

An Analysis of Grow Your Own Programs to Attract Culturally Diverse Teachers

By

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ABSTRACT

Grow Your Own (GYO) programs are used in the USA at both community and school levels to foster a culturally diverse teacher force by introducing individuals to the teaching profession and supporting those who wish to pursue a teaching career. With a view to considering how recruitment of culturally diverse applicants to teacher education programs could occur in Canada, this study reviews relevant literature to identify critical features of such programs, including their flexible nature, their institutionalization, and the importance of establishing productive partnerships with other organizations. The concluding chapter reports six major insights into the effectiveness of American GYO programs and offers suggestions for developing similar programs in the Canadian context.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction and Overview

Cultural diversity in the current teaching population is a significant issue that merits the attention of various stakeholders in order for there to be a real shift from the status quo. Many scholars have lamented the lack of culturally diverse teachers (Ryan, Pollock, & Antonelli, 2007) and the learning consequences this has for students in the K-12 system (Villegas & Irvine, 2010). There are numerous solutions that exist--all focusing on different routes--to fix the problem of lack of cultural diversity in the current teacher force. Because the paucity of teachers of colour stems from various factors (Solomon, 1997), one strategy to resolve the issue should not be expected to serve as a magical solution that fixes everything. In this project I focus Grow Your Own (GYO) programs, as one way of addressing the lack of culturally diverse teachers in the current teacher force.

I first review the literature as it relates to GYO programs in terms of highlighting the forms they take, how they operate, and some of the benefits and potential drawbacks in comparison to other methods aimed at culturally diversifying the current teacher force. Second, I consider some of the arguments for the need of culturally diverse teachers and why having a culturally diverse teacher force is an asset for students. Third, I report on what is known about GYO programs in the USA (specifically their prevalence and the overall gains) and other programs in Canada that seek to accomplish similar aims to that of GYOs. Fourth, I have a look at two American GYO programs that serve as models of

effective GYOs. Fifth, I offer a number of recommendations as what an effective GYO program might look like in a Canadian context at the secondary level from ideological, structural, and functional viewpoints. Sixth, I look at strategies other than GYO programs that teacher education programs can utilize in order to diversify. Finally, in the conclusion I summarize my insights into what elements of American GYOs may be applicable to Canadian contexts, in terms of developing a more culturally diverse teacher force. Also, I highlight some key points about issues that are worthy of more consideration by those who have an interest in organizing a GYO program. Throughout this project, but especially where I talk about how recruitment of teachers of colour occurs in Canada, I refer to my own personal experience within the education system (both as a student and as a teacher) in order to illustrate several themes.

Grow Your Own Programs: A Review of the Literature

The Form of GYOs

GYO programs are a type of pipeline program. Sleeter and Milner describe teacher pipeline programs such as GYOs in the following way:

Many programs attempt to build the pipeline of potential teachers candidates of colour . . . Such programs do not attempt to change teacher education programs but rather to build support systems into, around, and through them. Pipeline programs work with youth to demystify higher education and increase the likeliness that youth will be prepared academically for college, while also exposing them to experiences that may also attract them into teaching (2011, p. 85).

By their nature, pipeline programs are typically programs that have been strategically designed to fill some sort of academic or professional gap. By scaffolding participants and giving them the supports they need to reach a certain level of competency in a respective area, it is anticipated that there may be a decrease in the gap that exists. While my focus is on GYO programs borne out of a need to cultivate a more culturally diverse teacher force (Villegas & Davis, 2007), it should be noted that pipeline programs can operate in a variety of professional fields and are not restricted to education as a recruitment pathway to enter a career in teaching.

Throughout this project, I focus on GYO programs within middle or secondary schools aimed at adolescent students as well as GYOs hosted by community groups in order to see what can be learned that may be applicable at the secondary level. GYO programs at the secondary level usually take the form of a for-credit course that is offered at a designated secondary school (often times located in a community where a need exists for a greater number of teachers of colour). GYO programs may also take the form of an extra-curricular club, one of many special-interest clubs that are available to students.

A significant potential of a pipeline program operating out of a secondary school model is that it affords the opportunity to monitor participants throughout their post-secondary studies, teacher education program, and beginning years of teaching (Toshlis, 2013). Tracking participants longitudinally through various stages could help to develop and build in more strategies for success (for the participant and within the program).

It may not be the case that all participants pursue a career in teaching. As such, the goals of respective programs may vary together with the extent to which participants are monitored beyond secondary school. It may be that one program functions solely within

the confines of a secondary school while another program has partnerships with post-secondary institutions and even school districts in order to help facilitate employment upon graduation from a teacher education program (Robinson et al. 2003). In addition, financial, academic, and social-cultural supports are usually put in place for participants beyond the secondary level (Bartow et al., 2015).

How Grow Your Own Programs Operate

GYO programs vary greatly. It should be noted that GYOs can be aimed at various target groups such as para-professionals, those transitioning careers, and post-service military veterans (Toshalis, 2013) in addition to students in a middle or secondary school context. Accordingly, the nature and scope of the program will vary depending on the target audience. However, for the purposes of this analysis, I focus on GYO programs at the secondary level. Sleeter and Milner (2011) indicate that the activities in less intensive pipeline programs consist of “bringing secondary school students onto a college campus, strengthening [participants’] academic skills, and involving them in tutoring younger children” (p. 86). Other activities recommended for GYO programs include workshops about post-secondary issues (including financial aid), simulated teaching experiences, and being connected with mentors (Villegas & Davis, 2007). Even if it is not part of the objective of a GYO program to monitor their participants after secondary school, the experiences listed (among other experiences that are provided by GYO programs) provide tremendous value for participants.

Benefits and Drawbacks

Benefits

GYO programs are beneficial in a variety of ways. First, GYO programs empower participants, who are of disproportionately marginalized communities, to become knowledgeable about a career in teaching (Toshalis, 2013). Second, GYO programs have the potential to contribute towards furthering one's academic skills (Tandon et al., 2015) through participation in the various workshops that are offered through the program. Finally, through GYO programs participants are able to gain valuable information about post-secondary opportunities (Villegas & Davis, 2007), which can assist participants regardless of what field they pursue. Other potential benefits to participants include the intangible feeling of good one gets from "giving back," as when participants become tutors for students in younger grades. From the perspective of the teacher-mentor, GYO programs are practical and can be organized relatively quickly with the potential to be transformative for the participants. Also, taken as a whole over a number of years, GYO programs carry the potential to be transformative in the shifting the demographic of the teaching profession (Bartow et al., 2015)

Drawbacks

There are few drawbacks of GYO programs for the participants. However, a number of authors have cautioned that, in terms of contributing to the cultural diversification of the current teacher force, GYO programs take longer than other methods aimed at culturally diversification. Ellis and Epstein (2015) state that "much of the teacher recruitment focuses on something called pipelines We are not opposed to these programs . . . there should be many more of them, but they take a long time to produce results" (p. 142). Villegas and

Davis (2007), in describing a GYO programs, state that “while . . . programs . . . have the potential to bolster the pool of racial/ethnic minorities for teaching, they are long-term efforts that take minimally five to eight years to produce results, and typically much longer” (p. 140). Because of this, Ellis and Epstein (2015) have also focused their attention on programs that are geared towards holders of a bachelor’s degree, as it typically takes a shorter time for individuals who already have a bachelor’s degree to become certified to teach. Another criticism of GYO programs is that although they may tend to increase college attendance among culturally diverse students, participants of these programs may not choose to pursue teacher education certification or a career in teaching (Villegas & Davis, 2007).

CHAPTER 2: THE NEED FOR CULTURALLY DIVERSE TEACHERS

Culturally diverse students in the K-12 system may indeed learn more effectively from cultural diverse teachers. Irvine (2003) describes the need for culturally diverse teachers in these terms:

Teachers of colour are essential in our school because, like all other teachers, they teach who they are. They teach through a cultural lens of cultural experiences that is different from the lens of mainstream teachers. Teachers of colour bring to teaching a “situated” pedagogy. How they make meaning within their classrooms, how they define their teaching roles, and the articulation of their beliefs are contextually and culturally dependent. Most important, their situated pedagogy and culturally specific teaching behaviors and beliefs seem related to the achievement of students of colour (p. 58).

This argument has significant implications with regards to need for GYO programs as a mechanism to assist in the development of a generation of culturally diverse teachers. The literature points to the learning of culturally diverse students improving due to culturally diverse teachers who are able to serve as role models, share a lived experience, and better utilize culturally relevant pedagogy.

Culturally Diverse Teachers as Role Models

The ability to serve as a role model is not something that is contingent upon one’s cultural background being the same as another’s. Certainly, teachers of cultural backgrounds different from that of their students may still serve as role models. Having said that, the

racial or cultural background of a person is usually one of the first things observed; as a result, in an educational context, students from particular racial and ethnic communities are likely to gravitate towards teachers who look like them. In a related study, Solomon (1997) tracks four culturally diverse Bachelor of Education students through the entirety of their teacher education program and their first year teaching in culturally diverse schools in a large urban centre. Solomon finds that the teachers “strategically used identity politics to build student-teacher relationships, and to promote student learning” (p. 402). The participants recount students’ initial reactions when they were encountered by culturally diverse students at the schools in which they were teaching. Vanitha (a grade five teacher candidate of Indo-Caribbean Guyanese descent) recounted her experience of having Tamil and West Indian children approaching her and saying “Oh, you’re Guyanese. Oh, maybe your mother knows my mother.” Vanitha stated, “And they’re probably right [because it is a small-knit community] . . . So we had that bit of connection” (p. 401).

Vanitha’s experience is similar to my own during the time I was supply teaching: I would commonly get reactions such as, “Oh my goodness, finally, a black teacher” from black students when I walked into a classroom. This reaction demonstrated to me, and upon speaking to the students it was confirmed that, having a black teacher (even if it was only for a day) was something to which they were quite unaccustomed. The visual element of having a teacher reflect the cultural diversity of students serves as a channel to foster an initial connection between teacher and student. As a result of this relationship, a skillful educator will have some awareness of how to turn this dynamic into a valuable learning opportunity for the students.

The Sharing of Lived Experiences

Culturally diverse teachers also have an ability to bolster learning for culturally diverse students by drawing on shared lived experiences. Undoubtedly, persons from diverse backgrounds are not homogeneous, but individuals may share certain commonalities. Ball (2011) refers to scholars who often participate in diversity and teacher education research as being “inside members of communities” who live and work in the same communities in which they conduct research (p. 2). Certainly, an in-depth connection with the community being studied allows these researchers insights that may be rare to an “outside” researcher who is not a member of the community. To put it differently, realizations may come more easily to the inside researcher due to an ability to connect prior experiences to the material that he or she is uncovering in the research.

The phenomenon of the inside researcher is analogous or similar to the experience of the culturally diverse teacher when relating to his or her culturally diverse students. The extent to which this is the case may vary, but there are indeed experiences that teacher and student will share which may have a practical benefit to pedagogy. The culturally diverse teacher is then able to utilize culturally relevant pedagogy to turn this connection into learning outcomes for the student. Irvine (2003) describes teachers who possess this ability as cultural translators: Culturally diverse teachers “tend to be knowledgeable, sensitive, and comfortable with students’ language, style of presentation, community values, traditions, rituals, legends, myths, history, symbols, and norms” (p. 55). This is largely because culturally diverse teachers often share the factors that Irvine mentions in common with their students, which lends itself to a certain amount of innate pedagogical ability (through the use of culturally-relevant examples). The ability that a culturally diverse

teacher may possess as a cultural translator ultimately stems from a sense of a shared lived experience that he or she has with culturally diverse students.

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

Culturally relevant pedagogy is a valuable tool that can make a substantial difference in the learning of culturally diverse students. Most importantly, culturally relevant pedagogy is not exclusive to culturally diverse teachers, and it is a subject area that all teachers need to learn in order to increase the ability to teach culturally diverse students. Solomon (1997) described an incident in which a culturally diverse teacher candidate is in a classroom in which the regular teacher posed a question to a culturally diverse student, whose response mentioned that she enjoys preparing fritters (a Caribbean breakfast dish) for her family. The teacher did not know what fritters were and so the little girl turned to the teacher candidate, hoping that she would clarify (p. 400).

To put it differently, the student turned to the culturally diverse teacher candidate because she assumed that the teacher candidate would be familiar with fritters. In culturally complex classrooms there are going to be misunderstandings between teachers and students, but the important thing is that misunderstandings be handled with a great deal of sensitivity. This example illustrates the importance of cultural knowledge and the role it can play in facilitating student learning.

According to Irvine (2003), culturally diverse teachers are better able to utilize pedagogical strategies such as *Transfer*—the use of students' experiences to connect new information to prior knowledge—in order to facilitate student learning (p. 58). This is to say that teachers from culturally diverse backgrounds may have prior knowledge that will help them communicate effectively when relating to culturally diverse students. Obviously,

we cannot match one culturally diverse teacher to all the cultural diversity occurring in a single classroom. Nevertheless, the presence of a culturally diverse teacher in a classroom has the potential to positively influence the learning of culturally diverse students to varying degrees.

Certainly there are other arguments for the need for culturally diverse teachers, such as culturally diverse teachers being more willing to work in schools located in poor and more diverse neighbourhoods (Sleeter & Milner, 2011). Furthermore, it is critical to remember the importance of all teachers being adequately trained to teach students from culturally diverse backgrounds (Sleeter, 2008).

CHAPTER 3: CHALLENGES AND ACHIEVEMENTS OF GYO PROGRAMS

The way in which future educators are recruited in the USA through GYO programs is markedly different from the way it happens in Canada. GYO programs are structurally embedded into institutions in the United States. This is to say that often times there are supports put in place with partnerships among a college, some type of external organization, and/or the state that allows the GYO program to operate within a certain structure (Toshalis, 2013). On the other hand, in Canada the recruitment of those who may become future educators is done through nurturing, informal, and grassroots supports. The advantage of the former is that participants of a GYO program in a USA-context are able to receive the benefits, such as financial support, that often come with this kind of institutionalization of a GYO program in formal partnerships with other organizations.

For the purpose of this section, I review how GYO programs in the USA function by highlighting trends pointed out in the literature. This type of analysis may offer some lessons for those who have an interest in developing GYO programs in Canada. Then I outline the measures that exist in Canada, and that to some extent resemble current GYO programs in the USA that may meet similar objectives.

GYO Programs in the USA

Differing Operations of GYO Programs

GYO programs in the USA operate in several different ways, as Toshalis (2013) explains:

The goals across programs is [sic] generalizable only at the meta-level. This may be due to the fact that each GYO organization typically emerges from a specific set

of circumstances, drawing from a unique assembly of individuals, and using a distinctive arrangement of assumptions that target local contexts (p. 225).

To put it in simpler terms, GYO programs and organizations tend to arise from the recognition of a specific need or deficit that should be addressed. Due to this, the focus, content, and types of GYO program activities tend to vary depending on the circumstances under which the program was created. For example, one GYO program may put an emphasis on skill development, whereas another might focus more on developing participants' knowledge of post-secondary education opportunities. To go further, because GYO programs do not adhere to a mandatory set of guidelines, there is a certain level of flexibility that allows them to address the needs of the communities in which they exist.

GYO Programs as an Approach to Resolving the Lack of Culturally Diverse Teachers

One purpose of many GYO programs is to increase the numbers of culturally diverse teachers. Hence, as previously stated, it is not uncommon for GYO programs to have partnerships with post-secondary institutions (including teacher education programs) and even school districts (Sleeter & Milner, 2011). As such, GYO programs at the middle or secondary school level may track participants from graduation of secondary school to completion of an undergraduate degree to a teacher education program and eventually into a teaching position with a partnering school board. Such partnerships have great potential to influence the demographic of the teaching force because it is understood, for the most part, that should the performance of the participant be satisfactory (and he or she becomes certified to teach), then employment is likely. According to Toshalis (2013), such partnerships are also beneficial to the participant because “they help demonstrate to the future teacher how to get from high school, to college, to graduate school, and into a job”

(p. 226). Even if it is not the mandate of a particular GYO program to monitor its participants beyond secondary school, the very nature of GYO programs encourages interest in education, which may lead to participants pursuing teaching as a career choice.

The Institutionalization of GYO Programs

In addition to GYO programs often being affiliated with partnering colleges, GYOs also tend to be embedded within the structure of external organizations. In the U.S.A., the main external organization with whom GYOs are registered is the Future Educators Association (FEA). Local GYOs (as well as private individuals) pay a fee to register with the FEA and receive supports such as leadership training resources, curricular suggestions for participants, an informative magazine and scholarships. The total suite of resources may be found at <http://www.futureeducators.org/join/benefits.htm>. Although GYO programs arise from the distinctive needs of a community and tend to operate in order to meet those needs, formal affiliation with an existing program allows these programs to have access to information about best practices in the field. To a lesser degree, individual states also fund and enact GYO programs and initiatives through legislation, but the extent of the funding that states give to programs is unclear and “varies from state to state, and year by year” (Toshalis, 2013, p. 229).

Recruitment of Teachers of Colour in Canada: My Personal Experience

In Canada, the exposure of culturally diverse students to a possible career in teaching and post-secondary education occurs in a less structured way. In order to illustrate this, I present some of my personal background and use the way I was recruited to a career in teaching as an example of the type of informal recruiting that occurs in Canada.

As a 14-year-old African-Canadian boy growing up in the borough of a large Canadian city, initially I experienced difficulty at the secondary level. After a challenging year in many regards, I was made to repeat grade 9. After experiencing continued difficulty, the principal of the school that I was attending suggested that I join a government-sponsored program in which I would work full-time and be paid. Soon after, I was placed at a local department store as a stock clerk for the six-month duration of the program. Upon completion of the program, while my friends were in school and on the basketball team, I found myself out-of-school, out-of-work, and at home during the day—a sad situation for the child of West Indian parents who had high hopes for their only son.

Because I did have some work experience as a stock clerk, after handing out resumes to other stores in the same chain, I was eventually hired again as a stock clerk and cashier. Between ages 15 and 18, my work experience grew sporadically, as I would work at places for various periods of time, doing work that ranged from lifting boxes as a stock clerk to folding towels as a laundry attendant. I did many blue-collar jobs.

When I was 18, after receiving encouragement from a Jamaican supervisor of the laundry at the athletic facility in which I was working, I returned to an adult high school permanently. I had tried to return to school several times over the years, but I was so used to making money that I would never stay for long. At the adult high school, I started to earn higher marks and decided that I wanted to attend university rather than college. Because the adult school I was attending did not have university preparation courses (or advanced courses as they were then called), with the help of a supportive guidance counsellor I transferred back to my home school..

At this point, I was highly motivated and excelled partly because I now realized, after being out of school, that I could not go on working dead-end jobs where there was no future. I would arrive at school at 6:30 a.m. with the custodians and study in the cafeteria until school began at 8:50 a.m. This work ethic carried me all the way through to my grade 13 year. I eventually graduated at the age of 21 with a 92% average and a scholarship to university.

Despite my newly found academic/co-curricular success, I did not know which field I wanted to pursue as a career choice. In the final year of high school, one of the vice principals of the high school I was attending was promoted to the position of principal at another school. Because there was a need for volunteers at that school and because she was familiar with me as a hard-working student, I began volunteering at her new school. After some time, the principal suggested that I start doing emergency supply work (substituting for an absent teacher when the school cannot find a certified teacher). I happily agreed to this as I was in university and often times did not have class on Fridays, when most of the calls for an occasional teacher would occur.

As the result of my former vice-principal's promotion, I was 22 and now on the other side of the teacher's desk. Although I was not a certified teacher, both through my volunteer classroom experience and through supply teaching, I began to gain insights into the experiences of a teacher. Moreover, while in university I was involved with a number of educational-related co-curricular activities. With groups such as the Black Students' Association and campus recruitment, I engaged in activities such as high schools visits, planning of the annual education conference, and numerous other community outreach initiatives. These experiences coupled with my initial experience as a high school student

contributed to furthering a passion for education; because I had been a struggling high school student, my own experiences helped me to develop a sense of empathy for students who are experiencing difficulty within the education system. I carry this empathy with me to this day.

Partly due to these experiences, I chose English as a major because I thought I might like to pursue teaching as a possible career choice. Upon graduation from university, I took a year off and put in my applications to faculties of education across Ontario. During my B.Ed. studies I learned a lot of the theory behind what I had been exposed to in secondary school, both as a student and as an emergency replacement teacher. Upon graduation from the Faculty of Education, when I had a classroom of my own, I was able to reinterpret from more formal pedagogical perspectives many of the situations that I had previously experienced.

I chose to share my personal experiences here because they highlight the type of informal recruitment of teachers of colour that can occur in Canada. Through my experiences as a struggling high school student who overcame obstacles to succeed in the education system, I had much to offer other students, especially those at risk of failure. Had it not been for a supportive administrator taking the time to expose me to a possible career in teaching, I might not have pursued education as a career choice. Because no one in my immediate family was an educator who could have provided me with similar types of opportunities, I would have been much less likely to pursue teaching as a career.

Initiatives for Students of Colour in Canada

Although formal GYO programs do not currently exist in Canada, there are a number of programs and initiatives that exist for students of colour that could indirectly lead to a

career in teaching. For example, at the secondary level, schools with a high number of culturally diverse students will tend to have groups based on the culture of the students (e.g., Tamil club, Nepalese club, African-Canadian club) hosted by a teacher-mentor. These clubs will engage in various activities, including some that are culturally relevant. For example, African-Canadian clubs at the secondary level currently take students to university campuses for tours. These education-related activities, although not formally part of a GYO program, help by giving exposure to post-secondary opportunities for students who may not otherwise have access to them. Similarly, it is common for African-Canadian student associations at the university level to give workshops on issues related to post-secondary education to students at the secondary level.

Also in a Canadian context, external non-profit organizations may play a role in promoting post-secondary opportunities. For example, Pathways to Education operates in low-income neighbourhoods in major Canadian cities and serves to encourage post-secondary attendance and an interest in professional careers such as teaching. Pathways to Education, which is funded by the Federal government and private donors, functions on the pillars of academic, social, financial, mentoring, and financial support (<http://www.pathwaystoeducation.ca/en/about-us/pathways-model>). Through programs such as Pathways to Education, secondary school graduation rates and post-secondary attendance have increased for culturally diverse students who are enrolled in the program.

While these initiatives focus more on post-secondary contexts, they are still relevant to producing teachers of colour insofar as acceptance to a teacher education program requires one to have a bachelor's degree. One purpose of this research project is to explore GYO programs in the United States with the hope of gaining knowledge that may be

transferable for those interested in starting GYO programs at Canadian secondary schools. In the next section, I outline two American GYO programs in order to highlight important aspects of what makes them effective.

CHAPTER 4: THE CONTEXT OF AMERICAN GYO PROGRAMS

The USA serves as a model for GYO programs that Canada could emulate in attempting to diversify its teaching force. However, some states are more progressive than others in terms of policies towards GYO programs. Illinois is a particularly forward-thinking state in this respect.

The history of GYO programs in Illinois is interesting in that GYOs in the state were started out of a need to develop culturally diverse teachers to work in some of the harder-to-staff schools. In the context of Illinois, newly certified teachers (typically white and female) were working at urban schools in the state for a short duration—usually two to three years—and then leaving to pursue teaching jobs in their home communities. Talbott (2007) describes it as “a revolving door of teachers passing through the poor schools that need the most stable and experienced teachers” (p. 8).

This phenomenon is not much different than the situation faced in urban schools in large Canadian centres. Ontario Faculties of Education, for instance, graduate a high number of teacher candidates that tend to not reflect the demographic of students in urban schools. Notwithstanding, due to the bleak job market, newly certified teachers will often accept work in urban schools that may not be their first choice; consequently, as soon as the opportunity presents itself, some beginning teachers may decide to leave high-needs urban schools. Compounding this issue is the fact that research shows that teachers (regardless of cultural background) prefer to teach in areas where they were raised (Villegas & Irvine, 2010). By helping to ensure that an adequate number of persons from culturally diverse backgrounds become certified as teachers, there is a higher probability of reducing high

turnover rates because individuals are more likely to return to their childhood community to teach. Increasing the number of culturally diverse teachers may also help to positively impact student achievement in these schools (Talbot, 2007).

Two Types of GYO Programs

GYO programs in the USA typically fall under two categories: those hosted by a community group/external organization and those that operate out of a middle or secondary school. While both types of GYOs seek to fulfill similar objectives—first and foremost attempting to diversify the teaching force—each is geared to a unique demographic and is tailored to the needs of the target groups they serve.

GYOs that operate out of a community group usually arise out of the needs of the community in which they are located; thus the demographic of which the GYO is comprised will vary. Such GYOs are geared towards para-professionals (those working in a field related to a teachable subject), military veterans, and community members/activists, among various other groups who have an interest in pursuing teaching as a career (Sleeter & Milner, 2011).

GYO programs in the context of Illinois, as mentioned, arose out of a need to better equip hard-to-staff urban schools with teachers who were committed to the schools and neighbourhoods in which the schools were located. A community group by the name of Action Now collaborated with other community organizations to propose (and successfully see passed) a state law called the Grow Your Own Teacher Education Act (Bartow et al, 2015), thus founding the GYO initiative.

By having GYO policy enacted into legislation, there were certain notable advantages (such as government funding) that came as a result. The GYO legislation also

articulated specific criteria such as who was eligible to participate in the program and qualified for various incentives for participation in the program. Bartow et al. (2015) describe the incentives for participants in the following way:

Once accepted in GYO, candidates receive forgivable loans (forgiven after teaching 5 years in a low-income school) for college tuition, books, and fees. Other financial support includes stipends for student teaching, child care, and transportation.

Candidates also receive academic support such as individualized tutoring and test preparation for the Illinois state licensure exams (p. 100).

Notably, the incentives are, for the most part, markedly different from those that would be provided to the traditional teacher candidate. Typically, the GYO program is marketed to individuals who tend to be older than the traditional teacher candidate; therefore, supports and accommodations must be available to these individuals in order for them to be successful in school and in managing additional responsibilities.

The Model of an American Community Group GYO Program

The GYO program at Northeastern Illinois University is a partnership between the College of Education and six GYO consortia (including Action Now) across the state. After going through a rigorous selection process, participants in the program either take courses or receive acceptance to the College of Education. It is the intention that this GYO program will enable participants to gain teacher certification in the state of Illinois and then teach in the underserved communities from which they came. This particular GYO program also has a partnership with school districts across the state of Illinois so that its graduates are either placed in or have the opportunity to apply to teaching positions at schools in low-income neighbourhoods. Other objectives of the program include to “supply a pipeline of

highly effective teachers of colour, to improve cultural competency and community connections of teachers, and to improve academic achievement of low-income students.” (www.growyourownteachers.org).

Bartow et al. (2015) cite several criteria that help make the program a success. First, participants are given financial assistance in order to help with educational-related expenses. For adults who often have families to support, this is an indispensable asset of the program because extra income to purchase books and supplies may be difficult to afford. Second, the participants are given social and academic support. A coordinator and academic liaison are hired as part of the program to monitor the success of the participants. As Bartow et al. (2015) point out, this is a crucial feature of the program: “Because many candidates are entering college after years out of school, the GYO coordinator and academic liaison play key roles in helping candidates navigate the bureaucratic inner workings of the university” (p. 102). Speaking from personal experience from my years in university, I can say that having someone dedicated to monitoring various aspects of a student’s university experience would be very helpful. There have been many times that I have encountered potential obstacles, such as financial challenges, and it was serendipitous that I was connected, through informal channels, with someone within the university who could direct me to information or resources to help resolve the problem. As part of the academic support piece, tutoring is also part of the program, should participants find that they are having difficulty in their courses. Finally, Bartow et al. (2015) cite relationships as the final “essential feature” of the program in that participants are able to develop professional working relationships with other, like-minded community-oriented teacher

candidates. Moreover, through these relationships, teacher candidates are able to help and support one another throughout the program (p. 102).

There is also an exchange of benefits between the university and GYO community programs that should be highlighted. It could be argued that associating a community GYO with a faculty of education provides a certain level of respect and credibility for that GYO. On the other hand, for the faculty of education, its teacher candidate body is expanded to include individuals who are different from its traditional base and who will be able to offer more diverse input based on their experiences.

The Model of Middle or Secondary School (Pre-collegiate) GYO Programs

The demographic of GYO programs in middle or secondary schools is vastly different from that of GYOs initiated through a community organization. GYO programs that operate out of schools tend to function as for-credit courses that are geared towards students in that school who express some interest in teaching. However, the extent to which an interest in teaching will actually translate into students pursuing teaching subjects as a major at the undergraduate level, seeking admission to a faculty of education, and working in the field varies greatly. Although some cite this unpredictability as a flaw of GYOs at the secondary level, I believe that exposing students to education-related activities, having them engage in skill-building activities, and providing them with knowledge of post-secondary education (i.e., the objectives of many pre-collegiate GYOs) are strong assets that are valuable to all participants, regardless of whether or not they go on to pursue a career in teaching. Bianco et al. (2011) (as originally cited in the national survey, Recruiting New Teachers, Inc., 1996), identify a number of criteria that are usually part of an effective pre-collegiate pipeline program. The criteria are as follows:

- connections to colleges, feeder schools, and the local community;
- apprenticeship activities including tutoring younger students;
- high academic entrance requirements for admission to the program;
- resources for college matriculation; and
- a curriculum that teaches and models a conception of the teaching profession emphasizing leadership and school reform (p. 370).

In the context of a secondary school, the particular elements of the program tend to vary depending on the circumstances and environment from which the GYO arises. For example, in an environment in which it is noted that students are not receiving adequate preparation for the college application process, then more time might be spent around activities that seek to resolve this. If it is the case that there is a significant need for students at the middle school level to be better prepared for high school, there might be a greater emphasis placed on tutoring programs for younger children. The overarching focus, however, tends to be on the development of participants' teaching-related skills and creating an awareness of teaching as a possible career choice.

Pathways2Teaching is an example of an effective secondary school-based GYO program. A goal of this particular GYO goes beyond sparking an interest in teaching in students to also develop critically conscious young people who would become the type of teachers who are concerned about social justice issues. This is an extremely important aim because being a person of colour does not mean that one will necessarily be a critically conscious individual, socially aware, or an effective teacher. Sometimes, in the movement to generate culturally diverse teachers, these extremely important factors may be lost. The creators of the program coined the term "Rida" to describe a consciously-minded young

person. Hence it is the goal of the program to nurture Ridas through exposure to content through a social-justice lens throughout the course. The program is offered as a for-credit course at low performing high schools and a key component of the course is that, unlike some GYOs, it is open for all students, regardless of academic background (Tandon et al., 2015). The chart on the next page (identified as Table 8.1 copied from Tandon et al., 2015, p. 112) illustrates the guiding principles that the Pathways2Teaching program operates by, categorized under key activities (Student activities and Adult activities).

These activities represent an excellent GYO program that is well-balanced with “promoting the teaching profession” (as one of the guiding principles) and developing skills that will serve students well regardless of the profession they decide to pursue. For instance, looking at achievement gap data, scholarship application support, and communication between instructors of course and family members are just a few ways that the course has the potential to help students (all in different ways) well into their future and beyond the focus of solely promoting teaching as a possible career choice. Moreover, the incentive of earning a college credit is a significant driver for students of the course to, at very minimum, think about attending college.

TABLE 8.1 Guiding Principles and Key Activities

<i>Guiding principles</i>	<i>Key activities</i>
	<i>Student activities</i>
Critical lens	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Readings and discussions• Examination achievement gap data• Urban education research project: Counter narrative writing project
Promote the teaching profession	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Weekly elementary school field experience• Field experience reflection journal
College access and readiness	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Skill building (e.g., essay writing, research report writing, public speaking, presentation development)• Earn college credit for course• College search and application support• Scholarship application support• Campus visits and information sessions
	<i>Adult activities</i>
Inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide <i>all</i> interested 11th- and 12th-grade students an opportunity to earn college credit while engaging in a rigorous curriculum.
Role models and mentors	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students are provided with opportunities to establish mentor–mentee relationships with community members, teacher candidates, master’s level students, doctoral students, and faculty of color.• Nationally recognized scholars of color are invited to guest speak via Internet video conference call.
Family and community engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Regular communication between family members and teachers of the course• Parents are regularly informed of the work of the class and invited to learn about it through student led presentations.• Family and community evening for students’ research presentations.

CHAPTER 5: MESSAGES FROM AMERICAN GYOs

FOR THE CANADIAN CONTEXT

Much can be learned for the Canadian context from the landscape of American GYOs hosted by a community group or by a secondary school. For purposes of this project, I draw inferences from both types of American GYOs, but I focus on what can be learned from both to suggest ways to develop GYO programs at the secondary level in Canada. Recommendations are broken down ideologically (values that can be learned), structurally (organizational strategies that can be learned), and functionally (operational approaches that can be learned). After each recommendation, I have included a brief explanation of the recommendation in order to make it as clear as possible.

Recommendations at the Ideological Level

Recognition that there is a lack of culturally diverse teachers in the current education system and that a lack of teachers of colour is an issue.

Recognition of a lack of teachers of colour is a necessary starting point for any recruitment program (including GYOs) intended to increase the number of culturally diverse teachers in the system. In referring to the recruitment and retention of culturally diverse teacher candidates in a teacher education program, Robinson, J.J. et al (2003) highlight the importance of the four C's--*Concerns* ("Readiness to Tackle"); *Commitment* from the Highest Leadership Levels; *Collaboration* Among All Concerned; and *Creativity* in Program Development. The recognition that there is that a lack of teachers of colour by faculty and administration should ideally translate into policies that facilitate the

recruitment and retention of culturally diverse individuals into teaching. Without this recognition by teacher education programs or secondary schools it is unlikely that any kind of action will be taken in order to resolve disparity in terms of culturally diverse representation.

GYO programs are inherently of value even if students do not go on to pursue a career in teaching.

GYO programs provide students with the opportunities for skill building, to attain knowledge about the post-secondary application process, and to gather insight into career development among of a host of other useful experiences. These experiences serve participants well, regardless of their ultimate choice of field. Even if participants in a GYO program do not go on to declare education as a major or pursue a career in teaching upon completion of secondary school, it cannot be assumed that they will not pursue some form of teaching, formally or informally, in the future. It may be that a former participant goes on to pursue a career in nursing, for example, and then partly due to the experiences gathered in a GYO program, opts to teach nursing at the college level. I mention this example because it illustrates the transformative impact that GYO programs may have on the lives and careers of participants. The implications of GYO programs reach far beyond the actual program itself and are difficult to quantify.

It is beneficial for GYO programs to be started at schools in which there are a high number of culturally diverse students.

To date, most GYO programs have been situated in schools and communities in which there are a high number of culturally diverse individuals because it is believed that in these locations the greatest pool of culturally diverse students will be found. Because of these

people's commitment to their own community, there is a higher probability that they will be motivated to teach in their home communities (Villegas & Irvine, 2010). Should former participants of a secondary GYO program decide to pursue teaching as a career choice, there is an increased likelihood that they will return to their home communities to teach. Returning to teach in a home community is similar to my personal experience. Although I went away from home for my teacher education, I returned to teach at a local high school in my community before pursuing further education. It is not a stretch to imagine that former participants would want to give back to their home communities and possibly even contribute to or establish a GYO at the high school in which they teach.

It is important to develop a sense of critical consciousness in student participants' of GYOs.

As Tandon et al. (2015) highlight, it is important to work towards developing a sense of critical consciousness in participants of GYO programs. For a GYO program to focus solely on the preparation culturally diverse teachers without paying attention to the co-development of critical consciousness would be insufficient. It is important that GYO programs provide students the opportunities to engage in critical analysis and study of relevant topics within education and the community. Students' participation in activities such as tutoring takes them beyond the four walls of the classroom and into the community is a vital component of GYOs. Through such experiences, students may become more aware of the systemic issues that contribute to existing inequalities. Participation in this type of embedded learning is likely to increase the participants' decision to become educators focused on social justice.

Recommendations at the Structural Level

An organization (such as the FEA) is an asset to provide support to teacher-facilitators who take a leadership role in GYO programs.

In an American context, the FEA is a nationally recognized body that provides supports to teacher-facilitators of GYO programs. The FEA also keeps a record of GYOs that exist and classifies them into chapters. Supports vary in nature from curriculum to networking opportunities as well as a publication produced for members. Being part of a larger body is important for school-based GYOs by giving a sense of contribution and membership in a larger cause, helping individual GYOs to feel less isolated and vulnerable.

GYO programs should be legislated.

Legislating GYO programs to some degree, whether it is through government agency or school board, or through some organizational body, may be a step towards securing funding that can sustain the program over time. Further benefits to a body that has oversight for the development and implementation of the GYO may support curriculum and incentives as well as strengthening partnerships and increasing communication between school-based GYOs and post-secondary institutions.

GYO programs typically form out of the needs of a community and hence the rules in terms of how they operate as well as where the focus lies will tend to vary greatly.

GYO programs develop from different root causes—one GYO might emerge due to a lack of students pursuing mathematics whereas another might arise from a group of autoworkers being laid off. These two groups of participants have very distinct needs and hence the GYO seeking to serve them would operate differently. The former would operate perhaps

as a course or a co-curricular club that seeks to expound the benefits of mathematics, including how it may relate to a possible career in teaching. The latter might focus on meeting the financial needs of unemployed adults by introducing them to aspects of teaching in a college or community setting. Flexibility of GYO programs is key in making them responsive to both the needs of the community and those of the participants.

Secondary schools/boards partnering with post-secondary institutions is an asset in that, if organized in this way, students will have the option of continuing in the program beyond the completion of secondary school.

Aspects of this point are discussed in the following section.

Recommendations at the Functional Level

Ideally students should be monitored beyond secondary school.

Monitoring students beyond secondary school serves a dual purpose in terms of meeting both the students' and the programs' interests. Students' have a vested interest in being monitored beyond high school graduation in that, should they continue in a GYO program at the post-secondary level, the post-secondary institution (assuming there is a disclosure agreement) would be aware of the history of students and be better informed about the financial, educational, social, and other needs of students. The GYO program itself has a vested interest in monitoring students' beyond high school graduation in that students who go on to pursue a career in teaching could be tracked in order to help determine the success rate of the program in producing culturally diverse teachers.

Students should receive a secondary school credit and possibly a college credit for participation in the program.

Certainly, if GYO programs are offered at secondary schools (like the Careers course in Grade 9 in Ontario), it should be a for-credit course. Students who have an interest in teaching or a broader interest in social justice would have the opportunity to complete a course that could count towards their graduation requirements. If the secondary school in which GYO program is hosted were to make an arrangement with a local post-secondary institution, it may be possible that advanced college credit could be given to students who go on to attend classes at that institution. This could be a powerful incentive for students to continue their studies beyond high school.

There should be financial incentives for participation in GYO programs.

Post-secondary education is expensive for any student and culturally diverse students are no exception. Bartow et al. (2015) highlight financial incentives (such as bursaries, stipends for materials/books, and forgivable loans) that could be offered for students continuing in the GYO program beyond secondary school. At the secondary level it is plausible that students could be given tickets for transportation, lunch subsidies, and small travel allowances for events related to GYO-related activities.

A staff person should be hired (in addition to the teacher-facilitator) in order to implement and oversee the aforementioned.

Whether at the secondary or post-secondary level, a coordinator who oversees all organizational and administrative aspects of the GYO program would contribute to efficient and consistent operation of the program. Such a person could work closely with the teacher-facilitator of the program on such aspects as ensuring adequate resources to implement curriculum, attendance, guest speakers, and tracking student progress

throughout the program. A foreseeable setback to securing a person for an on-going role could be a lack of funding that is often the case with GYO's (Toshalis, 2013).

A wide range of information should be taught in the program.

While/in addition to exposing students to a possible career in teaching, a wide array of content should be focused on including social justice, community awareness, and post-secondary preparation. In this way if students go on to pursue a career in teaching, it is possible that more well-rounded teachers will result.

CHAPTER 6: STRATEGIES BEYOND GYO PROGRAMS

There are numerous solutions other than GYO programs to resolve the issue of the dearth of teachers of colour in the K-12 system. Thus far, I have focused on GYO programs that mainly operate at the secondary level; in this section I consider some of these strategies that may have potential to increase the number of culturally diverse teachers. Although the strategies outlined focus largely on what teacher education programs could do to generate change in the demographic of the teaching profession.

The strategies outlined here are active recruitment strategies in that they do not rely on “the market need for teachers [to] automatically draw students into teacher education” (Villegas & Davis, 2007, p. 137). Rather, these documented strategies are based upon the assumption that it is beneficial to have a diverse teacher candidate student body/teacher force and it is therefore advantageous to actively engage in efforts that contribute toward this end.

Recruitment Strategies

1. Recruitment from places where cultural diverse people congregate

On a whole, there tend to be communities in which people from culturally diverse backgrounds live and congregate (Ball, 2002). Active recruitment would entail representatives from teacher education programs going into these communities and seeking to recruit individuals who may have an interest in pursuing teaching as a career. Whether it be places of worship, community centres, festivals, or various cultural events, these and

other venues present realistic opportunities for individuals from culturally diverse backgrounds to have access to information about the teaching profession.

According to Ellis and Epstein (2015), cultural newspapers, radio programs, and personal networks also present vital avenues for the active recruitment of teachers of colour. Ellis and Epstein (2015) offered the following recommendation:

In this sort of campaign, the ads should not be seeking “diverse teachers” but rather individuals who want to explore the possibility of teaching. This is different.

Because people without a credential do not think of themselves as ‘teachers’, they are not likely to answer ads for teachers. (p. 141)

Indeed, this type of recruitment presents an opportunity for individuals who might not have considered teaching as an option previously to consider it as a reachable aim.

2. Students of colour already enrolled in university

An active recruitment approach would also see recruitment take place from the undergraduate population, especially in those universities that also have teacher education programs. The teacher education program could recruit diverse students with undeclared majors or students who are enrolled in majors that lead to a teachable subject. In order for this to occur, there should be strong partnerships with departments such as history, English, geography, French, and life sciences. To achieve this, the teacher education program should have a visible presence on campus at such things as campus fairs and other events put on by the university.

Villegas and Davies (2007) state that this type of recruitment should focus on helping “identified students understand the valuable contributions that educators make to society, the many opportunities available to someone with a teaching credential, and the

type of preparation and support the teacher education program is ready to provide” (p. 138). Certainly, such efforts require that the teacher education program have adequate staff/resources designated to engage in this type of outreach. Indeed, the teacher education program must strive to provide programs to support university students of colour, including elements such as financial, academic, and cultural resources that are known to facilitate success (Sleeter & Milner, 2011, p. 86).

Villegas and Davies (2007) caution that such outreach efforts at the undergraduate level should be combined with other recruitment strategies in order for the outcome to be maximized for the Faculty of Education. This type of recruitment is likely to be most fruitful at institutions where there are a large number of students of colour (p. 139).

3. Para-professional pool/ Holders of a Bachelor’s degree

Para-professional is the term used to refer to individuals in a professional field apart from teaching who have the potential to teach a sub-area of the field in which they are trained. Because there are a high number of culturally diverse professionals in other fields, such as nursing, the idea is that these individuals could serve as a pool in which future teachers could be recruited. As Ellis and Epstein (2015) point out, initiatives to recruit para-professionals take less time to produce results because the individuals who are being recruited often times are holders of a bachelor’s degree.

Para-professionals are often trained to be teachers through alternative certification programs. The “traditional” versus “non-traditional” certification process is a distinction that is often made in the field of diversity and teacher education. The former refers to the traditional teacher education program housed in a university setting, reflecting established policies and procedures for teacher certification. These programs are designed for

university-aged students because they are post-graduate program. The latter refers to alternative certification programs that are put in place for individuals to become trained as teachers in a way that meets the criteria of certification while concomitantly meeting the needs of older, perhaps non-degree-holding participants.

In writing about the history of non-traditional certification programs in the US, Ladson-Billings (2008) states “the threefold approach [of] on the job training, professional development, and community involvement seemed to be an important strategy for inducting new professionals into the field” (p. 393). A distinguishing feature of the non-traditional certification process is that they present para-professionals with the opportunity to work in the field and be paid, while being uniquely positioned to fill the need of school districts for teachers of colour (Villegas and Davis, 2007). The fact that this type of certification presents para-professionals with the opportunity to become certified while working in the field is an extremely important aspect for culturally diverse individuals who may be older with families to support.

4. Other

It should be noted that there are other strategies/initiatives dedicated to diversifying the teacher force such as non-profit initiatives that target recent university graduates, recruitment from community college students, and the proliferation of online programs offering teacher certification.

What Else Can Teacher Education Programs Do? Approaches to Admissions

Apart from active recruitment strategies that teacher education programs use to diversify their student populations, there are policy measures (particularly around admission to the program) that may also have an impact. Because teacher education is a professional

program and graduation from the program qualifies one for teaching certification. It follows that admission standards serve as critical gatekeepers for future generations of teachers.

As cited in Childs et al. (2011), Guinier (2003) makes an interesting distinction in approaches to admission practices that teacher education programs take and points to “contest mobility” versus “sponsored mobility.” The former refers to an approach to admissions taken by teacher education programs that places a high value on academic criteria rather than on an individual’s perceived potential to succeed as a teacher. Often, if an applicant does not meet the minimum academic criterion (usually involving average grade), his or her application will not be considered. Sponsored mobility, on the other hand, takes a more holistic approach to teacher education admission practices in the sense that teacher education programs that employ this approach attempt to assess an applicant’s perceived ability to succeed as a teacher in addition to academic criteria (p. 6). Teacher education programs that utilize the sponsored mobility approach recognize any form of historical disadvantage that applicants from marginalized backgrounds may have experienced and also consider the underrepresentation of certain groups within the teaching profession (Childs et al., 2011).

I view the sponsored mobility approach to admission practices to be more progressive in contributing to the cultural diversification of teacher education programs and ultimately the teacher force. There are documented socio-economic inequalities that are experienced by culturally diverse applicants to teacher education programs that could be mitigated by a sponsored mobility approach.

Equity admissions

Equity admissions, in which culturally diverse applicants are able to self-identify, fall under the sponsored mobility approach. Although equity admissions are controversial, granting admission in this way allows the admissions committee to have a firm idea (once the applicant has met the admission criteria) that the individual being accepted into the program is a person of colour. While applicants of colour must meet the admission criteria for the program, information acquired through self-identification has the potential to result in a shift to the demographic of the program.

Strategies for Diversification: Final Thoughts

As in GYO programs, the administration of the types of diversification strategies outlined above must make sure that culturally diverse students are monitored closely at every stage of the recruitment cycle. Ideally, students would be given financial, cultural, and social supports throughout the program and would be assessed regularly. Without adequate resources and supports, participants are unlikely to succeed and diversification of the teaching population will be slow to occur.

CHAPTER 7: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Summary of Insights from American GYOs

My research into American GYOs has given me a number of insights about the programs and the potential they have to be transformative as one method of diversifying the teaching force. While GYO programs may have some drawbacks, such as taking a relatively longer time than other diversification strategies to produce results, on a whole I find them to be effective for the following reasons.

1. GYOs programs are flexible. Whether at the community or pre-collegiate level, GYO programs are intended to meet the needs of the participants they serve. Unlike so many education-related initiatives that often seem to be only outwardly interested in the well-being of participants, GYOs are generally adaptive to the needs of the participants in best meeting the needs of the community in which the program functions.
2. GYO programs at the pre-collegiate level catch students who may have an interest in a career in teaching at a young age. Early recruitment is crucial in that GYOs give exposure to the teaching profession to students who might not have it otherwise. Moreover, through pre-collegiate GYOs there is ample time for skill development to occur and for students to be monitored academically as well as counselled about career path.
3. GYOs present the opportunity for students to be monitored past the pre-collegiate level into undergraduate programs, teacher education programs, and the workforce. This type of tracking helps to create a pathway for students and creates a way that

the success of respective programs can be measured quantitatively. Partnerships with universities and school boards are instrumental in giving deserving students a pipeline in which they can progress.

4. Participants need to be provided with the proper academic, cultural, and financial support at all levels. It is critical that participants feel supported so that they do not fall through the pipeline in order for the end objective of GYOs—contributing to the diversification of the teacher force—to be achieved.
5. Having GYO programs institutionalized to some degree, whether it is through a regulating body or school boards, may be beneficial to programs. Through institutionalization, various types of support can be given to respective programs in order to best serve participants and combat potential isolation of programs that could occur.
6. If implemented correctly, GYO programs have the ability to reduce turnover at schools in low-income communities. Both through the creation of incentives (such as forgivable loans) and by students returning to their home neighbourhoods to teach, GYO programs have the potential to disrupt the “revolving door” phenomenon; in theory, they create social-justice-minded teachers with a desire to give back to their community.

Issues to Consider when Implementing GYOs in a Canadian context

In order for GYO programs to be successful in a Canadian context, several conditions are required in the setting where the GYO will function:

- From the perspective of the administration of the school, generating culturally diverse teachers must be considered a priority and hence the GYO program must be given adequate resources, both human and financial.
- Partnerships between post-secondary institutions, teacher education programs, and school boards should be created.
- The content covered in a GYO program should seek to give exposure to a career in teaching and it should also be responsive to the needs of the students and the community in which it functions.
- The goal of developing critically minded students should be at the forefront of the program.
- The well-being of students must be at the centre of the program and hence adequate supports (academic, financial, and cultural) must be given to students. Exactly what this entails will vary depending on the context of the program.
- GYOs at the secondary level should be offered as for-credit courses in which students may receive a secondary credit and, if possible, a post-secondary credit from a partnering institution.
- GYO programs could also explore the option of functioning as an extra-curricular club.
- Although open to all students, GYO programs should be offered in cities and schools where there is a high number of culturally diverse students in order to have the highest probability that students will return to those communities to teach once they become certified.

Conclusion

GYO programs are one systematic diversification strategy for recruiting culturally diverse teachers. If implemented correctly, GYOs have the potential to shift the current demographic of teacher education programs and, ultimately, the teacher force. The need for culturally diverse teachers is evident in that they are able to serve as role models, share a lived experience, and better utilize culturally relevant pedagogy. Other diversification strategies apart from GYO programs exist, including recruiting from places where culturally diverse people congregate, encouraging students of colour already enrolled in university and identifying the para-professional pool/holders of a bachelor's degree. Certainly, there are also approaches to admissions and equity policies that teacher education programs may consider that can contribute to diversification. Although GYO programs may take a longer time to generate the results in terms of diversification, GYOs can be an effective long-term investment that can transform both the lives of participants and the teaching profession itself.

The manner in which I was recruited to teaching by a conscientious Vice-Principal is the way that numerous students from culturally diverse backgrounds in Canada find their way to the teaching profession: informally. For schools and community groups in Canada that have a mandate of recruiting culturally diverse teachers, GYO programs in the USA represent an excellent model to guide the ways that recruitment of culturally diverse teachers is institutionalized.

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