Canadians aged 15 to 24 were more likely to volunteer (58% volunteered) than Canadians in any other age group” (as cited in Hall et al., 2009, p. 51). This rate of youth volunteer service has held strong from 2004 to 2009, and what is important to acknowledge is 16% of these youth were required to volunteer by either their schools (66%) or some other organization (Hall et al., 2009), which demonstrates that mandatory service is increasing volunteerism rates among youth.

The Ontario Ministry of Education (2013) has included a *Citizenship Education Framework* (p. 10) within the secondary school curriculum, which outlines active participation and contribution to the common good in communities as a quality of good citizenship. It is evident that community involvement is a valued characteristic that the

Ontario government is heavily promoting amongst its citizens. Programs such as the mandatory community service requirement are helping to solve the government's concern about declining civic engagement and continuing to encourage young citizens to participate in their communities.

In addition to the benefits that volunteerism can have on communities, there are also positive effects that volunteering can have on the individual. The 2007 CSGVP conducted by Statistics Canada concluded that "Two thirds (66%) of volunteers reported that their volunteering had provided them with interpersonal skills, such as understanding and motivating people or being better able to handle difficult situations" (as cited in Hall et al., 2009, p. 49). Meinhard and Brown (2010) stated that "there seems to be a general agreement among respondents that community service teaches students what the classroom cannot" (p. 225). Through surveying school counselors, Perera-Diltz (2010) suggests that volunteering can benefit students' ability to improve self-esteem, provide real-world experience by trying out different careers, and ultimately help students to build connections and find employment. These findings demonstrate the practical and authentic learning that can occur outside of the classroom through hands-on service. Thus, in addition to the community service program being inspired by Ontario's need for volunteers, the potential for students to develop as citizens and gain meaningful experiential learning is both evident and advocated for by modern educational research and time-honoured theorists such as John Dewey.

Ontario's Community Involvement Program

Since the 1999-2000 school year, secondary school students in Ontario have been required to volunteer 40 hours of their time in their community as a requirement for the

completion of their secondary school diploma. The purpose of the mandated community service program in Ontario secondary schools is to “encourage students to develop awareness and understanding of civic responsibility and the role they can play in supporting and strengthening their communities” (Ontario Ministry of Education and Training, 1999, p. 6). This program holds the potential to benefit not only student development and learning, but also the greater society.

The Ontario Ministry of Education (1999) outlines the roles and responsibilities of each of the stakeholders in the process of implementing and managing the program. There are also exemplar forms for school boards to use or to serve as guides to be passed along to school personnel, who then deliver the forms to students. These forms are to provide basic information about the program (what constitutes viable service, etc.) and to document their completed service to be handed in prior to grade 12 graduation (Ontario Ministry of Education, 1999). Overall, the government guidelines are very brief and straightforward leaving the details to the discretion of school personnel (Meinhard et al., 2005).

The community service program was implemented during a time of major revamping to the curriculum (Meinhard et al., 2005). It was put into practice very quickly during a time of large-scale changes in Ontario secondary schools—including the elimination of grade 13 and the creation of the mandatory grade 10 Civics and Citizenship course (Henderson et al., 2012). Funding was not allotted to schools for the implementation or ongoing administration of this program. Without funding or much time to prepare, the quality of implementation rested within the willingness of school staff to take on the responsibility (Harrison, 2012; Henderson et al., 2012). Given the vast

amount of curriculum changes in schools at once, it is likely that the time and resources necessary for effective implementation, training, and support for staff and students were not available.

Results of Mandated Community Involvement Programs

In order to determine the effectiveness of community involvement programs, such as Ontario's, there needs to be some systematic evaluation of the positive contributions the program is having and areas where improvements need to be made. Metz and Youniss (2005) evaluated the mandated 40 hours of community involvement program implemented in 1997 at a Boston high school. They acknowledged that for some students who were already inclined to perform community service before the program was mandated, the results were neither "advantageous [nor] harmful" (Metz & Youniss, 2005, p. 430). It is more important to acknowledge that the mandated community involvement program does have a significant impact on students that would not normally volunteer. Metz and Youniss state that "less-inclined but required students had significantly increased civic interest and understanding when contrasted with less-inclined students who were not required" (p. 430). Therefore, although not incredibly impactful for all students, the community service program in schools does have the potential to inspire students who would not normally volunteer in their community to become more engaged, without hindering the already motivated students from continuing their service.

Similarly, the mandatory 40 hours of community involvement program has successfully addressed the declining citizen involvement in communities and non-profit organizations. Henderson et al. (2012) have conducted research on the impacts of compulsory community service in Ontario secondary schools and concluded that

“volunteering in high school has had positive impacts on the political dimensions of a student's subsequent civic engagement” (p. 93). In addition to the positive results from the program, interviews conducted by Harrison (2012) have confirmed that administrators, educators, parents, and students have expressed enthusiasm for the intentions of the community service program in Ontario public secondary schools.

Investigating the Ontario Community Involvement Program

Despite the beneficial results of community involvement programs in general, and some enthusiasm from school personnel for the Ontario program, current research has presented some concerns with the community involvement program as presently implemented. The following section of the literature review outlines some of the concerns that researchers have acknowledged based on their observations of the community involvement program in Ontario secondary schools. These concerns are also embedded in research that describes what makes an effective community service program in schools.

There is substantial research that demonstrates the manner in which to reconfigure the program in a more structured way in order to make it more effective and achieve its desired outcomes. In a comprehensive literature review of more than 200 published works focused on community service and service learning programs in schools, in addition to surveying more than 300 schools across Canada to evaluate the current community service programs in place, Meinhard and Brown (2010) compiled a list of 20 essential features for successful community service programming. Meinhard and Brown categorized their findings into four main themes: program structure, student experience, reflection and relevance, and support for teachers. The themes suggested by Meinhard

and Brown's research will be used to frame the critiques and suggestions for the community involvement program in Ontario secondary schools. The themes are then used as points of reference in the development of this project.

Program Structure

Program structure is crucial to creating a successful community service program. The criteria for effective program structure include various elements such as proper planning, communication, collaboration, and systematic evaluation. By having a program that is thorough and well structured, it will be more likely to accomplish its goals and objectives (Meinhard & Brown, 2010).

The Ontario secondary school community service program is structured as a mandatory requirement for graduation. The *mandatory* nature of a *volunteer* program has led to questions of the program's effectiveness. Skeptics of the community service program believe that because the volunteer service in secondary school is mandated, the benefits associated with service being voluntary disappear or may have opposite effects. In order to research the effects of making volunteerism a mandatory service, Henderson et al. (2012) study the case of the double cohort in Ontario secondary schools. This double cohort was a one-time phenomenon that happened in 1999 with the removal of grade 13, when some of the secondary school students were graduating under the old requirements and the rest were subject to the new requirements. Henderson et al. conducted a survey of 1,768 first-year university students to evaluate their perceptions about volunteering and civic engagement. Findings showed that non-mandated students were more likely to volunteer in the school sector, but aside from that difference "the two cohorts are indistinguishable" (Henderson et al., 2012, p. 105). The pitfall with this

research was that it was only conducted with university students, rather than the broader, more diverse population of youth that would include workplace and college students, and it did not examine the long-term effects of the program.

Long-term program effects on the student population have yet to be published on the Ontario mandated community service program; however research that examines the current attitudes that secondary school students have towards mandatory volunteer programs are useful. Metz and Youniss (2003) surveyed secondary school students and concluded that students who were required to do community service did not lose any enthusiasm for volunteering based on the mandatory nature of the program. The attitudes of students demonstrate that mandatory community service still exhibits the same outcomes as voluntary service. Because the voluntary or mandatory nature of community involvement programs does not seem to impact students' levels of volunteering or their attitudes about community service, it seems practical to focus on making improvements to the program structures rather than eliminating or drastically reforming the program. There is good reason to believe that the Ontario program can be effective and the following project provides a resource that can help the program reach its potential.

Considerations for program structure. The current Ontario program's structure leaves the students solely responsible for the planning and execution of their community service hours, but Meinhard and Brown (2010) found that communication between schools, community organizations, and adults (parents, teacher, volunteer coordinators, etc.) makes for positive community service learning. When parents are involved in and support programs such as the community service initiative, students are more likely to be encouraged to participate (Meinhard & Brown, 2010).

Hands (2008) explains that community–school partnerships have positive effects on student academic success, moral development, as well as promoting civic responsibility and strengthening social capital in students through building links with their community. With regards to the implementation of the community service requirement, the Ontario Ministry of Education (1999) very clearly outlines the roles and responsibilities of the school boards, principals, students, parents, and community sponsors on its website. Each of these stakeholders are encouraged to participate in the students' completion of the requirement; however, there is no structure for how stakeholders should partner to support students nor is there any accountability to do so aside from ensuring that students are provided with the required information and forms to document their hours.

Parents and family connections can become a resource for students when planning their community service placements (Neal & Kaye, 2006). Teachers should communicate and collaborate with parents in order to utilize them as a resource and help students (Hands, 2008). Educators can also ensure that parents are receiving the information that they need, since often times the information is not adequately distributed (Allmendinger, 2006). When students reach middle and high school, parents often feel that they are no longer needed; the community service program provides an opportunity for schools to maintain parent engagement (Neal & Kaye, 2006).

The Ontario Ministry of Education (1999) outlines the responsibilities of stakeholders in the program, but interestingly enough teachers are not one of the stakeholders and therefore there is no obligation at the ministry level for teachers to assist students in their community service initiatives. In addition, the program policy states in

the roles and responsibilities of sponsors in the community that they might be asked by a student to sponsor their community involvement activity (Ontario Ministry of Education, 1999), which implies that it will be the student that establishes a relationship with the organization rather than the possibility of it being an adult representative of the school that is looking to develop a partnership. This formidable expectation for students to independently arrange their placements without ensuring that students are confident, prepared, and knowledgeable enough to take the required initiative to find meaningful placements is cause for concern and one that will be addressed in this project.

Meinhard et al. (2005) argue that the benefits from community service are embedded in linking the service to the school through partnerships with nonprofit organizations; therefore, they state that "simply adding community service to graduation requirements will likely not produce increased civic mindedness and volunteerism among students whose sole experience with volunteering is through the mandatory program" (p. 19). Meinhard et al. suggest that in order to "yield substantial results" (p. 19), the program should be designed to incorporate opportunities for meaningful service that inspires reflection and includes support from adults.

Research conducted by Schwarz (2011) recognizes that the procedures for completion of volunteer hours are very loosely regulated by the Ontario Ministry of Education and students are provided the autonomy to plan and complete their community involvement hours when, where, and how they choose. Given that activities are performed outside of the school and without teacher supervision, community involvement activities are "wide and diverse" because the students choose them based on either their interests or because they are accessible (Schwarz, 2011, p. 31). The ability for

schools to monitor that each student is experiencing the program in an effective and meaningful way becomes far too challenging under such a lax structure of implementation.

Goals of the program. The purpose of Ontario's community involvement program is to provide students with opportunities to build their leadership skills, take on responsibility, and engage in meaningful work in their community—not to "exploit students by giving them mundane jobs" (Meinhard & Brown, 2010, p. 221). When programs are unstructured, encourage short-term service, or "give insufficient attention to the appropriateness of service placements" (Henderson et al., 2012, p. 115) they will be less effective). One of the top three most performed volunteer activities by secondary school students is running errands, which is classified as secretarial and maintenance work (Perera-Diltz, 2010). This finding provides evidence that with no guidance or support, students often choose functionary work instead of meaningful social service (McLellan & Younsis, 2003). Many students seem to default to simply getting the requirement done by accepting the first position made available to them rather than searching out meaningful placements. When surveying Ontario secondary school students and asking why they chose the placement that they chose, "36% of students chose that it was 'easy (e.g., to do/to get to/close to home/to get a lot of hours)'" and 26% of students selected their position "because someone asked [them] to" (Allmendinger, 2006, p. 115). By implementing a resource for teachers to help students find meaningful and engaging community service placements—rather than simply being easy and convenient—I hope to encourage students to help themselves make their community involvement more worthwhile.

Without having a structure that monitors the activities in which students are participating for their required hours, there is no way of knowing whether or not they had a positive meaningful experience that would encourage them to continue their service in the future, or whether or not their experience was negative and discouraged them from further pursuing volunteer initiatives. Researchers have suggested program revisions that change the design of the program to be more structured and to allow for more reflection on service (Harrison, 2012).

Dewey (1916/2005) states that “education is found in life-experience are bound to exhibit inconsistencies and confusions unless they are guided by some conception of what experience is, and what marks off educative from non-educative and mis-educative experience” (p. 51). With this statement, Dewey is suggesting that students should be guided through their experiences in order to foster and encourage authentic learning. Butin (2011) critiques the community engagement movement, specifically looking at service-learning, and argues from a cultural perspective that “service-learning is undermined by the presumption of transparency that the community’s positionality mirrors the instructor’s and course’s cultural and ethical positionality” (p. 27). Thus, he is stating that schools assume that when students are placed in community service positions, the skills and attributes that are being taught by the organization align with the educational goals of the Ontario Ministry of Education. This also recognizes a need for more thorough evaluation of student experiences in order to validate the outcomes of the program.

What is needed in the Ontario secondary school structure of community service is a way to connect the program to other learning opportunities, so that students are able to

get support, reflect on their experience, and see the relevance of their service to their lives and the contributions they are making to the community (Meinhard et al., 2010). The resource developed in this project can be used to enhance the current structures and help to address this disconnect that researchers have acknowledged between the community service program and student learning.

Student Experience

The second theme relates to the quality of student experience. Meinhard and Brown (2010) define quality student experience as one in which students are being given opportunities for leadership, meaningful work, and challenging tasks that require problem solving and decision making. The following section describes what makes a quality student volunteer experience and also looks at the differentiated experiences that can occur based on student background.

When analyzing the effects of a mandatory 40 hour community involvement program in a Boston high school, Metz and Youniss (2005) suggest that the experience with community service differentiates between students who enter service placements "already prepared to gain something from it" with those who "are averse to service" (p. 416). Evidence demonstrates that the typical students inclined to participate in community service were "significantly more likely to be female, have mothers with a college degree, have parents who volunteered, have higher GPAs, and considered religion to be more important in their lives" (Metz & Youniss, 2005, p. 425). In addition to these factors, students who were more inclined to volunteer were more likely to be involved in extracurricular activities within the school (Metz & Youniss, 2005). This means that

although motivation and desire to complete service might not be a hindrance, time management could be an obstacle in completing their volunteer hours.

Metz and Youniss (2005) found that the 40 hour community involvement program most significantly benefitted the students that were not inclined to volunteer without the mandatory nature of the program, and that "males were significantly more likely to have an increase in intended unconventional civic involvement when compared to females" (p. 429). Therefore, the experiences of the program vary based on student background based on their upbringing which can influence their attitude toward volunteering and access to volunteer opportunities.

Influences of social capital. School personnel are failing to recognize students who might need extra support in planning their volunteer placement due to their background. Educators have expressed that by including community service in the secondary school requirements schools are offering "all youth an equal opportunity to become involved in their community" (Meinhard et al., 2005, p. 11). It is suggested that "the requirement operates as a form of recruitment that affords these students a novel opportunity to experience themselves as responsible civic actors" (Metz & Youniss, 2005, p. 431). However, this is stating that community service program offers *equal* opportunity and not necessarily *equitable* opportunity, given that the standards are uniform for all students despite any circumstances outside of school that might hinder their access or ability to complete 40 hours of meaningful quality community service (Meinhard et al., 2005).

In order to truly understand the nature of inequities with the community involvement program, one must understand the nature of social capital. Social capital in

schools is formed by students' social class position and class culture (Bourdieu, 1966). When school programs do not address issues where there are differences in access to learning opportunities based on their social status within society, the education system perpetuates inequities rather than providing opportunities for social mobility to students (Bourdieu, 1966).

With regards to the Ontario community involvement program, students' social capital is not being addressed with the current program structure. The program places the majority of responsibility on the student, with the help and supervision of their parents (Ontario Ministry of Education, 1999), but does not take into consideration the differences amongst parents and their ability to support their child based on their social class position. "Parents approach the family-school relationship with different sets of social resources" (Lareau, 1987, p. 82) and this should be taken into consideration when school programs request parental involvement. Teachers associate parental involvement with the value that parents put on their child's education, but in many cases the level of parental participation is reflective of the social and cultural resources that parents have (Lareau, 1987). Since there is an expectation that parents support their children in the Ontario community involvement program, parents' social capital can affect their ability to assist their child in their community involvement experience; for example, a parent who is an active volunteer will have more social resources than a parent who is not. This resource suggests a way to involve the classroom teacher into the community service program so that they can support students with less social capital and be available to parents for knowledge and guidance to help their students with their program.

Surveys conducted by Meinhard and Brown (2010) have determined that parental volunteer involvement and religious affiliation are the two strongest predictors of whether or not youth engage in community service. Research conducted by Verba et al. (1995) finds that religion plays a role in increasing civic engagement due to the opportunities provided to youth to practice their civic skills and opportunities to volunteer in community projects (as cited in Metz & Youniss, 2005). Hodgkinson (1995) suggests that "the best predictor of whether someone will do service is whether another person in their family has done service" (as cited in McLellan & Youniss, 2003, p. 56).

Various familial characteristics can play a role in students' community involvement activity. Research has demonstrated that socioeconomic status affects the experience that students have with community service. Perera-Dilz (2010) states that students with higher socioeconomic status have more access to volunteer placements. In addition, Henderson et al. (2007) found that students from families with lower incomes have a more positive attitude towards community service and students from families with higher incomes are more confident in private institutions and "tend to be more politically skeptical" (p. 856).

When looking at the quality of student service, Schwarz (2011) found that more than 75% of high-income students surveyed had direct interaction with service recipients and were able to build relationships in their placements, whereas only a third of low income students had that opportunity and the rest participated in unappealing administrative work. Schwarz states that "while low-income participants may have desired to complete community involvement activities that allowed them to forge relationships with service recipients, they did not appear to know how to access the

placements that would allow such interaction to happen" (p. 35). These findings suggest that the program is not equitable for all students with regards to arranging placements and overall experience, and therefore needs to be reformed to support all students and recognize the students that do not already have adult support and supervision at home. This project creates a resource for educators that can help students negotiate volunteer opportunities and help themselves build awareness and make connections to organizations that can provide them with meaningful, skill developing experiences.

In addition to family factors, studies have shown that "students' differential access to time, resources and social networks may markedly influence the types of community involvement activities in which they participate, and therefore, the extent of their interaction with service recipients" (Schwarz, 2011, p. 31). The unstructured nature of the Ontario program does not monitor student access to volunteer positions and therefore does not ensure that all students have equal opportunity to participate in meaningful community service.

Personal transformation. Despite its drawbacks, the Ontario community involvement program has value to students and their communities. Even though there is currently a lack of support and lax structure, "a service requirement can function realistically as a device for political and civic socialization. It could, in principle, compensate for background differences in resources and thereby, help to equalize opportunity for students" (Metz & Youniss, 2005, p. 432). Educators are faced with the challenge of providing "information to all families who want it or who need it, not just the few who attend school functions or workshops" (Mawhinney, 1998, p. 50). The resource being provided by this project helps to encourage teachers to be aware of

students' various social positions and assist in making information and support more accessible to both the student and their parent(s) so that they can plan and participate in a community service placement that is not only meaningful to them, but also inspires reflection, learning and continued service.

Education has shifted in recent years to adopt a more authentic and transformative approach to learning, rather than the traditional back-to-basics methods. The mandated community service program is transformative in the sense that it seeks to "focus not only on preparing students for academic achievement but on citizenship more broadly defined" (Shields, 2010, pp. 581-582). However, it is evident from the literature that the students who lack previously established community connections are the ones that the program is not reaching, even though they are the ones whom the program is directly targeting. Transformative policies "takes account of the ways in which the inequities of the outside world affect the outcomes of what occurs internally in educational organizations" (Shields, 2010, p. 584). In order for a program to be transformative issues of equity need to be addressed in order to help build social capital and offer fair access. The current structure of the Ontario community involvement program is failing to address the variety of student needs and issues of social capital. By ignoring the injustices of the situation, the Ontario community involvement program is failing to be truly transformative.

In addition to students needing meaningful community experiences, students need to enjoy their placements. Henderson et al. (2012) found that the mandated community service requirement has positive impacts on student civic engagement and subsequent volunteering, but only if the service is a positive experience for students in that they felt

that they made a difference and were engaged in the service for one year or more. Therefore, the effectiveness of the program is conducive to ensuring that students are engaging in volunteer hours that meet the criteria for positive and meaningful service; however, administrators, educators, parents, and students have expressed concern about the ability of school personnel to achieve this based on the limited resources allotted to schools for implementation (Harrison, 2012; Meinhard et al., 2005).

When conducting surveys and interviews, Volunteer Canada (2012) concluded that two-thirds of volunteers stated that they had had at least one bad volunteer experience which was attributed to either poor preparation by the organization, their skills not being utilized or valued, politics within the organization, or simply too much bureaucracy. School personnel cannot assume that students will find the service in which they partake to be positive or worthwhile, and given that they are only required to complete 40 hours—which has been criticized for not being enough time (Harrison, 2012)—it is essential that those 40 hours are positive enough to encourage students to continue their service after completing the requirement (Henderson et al., 2012).

Another factor affecting students' quality of experience is participation in direct service. Schwarz (2011) emphasizes the importance of students engaging in direct—rather than indirect—community involvement initiatives. Direct service means that students have direct contact with their service recipients and are able to develop relationships, as opposed to simply completing unskilled jobs such as fundraising. Schwarz (2011) states that when students are not provided with opportunities to experience direct interaction and to build relationships with the people they are serving during their volunteer placements, "student servers may be less likely to develop the

qualities that are desirable for democratic citizenship, namely, an appreciation for diversity and an understanding of personal and sociohistorical contexts" (p. 33). Thus, research discredits menial community service placements by saying that they risk missing the full potential of the community service program.

Community service hours should provide students with valuable life lessons and experiences. Shields (2010) explains that transformative education is learning that focuses on creating students that are aware and willing to be active citizens, recognize a need for change, and ultimately strive to achieve that change. When discussing direct service, Yates and Youniss (1996) use the term "transcendence levels" to describe the transformative learning that occurs through community service (as cited in Schwarz, 2011, p. 30). It is believed that indirect service influences youth to see the service recipients as "others that are shaped by their biography and context that is unique to them" (Schwarz, 2011, p. 30); this means that students perceive the service recipients as being distant and different from them, so they do not build a connection between the recipients situation and their own. Part of citizenship education and the community service learning experience is building ties to the community and understanding the diversity is embedded in Canadian society (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2013); by not building relationships and seeing connections, students are failing to achieve this learning objective.

Schwarz (2011) finds that when students are able to work directly with the people they are serving and build relationships with them, they are "inspired to search for the underlying injustices and problems with society and personal transformation takes place" (p. 30). Therefore, Schwarz suggests that only direct service involvement is

transformative and indirect service lacks the true learning potential that the community service program could achieve. The Ontario program currently does not monitor the types of student engagement, but the research findings call for a focus on direct involvement. Successful community service programs provide training to educators, so they can be informed and helpful in guiding and assisting students (Meinhard & Brown, 2010).

Volunteer Canada (2012) has addressed the current trend of unskilled volunteer jobs and has outlined the need for volunteer organizations to improve the volunteer experience in order to encourage continued service. Thus, finding meaningful placements is not an easy or obvious task and students need to be provided the knowledge necessary to choose appropriate placements and advocate for themselves within organizations to make their experience one that is worthwhile. The resource developed in this project is designed to help prepare students to embark on their community service venture as an advocate for their own learning and to ensure an authentic learning experience.

Reflection and Relevance

The third theme found by Meinhard and Brown (2010) when evaluating the features of successful community service programs through their literature review is reflection and relevance. They concluded that students were more likely to value and learn from their service if they were able to reflect on their learning and draw connections between what they learned and their lives in the present and in the future. It was also stated that it did not matter whether or not the reflection took place in the classroom, but just that students were able to recognize the benefits of volunteering (Meinhard & Brown, 2010).

Dawes and Larson (2011) studied the factors that lead to student engagement in youth programs. They argued that in order for programs to achieve their full potential, “it

is important that participants be psychologically engaged in the program activities" (Dawes & Larson, 2011, p. 265). Deep engagement is defined as the students' ability to internalize the goals of the activity in order to achieve motivation, ownership of the experience, and investment in its outcomes (Dawes & Larson, 2011). In order to achieve student engagement in the community service program, students need to be able to build connections between their service to their future goals, to feel that they are developing a competence at something, and to be personally invested in the moral and civic goals of the service (Dawes & Larson, 2011). In order for students to develop intrinsic motivators for engagement in community service they need be interested and excited about the experience, because after all "volunteering should be fun" (Meinhard & Brown, 2010, p. 223). By these standards, the unskilled, dull jobs that students may be undertaking are likely not engaging them in community service.

As it becomes more and more prevalent that students are choosing mundane volunteer positions that do not provide them with opportunities for leadership and true civic engagement, the question arises of how to make the program relevant to students. Perkins-Gough (2009) suggests that in order to have meaningful community service experiences, personality types and motivators for volunteering should be taken into consideration when selecting community service positions. Therefore, school personnel need to build connections with organizations in the community in order to be aware of various positions and make suggestions to students for placements that are appropriate for their skills and interests. Perea-Diltz (2010) finds that school personnel should be assisting students in selecting appropriate community service positions because "matching student personality to volunteer work may increase the possibility of future

volunteering or appropriate career choice and employment" (p. 46). School personnel cannot assume that students will have the resources or confidence to work to set up a meaningful placement that aligns with their ambitions, interests, and personalities, and educators should strive to ensure that students understand the benefits that can come from putting the necessary effort into setting up a meaningful community service experience for themselves.

Hands (2008) states that schools that have partnerships with the community make schooling "more meaningful and relevant for secondary school students who are preparing to venture beyond the school setting and into the broader community as postsecondary students, or more commonly, as members of the work force" (p. 64). Thus, programs such as the community service requirement in Ontario secondary schools have the potential to make schooling more meaningful to students who fail to see the relevance between their education and their future—however, potential is lost when there is no connection between the school and the service and the requirement becomes an arbitrary menial task.

A method of demonstrating the connections and relevance of community service experiences is through reflection. Stewart (2011) holds that service-learning reflection is paramount and goes as far as to say that "[reflection] is the glue that allows service activities to manifest into actual learning" (p. 37); however, there are factors that need to be taken into consideration in order to reflect effectively. Reflection needs to be structured and intentional in order to be valuable; often times lack of experience with reflection leads to lack of time and inadequate or limited and repetitive processes such as traditional narrative strategies (e.g., journals) that hinder the authentic learning that can

take place from reflecting on service (Stewart, 2011). Reflection should be purposeful and mindful in order to make community service a learning experience. Thus, effective community service programs need to not only encourage students to reflect during the process, but school personnel need to ensure that students understand how to reflect in a meaningful way and value the process.

Teachers need to be made aware of the importance of this reflection process and be given the capacity to facilitate deep reflection, so that students can take that skill with them as they proceed with their volunteer activities. Students need to be taught how to reflect on their experiences in order to find the relevance of the community involvement program, to value its initiative, and to reap its rewards. The resource developed in this project will help to demonstrate to teachers how they can integrate lessons about the relevance of community service and the value of reflection into their classroom instruction.

Teacher Support

Meinhard and Brown (2010) found that successful volunteer programs in schools had strong communication between schools and agencies, which ensured adult participation in the program. Teachers should be a companion to students and help them find placements that are meaningful to them (Meinhard & Brown, 2010, p. 227). In addition to adult support, Meinhard and Brown also suggest support for adults who are facilitating the program. The final requirement for a successful community service program involves support for teachers, which includes professional development, as well as financial and administrative support (Meinhard & Brown, 2010).

When educators were interviewed about the program in a study conducted by Meinhard et al. (2005), the latter observed that “every educator consulted in all types of schools noted that their program does not provide enough staff time to create meaningful placements for students” (p. 17). Students are required to submit their forms stating the community service that they performed and include the contact information for their supervisors; “however, not one educator interviewed had ever contacted a supervisor to review the service experience” (Meinhard et al., 2005, p. 17). Educators were frustrated by the nature of the forms because all it provided them was the quantity of hours completed without any recognition for the quality of the service (Meinhard et al., 2005). Of course, educators could talk to the student and contact each supervisor and question them about the service experience, but time and resources may prevent school staff from taking this initiative. In addition to the financial and time constraints that school personnel have experienced with the program, Meinhard and Brown have suggested that there is a lack of necessary professional development for teachers to manage and facilitate the community involvement program.

In 2010, the Volunteer Sector of the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration commissioned Volunteer Canada to create a document profiling the current trends in Ontario volunteerism. The report also included suggestions for organizations to help them recruit and maintain volunteers, which the document classifies as “Strategies to reinvigorate Ontario’s tradition of volunteering” (Volunteer Canada, 2012). These strategies include mobilizing knowledge and training, facilitating networking and information exchange, inspiring innovation, embracing Ontario’s diversity, creating welcoming communities, promoting a broader spectrum of engagement, making

volunteering more inclusive and accessible, and establishing relationships (Volunteer Canada, 2012, p. 26). Given that Ontario secondary schools are striving to promote youth volunteerism with the mandated program, these strategies should be recognized as ways in which school personnel can help to engage students in community service. However, in order for educators to be able to mobilize knowledge and facilitate networks, they need to be provided with the necessary resources and appropriate professional development.

This need for professional development can also be recognized in reflective practice development. Proper reflection requires knowledge of how to reflect in a meaningful manner rather than just telling students to write a reflection (Stewart, 2011). Educators need to have the knowledge and resources to assist students in not only planning their placements but also providing them the knowledge of how to make the most of their community service hours, and this can come from proper training, reflection and collaboration with colleagues.

The Ontario community involvement policy currently does not identify the need for training, and therefore there is no training at the Ministry level, and it is not evident that there is training at the district level either (Ontario Ministry of Education, 1999). Therefore, it is apparent that there is a need for a resource which can help educators feel confident to address these issues and prepare their students to embark on their community service experiences.

Conclusion and Connection to Project

The same year that the community service requirement was implemented in Ontario secondary schools, there were some other drastic changes made to the curriculum. The Ontario Ministry of Education removed grade 13, reducing secondary

school to 4 years and compressing compulsory courses such as Math and English. In addition, the Ontario Ministry of Education added a mandatory grade 10 Civics and Citizenship course, which serves to teach students about the “rights and responsibilities associated with being an active citizen in a democratic society” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2013, p. 147). Despite being implemented at the same time as the mandatory 40-hours of community involvement—which also seeks to teach students about their civic responsibilities—the two initiatives were not linked in any way (Henderson et al., 2012).

The goals and purposes of the grade 10 Civics and Citizenship course directly relates to the 40 hours of community service program in Ontario secondary schools. There are three streams in the grade 10 Civics curriculum: (a) political inquiry and skill development, (b) civic awareness, and (c) civic engagement and action. Strand C: Civic Engagement and Action seeks to have students understand how they can make a difference in the world, how communities should be inclusive and welcome various perspectives, and create action plans demonstrating how they can contribute to the common good in their community (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2013). The big ideas of this curriculum document correspond suitably with the community involvement program. I believe that educators should use the grade 10 Civics and Citizenship course as a resource to not only teach the curriculum but to teach the knowledge and skills (such as communication and reflection) needed to partake in meaningful volunteer placements for the completion of their mandated community service hours.

In addition to being relevant to students’ personalities, community service should be relevant and meaningful in connecting to the students' academic curriculum (Perkin-

Gough, 2009). By addressing the volunteer requirement in the classroom, students have an opportunity to be supported by their teacher and peers, educators and students are using their classroom time constructively by overlapping the requirement with curriculum content, and commitment and positive values can be established with regards to the community service program by exposing students to critical questions and challenging them to take initiative (Wilczenski & Coomey, 2007). Community service has the potential to educate the whole child, rather than just being a means to an end, but this potential is being lost with lack of support in the program structure. I believe that this support can be provided through an already established course in the curriculum, thus not requiring any additional time or resources from schools and school boards.

CHAPTER THREE: DEVELOPMENT AND PROCEDURES

This research project is a resource for grade 10 Civics and Citizenship educators. The resource is a curriculum unit that helps educators to understand the benefits of integrating the 40 hours of mandated community service requirement into their classroom teaching. The unit itself demonstrates how the program can be integrated into the classroom by utilizing the already established curriculum expectations. This chapter describes the procedures for developing the project in terms of assessing the need for the product, the process for development, evaluation, and criteria for revisions.

The Need for a Community Involvement Program Educator Resource

The literature review revealed some of the criticisms of the Ontario secondary school community involvement program and recommendations that have been made for policy reform in order to make it more effective (see Allmendinger, 2006; Farahmandpour, 2011; Harrison, 2012). Despite having evidence to suggest a need for change, “the ministry and the majority of school boards have done little to reform or further enhance the program since its inception” (Farahmandpour, 2011, p. 3). In considering that reform has yet to take place, as well as evaluating the suggestions from researchers, I decided that a supplementary resource to help enhance the program in its current state would be the most valuable and effective approach to fast and accessible improvement because it would not require policy changes or resource allocation. With an absence of funding, there has been a lack of value placed on the mandated community involvement diploma requirement, which has led to the simplicity of the program implementation in schools (Harrison, 2008; Henderson et al., 2012, Meinhard et al., 2005).

Given that the Ontario Ministry of Education is providing a policy that lacks

thorough instruction and support for boards to administer to schools, educators are frustrated with the lack of time or ability that they have to make the program more comprehensive, provide more support, and monitor students' progress more thoroughly (Meinhard et al., 2005). This demonstrates a need for a manual or training material for educators for implementation of the program, and thus has inspired this project.

Research has established a recommendation for more comprehensive structured community service programming, support for students, and a space for reflection; given that this has been established it is now recommended that further research focus on developing instruction that could actualize these suggestions (Farahmandpour, 2011). A grade 10 Civics and Citizenship unit resource is a good strategy for improving the Ontario community involvement program because it addresses the criticisms of the program's need for more thorough structure, demonstrates the programs relevance to students, and ultimately is a practical solution for immediate improvement rather than drastic reform.

Allmendinger (2006) recommends that the Ontario Ministry of Education reform the community involvement program to be more structured and tied to the curriculum because such a program "would be far more likely to reach the stated goals of the policy" (pp. 153-154). Harrison (2012) also suggested that it would be valuable for the Ontario Ministry of Education to consider transforming this program into a curriculum-based requirement, such as service-learning which involves organized community experiences that are integrated into school curriculum, often with a civics course or social justice class (McLellan & Youniss, 2003; Wilczenski & Coomey, 2007). In addition, Farahmandpour (2011) advocates that "curriculum or course content should be created or adopted to

enable students to serve their communities with greater efficacy, rather than pegging service activities on to the current school system" (p. 54). Therefore, policy reform seems justifiable given the consistent recurring suggestions for reform from various educational researchers, which has inspired the creation of this curriculum resources for educators to help them address the current areas of concern with the community involvement program.

Considerations for the Resource

After reviewing the Ontario community involvement program, Meinhard and Brown (2010) found that effective community service programs need to be relevant to students and create a positive experience that encourages them to engage in continued civic contribution. Meinhard and Brown state that these conditions are "best achieved by setting clear educational goals, providing students with opportunities for reflection and linking their community service experience to prior knowledge and course-work" (p. 227). By developing lessons that set educational goals that align to the curriculum while also preparing students for their community involvement, educators can make the requirement more relevant to their learning and course work and also help to enhance the guidance and structure of the program.

Meinhard and Brown (2010) found that community involvement programs need to be structured in order to support students in their learning, but the current program has been criticized for not having enough supervision and guidance to ensure that students are having meaningful service experiences (Farahmandpour, 2011; Harrison, 2012). Program structure requires involvement of adults, regular communication between stakeholders, and program planning that includes educational goals (Meinhard & Brown,

2010). By making the program more relevant to curriculum and integrating the program into a mandatory grade 10 course, educators can provide training and support for students and parents in order to improve the structure of the program.

Finally, the project is a realistic solution for immediate improvement to the program. Rather than relying on the Ontario Ministry of Education to reform the program, educators can implement this resource independently to support their students. The Civics and Citizenship course is a mandatory grade 10 credit that must be completed in order for students to receive their secondary school diploma (Ontario Ministry of Education and Training, 1999); therefore, it is a course that reaches all students early in their high school education. The Civics and Citizenship course also lends itself nicely to the community involvement initiative with one of its three main streams being focused on civic engagement and action. This curriculum expectation seeks to teach students the ways that people can be involved and take action in their communities in order to contribute to the common good. The course also seeks to have students create a plan for how they could contribute to the common good of their community by taking initiative in an issue of personal interest (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2013). By relating these expectations to the already required community involvement expectation of students, educators can demonstrate the relevance between the program and their education in order to motivate students to engage themselves in the initiative.

Targeted Audience for and Purpose of the Resource

Since the research has suggested that the program should be connected to course work (Meinhard & Brown, 2010), I have targeted classroom teachers (specifically Civics and Citizenship) to implement this resource for program improvement. The current

community involvement program does not involve teachers in the implementation or management of the program in any way (Ontario Ministry of Education, 1999). I feel that by not utilizing classroom teachers, the current program structure is missing a valuable opportunity to provide another avenue for in school support for students and to connect the program to their classroom learning, which has the potential to greatly enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of the program.

This resource will address the big ideas that students need to understand with regards to the criteria for meaningful community services as well as provide an avenue to ask questions and delve into the program prior to engaging in their community service hours. These lessons and skills are intended to help inspire students to find engaging and meaningful placements for their volunteer service and encourage them to reflect on their learning during and after they complete their service. Since volunteer hours must take place outside of the school and cannot be used for course credit, educators have no way of monitoring students' experiences to make sure that they are legitimate or that they are positive and meaningful activities. This resource seeks to assist teachers in providing students with the tools and knowledge they need so they can advocate for themselves and make the most of their community service.

Process of Development

The inspiration for this project first came from my own personal experience with the community involvement program in an Ontario secondary school. I then began my investigation by reading the Ontario Ministry of Education's (1999) webpage that outlines the community involvement policy, purpose, and the roles and responsibilities of stakeholders such as principals, parents, and students. By reading the policy, it was

evident why the program has been implemented with variable success in schools. The majority of the responsibility falls on the students with minimal accountability on school personnel to monitor and support students due to the expectation that they will perform the requirement outside of the school (Ontario Ministry of Education, 1999).

The literature revealed that there are concerns with the unstructured nature of the community involvement program in Ontario secondary schools. I specifically researched studies that have been conducted with a focus on the Ontario program, but I also included evaluations of other community involvement programs such as service-learning in order to evaluate key features for successful community service programs in schools. With this knowledge, I began to compile a list of concerns about the program as well as suggestions for reform.

In order to frame my research findings for the resource, I have used the themes of quality community service programming in schools as outlined by Meinhard and Brown (2010). These themes are quality of student experience, program structure, support for teachers, and reflection and relevance. I also used these themes to frame the majority of my research in my literature review. This conceptual framework provides the criteria for a meaningful community service program in schools, which helped me to develop a program that could fill some of the voids that are currently evident within the structure of the program to make it more effective.

Based on the content and criteria for meaningful community service as demonstrated in my literature review, I developed a unit or sequence of lessons that could be used in a grade 10 Civics and Citizenship course. For the organization and development of the resource, I used a framework created by Drake (2007). This

organization represents the integration of content, curriculum, and instruction. Drake uses the notion of backwards design to build units with the end in mind, which she terms "designing down" (p. 8). She claims that educators should start their instruction planning by developing an outline of what they ultimately want their students to know, do, and be once they have completed the lessons and tasks. By having an idea of the big picture and aligning lessons to that final goal, educators can ensure that curriculum is "both relevant and accountable" (Drake, 2007, p. 5). This backward design strategy for lesson planning allowed me to begin with the criteria for quality community involvement programming and then develop lessons that lead students to achieving that final goal.

In order to create a resource for Civics and Citizenship teachers, I had to first ensure that my resource and activities were meeting the expectations of the Civics and Citizenship curriculum. Using Drake's (2007) conceptual framework for creating an integrated curriculum, I looked at the "big picture" (p. 5) of the Civics curriculum (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2013) and the community involvement program (Ontario Ministry of Education, 1999) in order to establish common goals and merge the learning objectives. I aspired to make lessons relevant to the community involvement program, while also ensuring that teachers meet the standards that they are accountable to fulfill from the curriculum.

Drake (2007) uses an organizer she calls an "umbrella [which] represents the core purpose of education and holds within it the most important things for students to know, do, and be" (p. 5). By deconstructing the documents, I constructed "Know, Do, Be" charts that demonstrate the big ideas and end goals of both the Civics and Citizenship curriculum and community involvement program. Lessons were planned and created

based on recommendations in research from the literature review regarding what makes engaging and meaningful community service (e.g., see Meinhard & Brown, 2010). The lessons included in the resource not only teach to the needs of the community involvement program, but also align with the specific curriculum expectations of the Civics and Citizenship course. They strive to influence students to be active responsible citizens, in accordance with grade 10 Civics and Citizenship and the community involvement program goals. The Ontario Ministry of Education (2013) also encourages teachers to use "The Citizenship Education Framework" (p. 10) which is provided in the introduction of the Canadian and World Studies curriculum document; thus I decided to also create a "Know, Do, Be" chart using the Ministry's qualities of and expectations for the ideal citizen. By mapping out the big ideas of these three programs, I was able to formulate an integrated outline of the unit's big ideas as a whole. Beginning with the end in mind helps to map out the skills and knowledge that needs to be taught and how educators will achieve these learning objectives (Drake, 2007).

Prior to teaching the unit, teachers should have an understanding of the benefits of the community involvement program, what makes an effective program, and how to best help students plan for their community service initiative. Meinhard and Brown (2010) state that training and professional development are crucial to supporting teachers in executing community involvement initiatives, which are essential for preparing educators to confidently administer a quality program. Change can cause anxieties and conflicts amongst school staff, but by providing educators with proper resources and preparation to implement the program, educators will be more confident and committed to the change initiative (Evans, 1996). This resource seeks to create buy-in, commitment, and

competence in educators by explaining the research and the motives behind the project. It is important that educators understand the merit behind the program and proper ways to foster quality meaningful service amongst students so that their teaching objectives align with the goals of the program and the full potential of the program is met. Each student has a unique set of circumstances that might make volunteering positions more accessible or more challenging than they would be for another student and this could influence their attitude and experience with volunteering (Henderson et al., 2007; Meinhard & Brown, 2010; Metz & Youniss, 2005; Perera-Dilz, 2010; Schwarz, 2011). Therefore, the first section of the resource provides an overview of some of the community involvement and service learning program research and information about recognizing students that might need support when planning their volunteer placements in order to inform educators before they teach the unit.

Evaluation and Revision Criteria

This resource is intended for educators' use and therefore I feel that educators should be included in the process of improvement. In order to implement change in schools, educators need to feel change is necessary. This resource assists in "unfreezing" (Evans, 1996, p. 56) educators by demonstrating that there is a need for change and involving them in the process of making a change. By consulting with educators, it is my hope that I can gather insights into how to gear this resource to their needs for the program and support them in taking initiative to change the current conditions. Schools are living systems that function through the interconnection of people and the community and require constant reflection and evaluation based on the needs of the people and the conditions in environment (Capra, 2002, as cited in Mitchell & Sackney, 2011). The

community involvement program has been implemented in a very managed and uniform manner, so evaluation and reflection are crucial for its success if it is to serve the unique population and community of each school. The evaluation form (see Appendix) was created to probe educators to critique the resource, reflect on their practice and use of the resource, and consider areas for further improvement of the program with the use of such resources.

True evaluation for the resource cannot be conducted until it has been implemented in the grade 10 Civics and Citizenship classroom. Since the resource has not yet been used in a classroom, I had a practicing Ontario secondary school educator, who currently implements the community involvement program in his role as a guidance counselor, provide his insights about what would make my resource the most effective and useful for teachers. He was asked some of the questions that are listed in the Appendix about the practicality, usefulness, and quality of the resource. This feedback is integrated and discussed in chapter 5.

CHAPTER FOUR: INTRODUCTION TO THE PROGRAM

This chapter presents a resource for grade 10 Civics and Citizenship educators, designed to be a curriculum resource that integrates the 40 hours of community involvement program into classroom instruction. As a solution to the common complaint that there is not enough structure to the program in order to ensure a positive experience from all students, this resource demonstrates a way that educators can include themselves in the program and use a compulsory credit as a venue to educate and support students in planning their community service initiative.

The resource adapts Meinhard and Brown's (2010) findings about what makes quality community service programming to educate teachers on what the program should be striving to achieve in order to make it meaningful and effective for students. It then proceeds to demonstrate how the criteria for quality community service programming could be met by integrating the program objectives into lessons in Civics and Citizenship that teach students about the value of community service to their community and their own personal growth, as well as how to plan and reflect on community service placements in order to make sure that they are appropriate, meaningful, and valuable to the student.

This resource is meant to be an informative guide for grade 10 Civics and Citizenship educators to help guide them through the big goals and lesson objectives that should be taught to students in order to prepare them to venture into volunteerism on their own and satisfy their required 40 hours of community service. It includes an integrated framework describing what educators should strive to teach students to know, be able to do, and ultimately who they want their students to be. There is also a comprehensive unit

outline, lesson descriptions, and suggestions for instruction. Educators should use this resource as an informative guide, but should adjust it to meet the unique needs of their students and local community.

Helping Youth Venture Into Volunteerism

A Resource for Ontario Secondary School Educators

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St. Catharines, Ontario

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HELPING YOUTH VENTURE INTO VOLUNTEERISM

A Resource for Ontario Secondary School Educators

Helping Youth Venture into Volunteerism: A Resource for Ontario Secondary School Educators is a support document for grade 10 Civics and Citizenship teachers in Ontario secondary schools. This resource offers a way to prepare students for the mandated 40 hours of community involvement that they are required to complete prior to graduation. Included in the resource is a background to the problem that currently exists with the unstructured program, information about how researchers have suggested schools combat the problem, and then a unit plan and lesson suggestions to assist educators in teaching to the needs of the program while also meeting the curriculum expectations for grade 10 Civics and Citizenship.

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The Ontario Community Involvement Program

The following section will introduce educators to the community involvement program as currently implemented in Ontario secondary schools. This includes an overview of the program, rationale behind its implementation, and concerns with the existing structure.

The Program

The *Ontario Secondary Schools, Grades 9 to 12: Program and Diploma Requirements, 1999* states that in order for students to earn their secondary school diploma, they must complete a minimum of 40 hours of community involvement in their community. The purpose of the program "is to encourage students to develop awareness and understanding of civic responsibility and of the role they can play and the contributions they can make in supporting and strengthening their communities" (Ontario Ministry of Education, 1999, para. 2). Since 1999, the program has been administered in all public Ontario secondary schools as a requirement for graduation. This program has sparked much interest in the field of education and research has been conducted to assess the capacity and effectiveness of the initiative.

The Rationale Behind the Program

Education in the 21st century is being driven towards experiential learning and providing students with learning opportunities outside of the traditional classroom instruction, gearing lessons more towards real life contexts in their local communities (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2013). This progressive focus is reflected in curriculum expectations that emphasize the goal of developing students into "informed, productive, caring, responsible, healthy, and active citizens in their own communities and in the world" (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2013, p. 3). The curriculum documents also include a Citizenship Education Framework, which "brings together the main elements of citizenship education" and outlines the specific qualities and skills that embodies the ideal Canadian citizen (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2013, p. 7). Educators are expected to strive to foster and promote active responsible citizenship in their daily practice.

Both the Civics and Citizenship course and the 40-hour community involvement program were implemented in 1999 during a drastic revamp to the secondary school curriculum. This reform occurred after a time where the Ontario provincial government made cutbacks to social expenditure, which created a climate of increasing concern about levels of volunteerism amongst citizens. One could speculate this to be a motive behind the creation of the community involvement program in Ontario secondary schools.

Ontario secondary schools have taken on a pragmatic approach to education and teachers are expected to prepare their students to apply their education to the real world outside of

the classroom and develop transferable skills that will help them throughout their lives. The 40 hours community involvement program in schools allows students to experience what volunteering has to offer as well as encourage them to develop ties to their community. The Ontario Ministry of Education (1999) designed the program to allow students to experience and understand the contributions that they can make in the community and what it means to be an active and involved citizen.

Civics and Citizenship

The Civics and Citizenship course is a mandatory grade 10 half-credit open course. It was implemented into the Ontario secondary school curriculum in 1999 along with the 40-hour community involvement program and immediately made a requirement for the completion of the secondary school diploma.

This course explores the rights and responsibilities associated with being an active citizen in a democratic society. Students explore issues of civic importance, while developing their understanding of the role of civic engagement and of political processes in the local, national, and/or global community.

The course has three strands: Political Inquiry and Skill Development (Strand A), Civic Awareness (Strand B), and Civic Engagement and Action (Strand C). The following resource will focus on teaching to curriculum expectations from Strand C: Civic Engagement and Action, while having students develop the skills that are included in the expectations of Strand A. The strands are outlined below.

Figure 2: Civics and Citizenship Overall Expectations (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2013, pp. 147-148)

Overall Expectations	**Big Ideas**
A: Political Inquiry and Skill Development	
A1. Political Inquiry: use the political inquiry process and the concepts of political thinking when investigating issues, events, and developments of civic importance	
A2. Developing Transferable Skills: apply in everyday context skills developed through investigations related to civics and citizenship education, and identify some careers in which civics and citizenship education might be an asset	
C: Civic Engagement and Action	
C1. Civic Contributions: analyse a variety of civic contributions, and ways in which people can contribute to the common good	Individuals and groups of people can make a difference in the world.
C2. Inclusion and Participation: assess ways in which people express their perspectives on issues of civic importance and how various perspectives, beliefs, and values are recognized and represented in communities in Canada	People, including students, have various ways to voice their points of view within the many communities to which they belong.
C3. Personal Action on Civic Issues: analyse a civic issue of personal interest and develop a plan of action to address it	Through the critical analysis of issues and the creation of plans of action, students can contribute to the common good.

Roles and Responsibilities

Students

Ontario students are currently required to independently complete 40 hours of community involvement outside of the school over the course of their four years of secondary school. They must acquire the appropriate forms, complete the hours, have a supervisor and parent approve the hours, and submit the forms for approval prior to graduation (Ontario Ministry of Education, 1999). Students are provided the autonomy to plan and fulfill their community hours where and when they please, as long as they meet the school boards list of eligible activities.

With regards to the curriculum, students are expected to gradually take responsibility of their own learning with the guidance of their teachers. The Ontario Ministry of Education (2013) acknowledges that not all students are the same and some students will be more independent than others, so educators should make appropriate accommodations as they see fit. In order for students to master the content of the Civics and Citizenship curriculum "ongoing practice, personal reflection, efforts to respond to feedback, and commitment from students" is required (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2013, p. 15).

The Ontario Civics and Citizenship curriculum (2013) takes into consideration the need for guidance and support as educators gradually release responsibility to students and have them take ownership of their own education; however, the same consideration for preparation and accommodation for diverse needs are not currently taken into consideration within the structure of the community involvement program. This resource assists educators to provide guidance and tailored support, so that students can demonstrate the same level of practice, reflection, planning, and committed effort for the community involvement program as they would for their regular classroom expectations and make for a more meaningful effective community service experience.

Principals

The principal's responsibility is to work alongside teachers and parents to ensure that students receive the best education possible. Principals must make sure that the curriculum is being taught properly and that teachers have the resources necessary for effective and engaging classroom instruction (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2013). With regards to the community involvement program, principals are required to provide the necessary information and forms to students and ensure that community hours are being fulfilled according to the Ontario Ministry of Education's standards (Ontario Ministry of Education, 1999). Therefore, the principal should support classroom teachers with knowledge and resources to implement and assist students in completing their mandated 40 hours of community involvement.

Teachers

Teachers are expected to create appropriate and engaging instructional strategies to teach the curriculum to their students. In addition, they are required to provide students with opportunities for real world application in order to "motivate students to participate in their communities as responsible and engaged citizens and to become lifelong learners" (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2013, p. 16). This resource demonstrates how educators can teach to the curriculum in a manner that is relevant to student's education outside of the classroom and to the wider context of their learning. It also provides an opportunity to establish meaningful values and skills that students can take with them into the community as active citizens.

In addition, "stronger connections between the home and the school support student learning and achievement" (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2013, p. 16). As part of effective teaching, teachers are expected to communicate with parents about what their children are learning. By integrating the community involvement program into the classroom, educators who have been assigned to teach Civics can create dialogue for conversation about classroom practices, and also use that relationship to speak to the needs of each student's community service experience.

Currently educators are not responsible for any roles with regards to the community involvement program in schools. However, the literature suggests that teachers should be active in the community involvement program because effective community service programs are ones which connect service to the curriculum (Meinhard & Brown, 2010). In order to have educators engage in the program and help support students in planning meaningful and appropriate community service placements, this resource helps provide some knowledge on how to teach to the needs of both the program and the course curriculum.

Parents

Parents are encouraged to be aware of the curriculum and engaged in their child's learning by communicating with their child and the classroom teacher. The Ontario Ministry of Education (2013) encourages parents to take an interest in their child's education by discussing current events with regards to civics and citizenship, exposing them to the communities in which they belong, supporting them through their learning, and monitoring their work.

The Ministry also encourages parental engagement in community service hours. As stated on the Ministry's website (1999), parents are encouraged to assist their child in selecting and planning their community service hours and suggests that parents communicate with their child's volunteer supervisor. If parents have any concerns or questions, it is recommended that they contact the school's principal. Additionally, parents are required

to sign student forms to verify completion of their required 40-hours of community involvement (Ontario Ministry of Education, 1999).

Currently, there is little to no formal assistance for parents in supporting their child with their community involvement initiative. The Civics and Citizenship course encourages parents to expose their child to the communities that they belong to, which logically could be accomplished through the facilitation and mentorship of the community involvement program. Therefore, it is advantageous for educators to assist parents in understanding the value of the community service initiative in order to encourage them to be present and engaged in their child's volunteer service hours.

Just as each student has a unique background influencing their ability and feelings towards community service, parents come with their own set of circumstances as well. One parent might already be an avid volunteer and leader in their community, while perhaps another parent might be new to Canada and have cultural and language barriers making them apprehensive about becoming involved. It is in the best interest of students for educators to strive to address any inequities between students based on their parents' ability to support their child in volunteering. They can help support parents as best as they can in understanding how to be active in their child's community service experience, but more importantly educators should simply be aware of the situations that students come from and monitor and adjust the level of time and support spent with that student accordingly.

Community Partners

The community service requirement is in effect to help students build connections to their communities. In order for students to be able to complete the minimum requirement of 40 hours of community involvement, persons and organizations in the community are asked to sponsor students and provide them with any necessary training, preparation, or equipment to fulfill volunteer service. Supervisors are also asked to verify the student's service by signing the appropriate forms (Ontario Ministry of Education, 1999).

It is not the community's responsibility to connect with schools or individual students. Students are expected to arrange their own community placements and parents and school staff are simply expected to assist them in doing so (Ontario Ministry of Education, 1999). In relation to the curriculum, educators are encouraged to create partnerships with community organizations because community partnerships "can be models of how the knowledge and skills acquired through the study of the curriculum relate to life beyond school" thus demonstrating the connections between their learning and the so-called real world (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2013, p. 17). Therefore, educators are encouraged to facilitate community involvement in the classroom in order to make for more relevant and engaging instruction and learning for students.

Problem Context: What the Research Tells Us

Despite the great intentions of the community involvement requirement, there have been sceptics that question the effectiveness of the program as currently implemented. The program is designed to be an independent task that takes place outside of the school. Principals are required to provide students and parents with the necessary information about the procedures for the program and distribute the required forms to be signed and submitted for approval by the school prior to graduation. Once students are given this information, it is their responsibility to complete the hours over the course of grades nine through twelve.

Some students, parents, and school staff have criticised the lax program structure that makes monitoring student's volunteer experiences nearly impossible due to restricted time and resources (Harrison, 2012). Given that students are provided the autonomy to plan and complete their community involvement hours when, where, and how they choose, the activities that they participate are wide and diverse and chosen for various reasons that might not necessarily make them the best placements for the student (Schwarz, 2011).

Quality volunteer placements are ones that provide students with opportunities to have direct interaction with service recipients, leadership roles, chances to challenge themselves and demonstrate their skills, appeal to their interests, and are relevant to their lives (Meinhard & Brown, 2010; Schwarz, 2011; Volunteer Canada, 2012). The concern is that with a lack of structure, students are choosing the first available and easy position rather than seeking out placements that are engaging and meaningful to them (Schwarz, 2011).

The current program structure provides all students with an *equal* opportunity to engage in volunteer service, but it does not take into consideration the various differences between students that could affect their ability and attitude towards volunteering (Meinhard et al., 2005; Metz & Youniss, 2005). Educators need to recognize that different characteristics can effect a student's feelings towards the program and consequently, the quality of his or her volunteer experience. For example, Henderson et al. (2012) found that "being female, attending religious services more regularly and having a lower family income are all significant predictors of a more positive attitude toward community service" (p. 856). In addition, high socioeconomic status can increase student's access to volunteer placements (Perera-Dilz, 2010) but low socioeconomic status can lead to more positive feelings towards volunteering (Henderson et al., 2007). The best indicator or whether or not a student will engage in positive community service is whether or not another member in their family is an active volunteer in the community (McLellan & Younsis, 2003) but overall it seems as though each student is different and

it is in the best interest of all students for school personnel to offer the knowledge, preparation, and guidance necessary so that students can advocate for themselves.

As an educator, it is important that students are supported in planning their volunteer initiatives in order to ensure that they have a positive experience with the program and are encouraged to continue their service. The following resource provides educators with the means and opportunity to provide students with individualized support, as well as the knowledge and skills needed to help themselves make the most of their volunteer placements.

Striving for Improvement

With investigation of the requirements for quality community service programming in schools, research suggests that the program be more structured and relevant to the curriculum (Farahmandpour, 2011; Harrison, 2012; Meinhard et al., 2005, Meinhard & Brown, 2010). The following document is a resource for grade 10 Civics and Citizenship educators to incorporate the 40 hours community involvement program into their classroom instruction while meeting the current 2013 curriculum expectations. This initiative will help to support educators in helping students be successful in the program, while working within the current program structure and not requiring reform or additional resource allocation. By incorporating the 40-hours of community service program into the classroom, educators are provided with an opportunity to have students reflect on the significance of volunteering, what they can gain from their service, and help guide them in planning a quality meaningful placement.

Mission

What is the purpose of this resource?

The purpose of the resource is to provide grade 10 Civics and Citizenship educators the necessary preparation and support to assist their students in the process of reflecting on and planning their volunteer placements in order to complete their required 40 hours of community involvement. With the implementation of this resource educators can help to ensure that all students have the opportunity to access the support and knowledge that they need to have a positive and meaningful volunteer experience.

Vision

What must we become to accomplish our purpose?

With the use of this resource, educators can become an active facilitator, ambassador, and counselor for the 40-hour community service program in order to assist students in making the most of their volunteer service. By integrating the program into the curriculum, students will be able to see the relevance of the requirement and grow to understand and appreciate the value that comes from being an active and engaged citizen in their community. The program will be able to better serve its purpose by having educators acknowledge students' apprehensions, limitations, and concerns about becoming involved in the community and take the necessary steps to support them in planning and engaging in meaningful service.

Values

How can we accomplish our vision?

The 40-hour community involvement program is a valuable initiative because it exposes students to the benefits of volunteering and aids in developing students into active responsible citizens in their community. Participants responsible for implementing and managing the program need to strive to educate students on the significance of being an active leader in their community and encourage them to engage in meaningful relevant volunteer placements that appeal to their goals and interests. The program must provide support to students, parents, and community organizations in order to establish open lines of communication and partnerships between the school, home, and community.

Goals

What are we striving for?

The end goal of this program is for grade 10 Civics and Citizenship educators to teach to the curriculum while also providing students with the knowledge, support, and confidence to engage in meaningful community involvement and fulfill their mandatory 40-hours of volunteer service in a positive way. Students should have an appreciation for the program and understanding of the benefits of being an active volunteer.

Criteria for Effective Program

In 2010, Meinhard and Brown published their findings of what makes an effective community service program in schools after completing a comprehensive literature review of over 200 published works and conducting in-depth interviews with five education administrators about Canada's community service programs. They concluded by compiling their findings into four main themes which outline 20 essential features for successful community service programming.

The themes and features for successful programming as stated by Meinhard and Brown (2010) are the foundation for this resource. Having an understanding of the critical components of meaningful community service programs can help educators to effectively provide their students with the necessary skills and knowledge in order to educate and prepare them to confidently and successfully venture into volunteerism.

Figure 2: Essential Features of Community Service Programs

Features for Successful Community Service Programs
Support for teachers
• Support: financial, administrative, and collegial • Professional development and training
Program structure
• Regular communication between school and agencies • Creating programs of sufficient duration • Involving adults (parents, teacher, volunteer coordinator) • Engaging in systematic program evaluation • Program planning, educational goals
Quality of students' experiences
• Giving students responsibility • Providing meaningful work/challenging tasks • Opportunities for student leadership/decision making • Matching placements with students' interests • Listening to and considering students' ideas • Helping students choose placements • Matching placements with students' abilities • Engaging in direct service work • Providing training/preparation for student volunteers
Reflection and relevance
• Providing opportunities for student reflection • Building on prior knowledge, linking to curriculum • Providing feedback and indicators of progress • Pointing out benefits of volunteering

Figure 2. Essential features of community service programs as reported in 22 articles. Adapted from "School Community Service Programs: Essential Features for Success," by Agnes Meinhard and Steven Brown, 2010, *Journal of Nonprofit & Public Sector Marketing, 22, p. 222*. Copyright 2010 by Taylor & Francis Group, LLC.

Features for Successful Community Service Programs

The following section will expand on the previous chart from Meinhard and Brown (2010) which establishes what they conclude to be the 20 essential features for successful community service programs. It will work to connect the findings to the Ontario community involvement policy and demonstrate how the standards can be met within the current program structure with proper knowledge and understanding of what makes quality programming.

Support for Teachers

This resource provides support to educators by guiding them through how they can connect the criteria for a successful 40-hour community involvement program into the curriculum they are expected to teach in grade 10 Civics and Citizenship. By meeting curriculum expectations, educators have the venue and the time to assist students in planning their volunteer placements and teaching to the needs of the program.

This resource can serve as a starting point for educators to learn and prepare themselves to venture into the community involvement program in schools, but further professional development and initiative is encouraged. It is crucial that educators collaborate and build relationships with other adults in order to provide the best information and guidance possible to students in planning their community involvement placements.

Program Structure

By integrating the community involvement program into the grade 10 Civics and Citizenship course, educators can work towards strengthening the current program structure by incorporating some more thorough planning and addressing the educational goals.

In order to assist students, teachers may decide to take the initiative to educate themselves on the community organizations available to students and local initiatives that they can participate in. Although the establishment of these relationships may be demanding on teacher's time, once these connections are built they will become an invaluable resource for educators and students. Community connections are valuable throughout all school practices (Hands, 2008), and therefore teachers could utilize these relationships for more than just the teaching of this unit. Teachers can build relationships with leaders in the community and establish collaborative partnerships so that they can pass along contact information to students. Teachers could arrange methods of communication to pass along information to students, such as having community leaders come into the classroom to speak about the organization they represent or having a blog/webpage where community members could post to students about current local issues and events.

Given that the program is structured to take place outside of the school, parents are encouraged to monitor their child's community involvement hours and authorizing their hours (Ontario Ministry of Education, 1999). Therefore, it is important not only for students to be knowledgeable and prepared for meaningful volunteerism, but it is also just as important for parents to have this level of understanding. Some parents may be uninterested or preoccupied, so the best that teachers can do is make sure that information is easily accessible in order to hopefully encourage and inspire parents to inform themselves and support their child.

Teachers might consider having an established method of communicating to parents on a regular basis that is easily; this could be through a webpage, blog, or newsletters that informs parents of the content that their child is receiving in the classroom about valuable and engaging community service initiatives. By engaging parents in their child's education, educators can break down barriers and help to encourage parents to feel comfortable and valued in the school. Some parents might be apprehensive about involving themselves in the community involvement program because they themselves are not avid volunteers and do not feel comfortable or have the knowledge to help their child plan and engage in meaningful community service work. Just as teachers can help prepare students, they can help make parents feel comfortable with the community involvement program. It is important that teachers strive to reach out to all of their student's parents and be aware of the various situations that their students are coming from.

In addition, students should feel that they can come to their teacher for help and guidance in planning their community involvement hours. It is the teacher's responsibility to create a safe and supportive classroom environment where students feel that they can ask questions and investigate relevant topics that interest them (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2013). Thus, teachers are expected to be accessible to students and facilitate learning by listening to and considering student's interests in order to assist them in choosing their placements (Meinhard & Brown, 2010).

Meinhard and Brown (2010) found that communication between schools, community organizations, and adults (parents, teacher, volunteer coordinators, etc.) makes for positive community service learning. With open lines of communication, students can be supported and monitored during their volunteer planning and process. Adults can encourage students and intervene when necessary in order to ensure that students are having positive meaningful experiences that will encourage them to continue their service beyond the required 40 hours.

Finally, educators are encouraged to make students aware of the educational goals and objectives of both the unit being taught in the classroom and the community involvement program which they will engage in outside of school. By integrating the program into the

classroom curriculum, educators have a unique opportunity to educate and persuade students of the value and benefits of the program and "form authentic connections to program activities" (Dawes & Larson, 2011) in order to get them engaged. With a better understanding of the merit behind the program, it is more likely that students will be encouraged to engage in meaningful volunteer placements rather than simply “getting it done as soon as possible” (Allmendinger, 2006, p. 121).

Quality Experiences

Since students are expected to independently complete the program outside of the school and with the supervision of their parents (Ontario Ministry of Education, 1999), this resource covers the topics to be taught in the classroom in order to prepare students to plan community involvement placements that provide them with quality, meaningful, and engaging experiences. The fear is that if students are not knowledgeable or confident enough to plan authentic and engaging placements that leave them with positive feelings about volunteering, that the program will fail to encourage continued civic engagement.

In order for educators to engage students in the community involvement program, students need to be able to internalize the goals of the activity and achieve motivation, ownership of the experience, and investment in its outcomes. Educators should facilitate student learning that helps students to build connections between their community service to their future goals, feel that they are developing a competence at something, and be personally invested in the moral and civic goals of the service (Dawes & Larson, 2011). This would require that educators help to provide students with the knowledge and skills to arrange placements that meet these criteria for engagement in order to ensure a positive experience.

Meinhard and Brown (2010) find that quality volunteer placements are ones that provide students with leadership roles where they feel they have valued responsibilities and opportunities to take on tasks that challenge them and require them to make decisions. These roles should be meaningful, enlightening, and should match students interests and abilities. Educators can inform students of the benefits of having these opportunities and help them to be motivated to work towards finding these placements and advocating for themselves within organizations.

The exposure students have to the contributions they are making impacts how engaging a volunteer placement is for them. Direct placements allow for students to engage with their service recipients and build relationships (e.g., tutoring), whereas indirect service does not allow students to interact with the people they are seeking to help (e.g., fundraising). It is important that students understand the difference between direct and indirect service placements. It is suggested that direct service inspires students to understand various positions of people in society and investigate the injustices in the

world, whereas indirect service does not provide students with access to that type of inspiration and transformation (Schwarz, 2011). Therefore, students should be taught to understand what makes a placement direct or indirect and encourage them to plan activities that allow for them to engage in direct service.

Relevance and Reflection

Research has recommended that schools embed the program into the curriculum so that students can see the relevance of the initiative to their education, rather than simply implementing it without teaching the value and significance of the requirement (Farahmandpour, 2011; Harrison, 2012; Meinhard et al., 2005). By connecting the program to the curriculum expectations, educators can demonstrate to students the parallels between the goals of the community involvement program and their secondary school education. The grade 10 Civics and Citizenship course prepares students for their participation in Canadian society outside of the school and seeks to develop them into aware, responsible, and contributing citizens in a democratic society (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2013). Therefore, by connecting the program to the mandatory academic course, educators are also connecting the goals of the requirement to their responsibilities as citizens.

Given that students have four years to complete their 40 hours of community involvement and therefore are not expected to complete their hours during their enrollment in Civics and Citizenship, teachers do not necessarily have the luxury of facilitating reflection throughout their volunteer experience. If a student has already engaged in volunteer service then educators should encourage them to reflect on that experience in order to help them plan their future service, but this cannot be expected of all students given that they may not have served in their community before. What educators can strive to do is to teach students the skills and knowledge needed to be able to reflect on their own when it does come time for them to volunteer in their community.

As discussed previously, there are many aspects of a student's personality, skills, interests, and ambitions that should be taken into consideration when planning their volunteer placements. Educators can help students reflect on what they want to gain from the program and connect their volunteer placements to their academic, personal, and professional goals in order to make the experience relevant and purposeful.

The lessons being taught in Civics and Citizenship will provide students with the criteria for what makes a positive and valuable volunteer placement. Therefore, with this knowledge students can reflect not only during the planning stages, but also during and after their experience in order to evaluate the quality of their service placement. Students should be encouraged to constantly assess and evaluate their experiences and provide them with the understanding of how to do so.

Students are likely able to complete a volunteer role in their community and know whether or not they enjoyed themselves or felt satisfied and proud of their contribution. Students need to be motivated to ask themselves why they had either positive or negative experience and take that learning with them as they continue their service. By preparing students with the knowledge of how and why it is significant to evaluate their service, they will be able to judge what they need to look for as they venture into their next volunteer placement and ensure that they always strive for positive experiences that not only contribute to the common good, but also make them feel proud to be a contributing citizen in their community.

Designing Down

Using the framework created by Dr. Susan Drake (2007), this resource begins by looking at the standards that educators are expected to meet by the end of the unit based on the curriculum and the criteria for quality community service programming. This includes not only the overall and specific expectations of the course, but also the attitudes, beliefs, actions, ideas, understandings, and skills that students are expected to have following the completion of the lessons, which are taken from the Ontario curriculum (2013).

By deconstructing the Ontario Ministry of Education's Canadian and World Studies (2013) curriculum document and community involvement policy (1999), the big ideas, skills, and beliefs have been organized and compiled to create a standards-based integrated curriculum for grade 10 Civics and Citizenship classroom teachers.

Citizenship Education

The Ontario Ministry of Education (2013) provides educators with a framework that outlines the key features of the ideal citizen. This framework includes the understandings, attitudes, actions, and skills that formulate citizenship in Ontario. It is expected that teachers will create learning goals and lesson objectives that foster these qualities in their students. Please refer to the following page.

Figure 3: The Citizenship Education Framework

The Citizenship Education Framework

Active Participation

Work for the common good in local, national, and global communities

- Voice informed opinions on matters relevant to their community
- Adopt leadership roles in their community
- Participate in their community
- Investigate controversial issues
- Demonstrate collaborative, innovative problem solving
- Build positive relationships with diverse individuals and groups

Related Topics:

decision making and voting, influence, conflict resolution and peace building, advocacy, stewardship, leadership, volunteering

Identity

A sense of personal identity as a member of various communities

- Identify and develop their sense of connectedness to local, national, and global communities
- Develop a sense of their civic self-image
- Consider and respect others' perspectives
- Investigate moral and ethical dimensions of developments, events, and issues

Related Topics:

interconnectedness, beliefs and values, self-efficacy, culture, perspective, community

Attributes

Character traits, values, habits of mind

- Explore issues related to personal and societal rights and responsibilities
- Demonstrate self-respect, as well as respect and empathy for others
- Develop attitudes that foster civic engagement
- Work in a collaborative and critically thoughtful manner

Related Topics:

inclusiveness, equity, empathy and respect, rights and responsibilities, freedom, social cohesion, fairness and justice, citizenship, collaboration and cooperation

Structures

Power and systems within societies

- Develop and understanding of the importance of rules and laws
- Develop an understanding of how political, economic, and social institutions affect their lives
- Develop an understanding of power dynamics
- Develop an understanding of the dynamic and complex relationship within and between systems

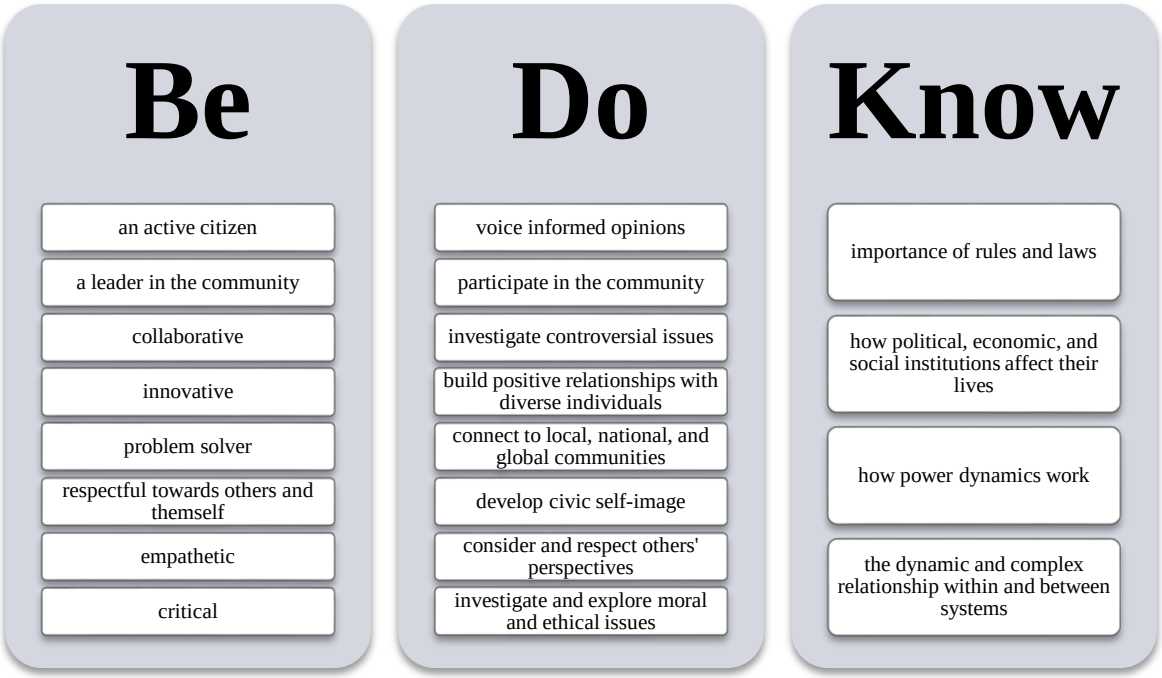
Related Topics:

democracy, rules and laws, institutions, power and authority, systems

Figure 3. The citizen education framework comes directly from the 2013 Grade 9 and 10 Ontario Canadian and World Studies curriculum and is a resource that educators are expected to use when planning instruction for Grade 10 Civics and Citizenship.

The following is a compilation of the skills, understandings, and attributes that the Citizenship Education Framework (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2013) has outlined. This will be used to develop the big picture for the lessons.

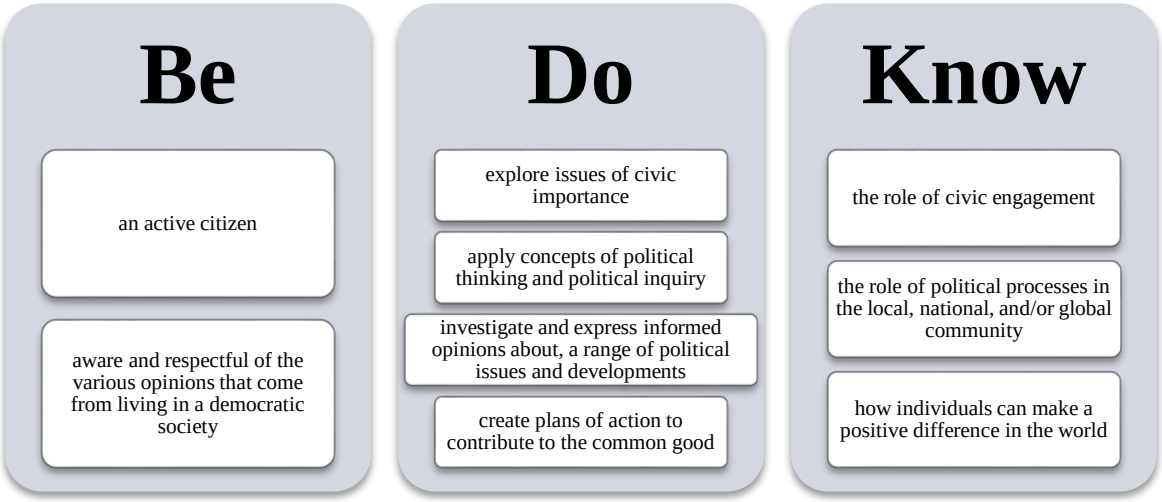
Figure 4: Big Picture—The Citizenship Education Framework



The Ontario Ministry of Education (2013) provides educators with the big ideas, overall expectations, related concepts, framing questions, and specific expectations that assist educators in planning lessons that meet provincial standards.

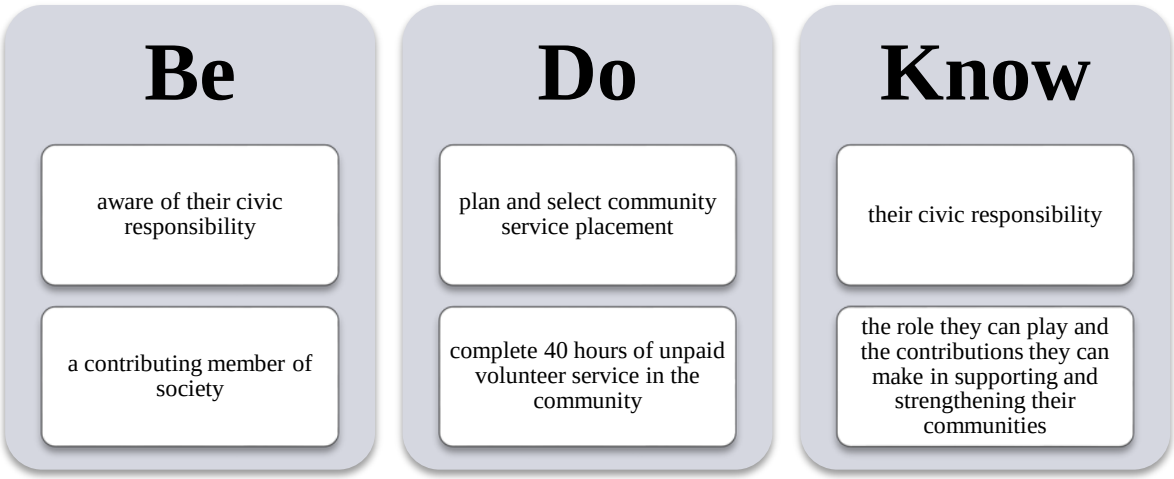
The following is a compilation of the skills, understandings, and attributes that the grade 10 Civics and Citizenship course (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2013) has outlined (refer to pages 3, 21, 22). This will be used to develop the big picture for the lessons.

Figure 5: Big Picture—Grade 10 Civics and Citizenship



The community involvement program has specific objectives and goals as described by the Ontario Ministry of Education (1999). The ministry implemented the program to expose students to their civic obligations and encourage them to embody the type of citizenship that is valued by society and will strengthen the community locally and at large. The following is a compilation of the knowledge, abilities, and characteristics that are being conveyed by the community involvement program. These standards will be incorporated into the overall big picture of the integrated unit.

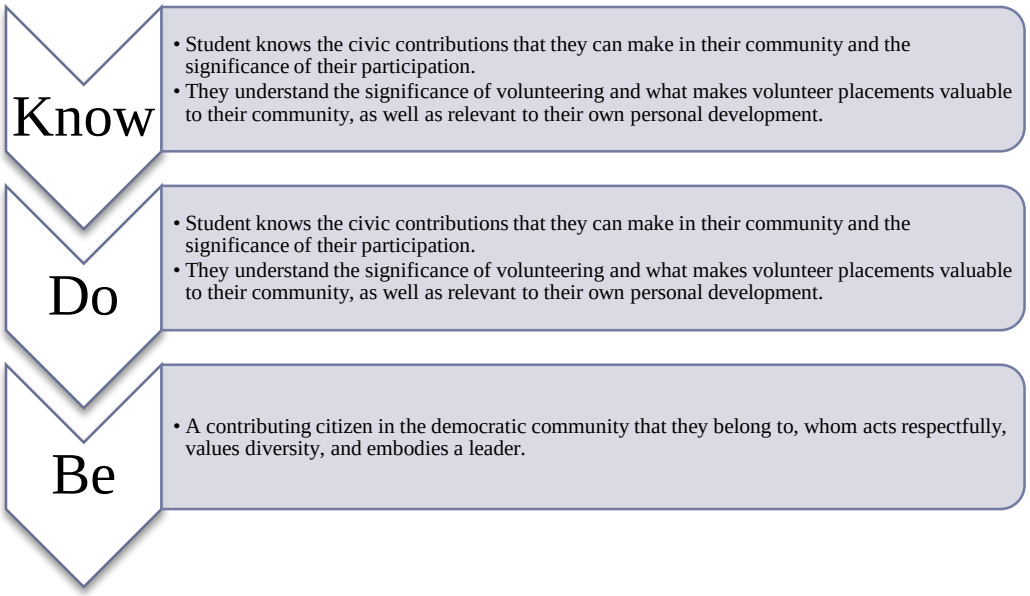
Figure 6: Big Picture—Community Involvement Program



The Big Picture

The following framework demonstrates the overall goals of the lessons by combining the learning objectives of the Civics and Citizenship curriculum, Citizenship Education Framework, and the Community Involvement Program. It outlines what teachers should strive for when teaching this unit. The content of the curriculum and the required knowledge about successful volunteerism are the basis of what students need to know. With this information taught to them, students are able to apply the knowledge and become the active contributing responsible citizens in their community as intended by the Ontario Ministry of Education's policies and mandates.

Figure 7: The Big Picture for the Standards Based Integrated Curriculum



In addition to the attributes, skills, and knowledge that educators should be constantly reflecting upon in their lesson planning and instruction, it is also crucial that they remember the four pillars for successful community involvement programs. By keeping these end goals in mind throughout the planning and execution of the lessons, educators can help to ensure that students are being developed into responsible active citizens, aware of their civic duties and prepared to venture into volunteerism.

Figure 8: Effective Community Involvement Program

Helping Youth Venture Into Volunteerism

This resource is meant to be a guide for educators to create a unit in their classroom that teaches to the expectations as well as covers the knowledge and skills needed to help teach students how to plan an effective volunteer experience for the completion of their required 40 hours of community involvement. Given that the concept of community volunteerism is specific to the community that the students are in and that each student has a very different set of needs, this resource is meant to be generalizable and therefore does not provide specific resources or tools. Educators should act as facilitators and allow students to guide the discussions and develop assignments. This resource provides examples and guidelines for educators to understand the big ideas in each stage of the unit, but specifics are not included for the purpose of differentiated instruction and making learning customizable to the students and the community to which they belong.

Figure 9: Unit Outline

Stage	Lesson	Objective	Big Ideas/Framing Questions
Get to know the program and expectations	1. Introducing the Community Involvement Program	Educators will introduce the community involvement program to students, including the requirements and the roles and responsibilities of participants. This is an information lesson, but more importantly it serves as a diagnostic for educators to get to know their student's various needs.	What is required of the program? What are your impressions? Do you have any anxieties or concerns? How can you be better supported in your volunteer experience?
Understanding the program and the meaning of volunteerism	2. Benefits of Volunteerism	Educators will expose students to the ways that they can contribute to the common good and the benefits that volunteering has on the community and volunteers themselves.	Why should I volunteer? What impact can I have on the community? Why am I required to volunteer in order to graduate high school?
	3. Meaningful Service	Students will analyse what makes community service meaningful and engaging for volunteers.	Why does it matter where and how I complete my community service? What makes community service meaningful and engaging?
Establishing goals and criteria for meaningful service	4. Goal Setting	Students will analyse their skill sets and set goals for their service so that it is meaningful and relevant to them.	What should I look for when planning my service? How can I evaluate my experience?
	5. Volunteer Placement	Students will align their goals and interests to potential volunteer placements available in their community.	How can I align my goals to my service? What kinds of service is there? What do various positions have to offer?

Opening lines of communication and establishing ties to the community and school	6. Opportunities for you	Students will investigate other incentives and relevant opportunities available to them from their community and/or in their school in order to further demonstrate relevance.	How does the school/community value my volunteer service? What incentives or opportunities are available to me if I contribute?
	7. Community Volunteer Organizations	In groups, students will research a community volunteer organization and share their findings with their peers in order to create a database of local organizations available for volunteer placements.	How do I connect with volunteer opportunities? What is available in my community?
Planning your placement	8. Culminating Task: Venturing into Volunteerism	Students will plan a volunteer placement for themself that reflects their goals, interests, and lifestyle.	What kind of contribution do I want to make? What do I want to gain from my service? What are my goals, skills, and interests? What type of placement works for my lifestyle? How can I implement a plan of action to make positive change in my community? Who do I need to connect with in order to make my plan come to life? How will I reflect and evaluate my service to ensure it is engaging and meaningful?

This unit outline is an overview of the expectations that will be met in each lesson, but is meant to provide educators with a general plan for mapping out the unit, but these expectations may change based on choice of activity and assessment.

Figure 10: Strand A: Political Inquiry and Skill Development

Strand A: Political Inquiry and Skill Development									
Overall Expectations	**Specific Expectation**	**Lessons**							
		1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**CT**
A1. Political Inquiry: use the political inquiry process and the concepts of political thinking when investigating issues, events, and developments of civic importance	1.1 formulate different types of questions to guide investigations into issues, events, and/or developments of civic importance	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	
	1.2 select and organize relevant evidence, data, and information on issues, events, and/or developments of civic importance from a variety of primary and secondary sources, ensuring that their sources reflect multiple perspectives		✓				✓	✓	
	1.3 assess the credibility of sources relevant to their investigations								
	1.4 interpret and analyse evidence, data, and information relevant to their investigations using various tools, strategies, and approaches appropriate for political inquiry			✓		✓			
	1.5 use the concepts of political thinking when analysing and evaluating evidence, data, and information and formulating conclusions and/or judgments about issues, events, and/or developments of civic importance			✓				✓	
	1.6 evaluate and synthesize their findings to formulate conclusions and/or make informed judgments or predictions about the issues, events, and/or developments they are investigating						✓	✓	✓
	1.7 communicate their ideas, arguments, and conclusions using various formats and styles, as appropriate for the intended audiences and purpose	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	1.8 use accepted forms of documentation to acknowledge different types of sources								
	1.9 use appropriate technology when communicating the results of their investigations		✓					✓	
A2. Developing Transferable Skills: apply in everyday context skills developed through investigations related to civics and citizenship education, and identify some careers in which civics and citizenship education might be an asset	2.1 describe some ways in which political inquiry can help them develop skills, including essential skills in the Ontario Skills Passport and those related to the citizenship education framework, that can be transferred to the world of work and/or to everyday life				✓	✓		✓	
	2.2 demonstrate in everyday context attributes, skills, and work habits developed in civics and citizenship education			✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
	2.3 apply the concepts of political thinking when analysing current events and issues involving Canada and the world								
	2.4 identify some careers in which civics and citizenship education might be useful				✓				

Figure 11: Strand C: Civic Engagement and Action

Strand C: Civic Engagement and Action									
Overall Expectations	**Specific Expectation**	**Lessons**							
		1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**CT**
C1. Civic Contributions: analyse a variety of civic contributions, and ways in which people can contribute to the common good	1.1 assess the significance, both in Canada and internationally, of the civic contributions of some individuals and organizations, including NGOs and social enterprises			✓	✓		✓	✓	
	1.2 describe a variety of ways in which they could make a civic contribution at the local, national, and/or global level			✓		✓		✓	✓
	1.3 explain how various actions can contribute to the common good at the local, national, and/or global level	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
C2. Inclusion and Participation: assess ways in which people express their perspectives on issues of civic importance and how various perspectives, beliefs, and values are recognized and represented in communities in Canada	2.1 analyse ways in which various beliefs, values, and perspectives are represented in their communities								
	2.2 describe ways in which some events, issues, people, and/or symbols are commemorated or recognized in Canada						✓		
	2.3 describe various ways in which people can access information about civic matters and assess the effectiveness of ways in which individuals can voice their opinions on these matters		✓			✓		✓	
C3. Personal Action on Civic Issues: analyse a civic issue of personal interest and develop a plan of action to address it	3.1 analyse a civic issue of personal interest, including how it is viewed by different people						✓	✓	
	3.2 propose different courses of action that could be used to address a specific civic issue and asses their merits				✓	✓		✓	✓
	3.3 develop a plan of action to implement positive change with respect to a specific civic issue, and predict the results of their plan				✓	✓		✓	✓
	3.4 develop criteria that could be used to assess the effectiveness of their plan or action if it were implemented			✓	✓				

HELPING YOUTH VENTURE INTO VOLUNTEERISM

Lesson 1: Introduction to the Program

Learning Goals

Know:

- how they can make a civic contribution and how their service can contribute to the common good of the people in their community
- what the policy and procedures are for the community involvement requirement in Ontario secondary schools
- what the various roles and responsibilities are of stakeholders involved in the program
- the connection between the program and civics and citizenship

Do:

- assess the program requirements
- communicate their questions, concerns, ideas, and general feelings about the program

Be:

- active and engaged in their exploration of citizenship and leadership in their community
- honest, critical, and respectful in communicating their ideas and responding to the opinions of their peers and teacher

Lesson Objectives

The objective of this lesson is to help enhance the structure of the program by formally introducing the requirements to students and providing them with an opportunity to ask questions and get support from their teacher before beginning to venture into their 40-hours of community involvement. Students would have probably been exposed to the program when they began grade nine, but this provides educators the opportunity to thoroughly reiterate the program and address any concerns or questions that students have.

Educators can explain what makes a placement valid or invalid, based on the program standards set by the Ontario Ministry of Education. This also provides them an opportunity to explain to students the rationale and purpose for the program, and how it relates to the Civics and Citizenship curriculum. The information being conveyed to students is also very relevant and valuable to parents, so educators could pass along this information, as well as providing them with an update of the goals of the upcoming lessons so that they can stay informed. Ultimately this is a time where educators can emphasize the relevance of the program to their education and role as citizens, as well as open up lines of communication to students and to their parents.

Students are asked to communicate their initial feelings and ideas about the program. In addition to introducing students to the program, this lesson serves as a diagnostic for educators to understand where their students are coming from, what experiences they have with volunteering (if any), and what concerns or anxieties they have about the program. By asking students about their opinions and feelings they become involved in the program and engaged in its process. Educators can also begin to assess the needs of their students based on the class discussion and written reflections.

Instructional Plan
Setting the Stage: Educators should use the resources provided by their specific school board/principal for the implementation of the community involvement program in schools. This information should be provided to students to inform them of the policy and procedures. Educators are encouraged to ensure that parents have access to this information. As a class, educators should review the program, the roles and responsibilities of stakeholders (students, principals, teachers, parents, and community members). They should also review what makes a valid or invalid service placement because the program is very general and leaves a lot of room for interpretation. This lesson is meant to be diagnostic where educators can open up discussion for questions, concerns, anxieties, and general feelings about what students want to gain from the program.
Core Learning Activity: Have students write on a piece of paper one positive feeling that they have about the program. Each student will toss their paper in a basket and then the teacher will mix up the papers and pass out one paper to each student. Each student will share the comment on their paper with the class, providing an opportunity to open up discussion and for the teacher to assess the feelings their students have towards the program. This process should be repeated for a negative feeling or concern/question and teachers should facilitate discussion of common themes and help address students feelings and try to answer any questions that might arise. In order to teach about quality volunteer placements, educators can facilitate a four corners activity where they provide students with a scenario of a volunteer placement and students need to choose whether or not they "strongly agree," "agree," "strongly disagree," or "disagree" that that particular community service activity should be considered valid hours for their high school requirement. Educators might refer to the Ministry's policy as stated on their website for this activity.
Lesson Consolidation/Debriefing with Students: As a final diagnostic, teachers should have students use the last 5-10 minutes of class to write a short journal entry/feedback form to be handed in at the end of class. This should be used as a way for teachers to get to know their students' situation as they begin to learn and plan for community service (previous experience, connections to volunteer organizations, challenges/obstacles, apprehensions, etc.). Educators should keep this information available to them throughout the lessons and use it to help ability/interest group students for activities and know how much support students might need in planning and researching volunteer placements. Teachers should consolidate the discussion by noting the common themes and outlining how the following lessons will help to make students feel more comfortable and confident in planning and engaging in community service for the fulfillment of their 40 hours of community involvement.

Message Home

The following letter is an example of the message that educators could send to parent(s)/guardian(s) of their students in order to inform them of the requirement their child has to meet and how that requirement will be addressed in their class. This message could be sent in a variety of ways, either by letter, email, posting on a class website, phone call, etc. Educators are encouraged to find the most effective ways to communicate with their student's parent(s)/guardian(s) depending on their situation.

When students reach secondary school, parents often become disengaged because they feel that they are no longer needed (Neal & Kaye, 2006). This message will hopefully inspire parent(s)/guardian(s) to discuss these topics with their child and be active in their community involvement planning. Given that this requirement is one that is expected to be completed outside of the school, educators should develop relationships with their student's parent(s)/guardian(s) in order to better help to support them in their community involvement initiatives with the proper access to resources and information.

Dear Parent(s)/Guardian(s),

(EDUCATOR CAN INTRODUCE HIM/HERSELF ACCORDINGLY)

EVERY HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT IN ONTARIO MUST COMPLETE 40-HOURS OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN ORDER TO RECEIVE THEIR ONTARIO SECONDARY SCHOOL DIPLOMA (OSSD). FROM THE TIME BETWEEN THE SUMMER BEFORE THEY ENTER GRADE 9 UP UNTIL THE END OF GRADE 12, STUDENTS ARE EXPECTED TO ACCUMULATE HOURS TO MEET THE GRADUATION REQUIREMENT.

THE ONTARIO MINISTRY OF EDUCATION (1999) STATES THAT THE PURPOSE OF THIS REQUIREMENT "IS TO ENCOURAGE STUDENTS TO DEVELOP AWARENESS AND UNDERSTANDING OF CIVIC RESPONSIBILITY AND OF THE ROLE THEY CAN PLAY AND THE CONTRIBUTIONS THEY CAN MAKE IN SUPPORTING AND STRENGTHENING THEIR COMMUNITIES" (PARA. 2). ESSENTIALLY, THE PROGRAM ALLOWS FOR STUDENTS TO EXTEND THEIR SKILLS BEYOND THE CLASSROOM AND APPLY THEM IN A REAL WORLD CONTEXT WHILE ENGAGING WITH THEIR COMMUNITY AND GAINING VALUABLE EXPERIENCES.

CIVICS AND CITIZENSHIP IS A MANDATORY GRADE 10 COURSE THAT IS A REQUIREMENT FOR STUDENTS TO RECEIVE THEIR OSSD. THE COURSE EXPLORES THE RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES ASSOCIATED WITH BEING AN ACTIVE CANADIAN CITIZEN IN A DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY. THE COURSE SEEKS TO DEMONSTRATE TO STUDENTS WHAT THEIR ROLE IS IN SOCIETY AND THE MEANING AND VALUE OF CIVIC ENGAGEMENT.

AS I TEACH STUDENTS ABOUT CIVIC ENGAGEMENT, I AM GOING TO CONNECT THE CURRICULUM EXPECTATIONS TO THE COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT REQUIREMENT IN ORDER TO PREPARE YOUR CHILD FOR PLANNING THEIR SERVICE AND UNDERSTANDING THE VALUE OF BEING AN ACTIVE AND INVOLVED CITIZEN AND THE BENEFITS OF VOLUNTEERING THEIR SKILLS AND SERVICES IN THEIR COMMUNITY. I ENCOURAGE YOU TO MOTIVATE AND SUPPORT YOUR CHILD TO BE OPEN MINDED AND POSITIVE AS WE EXPLORE COMMUNITY SERVICE TOGETHER.

AS A MEMBER OF THE COMMUNITY, YOUR INPUT AND EXPERIENCES ARE VERY VALUABLE NOT ONLY TO YOUR CHILD, BUT POTENTIALLY TO OTHER STUDENTS IN THE CLASSROOM. IT IS MY HOPE TO HAVE COMMUNITY MEMBERS BE PRESENT IN THE CLASSROOM IN ORDER TO SHARE THEIR EXPERIENCES AND ASSIST STUDENTS IN MAKING VALUABLE COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS. IF YOU HAVE ANY EXPERIENCES, INFORMATION, OR RESOURCES THAT YOU THINK MIGHT HELP STUDENTS AS THEY DELVE INTO THEIR COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT HOURS PLEASE FEEL FREE TO CONTACT ME. I WOULD VERY MUCH APPRECIATE ANY SUGGESTIONS OR ASSISTANCE YOU COULD PROVIDE IN ORDER TO MAKE THIS UNIT AS AUTHENTIC AND VALUABLE AS POSSIBLE FOR THE STUDENTS.

BEST WISHES, (SIGNATURE AND CONTACT INFORMATION)

HELPING YOUTH VENTURE INTO VOLUNTEERISM

Lesson 2: Why Volunteer?

Learning Goals

Know:

- their role as an active and engaged citizen and contributing member of society
- how they can make a civic contribution and how their service can contribute to the common good of the people in their community
- why volunteering is so important and significant to communities and to their own personal development

Do:

- investigate the benefits of volunteering from various perspectives
- select and organize relevant evidence and communicate their findings and ideas to their peers

Be:

- informed and aware of their duties as citizens and active members of their community
- confident in their ability to do good and make a difference in society

Lesson Objectives

The next step of introducing the program is to engage students in the rationale and purpose behind its implementation. Teachers should create buy-in from students by exposing them to the benefits of volunteering, not only on the members of the community they seek to serve, but also the volunteers themselves. It is about making them realize that they can have a positive influence on their community at any age and in various capacities. It is about making them realize why the Ontario Ministry of Education implemented this requirement in Ontario secondary schools.

This lesson is focused on increasing engagement and making students see the significance and relevance of volunteering through reflective practices. In order for programs to achieve their full potential, "it is important that participants be psychologically engaged in the program activities" (Dawes & Larson, 2011, p. 265). Deep engagement is defined as the students' ability to internalize the goals of the activity in order to achieve motivation, ownership of the experience, and investment in its outcomes. Students need to see the value in volunteering so that they can be motivated to engage deeply in a service placement.

Instructional Plan
Setting the Stage: Educators should use resources and videos to explain to students the contributions that youth volunteers can make in their community. The following list contains Canadian resources that could be used. Many of the resources are created by the Ontario Government, which makes them very relevant to the students and the 40-hours of community involvement requirement. This website is created by the Ontario government, which means it is geared towards youth that are required to volunteer 40-hours for their graduation requirement. Included are a couple of inspirational videos to encourage students to volunteer. Showing students a brief video would be a good way to introduce the lesson. Government of Ontario (2014). *Encouraging Ontario Students to "Change the World"*. Retrieved from http://www.citizenship.gov.on.ca/english/citizenship/changetheworld/index.shtml The following is a link to a document (which will be suggested again later in the unit) that includes a brief summary of the benefits of volunteering. Volunteer Canada in partnership with Manulife Financial (n.d.a.). Building Blocks for Youth Volunteer Engagement. Retrieved from http://volunteer.ca/content/building-blocks-youth-volunteer-engagement The following link is to a two page handout that describes the skills and employment benefits that come from volunteering. Imagine Canada (2000). *The Benefits of Volunteering*. Retrieved from http://www.imaginecanada.ca/sites/default/files/www/en/giving/factsheets/benefits_of_volunteering.pdf A youth friendly website created by the Ontario Government contains a list of 10 reasons why youth should volunteer. This website also includes stories from youth volunteers and ways that youth can get started their service. Youth Opportunities Ontario (2013). *Why should I volunteer?* Retrieved from http://www.youthconnect.ca/htdocs/english/getinvolved/why.asp Volunteer Canada has conducted thorough research available to volunteer organizations to help them recruit volunteers and create opportunities for service that engage volunteers and inspire continued service. There is a section on their website that is specifically geared towards engaging youth in volunteer positions. This is not written for a youth audience, as it is a resource for volunteer organizations to engage youth; however, it would be interesting to have youth read the research on them and see how organizations value youth participation and are working to meet their needs. Volunteer Canada in partnership with Manulife Financial (n.d.c.) *Building the Bridge to Youth Volunteers: Enriching the volunteer experience to build future for our communities*. Retrieved from http://volunteer.ca/content/building-bridge-youth-volunteers The following article is written to inspire organizations to better engage youth in volunteerism, but it also provides a great story of an avid volunteer that began their experience as a child from a family that was very involved in charity work. This article may not be written for a youth audience, but it does demonstrate to students the value that they have and contributions that they can make as volunteers in their community. Dougherty, I. (2011). Engaging youth in decision-making: Moving from volunteerism to active citizenship. *The Philanthropist, 24*(2), 103-107. http://www.thephilanthropist.ca/index.php/phil/article/view/910/774

Core Learning Activity:

Students will create a campaign for the 40 hours of community involvement program. The first lesson provided them with information and the logistics of the program. This lesson demonstrates the rationale for the program by establishing the benefits of youth engaging in volunteerism.

Students will be asked to work in partners or small groups to create some sort of campaign advertisement for the community involvement program. What they choose to do is entirely up to them (poster, video, radio ad, newspaper article, flyer, etc.). Whatever form of campaign method they choose, they will need to do research and include primary and/or secondary resources to sell the idea of volunteering that reflects their audience (Ontario secondary school students). They will also need to include some general information about the program to inform students.

Lesson Consolidation/Debriefing With Students:

Ideally, these campaigns can be shared not only with the class, but could be displayed in the school (posters in the hall, announcements over the PA, articles in school newsletter, school website, etc.) and available for parents to view as well. Educators should help students present their campaign in whatever capacity they see fit.

Educators should reiterate to students that the required 40 hours of community service is a program that has been implemented not only for the benefit of the community, but as a way to motivate and expose students to see the benefits that volunteering could have on them.

HELPING YOUTH VENTURE INTO VOLUNTEERISM

Lesson 3: Meaningful Service

Learning Goals

Know:

- the contributions that they can make and how they can contribute to the common good of their community
- what makes a service placement meaningful and engaging for volunteers
- the significance of carefully planned, relevant, and engaging volunteer placements

Do:

- assess service placements in order to evaluate what makes civic contributions valuable, worthwhile, and impactful

Be:

- responsible and informed citizens
- thoughtful, prepared, and reflective volunteers
- proactive life-long learners

Lesson Objectives

The overall goal of this lesson is to demonstrate to students how one person can make a valuable contribution through volunteering and how that contribution can have a powerful effect on their own personal development. In order for service to be effective and impactful, the service needs to be appropriately planned and implemented so that it is meaningful and engaging for the volunteer. Passion and interest will inspire engagement and dedication amongst volunteers.

Meinhard and Brown's (2010) research found that reflection and relevance make for a positive community service program. Educators need to help students choose placements that provide quality experiences. Meinhard and Brown (2010) state make quality experiences:

- give students responsibility
- provides meaningful work/challenging tasks
- opportunities for student leadership/decision making
- matches students' interests
- listens to and considers students' ideas
- matches students' abilities
- allows for engagement in direct service work
- provides training/preparation for student volunteers

This lesson is designed to expose students to these criteria for volunteer service so that they use this awareness when they plan their own volunteer placements. If students engage in meaningful service they are more likely to have a positive experience and hopefully this means that they continue their service into adulthood.

Instructional Plan

Setting the Stage:

The instruction for this class provides a lesson on these aspects of quality volunteer experiences. These should be the founding criteria for students when they set specific goals for themselves as they plan their placements.

Before providing students with the criteria (Meinhard & Brown, 2010) educators should begin the class with a brainstorming activity about what makes a quality community service placement to see what ideas students come up with on their own. Educators can then contribute any of the remaining criteria that students did not mention or rephrase ideas to come up with a consolidated list of criteria. These criteria can be used when they plan their placements and reflect on their service.

The "Get Involved" website has a series of short video clips available that have volunteers tell about their volunteer experience. Educators could choose from the "Volunteer to turn my passion into a career" videos to show the class, then facilitate discussion about how these volunteers chose civic contributions that utilized their skills and passions as well as the significance of choosing to do this rather than simply doing menial unskilled jobs.

Reference:
Q Media Solutions Inc. in association with TVO (2014). *Get involved: Find your volunteer match*. Retrieved from https://www.getinvolved.ca/

Core Learning Activity:

The purpose of this lesson is to provide students with an example of a person that had a meaningful and engaging community service experience. Educators should provide students with an example of a citizen that acted as a leader in their community and made a valuable contribution through their volunteer service. They will deconstruct the volunteers experience by asking critical questions in order to draw conclusions about what made their service impactful for both them and their community.

An example experience comes from Dyan deNapoli who has a TED video called "The great penguin rescue" in which she discusses her volunteer contribution in Africa when there was an oil spill that threatened the lives of thousands of penguins. This story demonstrates how one person can make a powerful contribution by using their passion and skills to address a crisis in the world. This particular problem is one that affected a species of animals that were endangered and therefore the efforts of volunteers had a huge impact on the ecosystem. The story also incorporated the contribution of a 17-year old student that used his skills to invent a tool to help degrease the penguins.

DeNapoli, D. (June, 2011). *Dyan DeNapoli: The great penguin rescue* [video file]. Retrieved from http://www.ted.com/talks/dyan_denapoli_the_great_penguin_rescue#t-642926

This particular example is great because it demonstrates an example of a young person making a huge impact, as well as how significant a volunteer position can be when you are passionate about the imitative and the organization values and utilizes your skills.

Based on the criteria created by the class, students will assess the quality of the volunteer's service and reflect on what made it positive and provide comments and feedback for how to enhance the service or suggestions for future service. This could be a written activity or it could simply be a class discussion.

Another activity option could be to provide students with mock profiles of youth and then brainstorm possible volunteer placements for them that would match their passions and help to develop their skills so that they have meaningful and worthwhile experiences that encourage them to continue their service beyond 40-hours and into adulthood. They would have to thoroughly explain the reasons for why they chose the particular placement, as well as what how the placement will contribute to the common good of the community and how the service will benefit the volunteer. This could also be an individual written activity or depending on the culture and dynamic of the class this could be a group drama activity with skits and a class debrief.

Lesson Consolidation/Debriefing With Students:

The objectives of this lesson were to expose students to what makes meaningful quality community service placements, so that they can consider these criteria when planning their own placements for their required 40-hours of community service and all service after that. The next lesson will have students create their own goals for their service, so educators should consolidate their learning and have them think about what this lesson means for them.

HELPING YOUTH VENTURE INTO VOLUNTEERISM

Lesson 4: Goal Setting

Learning Goals

Know:

- the traits, qualities, and expertise that you have to offer your community
- the type of civic contribution that matches their lifestyle, as well as personal and professional goals

Do:

- assess your own personal and professional goals and skills
- reflect on the goals and purposes you have for volunteering in your community in order to make for a positive and meaningful experience that will encourage continued civic engagement
- develop a plan of action that creates positive change in a manner that engages you and is relevant to your goals and development

Be:

- reflective and proactive when planning civic engagement
- positive and engaged in the potential to contribute to the common good of their community

Lesson Objectives

The first three lessons provided students with an understanding of the program and of what makes volunteerism important. The previous lesson had students evaluate someone else's experience to deconstruct what made it meaningful for them and made them a contributing member of their community. With an appreciation for meaningful volunteerism, students will now be asked to create their own goals and criteria for their volunteer experiences.

In order for students to have a meaningful experience, they need to feel that the experience is relevant to them and be able to reflect on their experience. With goals set, students can better evaluate the quality of their service and reflect on the learning and contributions they have made.

In order to achieve student engagement in the community service program students need to be able to build connections between their service to their future goals, feel that they are developing a competence at something, and be personally invested in the moral and civic goals of the service (Dawson & Larson, 2011). By these standards, mundane unskilled jobs, such as fundraising, cannot possibly be engaging them and promoting continued community service. Therefore, educators need to encourage students to articulate what they want to gain from their service so that when the time comes to plan a service placement they are aware of what to look for and their standards. In addition, educators need to reiterate that the goals and criteria that students set should be continuously reflected on throughout their service in order to advocate for themselves and ensure they feel valued and are making contributions that provide them with a positive experience.

Instructional Plan
Setting the Stage: Educators should cover the basics of what makes goals "smart" prior to the core activity. Smart goals are specific, measureable, achievable, relevant, and timely. Students should consider their lifestyle and availability when they plan their placements in order to make sure that their goals are practical and that their service is meaningful but not unrealistic. As students perform and complete their service, they should reflect on their goals and criteria and determine what made their experience valuable or reassess their goals before planning their next one. At this point in time, educators should recap with students the knowledge of what makes volunteer service engaging and meaningful. Students will then begin to set their own goals and expectations for any service they complete based on the standards they have been taught and their own personal aspiration and development. Student goals should include the contribution that they want to make on the community, their personal interests and passions, as well as their professional development as a student and their future employment/careers. Educators should have students reflect on the various skills that they use in their lives and interests that engage them. Students need to view volunteer placements as something that utilizes and develops their skills and qualifications, just like an employment position would. Educators need to emphasize that students will only get as much out of their placement as they put into it, so they should plan carefully and reflect on their goals. If they settle for a placement that does not develop or utilize their skills and challenge them, then they will not grow from that experience. They should also consider the experience as being an asset to their resume and something that could help them find employment
Core Learning Activity: Students will evaluate the skills that they are good at and want to utilize in their placements, as well as skills that they would like to develop through their experience. They will also be provided with examples of placements that align to a civic issue of personal interest. This lesson should be focused on self-assessment and personality testing in order to match students to volunteer placements. Students need to decide what they are passionate about. It could be a hobby or it could be a future career. They also need to decide what skills they value and what they want to enhance and use so that they feel like a valuable contributor. In order to help students begin to think of various skills that they feel they have or want to develop they can use skills self-assessments such as the one at the following site: Volunteer Canada in partnership with Manulife Financial (n.d.a). Building Blocks for Youth Volunteer Engagement. Retrieved from http://volunteer.ca/content/building-blocks-youth-volunteer-engagement Based on the criteria that have been set for meaningful community service and their own personal interests and aspirations, students will create a checklist of criteria for their volunteer placement. This checklist will be something that they can use not only to help guide them when planning their placement, but it can also be used to evaluate their service during and after their experience. By having specific measurable goals and standards students can judge what makes their experiences positive or what they might be missing in their placement that is preventing them from having the most impactful experience possible.
Lesson Consolidation/Debriefing With Students: Students will debrief together by peer-assessing their goals and providing each other with constructive feedback in order to ensure that goals are "smart" and clear. The assessment criteria should be class-created.

HELPING YOUTH VENTURE INTO VOLUNTEERISM

Lesson 5: Volunteer Placement

Learning Goals

Know:

- the various ways that people can access information about civic matters and the ways that they can make contributions
- the ways to effectively make civic contributions based on their skills, interests, and lifestyle

Do:

- investigate and reflect on their volunteer identity
- research possible ways that they can make civic contributions
- describe the ways that they could contribute to the common good based on their volunteer identity

Be:

- self-reflective
- expressive
- engaged citizens

Lesson Objectives

Now that students have an understanding of what they want to gain from their volunteer service based on the contributions that they want to make and their personal and professional goals, the next step is to match their goals to the appropriate position for them. Students need to find positions that align with their goals, interests, and lifestyle so that they can have a positive, engaging, and meaningful experience which will inspire them to continue their service.

This lesson also gives students and opportunity to begin to access information about various volunteer positions that are available to them. They will be exposed to resources that could help them to research volunteer positions for their mandated 40 hours of community involvement. In addition, they will be reflecting on the criteria for effective and meaningful volunteer service based on personality and goal alignment.

Instructional Plan

Setting the Stage:

Students will be evaluating the kind of placements that are appropriate for them and explore various positions available in their area. Students should utilize this opportunity to be inspired by various positions and begin to build their skills and knowledge of how to find volunteer placements.

To begin the lesson, educators can have students take a quiz to find out what kind of volunteer they are. Volunteer Canada provides a very user friendly, quality quiz called "What kind of volunteer are you?" (link on the main homepage) that would be appropriate for this introduction exercise.

Volunteer Canada in partnership with Manulife Financial. (n.d.c). *What kind of volunteer are you?* Retrieved from https://www.getinvolved.ca/vquiz/english/

Students can take the quiz and record their results for future reference. This icebreaker activity is meant to help students to understand the types of questions they should be asking themselves as they search for volunteer positions. Once students have completed the quiz, educators should facilitate discussion about the types of questions the quiz asked and why students think these questions in particular were chosen to help calculate their volunteer identity.

Core Learning Activity:

For this activity educators should provide students with some valuable resources to help guide them to finding placements appropriate for them for their volunteer placements. Below are a couple of valuable Canadian websites that explore various positions in which students could engage based on their skills, interests, and location.

For this activity, students will be required to write a cover letter. By exploring the resources, students need to choose a position and placement that appeals to their interests and is realistic and relevant to their goals and lifestyle. Once they have chosen the volunteer placement that they would like, they will need to write a cover letter to apply for the position. This letter will need to be written formally just as they would if they were applying for an employment position; therefore, educators may have to review proper format for cover letters.

In this cover letter students will need to:

- introduce themselves to the volunteer supervisor (current situation, interests, future goals etc.)
- explain why they are a valuable candidate for the position (align themselves to the placements)
- tell the supervisor how they learned about the position and provide feedback for how they could continue to recruit youth volunteers

Students should self-assess based on the goals they created in the previous lesson, as well as have their work peer assessed prior to submitting for evaluation.

These are a couple of websites that students can use to find positions for their cover letter application:

Q Media Solutions Inc. in association with TVO (2014). *Get involved: Find your volunteer match*. Retrieved from https://www.getinvolved.ca/

Manulife Financial (2011). Skills-plus: Bridging Volunteer Experience and Career Development. Retrieved from http://www.getvolunteering.ca/pdf/Skill-Plus-English-June%2020%20-%202011.pdf

Lesson Consolidation/Debriefing With Students:

Students were encouraged to explore the resources provided to them and had the option to search for their own resources. As a class, students should critique the resources that they used and share their findings with their peers. If there were other resources found, teachers should record these. Educators should share these resources with parents as well.

HELPING YOUTH VENTURE INTO VOLUNTEERISM

Lesson 6: Opportunities for Me

Learning Goals

Know:

- how volunteer service is commemorated or recognized
- the significance of civic contributions of some individuals
- how others might view their service
- the value of reflecting on and documenting their experiences to develop and demonstrate their skills and know-how

Do:

- investigating how their civic duty is valued in their school and community based on opportunities provided to them
- acquire a primary example of an incentive or opportunity available to youth and synthesize their findings
- communicate their ideas and conclusions

Be:

- aware of the importance of civic contributions
- motivated to set goals and be an active citizen

Lesson Objectives

In this lesson students are exposed to volunteer opportunities from someone in the local community, as well as school personnel. This will provide students with some examples of how their school and community value their volunteer contributions and incentives that they can strive to achieve such as scholarships and awards.

One of the largest predictors of youth engaging in volunteer service is whether or not someone in their family does community service, particularly their parents (Meinhard & Brown, 2010; Metz & Youniss, 2005). If students do not have family members or friends encouraging them and supporting them in their volunteer initiative, then perhaps other incentives or goals provided to them from the school or community organizations might help to motivate them to strive to reach their civic duties.

Many schools and/or communities have awards and scholarships available to youth—some of which are granted based on community involvement and volunteer service. In lesson 2 students were asked to reflect on and investigate the benefits of volunteering and how community service contributes to the common good. This lesson helps to make students aware of some potential extrinsic motivators for volunteering and being an active member of society. At the same time, while exposing them to scholarships, awards, and further opportunities, educators are demonstrating to them the value that community members have placed on volunteerism and how others perceive them when they are active members of society working to do good for others.

Instructional Plan

Setting the Stage:

Educators should open up the lesson with discussion how people view volunteers. As a group students can list off words/phrases that come to mind when they think of an individual that is an active community volunteer and these words/phrases can be recorded on the board as a mind map. It can be assumed that most of these ideas and descriptors will be positive (if there are negative ones educators should not ignore them but address them immediately). This will open up thinking about how volunteers are perceived in the community and even in Canada as a whole. Educators can also make reference to iconic volunteers such as Terry Fox, in order to have students really conceptualize how volunteers can be commemorated.

By discussing volunteers like Terry Fox, educators can demonstrate the heroism that comes from serving the community. Now it is time to demonstrate how this same heroism can be recognized on a regular basis for average community members such as themselves.

Core Learning Activity:

Educators will expose students to the ways in which the school and community are commemorating youth volunteers. This can be through scholarships, awards, or simple manners of recognizing their contributions (newspaper articles, school announcements, etc.).

Ideally, educators should arrange for a leader in the community to come and speak to the class about their organization and the award/scholarship they distribute to youth. Educators should encourage representatives of community non-profit organizations to share their initiative with youth, as many community organizations are struggling to accumulate volunteers and this could help to increase volunteer interest (Volunteer Canada, 2012).

In addition to community members, the classroom teacher could arrange for other school staff to come into the classroom and talk about awards and scholarships that the school offers. For example, the Principal, Vice Principal, or Guidance Counselor may be experts about these opportunities and be a great resource for students to ask questions and gather information. As well, courses such as Co-op which is offered in grade 11 in Ontario schools also expose students to community organizations; therefore, the Co-op teacher in the school may be a valuable resource that can not only share information about these incentives but also relate the community service program to a course that students will have the opportunity to take the following year.

Aside from guest speakers, there are other resources that educators can expose students to in order to find information. School boards such as the Thames Valley District School Board have a “Student Awards and Scholarships” page on their website which lists the various awards students can apply to and many of them have volunteer service as their requirement:

Thames Valley District School Board. (n.d.b). *Student Awards and Scholarships*. Retrieved from http://www.tvdsb.ca/students.cfm?subpage=36

Students will be asked to research an award or scholarship that is given to youth as recognition for the outstanding service in the community. Educators should encourage students to seek out an opportunity that they could strive for themselves and is relevant and feasible for them to strive for.

As an assignment, students will write a letter to the organization that is distributing the community service reward they researched and tell them why they think having the reward is beneficial and why they should continue to recognize community volunteers. These letters could be displayed in the school in order to help inform other students about these opportunities or educators could help students send the letters to the organizations in order to develop a relationship with a community organization of their choice.

Lesson Consolidation/Debriefing With Students:
Educators should have students share their findings with the class and consolidate their conclusions. This activity helps to expose students to opportunities that they might not have thought to seek out, while also demonstrating how others positively perceive volunteers in the community. Students should share what they learned with each other in order to teach each other about the opportunities available for youth volunteers.

HELPING YOUTH VENTURE INTO VOLUNTEERISM

Lesson 7: Community Volunteer Organizations

Big Ideas

Know:

- the significance of civic contributions of local organizations and leaders
- how these organizations are making contributions to the common good of the community
- how to access information about organizations and the civic issues they are striving to address

Do:

- formulate questions and research significant information about an organization in the local community
- evaluate, synthesize, and communicate their findings in an impactful presentation

Be:

- positive and contributing group member
- respectful and responsible
- aware and engaged citizens in the community

Lesson Learning Goals

In groups, students will research a nonprofit/charitable organization or initiative in their community. They will look into the organization's mission and the contributions they are making in the community and evaluate the significance of their contribution.

This lesson activity is a way for students to teach each other about various volunteer opportunities available to them in the community. Students will include events/positions that offer volunteer service hours and contact information for students to pursue the experience. Students should also describe the types of volunteers that would be ideal for the organization (interests, skills, values, etc.) to help guide students to appropriate for them.

By having students work in small groups and present to their classmates, the class will leave this lesson with an overview of numerous community organizations that they might not have thought to have contacted prior to the presentations. Student should create a pamphlet, handout, or electronic resource that students could save and take with them for when they begin to plan their volunteer service. These resources should also be shared with parents.

Instructional Plan

Setting the Stage:

Educators need to explain to students the importance of being informed of the various volunteer opportunities available to them. In order to be responsible and proactive in planning their placements for their mandatory community service students should research their options and choose the most appropriate placement for them based on their goals, skills, and interests.

Teachers should provide students with a list of various nonprofit/charity organizations in their community that they could choose from for their volunteer placements. This list may be available from the school staff member in charge of implementing the community service program; if not educators could contact a town/city representative to retrieve this information. If educators do not feel they have the resources to create such as list, they could engage the class in researching and compiling a list of organizations as an in-class collaborative task. Even if the list is teacher-created, students should be encouraged to contribute to the list and descriptions of organizations/events and ask their parent(s)/guardian(s) if they have anything to contribute.

Core Learning Activity:

Students will be placed into groups of 3 or 4. In the first lesson students were required to share some information about themselves with regards to their feelings and opinions about the 40-hours of mandated community involvement. Educators should use this diagnostic assessment, as well as their observations of students throughout the course, in order to appropriately group students. Ideally, groups should include students with similar interests/goals, but it would also be helpful to pair students that are confident with volunteerism with ones that are more apprehensive.

Each group is required to select a non-profit/charity organization or event in their local community to research and present to their peers. Educators should provide a copy of the list of various local organization or events created in Setting the Stage for students to choose from. Students can add to this list as long as their choice is approved by their teacher and meets the criteria of the community involvement program (Ontario Ministry of Education, 1999).

Students need to:

- introduce their organization/event with relevant general information
- describe the mission/vision of the organization/event
- explain the initiative, who they are serving, and how they are contributing to the common good
- sell their peers on the significance of the initiative and why they should involve themselves
- describe the ideal volunteer for that organization/event (interests, skills, goals etc.)
- create a handout/pamphlet for students with the main points from their presentation and relevant information needed for them to get involved (location, time, contact information, etc.)

Lesson Consolidation/Debriefing With Students:

As a consolidating activity, students should reflect on the various presentations of volunteer experiences that their peers shared with them and choose the most appropriate placement for them. As a simple exit card activity, students should select a placement and provide 2 or 3 reasons why they feel that this placement would be appropriate and meaningful for them. If students are unable to relate to any of the presentations, educators could ask students to select a position and provide 2 or 3 reasons why it would not be an appropriate placement for them.

HELPING YOUTH VENTURE INTO VOLUNTEERISM

Culminating Task: Venturing Into Volunteerism

Learning Goals

Know:

- the ways they can make civic contributions in their community and the significance of their participation
- what makes volunteer placements valuable and relevant to their own personal development

Do:

- student questions and reflects on the relevance and significance of volunteering and contributing to the common good of the community
- student informs themselves about issues in the community that resonate to their personal interests and aspirations in order to plan and assess a meaningful course of action and be a leader in their community
- they feel comfortable and are capable to open lines of communication and establishing ties to community organizations

Be:

- a prepared and engaged citizen ready and eager to contribute to their community in a responsible and respectful manner

Lesson Objective

As the final culminating task for this series of lessons on community involvement and civic engagement, students should be at the point where they have achieved the knowledge, skills, and attributes that the lessons have sought to achieve. The lessons have also addressed the current deficiencies of the structure of the community involvement program. Students were introduced to the policies and procedures and provided ample time to ask questions and receive support from their classroom teacher. They were exposed to the benefits of volunteering both on the community and on their own personal development. Students reflected on their goals, ambitions, and identities as they venture into volunteerism.

It is now time for students to use their new found knowledge of volunteering and awareness of their own goals and interests to plan a volunteer placement. This placement should be realistic so that students could actually implement it and use the hours for their required 40 hours of community service.

Instructional Plan

Setting the Stage:

Educators should review the activities and knowledge that students have gained over the course of the past seven lessons. Students have learned about the program, the benefits of volunteering, got to hear about some volunteer stories, investigate community organizations, and learn a little bit about themselves and their volunteer identity. To review:

Lesson 1 – learned the requirements of the program and what makes a valid or invalid service

Lesson 2 & 3 – learned the benefits of volunteering, the contributions that they can make, and what makes a meaningful community service placement

Lesson 4 – set goals for what they want to gain from their volunteer placements

Lesson 5 – outlined an identity for themselves as a volunteer and the type of placements that make sense for them

Lesson 6 & 7 – began to investigate volunteers and organizations and opportunities in their local community

It is now time to consolidate their learning by planning a course of action for volunteer service that could be used towards their mandatory 40 hours of community involvement for their high school diploma.

Core Learning Activity:

Students will compile the resources that they have created throughout the past seven lessons and begin to plan their community service initiative. The assignment should review the topics that have been taught in the course and include all components in the final product.

Now that you have a sound understanding of what the community involvement program expects of you and the benefits and rationale behind volunteering in the community, it is now time to take what you have learned to plan a volunteer placement for yourself which could be used towards your mandatory 40-hours of community service.

In order to plan your placement you should think about the lessons you have learned throughout this unit, such as:

- *Your volunteer identity*
  - *What are your interests and what initiatives are you passionate about?*
  - *What are your skills and how can you use your skills to contribution to your community?*
- *Your goals and expectations for your volunteer service*
  - *What do you hope to gain from your experience?*
  - *What are your personal and professional goals?*
  - *What contribution do you want to make?*
- *The various initiatives, positions, and/or organizations you could contribute to*
  - *What volunteer services are available and service the needs of the community and do good?*
  - *What initiative best aligns with your goals, skills, and interests?*
  - *What position will best benefit you personally and professionally?*
- *Your course of action to connect with the people in the community and build relationships*
  - *Who will you need to contact in order to begin your volunteer journey and how will you connect with them?*
- *Evaluation of your volunteer service*
  - *How will you know that your volunteer service was meaningful and engaging?*
  - *What questions will you ask yourself as you implement and carry out your service in order to ensure that you are having a positive experience?*

Core Learning Activity (cont'd):

Educators could plan the unit to have the students progressively complete tasks that lead up to building a final portfolio or they could have students complete a final reflection of their objectives, goals, and personal and professional skills and characteristics as a volunteer. Educators should be creative in how they present the task to students and provide some flexibility and options in order to make sure that it is valuable and realistic for each student. What is most important is that students see this assignment as being one that is relevant and practical for them and helpful in their venture into volunteerism.

As a final reflection piece, educators could ask students to create a document that exhibits their learning and plans for community involvement. Such as:

Write a letter to the school principal stating what you plan to volunteer and why it should count towards your required hours (how and why the placement is a good fit for you, the impact it will have on your learning and development, and the contribution it will make to the community).

Or another variation of the same idea could be:

Write a letter to a contact from the organization or event that you wish to get involved with and tell them why you would be the right candidate to volunteer for their organization based on your knowledge of the organization, interest in its initiative, the skills you can provide, and how they can help you achieve your goals (work skills, personal skills, and/or desired contribution to the community).

Educators should survey the interests of the class and come up with a task that would inspire creativity and be relevant to them as they venture into volunteerism.

Lesson Consolidation/Debriefing With Students:

Educators should consider conferencing with students to present their plan rather than simply handing it in or presenting it to their peers. This will help to solidify the support system between the teacher and student as they venture into volunteerism. Teachers can facilitate some reflection and provide constructive feedback to the student in order to help guide them to effective and engaging service. An option would be for educators to have students to get a signature from a parent/guardian or another relevant adult from the community to sign their project demonstrating that they have read the student's plan and hopefully that they will help to guide and support the student in their volunteer service.

Teachers should reiterate to students that they should seek support from community members, parents, and school personnel while they engage in community service and continue to reflect on their contributions and development as volunteers and leaders in their community in order to ensure that they are reaping all the rewards of being an active and responsible citizen working towards the common good of society.

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CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This developmental work was created to be a resource for grade 10 Civics and Citizenship educators in Ontario secondary schools to support students in the process of completing the 40 hours of community involvement requirement for graduation. The literature has addressed problems with the community involvement program based on complaints from educators, parents, and students. This resource provides a solution for the criticisms of the inefficiencies of the community involvement program as currently implemented, without requiring policy reform or further resource allocation. The grade 10 Civics and Citizenship course was chosen as a venue for teaching to the needs of the program because many of the curriculum expectations correlate with the goals of the community involvement initiative. The resource was created to help guide educators through the integration of the program into their classroom, while having them teach to the curriculum that they are accountable to instruct.

Summary

The resource was inspired by criticisms about the poorly implemented community involvement program in Ontario secondary schools. The community involvement program was implemented in 1999 in all Ontario public secondary schools and has been evaluated but not yet been reformed since its implementation (Harrison, 2012). To serve the purpose of increasing awareness about what makes a quality community service program in schools, a thorough literature review was conducted. The research provided the outline and content for the resource, specifically with regard to the major themes and essential features for successful community involvement programs in schools. Through evaluation of what makes a valuable program and the criticisms that currently exist, a

resource was made to help address the issue.

This project led to the development of a unit for teachers to combine with their instruction in the mandatory grade 10 Civics and Citizenship course. The unit is organized in a manner that outlines how the curriculum content can be met while also providing students with lessons that will help prepare them to venture into volunteerism for their required community service hours. The goals of both mandatory school initiatives are to develop students into responsible active citizens in their community, which is why integrating the two programs is both realistic and ideal.

When conducting the literature review, many of the criticisms of the program aligned with what Meinhard and Brown (2010) found to be the essential requirements for a successful community service program; these features for success were consolidated into four themes: program structure, quality student experience, teacher support, and reflection and relevance. Each lesson was designed to help address the concerns that have been raised in the research and attempts to reach the standards that Meinhard and Brown (2010) have set for community service programs. In addition, the resource begins by providing educators with the knowledge needed to have a general understanding of what makes a community involvement program successful and suggestions for how to support their students in their community service initiative.

The literature review revealed that educators have acknowledged the problems and missed potential of the community service program (e.g., see Harrison, 2012). In order to evaluate the validity of the presented project, I had an experienced educator review the resource. This educator has been administering the Ontario community

involvement program since its inception in 1999. Nevo (1985) states that face validity is "obtained by *asking* people to rate the validity of a test as it appears to them" (p. 288). This particular educator was an appropriate "rater" because he is experienced and could potentially work with the resource if implemented (Nevo, 1985, p. 288). The Ontario secondary school educator acknowledged the legitimacy of the research and the rationale behind the project, and expressed value in the resource as a step towards improving the community service initiative.

The resource focuses on demonstrating to educators how the community involvement program aligns with the grade 10 Civics and Citizenship curriculum and establishes a rationale for how this integration can actually improve the current structure of the community involvement program, which has been criticized for not meeting its full potential. The resource establishes the big ideas and end goals that educators should be striving to develop in the civics course and specifically in the volunteer unit, and it provides lesson ideas and outlines that they could integrate into their classroom.

Discussion

I began this project with the simple inspiration from my own observations of the ineffectiveness of the program structure for the community involvement program. Then as I began to investigate the literature, research reaffirmed that my experience was not unlike many other students in Ontario secondary schools, and both educators and parents were also aware of the downfalls and missed potential. I was surprised to discover that there is a substantial amount of research suggesting program reform, yet no changes have occurred since its implementation in 1999. The lack of policy reform encouraged me to find a solution that could be implemented at the school level within the current program

structure and without any additional costly resources. I felt that this would be the most practical and immediate way to implement improvements using the suggestions that have been made by researchers in the field that have recognized the problem.

Despite intending to create a formalized unit with all the required resources, handouts, and assessments, as I began to develop the product I realized that this was not practical for this unit. As described by the widely recognized and respected educational theorist, John Dewey (1916/2005), I believe in pragmatic education and feel that learning should be experiential; complementary to his beliefs about education and expression of learning, this unit strives to engage students in their local community and help them learn through building connections to local community members and organizations. Accordingly, it did not seem practical to develop a one-size-fits-all unit because the lessons needed to suit the needs of the students and be reflective of the communities in which they live. There has been a trend in education to follow a data driven standardized model of instruction; but often educators struggle with this approach because it assumes that all students will benefit from the same instruction and this is simply not the case (Hubbard, Datnow, & Pruyn, 2014). Following the belief that programs should be tailored to the needs of the students and community, the lessons are designed to focus on the big ideas and themes that should be taught and only include suggested instruction and resources rather than premade material. Educators are encouraged to customize the lessons and integrate information, resources, and people/organizations from their local community.

After completing the first draft of the product, I had an experienced educator review my resource and provide feedback. This educator is currently practicing as a

guidance counselor in an Ontario secondary school and is responsible for the implementation of the community involvement program, so he is very familiar with the policy and practice of the program in his school and within his school board. His feedback and suggestions were insightful and reassuring. He agreed with the research that has been conducted and confirmed that his observations and experiences with the program often did correspond to the findings in the research. In addition, he felt that an integrated unit would help to serve the needs of students while also being a practical option for improvement to which educators would respond well. His agreement and support were both reassuring and motivating when completing the project. Realistically, the program cannot truly be evaluated until it is implemented and reflected upon, but I feel that having an educator's perspective before finalizing the program strengthened the final product and provided face validity (see Nevo, 1985).

Through discussion and feedback from an Ontario secondary school educator, I was able to get a glimpse into the program at work currently which helped to enhance the lessons after being exposed to the current information and opportunities that are often available to students. In particular, his expertise made me aware of the external motivators for volunteering by showing me the vast array of student scholarships, awards, and bursaries that are available from community organizations and the school board based on students' contributions in their community. Community partnerships have been shown to provide students the opportunity to build social capital with access to resources and building relationships with people in the community, which can promote and motivate civic engagement (Hands, 2008). Thus, I was inspired to integrate awards and scholarships into the unit as a way to have students reflect on the relevance and greater

significance that the community involvement program can have in their lives both in and outside of school. This unit is a great opportunity for educators to introduce students to the opportunities available to them and the goals that they could begin to set for themselves over the course of their secondary school career.

Much research has recognized the inefficiencies of the current community involvement program in Ontario secondary schools and have made suggestions for reform and enhancements to the program. This project seeks to take a more immediate grassroots approach to the issue. The project consolidates the downfalls that have been outlined by researchers, prioritizes and compartmentalizes the suggested improvements and standards that have been made, and then attempts to integrate the needs of the program into the current grade 10 Civics and Citizenship curriculum in order to have educators support their students in conjunction with teaching to the expectations.

The community involvement program in Ontario secondary schools is a promising way to introduce students to community service who might not have necessarily take the initiative to volunteer without the requirement. However, researchers such as Henderson et al. (2012) revealed the dangers of forcing students to volunteer within a lax program structure that does not support them. If students were to engage in volunteer service that they did not enjoy or if they had a negative experience with the activities, they risk the chance of associating that negative experience with all volunteer service (Henderson et al., 2012). Thus, it is important that programs are created to educate students on the benefits of volunteering and how to recognize when a volunteer placement is simply not the right fit for them and how they could improve their experience. This resource provides a way for educators to reach out to all students and ensure that they are supported through the process

of planning their community service hours.

Recommendations

The product created from this project is a demonstration of how the community involvement program can be better structured by integrating it into other school practices. The grade 10 Civics and Citizenship course has a very logical connection to the community involvement program based on its overall educational goals and specific curriculum expectations (Ontario Ministry of Education, 1999, 2013). With further effort and collaboration, educators can expand this integration into various other school practices, such as building collaborative communities with other teachers and administrators, which would assist in demonstrating to students the relevance and significance of the program to their education and their future (Meinhard et al., 2010).

It is recommended that educators take a grassroots approach to instruction in order to create an authentic learning environment for students, which corresponds to Dewey's (1916/2005) pragmatic experiential approach. Educators in schools might take the initiative to collaborate with parents/guardians, build connections with community members and local organizations, and dialogue with students about their needs and expectations. This is a grassroots approach to teaching and learning which gives all parties "an appropriate voice in what they learn, and for the population of teachers an appropriate familiarity with what others teach" (Carrier & Williams, 1995, p. 2). Educators can assist their students and the parents of their students to build on their networks and strengths that they already have established (Carrier & Williams, 1995). With the collaboration of community and school personnel, students can network with people and organizations and be supported in planning their volunteer placements.

In addition to building communications outside of the school, Civics and Citizenship teachers are recommended to network with other educators within the school in order to strengthen the support/structure and further integrate the program into school practices, thus demonstrating the significance and relevance of the program to students' education. Given that classroom teachers are not listed as being a responsible stakeholder in the implementation of the community involvement program in schools (Ontario Ministry of Education, 1999), Civics and Citizenship educators using this resource are encouraged to invite the school personnel into the classroom to assist students with the community involvement requirement; for example, guidance councillors, principals, and administrators are all possible participants in the program. As a guest to the class, they can provide information about the program and develop a relationship with students in order to establish themselves as a resource for them to access throughout the process of completing their community involvement hours if they need support.

In addition, other courses offered to students might also involve community service, such as grade 11 Cooperative Education or grade 11 Leadership and Peer Support, which can further demonstrate the relevance of the program to their education. Schools are considered living systems that develop and change based on reflection, feedback, and changes in the environment; within these living systems educators are encouraged to build professional learning communities where reflection and learning relationships are developed in order to help the living system grow and flourish (Mitchell & Sackney, 2011). With regards to the community involvement program, educators might consider establishing a professional learning community where they can share resources, information, and collaborate in creating a cohesive program for students that

connects their learning throughout courses, grade levels, and are unified with the current school and local community environment.

Meinhard and Brown (2010) argue that educators need to be supported in the process of implementing community service programs. As I have mentioned, educators should be encouraged to network with each other in order to support each other and build communal resources. I believe that part of the next steps would be for school boards to construct professional development workshops to help educate teachers on how to establish these networks and foster safe learning communities for this to take place.

When reviewing the program, an Ontario secondary school guidance councillor suggested taking the knowledge that is provided in the resource to create a presentation or resource to share the relevant information with parents and other stakeholders such as community members and local organizations. Administrators, parents, students, teachers, and community members could all benefit from understanding what makes a quality community service placement and the standards to be considered in order to ensure that everyone has a positive experience that encourages continued service in the community. Therefore, a next step for improving the program would be to build awareness about quality community service through presentations to students and parents when they enter secondary school, as well as to school educators and administrators through professional development, workshops, and collaborative settings like professional learning communities.

Educational researchers and/or the Ontario Ministry of Education should also consider creating a document for parents to provide explicit instruction for how to assist their students in their volunteer initiatives. This resource would reduce the stress and

workload for teachers and help to ease anxieties that parents might have about assisting their child in finding and executing volunteer placements.

Upon implementation, the resource should be re-evaluated in order to see how it could be improved and expanded as a school wide program rather than specific to the grade 10 Civics and Citizenship course. Practicing Civics and Citizenship educators should be given an avenue to share their thoughts on the resource and make alterations and suggestions based on their experience during implementation and instruction (see Appendix for sample evaluation form). In addition, students could be talked to in order to see how their feelings changed about the program from before taking the course to after. By reflecting on the function of the requirement, educators can find practices that work for their school and improve the lax program structure within the expectations of the current policy.

Final Words

The intentions of the required 40 hours of community involvement are optimistic, but the potential is currently being missed without educating students and encouraging them to be more enthusiastic about the initiative. Educators will be able to better support their students in their volunteer initiatives by having an awareness of the standards that are needed for quality community service programming. By integrating the program into the classroom and creating a venue to teach students about the program, its value to their education and to their development as citizens, this resource seeks to improve the program structure and to provide the skills needed make the community involvement requirement more meaningful. Students are encouraged to reflect on their service and the impact they are having on their community, as well as their own personal growth, in

order to make the requirement more valuable and relevant to them. When educators complete the Civics and Citizenship community service unit, they can be confident that their students are equipped with the right knowledge and tools to successfully venture into volunteerism on their own and make their service positive and meaningful.

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Appendix

Evaluation Form

Thank you for agreeing to review this resource for grade 10 Civics and Citizenship Ontario secondary school teachers. As a practicing Ontario secondary school educator you provide valuable insights and knowledge that will help to make the following resource more effective and efficient in practice. All of your critical and constructive feedback is welcomed. Please provide as many details in your feedback as possible so that I can best improve the resource according to your suggestions.

Is the need for the resourced described effectively? Would you include any further information to enhance this section and help build commitment from educators for the initiative?

Are the goals and objectives of the resource are clear, coherent, and appropriate?

Are the expectations for the course and needs for the program effectively integrated?

Are the goals aligned with the lesson objectives?

Are the lesson objectives feasible and appropriate for the course?

Is there any more information that should be included that currently is not?

What difficulties might educators encounter when implementing this resource in their classroom?

Do you think that this resource can enhance the community involvement program?

Does the resource allow students to build their skills and understanding of volunteer service?