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JOURNAL OF LANGUAGE & LITERACY EDUCATION

“It Brought Me Back”: Using Young Adult Book Clubs to Develop Preservice Teachers’ Sympathetic Knowledge of Adolescents/ce

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Abstract: This study examines how book clubs were used within a young adult literature course to foster a development of “sympathetic knowledge” of adolescence/ts in preservice teachers as they grappled with their shifting positionalities and subjectivities. Using Critical Narrative Analysis, the data from these young adult book club discussions showed that personal anecdotal responses, perspective-taking, and future casting through storytelling around dominant discourses of adolescents/ce aided in a social ethic toward a (re)negotiation of their charge as future educators of adolescents.

Keywords: sympathetic knowledge, empathy, young adult literature, preservice teachers, adolescents, English teachers



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“**I** loved the book! I could not put it down! I think I read it in two sittings. Um, ‘Cause it was just so easy to relate to. Like, I felt like all the moments. I felt like I had experiences in some way, every action that happened, or just like, I don’t know, just like the topics and first loves. It brought me back to all of that. Those certain topics, so, I loved it...” – Shayna, during a book club conversation on *Blankets* by Craig Thompson

Literacy instruction requires educators to consider how and for what purposes students engage in discourses and social practices during their study of literature (Fecho et al., 2016). Teachers cannot fully realize the balance between students’ understanding of English Language Arts (ELA) standards and the larger humanistic conversations the curriculum exposes them to without considering how they conceptualize adolescence (Falter, 2016). Popular culture has caricatured teenagers as “another tribe” (Lesko, 2012, p. 1), associating them with negative attributes like delinquency, while also depicting them with familiarity and sometimes affection (Lesko, 2012). No longer in the process of transitioning to adulthood, teachers inherently stand apart from the experiences of the youth in their classrooms. Therefore, we argue that English and literacy scholars need to explore how preservice teachers (PSTs) can develop a sympathetic understanding of adolescents. Ultimately, through this work, adolescents will benefit from a more fair and less prejudicial assessment by those coming into the teaching profession.

One such way is to examine practices that occur within the teaching of reading. Fictional character study supports adolescent students’ emotional text-connections (Jamieson, 2015; Mar et al., 2011).

Specifically, studying fictional characters, among other types of analysis, with young adult literature (YAL) can be a conduit for increased student empathy (Kiser, 2017; Nikolajeva, 2012), social responsibility (Wolk, 2009), and critical witnessing (Coleman-King & Groenke, 2015). Book clubs are closely tied to shifting readers’ awareness and attitudes (Durand, 2015). The dialogic structure of YAL book clubs provides context for PSTs to consider a multiplicity of perspectives on themes relevant to adolescents. In a dialogic classroom, discussions are used to immerse teachers and students in ongoing reflection with the texts of their lives (Fecho et al., 2016). Moreover, this pedagogical strategy has afforded teachers the experience of imaginatively inhabiting their future selves to assess the value of pedagogical strategies and YAL for various purposes (Mason, 2010).

“English and literacy scholars need to explore how preservice teachers (PSTs) can develop a sympathetic understanding of adolescents.”

Although there exists a copious amount of literature demonstrating the pedagogical value of book clubs in literature instruction, the purpose of the current study is twofold. First, we sought to add to this collective knowledge by exploring how PSTs’ dialogic conversations within YAL book clubs can facilitate sympathetic understandings of adolescents. Secondly, we examined how YAL discussions helped PSTs navigate and (re)negotiate their own personal adolescent experience while imagining their future adolescent students.

Conceptual Framework

Both Jane Addams’ (1902, 2002) ideas around sympathetic knowledge and critical youth studies (Lesko, 2012) are particularly useful for this study of PSTs’ discussions of adolescents through YAL book clubs. These two frameworks enable us to study youth critically.

Sympathetic Knowledge

For many, the word *empathy* is used as the *pièce de résistance*, most acceptable, or “obligatory” emotion (Baum, 1996), that teachers want students to acquire through reading literature. However, our study takes a turn away from this work toward a social philosophical framing of the importance of “sympathetic knowledge” (Addams, 1902/2002) when reading texts about others. We do so because of the critiques of empathy as often being taken up as a passive or purely performative act (Boler, 1997; Falter, 2022) and its susceptibility toward an uncritical gaze, thereby creating an illusion of empathy, or what Delgado (1996) calls a “false empathy.”

Our study uses sympathetic knowledge and related terms—sympathetic imagination/ understanding (Nussbaum, 1997)—to emphasize that one cannot simply enter into another’s feelings. In contrast to this passive stance, sympathetic knowledge is disruptive, (Cromie, 2015; Hamington, 2009; Hendry, 2014) and perplexing (Cromie, 2015; Seigfried, 2007) which leads to inquiry (Cromie, 2015), and, perhaps most importantly, action (Hamington, 2009). Sympathy—with its Greek etymology meaning “feeling with” or “feeling in community”—shows solidarity with others, which is often missing with empathy work in schools, where empathy tends towards personal and internal feelings about others and their experiences (Falter, 2022).

Jane Addams, writer, activist, reformer, Nobel peace prize winner, and widely considered to be the mother of social work at the turn of the 20th century, was the first to use the term *sympathetic knowledge* as she worked with immigrant families and youth in Chicago at Hull House. Her notion of sympathetic knowledge is grounded in several interrelated claims. First, it acknowledges that human existence is relational and social (Hamington, 2009; Nieuwejaar, 2015). Second, it articulates a responsibility and ethics toward care and action through deep shared

encounters (Addams, 1902, 2002; Elshtain, 2002; Hamington, 2009; Nieuwejaar, 2015). Third, sympathetic knowledge necessitates developing emotional connections with others, to develop our cognitive understanding and promote action. And, finally, it requires more than the toleration of difference, but an orientation of recognizing, knowing, affirming and validating another’s experiences through mirroring (Ornstein, 2011), which is achieved only through an ethic of care.

Like Jane Addams, we see sympathetic knowledge as inextricably interwoven with storytelling, narrative, and novels. It is not a substitute for direct experiences, but fiction can develop sympathetic understanding (Addams, 1902/2002) through “listen[ing] to and engag[ing] in an exchange of stories across differences of opinion” (Schaafsma, 2014, p. 181).

Within our study, the aesthetic power of transacting with stories (Rosenblatt, 2005) is important, as the novel produces what Bruner (1986) called a “cultural forum” (p. 127) —an invitation to readers to consider issues through the inclusion of diverse, multiple voices and perspectives to foster sympathetic knowledge. According to Davis (1994) and Warren (2018), perspective-taking anchors the application of sympathetic understanding in social interactions. Perspective-taking represents the adoption of others’ psychological point of view in everyday life (Davis, 1994). It is the pragmatic and intellectual approach by which we negotiate how to best respond to new knowledges based on a “pedagogy of listening” (Low & Sonntag, 2013, p. 769), observations, previous interactions, or exposure to texts, stories or spaces (Decety & Lamm, 2006). By studying YAL, then, PSTs participate within a social, relational ethic that values willingness to suspend judgment and listen to others through perspective-taking so as to find common ground that can lead to social transformation (Hamington, 2009) for their future adolescent students.

Critical Youth Studies

Despite possessing a collective experience of adolescent development, adults too often mistake the young as disorderly, apathetic, or at-risk in common discourse as well as education research and policy (Lesko, 2012). For Addams (1909), who worked with many so-called “juvenile delinquents” at the turn of the century, young people should not be labeled as merely “troubled youth” and marginalized or discarded. Instead, through perspective-taking, and enacting a critical listening stance (Low & Sonntag, 2013), she was able to have a sympathetic understanding of their experiences that helped to create change. She was even so bold in her time to see adolescents through an asset-oriented lens, compelling educators to “go upon a voyage of discovery into that army of boys and girls who enter industry each year, what values might they not discover; what treasures might they not conserve and develop...” (Addams, 1909, p. 124). Our aim as teacher educators is similar: to help future teachers transform deficit and negative perspectives by acknowledging the complex intersectionalities and agencies of youth. As such, we also approach this work through a framework of critical youth studies (CYS).

Common adult conceptions about adolescents have victimized youth. These conceptions lend to ideological and unconstituted cultural marginalization of adolescents (Giroux, 2009). In academia, scholarship drawing on bio-psychological views of adolescents are often grounded in the belief that teenagers are simply undergoing an evolutionary phase of development and therefore ignores their socio-cultural realities and experiences (Sarigianides et al., 2017; Lesko, 2012). Additional consequences arise as the “coming-of-age” period bestows teachers and adults with greater authority, via the implied need for control, over the expected potential and hormonally-driven problems of those not-quite-there-yet (Lesko, 2012). Negative characterizations of

youth have also become culturally instituted through popular media. For example, crime sensationalism in fictional media is associated with frequent typecasting of “youth-as-perpetrator” and may fuel “unnecessary anxieties... generational divides, and moral panics about youth” (Ferguson, 2013, p. 32). With this in mind, we viewed our data in terms of the ways PSTs aligned with or rejected prevalent negative perceptions of youth.

Critical youth studies scholars respond by interrogating oppressive youth stereotypes of “trouble,” “at risk” or “delinquency” and adults’ role in constructing these deficit discourses, while also promoting more caring, nuanced, intersectional and comprehensive means of understanding the adolescent experience (Best, 2007; Jones et al., 2003). Informed by critical race and post-colonial theories, CYS utilizes the often disregarded or denied youth experience as evidence of their agency, complexity, and intersectionality (Sukarieh & Tannock, 2015). CYS recognizes important axes of social difference, including but not limited to race, class, gender, place, nation, and sexuality (Best et al., 2017).

We view youth as “cultural agents” (Bucholtz, 2002, p. 526) who are resilient and capable of success in a changing world. Accordingly, our analysis of PSTs’ discourse during YAL book clubs was guided by the “critical theoretical notion that the study of youth is political; the context of being a youth has everything to do with how agencies of power work, and how this work affects young women and men” (Ibrahim & Steinberg, 2014, p. xvi). In the next section, we discuss some of the scholarship that has been conducted about adolescent youth using YAL in teacher preparation programs.

Use of YAL in ELA Teacher Preparation

Over the last decade, researchers have indicated increasing incorporation of YAL book clubs in

English Language Arts teacher education (e.g., Coombs & Ostenson, 2022; Daisey, 2010; Glenn, 2012; Hauschildt, 2015; Ivey & Begbie, 2021; Mason, 2010; Pytash, 2013; Schieble & Polleck, 2017; Robertson & Smith, 2017; Stallworth, 2010). LGBTQ literature substantiates much of the YAL content written about in such contexts (e.g., Bach, 2016; Blackburn et al., 2016; Mason, 2010; Schieble & Polleck, 2017). Regardless of the topic, YAL book club meetings have offered PSTs opportunities to practice engaging their future students in critical discourse by posing and responding to challenging questions (Groenke, 2008).

Additionally, Mason (2010) and Glenn's (2012) scholarship evidenced YAL book clubs as a fulcrum for transformative affective shifts in PSTs' perspectives. For example, Mason (2010) invited undergraduate English Education majors to reveal their awareness and attitudes towards differences in gender expression and sexual orientation before and after participating in a YAL book club reading featuring LGBTQ characters. Mason noticed "book club members did not hesitate to reveal their own perceived ignorance, changing perspectives, and questions as they demonstrated their understanding in terms of self-knowledge" (p. 13). Similarly, in Glenn's (2012) study, she found that reading YAL counternarratives that featured diverse racialized adolescent experiences, helped PSTs to "reconsider assumptions that society and they hold and perpetuate" and to "re-conceptualize societal norms to reconsider how they see the seeming 'other' and, in some cases, recognize their own culpability in promoting existing stereotypes" (pp. 347-348).

When confronting their preconceived beliefs about diverse cultures in different socio-historical contexts, PSTs can experience shifts in perspective, increased empathy, improved perspective-taking, and a commitment to advocacy and social responsibility (Coleman-King & Groenke, 2015; Durand, 2015; Falter,

2022; Falter & Kerkhoff, 2018; Ivey & Begbie, 2021; Wender, 2015). Book club dynamics promote meaningful engagement in peer conversation although more informally compared to other go-to activities for text response, such as academic writing or whole class discussion. The open nature of conversation about YAL themes promotes PSTs' identification and authentic exploration of new and multiple perspectives regarding issues affecting adolescent lives such as gender, multiculturalism, race, and power dynamics.

Wender (2015) used the term *perspective-taking* to describe PSTs' willingness to change their minds by identifying and synthesizing alternative views with their own. For example, Coleman-King and Groenke (2015) signaled attention to an underrepresentation of multicultural studies in teacher education and found that by pairing multicultural YA fiction/historical non-fiction for discussion in an undergraduate education course, PSTs became critical witnesses by acknowledging and understanding what factors perpetuate systemic racism. More generally, critical witnessing is described as the "process of being so moved or struck by the experience of encountering a text as to embrace a specific course of action avowedly intended to forge a path toward change" (López, 2009, p. 205). Similarly, Durand (2015) found that PSTs' use of postcolonial YAL in book club settings enacted reflection of personal experiences as a starting point for learning about diverse cultures in various socio-historical contexts that might have been unavailable otherwise.

YAL book clubs not only encourage backward or reflective thinking but also allow PSTs to 'teacher-cast' by expressing their teaching-related anxieties, present desires, and future aspirations (Lewkowich, 2015). For example, Pytash (2013) observed that YAL can help PSTs learn about bullying and suicide, develop empathy for future students and increase

their confidence when supporting students experiencing trauma. YAL book clubs also notably encourage PST “imaginative rehearsals” –or forward thinking about their future selves as teachers– in order to assess the value of pedagogical strategies and YAL for various purposes (Gallagher, 2009; Mason, 2010). Thinking through a story about adolescents who are confronting problems with bullying and depression can prompt PSTs to imagine how they would actively respond to hypothetical-adolescents in their future classrooms facing similar situations. Sulzer and Thein (2016) found that when PSTs were asked to read and assess the pedagogical value of YAL from the perspective of a hypothetical adolescent student, they adapted their evaluations for “a ‘normal’ adolescent, envisioned as a white U.S. citizen of European ancestry, middle class, heterosexual, and abled” and the text’s “potential to serve as a corrective measure to the anticipated deficits of a normative adolescent, who was further imagined as being naive about life’s difficulties, devoid of empathy, and inexperienced with diversity” (p. 166). Such findings indicate that helping PSTs expand their normative and problematic understandings of adolescents is needed.

Given that YAL is seen as an appropriate and helpful tool in teacher preparation programs, and that structuring discussions around YAL in book clubs has numerous benefits for those involved, we developed a study within an undergraduate education course to help PSTs to better imagine adolescents as complex and agentive, and not as “single stories” (Adichie, 2009, n.p.). Throughout the course, we investigated how PSTs navigated and (re)negotiated their perceptions of adolescents through the practice of reading YAL in book clubs and conversing about their own adolescent selves, experiences, and relationships. Due to the interest in the dialogic component of the course and the course objects, the authors formed the following research question: How do PSTs navigate and (re)negotiate their sympathetic

understanding of adolescents/ce through participating in YAL book clubs?

Methods

This semester-long descriptive-interpretive qualitative study (Elliott & Timulak, 2021) examined data from a secondary English education YAL course at a large, predominantly white public university in the southeastern U.S., using elements of thematic and critical narrative analyses. The course aimed to expose PSTs to many YA texts, to critically analyze them, and to provide pedagogical strategies for teaching and defending the use of them. Additionally, the instructor’s (Michelle’s) goal was to have PSTs develop and unpack their definitions of what adolescents/adolescence is through their examination of YAL.

Students in the course had many assignments including response papers, giving book talks and making book trailers, writing reviews using the social book platform, GoodReads, along with creating a unit plan around a young adult text. Interspersed throughout the course were opportunities to discuss self-selected YAL from a list of books that the instructor curated based on factors including popularity in schools and online reviews, book award winners, and recommendations from scholars and teachers. The list attempted to present a wide range of genres, topics, age-levels, authors, diverse representations, and more. These discussions in class took the form of book clubs.

The Participants

The course was required for all middle and high school English language arts PSTs within the English education undergraduate licensure program. At the time of the study, the consenting participants included 23 PST undergraduate students enrolled in the course. No students declined participation. Of

this group, 3 identified as male, 2 identified as Asian American, 1 identified as Middle Eastern American, and the remaining identified as white/ European American. All students were undergraduates, although two of the female students were nontraditional, returning to obtain their bachelor's degree in their 30s. Both nontraditional students had teenage children at the time of the study, which added some nuance to the discussions that occurred.

Author Positionality

As a former middle and high school English teacher, Michelle was passionate about diverse representation in texts in the classroom. As a white heterosexual female that did not see a lot of diverse representations of adolescent experiences in her own upbringing, Michelle became an advocate and co-conspirator who champions social justice and equity initiatives in teacher education and k-12 classrooms. In addition to her own love, passion, and knowledge of YAL, Michelle also believes in the power of discussions as a pedagogical tool for change and growth. She brought these experiences to the course as the instructor.

Jessica is also a white female and former high school

English teacher and researcher of English teaching methods. She has used YAL in her own instruction and believes in the value of incorporating texts that feature diverse characters and contexts. Jessica also strives to make use of teaching methods that foster authentic inquiry and discussion.

Both authors acknowledge that their personal positive past experiences with and regards for YAL have influenced their decisions to select such texts for classroom use. As the authors represent the same gender and race, readers may take into consideration that our analysis may have been influenced by our collective experience as part of those communities.

Data Sources

Although the PSTs had many assignments for the class, the focus of this study was on the dialogic exchange that was happening during the class book clubs between the students because this space is not regulated by the instructor (Michelle) in the same way as assignments are for a grade. How PSTs co-construct knowledge about adolescents in these spaces without their professors' authority was interesting. Therefore, the data were solely comprised of audio-recordings of 27 book club discussions of YAL (see Figure 1) that students self-

Figure 1

Self-selected YAL Texts by PSTs

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>13 Reasons Why</i> by Jay Asher • <i>Autobiography of a Face</i> by Lucy Grealy • <i>A Wrinkle in Time</i> by Madeleine L'Engle • <i>Blankets</i> by Craig Thompson • <i>Boy Meets Boy</i> by David Levithan • <i>Bronx Masquerade</i> by Nikki Grimes • <i>Chopsticks</i> by Jessica Anthony & Rodrigo Corral • <i>Crank</i> by Ellen Hopkins • <i>Ender's Game</i> by Orson Scott Card • <i>Feed</i> by M.T. Anderson • <i>Girl, Interrupted</i> by Susanna Kaysen • <i>Heartbeat</i> by Sharon Creech • <i>I Don't Want to Be Crazy</i> by Samantha Schutz • <i>Maus</i> by Art Spiegelman • <i>Persepolis</i> by Marjane Satrapi 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Pride of Baghdad</i> by Brian K. Vaughan & Niko Henrichon • <i>Push</i> by Sapphire • <i>Sold</i> by Patricia McCormack • <i>Speak</i> by Laurie Halse Anderson • <i>The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian</i> by Sherman Alexie • <i>The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas</i> by John Boyne • <i>The Chocolate War</i> by Robert Cormier • <i>The Giver</i> by Lois Lowry • <i>The Glass Castle</i> by Jeannette Walls • <i>The Kite Runner</i> by Khaled Hosseini • <i>The Perks of Being a Wallflower</i> by Stephen Chbosky • <i>They Poured Fire on the Sky</i> by Alephonsion Deng, Benson Deng, & Benjamin Ajak
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selected from a larger provided list organized around specific topics and genres, such as: classic, contemporary, dystopian, graphic novels, multicultural, verse, and nonfiction. We do acknowledge that providing a list of books does demonstrate some authority over PSTs' discussions; however, PSTs were in the process of learning what quality YA literature was and therefore needed guidance. Book club groups consisted of different arrangements of 3-6 students. In total, PSTs read 6 YAL books within book clubs across the semester. Their sessions lasted approximately 40-60 minutes each, and PSTs were asked to discuss the book from both a reader and a teacher perspective. The audio-recordings were then transcribed for analysis.

Data Analysis

In order to answer our research question of how PSTs navigated and (re)negotiated their sympathetic understanding of adolescents/ce through participating in YAL book clubs, we conducted data analysis in two phases. In phase one, we used a thematic analysis. Both authors analyzed the data using the constant comparative method (CCM) (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) with Boeije's (2002) application of CCM outside of grounded theory work to search for themes and patterns in the data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In this first round of analysis, we employed inductive coding where both authors of this article worked independently, reading each book club discussions' transcripts then using descriptive codes for recognizable patterns (Saldaña, 2016). After completing a process of open coding, we co-created categories from the codes. Next, we compared our analyses, looking for themes across all of the data. Although we found a substantial number of themes using this method, we felt that these findings lacked criticality and did not purposefully highlight the storytelling that became an important element across the themes.

Therefore, in phase two, we conducted a Critical Narrative Analysis (CNA) (Souto-Manning, 2005), which is a hybrid of Critical Discourse Analysis (Fairclough, 2003; Rogers, 2011) and Narrative Analysis (Ochs & Capps, 2001; Patton, 2002; Polkinghorne, 1988). It is a beneficial partnership because CNA focuses on how people make sense of their personal experiences in society in relation to institutional discourses through language/stories (Souto-Manning & Ray, 2007).

On the narrative analysis side of CNA, stories are central to the analysis (Patton, 2002). As Barthes (1975) reminds us, stories are "present at all times, in all places, in all societies" (p. 237). Narrative scholars pay particular attention to how narratives systematize human experience (Bruner, 1990). Narrative analysis is, therefore, a sense-making activity (Ochs & Capps, 2001) in which personal identities are constructed and reconceptualized through narrative sharing (Bruner, 1987). Storytelling is also seen as a problem-solving site (Ochs et al., 1996).

CNA also purports that stories cannot be understood apart from context and apart from structures, like institutional discourses (Souto-Manning & Ray, 2007), thus the need to incorporate the element of critical discourse analysis (CDA). CDA views these institutional discourses, sometimes called "power discourses" (van Dijk, 2007), as potentially problematic and colonizing because they are saturated with traditional and normative conceptions often grounded in ethnocentric perspectives (Souto-Manning, 2014). These power discourses are essentially "cultural codes" which comprise of and normalize "dominant systems of knowledge, power, and discourse that comprise the symbolic order" (Buchanan, 2013, p. 6). Within our own participants' narratives, we were concerned with the cultural code of "adolescents." CNA, as an analytic tool, provided us with an understanding of how youth discourses are

produced and perpetuated, or problematized and countered through narrative constructions.

Thus, in analyzing the data, we read and reread the data, moving from the actual words said to the contextual understanding of the micro and macro elements involved. We attended to interpretive levels of making sense of how the PSTs made sense of adolescents' worlds through their conversational storytelling (Emerson & Frosh, 2009). We sought to identify larger institutional discourses about youth intertwined in the PSTs' personal narratives about adolescent characters, their adolescent selves, and adolescent students during their book club discussions.

To attend to the trustworthiness and rigor of findings, we engaged in several practices. First, we had multiple researchers (both authors) code the data, helped to make sure there was a high level of interrater reliability throughout (Denzin, 1978). Secondly, we used peer-debriefing (Stahl & King, 2020) with colleagues to provide constructive feedback and help in identifying possible biases and oversights. Additionally, we used at least two types of data analysis tools, as Leech and Onwuegbuzie (2007) contest is needed to triangulate results.

Findings

The findings below are grouped thematically. As we analyzed the transcripts of the students' book club conversations, we developed three overarching themes: (1) self-reflections about their adolescent past; (2) perspective-taking in understanding adolescents today; and (3) imaginative rehearsals of teaching adolescents in the future. For each of these themes, we selected representative narrative episodes that best captured the PSTs' storytelling. These narrative episodes were further analyzed by employing CNA in relation to what stories were being told, what discursive moves were happening, and

how discourses of adolescents were co-constructed and/or problematized. On a macro level, we explored how PSTs recycled, countered, and negotiated institutional discourses of adolescents as they told their stories. On a more micro level, we examined how they portrayed themselves in relation to adolescence through their discursive moves.

Connecting to Their Adolescent Past

Personal anecdotes significantly contributed to PST discussions about the relatability and believability of adolescent character behaviors and plot. That is, PSTs typically affirmed, and more rarely denied, the plausibility of adolescent characters' responses, interactions, and decisions by relating stories from their own personal history throughout their YAL book club conversations. Through self-reflections about their past adolescent selves, the PSTs aligned with characters and oriented themselves toward a position of sympathetic understanding. PSTs cited their lived experiences to discuss storyline effectiveness for accurately capturing the adolescent experience.

To demonstrate this first theme, we zoom in on the following book club discussion on *Crank* by Ellen Hopkins (2004), a novel-in-verse that follows the descent of a teenage girl named Kristina, as she falls into a dangerous world of crystal meth drug addiction, and the devastating consequences for her and her family. In the following narrative (see Figure 2), PST June tells her peers Bryce, Valencia, Megan, and Katherine about her own struggles with drugs as a teenager (note: all names are pseudonyms).

Narrative Episode #1. The storytelling begins with Megan who tells the group that even though she knew that there was a meth problem in the United States, she "never experienced it" and was "never around it" in high school. Due to her limited experience, she was surprised that the main character

Figure 2

Narrative Episode #1

June: It's really all around you. You just don't --

Katherine: You don't see it in the open.

June: Yeah, you just...it's easier for me to notice because I've been there, and I've done that, but like *literally*. Before I ever did drugs, I never saw it. like I never saw it. I came home from my 17th birthday and it was just there, and I was like, where the hell did this come from? But it is. It's everywhere. It's all around you. There was a lot of pressure coming at you. You just have to know what to look for. You really do. So, that's why I'm sayin'. Like, a lot of people just don't realize what a problem it is. It is a huge, huge problem, and your students, you're gonna see it. You're *gonna* see it. But, even when it's right there in front of you though people don't wanna see it. They don't wanna see it....Kids... can be really good at hiding it.

Katherine: Especially teenagers cause they are starting to transition into being like, "I'm an adult and like I get to make my own decisions, so I'm gonna pull slowly away from my parent's guidance." And, like, they do hang out in their room a lot, and sometimes you go up there and check on 'em, and they're like "we're not doing anything, we're fine, we're fine".

June: "Do you wanna eat dinner?" "Nah I already ate."

Katherine: Yeah, and you don't think anything of it.

Bryce: So, because they're changing you just naturally associate it with the fact that it's just like teenage issues?

June & Katherine: yeah.

June: It's everywhere, really you don't realize how much, how many kids do drugs in high school.

Valencia: I definitely saw it in my high school.

Megan: And like the scariest thing is you saw that in your high school. I didn't see that in my high school, and I'm just like I have a really hard time putting myself back in high schoolers shoes when I'm there, because I feel like even though I'm not that much older, I do feel like detached from them because I'm not them anymore, and I always try to bring myself back down even when it comes to like academic stuff, but at the same time you forget about all these things that go on in high schools socially. It's like I...I can't even... I can't like.... That's the thing with this and I wrote this in my GoodReads post...I can't empathize with her enough when I need to, because I cannot put myself in her shoes. I really, cause I can't wrap my head around why you would do such a thing. I know that she can't help it, but at the same time I have that mentally that's like, well you could just stop, but she can't, and so sometimes it was hard for me to empathize with her because I'm like, well you put yourself in the damn situation. But, then, I'd have to take a step back and be like, no, she can't help it. But she is so young and she doesn't know that, and yeah, she knows that it's not good, but she doesn't realize the repercussions that are gonna come from it that are so bad.

Valencia: 'Cause like, he's a good guy, except for the fact that he does meth.

Megan: Yes, exactly.

June: That's the sad thing. It's like some of these people are good people, except for the fact that they do meth. You'd be really surprised. You'd be shocked at the people who are good people but do meth behind closed doors.

Bryce: Everyone's got bones in their closet.

Valencia: I feel like we're so lucky to have you in this conversation!

Megan: I know! Right?

June: It is not respective of persons. You gotta get that out of your head right now. Like they are people-- even teens. But that doesn't mean they aren't good people. They. Are. People.

in *Crank* seemed to have easy access to it, and peers her age who also did it. However, the rampant nature of the drug use portrayed in the novel did not surprise June and Katherine, two of the older, nontraditional students in this class who both had teenage children of their own.

In this conversational narrative (Ochs & Capps, 2001), June responds to Megan who is having a difficult time, in her words, "empathizing" with the main character because she did not see drug use happening when she was a teenager. June, however, has not only seen drug use, but has also had the experience of

using drugs and has struggled with addiction, something she reveals here and in other parts of the book club discussion. Within this shared storytelling, we see two dominant discourses about adolescents popping up. The first is that teenagers are naughty, bad kids who take up problematic risky behaviors such as drug use. The second is that teenagers hide things from adults, such as their parents.

Although these discourses are exhibited in the novel *Crank*, the discussion that ensues about their own adolescent experiences complicates these discourses. We see this group of PSTs negotiating with each other through their storytelling about the realistic nature of the book and how the teenage protagonist, Kristina, is being portrayed by the author, Ellen Hopkins. Through June's storytelling, the rest of the group members start developing a deeper understanding of the pressures that teenagers face. Rather than simplifying adolescents as drug abusers, we see June discuss the societal pressures she faced and how for some teens like herself, and like the main character of the book, it was everywhere and hard to avoid. June's story also helps the rest of the group to see that drug use is complex and that teens who do drugs are "just people" who can be both good and bad at the same time.

Likewise, because June and Katherine are also mothers to teenagers now, their experiences raising teenagers from a parental perspective provides an additional layer of understanding of adolescents that traditional PSTs who are between 18-21 years old would typically not have. Yet, this conversation still reveals some presence of dominant discourses. Bryce questions this, asking Katherine and June about the so-called "typical" behaviors they are claiming from

an adult perspective. Although Bryce doesn't add additional commentary beyond this question, a seed is planted about what exactly are "teenage issues." Overall, hearing the stories by June and Katherine do help the group members have a more complex, and nuanced understanding of teens. We can see this through Valencia's recognition and Megan's agreement of appreciation for June's own personal experiences with drugs as an adolescent, and through

Bryce's acknowledgment that everyone has "bones in their closet."

Although Megan admits she might not have full empathy for teenagers like Kristina, this narrative episode does show the group is able to find a sympathetic understanding of adolescents. She tells the group

that putting herself in the character's shoes was difficult; yet, at the same time, she is able to move from thinking why would the main character do "such a thing" to "I have to take a step back." There is recognition from Megan that her own experiences may be sheltered, but through hearing her group member's stories she is able to gain new perspectives. Through their storytelling about their adolescent pasts, the group shows a willingness to consider different perspectives and challenge their own assumptions.

Understandings of Adolescents Today

In addition to reflecting backward on their own experiences, storytelling also took the form of perspective-taking, or attempting to understand adolescents today through teenager's eyes, instead of their own. Throughout the book club discussions, we noticed that the PSTs posed questions in their narrative conversations to gauge whether their perceptions of adolescents today were accurate. In

“Through their storytelling about their adolescent pasts, the group shows a willingness to consider different perspectives and challenge their own assumptions.”

this following narrative, we see a group of students, Alice, Emma, Zara, Camille, Roux, and Julie collectively unpack whether the adolescent experience of Annie, the protagonist in Sharon

Creech's (2004) YA novel-in-verse, *Heartbeat*, was portrayed realistically or not. The novel follows Annie, an avid runner, as she navigates the ups and downs of life, including her changing relationship

Figure 3

Narrative Episode #2

Emma: I thought like that at first, but then as I started reading it, I don't know, my grandpa has Alzheimer's, and so it just really...it was kind of hard for me to read but it also, I don't know, it just really connected with me. I really liked it, and then the part with the baby and it almost died and stuff, like...there were really serious moments. I sort of wondered though... Sorry, I just wonder if kids would understand a lot of the stuff.

Camille: Which I think, I mean, that's the part of the reason for me it didn't seem that serious. She's 12 years old so like for her to internalize this stuff, I feel like we got a pretty realistic look of how a 12 year old would internalize this.

Emma: Yeah, definitely.

Roux: But as 20 something readers, it was a little simplistic. But I loved the idea of, like, if I had a kid who was just starting to like reading and giving them something like this. It's simple and because it's poetry, you know, – make them feel smart cause they would get through it so fast. Like I love the idea of recommending this to a new reader or like someone that was getting interested in reading, I don't know...

Alice: But, I mean, I felt, I didn't dislike it, but I did think parts were boring, but I thought that there were some really poignant moments, like the baby and like all the times with grandfather were just very sweet and very personal, and I thought it was cute that she was starting to get a little crush on Max and I wanted it to go somewhere and it didn't.

Julie: What was I gonna say? Oh, as far as the simplistic thing... I guess I just was like, I can respect that she's not trying to do too much in a poetic novel or verse novel, whatever it's called. But yeah, I still was left wanting more.

Zara: My thing was if you are going to write a book that can be written in a normal prose format then you might as well do it. Hold on, let me reword what I'm trying to say. If you are going to use this verse format, there has to be a reason you're using the verse. Like there was no purpose, I felt, for her to use the verse.

Camille: Yeah, I felt that too.

Emma: I don't know. I really liked it.

Julie: I didn't not like it.

Roux: I liked it too.

Julie: I obviously enjoyed reading it but...

Emma: Well, I just thought she did like this because, like, I thought that one of the reasons could be because she was a 12 year old and it's just like easier for like a 12 year old to write, and maybe it's not really as poetic, but I don't know, which it wasn't really poetic, it was just more of like free verse which is I guess poetry, but I don't really see the pages as poetic, I just see them as thoughts.

Camille: Yeah, I agree with that. Like more scattered thought processes...

Roux: I felt like it was written simplistically because the message to me, for me, was that Annie is living life, like she doesn't want to complicate things in her life, she doesn't want to do the running thing because it takes away from, like, the simple pleasures. So, that's why I thought she was writing it just like I see this poem [points to a page], like I don't know. It's just like short and sweet is how I think of it, so that was what I thought.

Camille: I did love Annie. I thought she was very sweet, and I liked her as a narrator.

Alice: I think I saw like a lot more to it than what you would see, I guess, just because, like, I don't know, a lot of it I saw as like a bigger metaphor for life, like more than like a 12 year old is trying to do, and so then like I saw the author's purpose in it, so like that was really cool. But, I mean, I don't think that a lot of kids would see that though. I think they would just see it as like... So, if I read this when I was in middle school, I probably would have gotten it and be like, cool. But I don't know, reading it now it was really... I don't know... I feel like, I just liked the simplistic things, but like how she, I dunno, just the way she words stuff is just really cool, but then I don't see it as the 12 year old anymore, writing it.

Roux: Yeah, I get what you mean, 'cause there are some really significant and thought provoking ideas in here, but they're not really expressed because it's from the eyes of a 12 year old... but I don't think that a 12 year old would think about that.

Camille: Yeah, and I think that ties back into what Roux said when we tie back to novels we read when we were younger, like we are now in our twenties, we're not gonna have the same perspective we had when we were twelve, and were like, "this is the best book".

Julie: I just wish I could read it as a 6th grader.

with her best friend and her grandfather, whose memory has been affected by Alzheimers.

Narrative Episode #2. Before the start of the excerpt (see Figure 3), Alice tells the group that she thought the book was boring and “droned on” without much of a plot. This opinion becomes a jumping off point for her PST peers to share stories and negotiate ways in which they connected or disconnected from Annie’s adolescent storyline and experience as portrayed by the author.

Within this narrative, dominant discourses about adolescence are contested, navigated, and challenged through their shared storytelling and their attempts to take the perspective of a middle school student. One common discourse around adolescents is the belief that early adolescents cannot handle difficult or more serious topics. In our society, many book banning campaigns and censorship occur due to this belief. Through collaborative dialogue, the group unpacks and negotiates this concept. Alice, for example, acknowledged that there are some poignant moments in the story, such as the scenes with the baby and the grandfather, and that she liked the extended metaphor that elevated the book’s message; however, she questions whether younger readers would get it. Emma at first also wonders this, but based on her own experiences with her grandfather’s Alzheimers, she and Camille later continue to push back against Alice and Zara who think that adolescents might not be able to handle it.

Additionally, we also see the group discuss another dominant belief about adolescents, which is that teens are not very articulate. We see the group navigate whether the language use, word choices, and poetic structure in the novel are realistic to

adolescents, thus critiquing the authenticity of Sharon Creech’s book. Emma thought, for example, that the simplicity of the writing, and the free verse, shows the simple thoughts of a 12-year-old. Roux thinks the choice matches the message of the book, about not overcomplicating things that happen to you. But Alice and Zara are not convinced, feeling that perhaps that is not how a middle school student would talk and think, intimating that it was too simplistic even for a 12-year-old.

“In the end, through their perspective-taking dialogue, we see how the group continues to push each other to think beyond their own experiences and immerse themselves in the inner monologues of a developmentally different age.”

In the end, through their perspective-taking dialogue, we see how the group continues to push each other to think beyond their own experiences and immerse themselves in the inner monologues of a developmentally different age. There is an acknowledgement, as Camille indicates, that they are “not gonna have the same

perspective we had when we were twelve.” Julie’s final statement on this topic shows the tension the group grapples with as they develop a sympathetic understanding. There is a value in these conversations and hearing other perspectives because they are not 6th graders anymore—they are 20-year-old adults.

Teaching Adolescents in the Future

Our final theme shows how PSTs use past and present experiences to “teacher cast” (Lewkowich, 2015), i.e., think about their future classrooms and adolescents they will teach once they are licensed. PSTs continually discussed the credibility of group member’s interpretations of adolescent traits in relation to the utility of certain teaching strategies and situations they may face. Their conversations suggested perpetual renegotiation of these

perspectives through reading and discussing these young adult texts.

To demonstrate this theme, we zoom in on the following book club discussion about *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* by Stephen Chbosky (1999), a young adult epistolary novel written in the form of letters to an unnamed recipient, chronicling Charlie's freshman year of high school as he grapples with depression, anxiety, and trauma, and begins to discover his own identity and sexuality.

Narrative Episode #3. In the following narrative episode (see Figure 4), five PSTs, Alice, Roux, Amanda, June, and Megan discuss the emotional intensity of the novel which many of them feel is very sad. The adolescent protagonist, Charlie, is discussed in relation to experiences they are encountering in their student teaching placements and may encounter when they are teachers.

The narrative below highlights several dominant discourses about adolescents. Similar to the previous narrative episode #2, this book club discussion

Figure 4
Narrative Episode #3

Alice: It's just so, like, eye-opening. I don't know. I think about when I read this, I started noticing, like, more kids in my MT's [mentor teacher] classroom that, I'm like, you really don't understand what's going on in people's lives. You really don't, and you see these kids that sit alone, or they don't really talk to people, and reading and just seeing how excited he got over the littlest things, and you're like I don't get that 'cause that wasn't my life. I always had friends, I was always very social, and it was just like [sigh], so different. I don't know. I really like it. It was sad, but I liked it.

Roux: Yeah, it was hard to read. There was a lot of crying.

Amanda: Oh my Lord. It was like every other page, Charlie's crying.

Alice: I wonder if there was a difference because there was one line where it says something about, like, not panicky crying, like...a different kind of crying, so I wonder if crying was like a relative term, like maybe he did actually cry, but maybe also it was not like, "ahhhh," like sobbing, maybe it was just kind of like a panicking thing. It was like every other page, and sometimes when you didn't expect it. Like sometimes I was like, oh this is sweet, or this is hard, and then he started crying. I'm like, What?! [laughter]

Amanda: I noticed that when I went back to my mentor teachers' classroom after I finished this book, like one of our kids was like, had a bad day before, I guess, but didn't tell anybody. She came in and sat in the front, and then my MT got onto her for not paying attention, and then when she turned her back she started just bawling, and I'm like something's going on with this chick. You know? Like, what is going on? So later she [the mentor teacher] took her out in the hall and found out there was something going on, um, but I mean it just goes to show that you never know what's going on, and even when Charlie doesn't tell us why he's crying, sometimes they just don't even know.

June: Sometimes he just does it.

Amanda: Yeah. So, he doesn't even know, I mean... Sometimes, I mean, he didn't know. He's like, I started bawling, I don't know why. I mean. I mean, that's just the way that it is sometimes, and we just don't see it. But it's something we need to think about with our future students. So, it's cool to see it in the book.

Megan: I think if I read this as a high schooler, though, I don't think it would be so, "oh my god I can't believe they're talking about this." I think I would be like, "this is awesome! This is like *The Breakfast Club*. They get me. You know?" But, I don't think I would see it as "oh my gosh, I can't believe they're talking about that." The only reason I see it that way is because I'm reading it and thinking, how could I possibly teach this? I don't know. It's different when you have a wider perspective as an adult than when you do as a teenager. 'Cause I think that they would totally love this book and wouldn't think about it. But then again, I don't know what the parents would think.

June: So when I was at [my student teaching placement] school, so in the transitions of classes changing, I was trying to hurry up and finish and get to a stopping point, and so many students came up to me and were like "that's my favorite book ever!" It was...

Alice & June (in unison): So Cool!

June: So, I don't know... I think that's more important, ya know?

unpacks whether adolescents can handle difficult topics. From this discussion we see Megan, again, admit to having a hard time putting herself in the shoes of an adolescent, although she tries to “read this as a high schooler.” Because she is thinking “as an adult,” she questions whether this is an appropriate text to teach and seems to care more about parents’ opinions. June, however, tells a story from her student teaching placement where students have positively gushed about *Perks of Being a Wallflower*. She punctuates the point saying it is “more important” to value adolescents’ perspectives than adult’s and parent’s perspectives.

An additional discourse discussed is the notion that adolescents are moody and overly emotional, and that adolescence is a time of “storm and stress” (Hall, 1905). In some ways, the group accepts this dominant discourse noting that Charlie cries a lot, and sometimes for no apparent reason. However, they also share several stories to help make sense of and nuance Charlie’s adolescent experience. Alice, for example, reflects on how reading the book has opened her eyes to the struggles that some kids face in her student teaching placement. She felt that it can be difficult to understand adolescent experiences different from her own, but through reading and discussing the book she was better equipped in her sympathetic understanding.

Amanda also echoes Alice’s sentiments with her own story about a student who was having a bad day and started crying in class. Amanda recognized similarities between the student and what Charlie was experiencing in the book; for example, sometimes students are going through things that they do not share with others, and it is important to react kindly, unlike her mentor teacher. In thinking about this current experience, she discusses its connection to her future interactions with students, noting this is “something we need to think about with our future students.”

Overall, through discussion of the characters in the YA novel, Amanda was moved to act and to have a sympathetic understanding of her student, in her role as a student teacher. We see that the group comes to understand that, like Charlie in *Perks*, there are a lot of adolescents that need people, and teachers specifically, to really see them. Despite elements of sympathetic understanding, Megan still somewhat holds on to some dominant discourses (e.g., believing adults have a wider perspective), but she was able to see why the book is relevant and worth reading for adolescents because of the group conversation and stories her group members shared.

Discussion

Taken altogether, the data presented here provides additional evidence that PSTs’ participation in the social and transactional dynamics of book clubs using literature with adolescent-relevant topics can and do elicit transformative events. We conducted our analysis in two phases: 1) thematic content analysis and 2) critical narrative analysis. Our three findings are consistent with past research in that PSTs’ conversations revealed 1) self-reflections about their adolescent past (Durand, 2015); 2) perspective-taking in understanding adolescents today (Wender, 2015); and 3) imaginative rehearsals of teaching adolescents in the future (Gallagher, 2009).

Within each of the themes from phase one, we selected representative excerpts to share what stories were being told, what discursive moves were happening, and how discourses of adolescents were co-constructed and/or problematized. From our analysis of PSTs’ discursive constructions, we recognized a general picture of hopeful horizons. As PSTs discussed adolescents in relation to the books and life, they showed an awareness of dominant discourses surrounding adolescents. The results of this study contrast with the work of Sulzer and Their (2016) wherein the PSTs in their study evaluated the

value of a YAL text for classroom use, and results revealed the general assumption of White heteronormativity as constitutive of a normal adolescent. Our data suggests that the book club context of dialogic exchange facilitated PSTs' reimagining of exclusionary stereotypes. Specifically, the creation of counter-narratives through self-reflection and generative shared-awareness fostered sympathetic knowledge.

Furthermore, we approached this work with a critical youth studies framework. That is, we recognize popular culture's harmful and oppressive stereotypes of youth and seek to dismantle such perspectives by positioning youth as capable and meaningful contributors to society. When we looked critically at how PSTs' narratives operated and their effects in dialogue, we found that the PSTs adopted the paradigmatic stance of critical youth scholarship themselves and were able to come to sympathetic understandings of adolescence. The dominant discourses surrounding youth that were made apparent either within the text or through conversation included: generalizations about adolescence (i.e., Narrative 1: Teens hide things from parents/Narrative 3: Adolescence is full of storm and stress), adolescent characteristics (i.e., Narrative 1: Teens are druggies/ Narrative 2: Adolescents cannot handle difficult or mature topics/ Narrative 3: Adolescents are moody and emotional), and adolescent abilities (i.e., Narrative 2: Adolescents are not articulate/ Narrative 3: Adolescents cannot process difficult texts).

Seeking to understand how PSTs' dialogic conversations within YAL book clubs facilitate

sympathetic understandings for adolescents, we saw how the PSTs resisted canonical youth narratives and denied the adoption of ascriptive interpretations of youth. Like the PSTs in Sulzer and Thein (2016), the PSTs in this study also viewed the "self as a former adolescent," but our data reveals that within the book club context, they moved beyond anticipating students' reading abilities. When June (Narrative 1) connected to her adolescent past and shared that she was a former drug user, her group posited their own

“Sympathetic understanding happens in this ideological process through dialogue, which requires people to bring their own meanings to the discussion as they navigate, question, resist, and (re)negotiate their understandings.”

sheltered experiences as a limitation to their understanding of adolescent behaviors. Despite their initial difficulty with relating to the drug-addicted character's behavior, June's group members viewed the adolescent character's experience through June's, and developed sympathetic understanding: "Why would she [character] do that [drugs]?" She didn't know!!" This example is an illustration of how, "storytelling is a site for

problem solving. Every day, many problem-solving narratives happen and delineate roles, relationships, values, and worldviews" (Ochs et al., 1996, p. 95). We see the group working towards what Bakhtin (1981) calls "ideological becoming," or "the process of selectively assimilating the words of others" into one's own (p. 341). Sympathetic understanding happens in this ideological process through dialogue, which requires people to bring their own meanings to the discussion as they navigate, question, resist, and (re)negotiate their understandings.

Moreover, PSTs grappled with the tension between their personal experiences and their true ability to immerse themselves in the inner monologues of a developmentally different stage. In *Narrative 2*, after her group-members wrestled with how well the narrator captures the mentality of a 12-year-old and

pushed one another to think outside of their own experience, Julie admits an inability to fully realize the experience of adolescents today. By recognizing the current adolescent experience as distinct from her own, Julie reduces her authority over and privileges the voice of youth; this is the intention of critical youth scholarship.

We believe that “narratives are meaning-making sites, and by engaging in collective narratives, we made sense of our previous experiences. Stories or narratives, after all, account for past and present, and anticipate future experiences” (Ochs & Capps, 2001). Like Rosenblatt (2005) emphasized, in the transaction with texts, the reader brings with them “memories of past events, present needs and preoccupations, a particular mood of the moment” (p. 30). As such, it was interesting to see how PSTs’ dialogic conversations within YAL book clubs facilitated considerations for future teaching of adolescents even as they looked backward.

Our data revealed that rather than articulating a vision of adolescent needs (a deficit stance) and reducing the stories to clear messages that match these hypothetical needs (Sulzer & Thein, 2016), the PSTs in this study pushed back on dominant discourses by articulating how adolescents are open-minded, and capable of emotionally connecting with texts. Our data aligns with previous research in that our findings suggest PSTs engaged in “teacher-casting” (Lewkowich, 2015). In *Narrative 3*, Alice expresses her anxieties about the distance between herself and another: “You really don’t understand what’s going on in people’s lives. You really don’t.” In the same conversation, Amanda shared how her understanding of the main-character’s experience prompted her to engage in the process of “critical witnessing” (López, 2009) as she took supportive action with a student experiencing trauma during her student teaching. Our data has illustrated how the PSTs’ perceived ignorance and changing perspectives

led to their sympathetic knowledge of teens’ need for teachers to see them as people, not simply subjects or objects that lack complexity.

Conclusion

Although Jane Addams’ work and philosophies are over 100 years old, we believe that her social ethics of sympathetic knowledge still hold value for thinking about democratic, humanizing pedagogies in preservice teacher education especially as it relates to disrupting problematic and simplistic ideas about adolescents/ce. The present study not only reveals ways that PSTs think about teaching their future students, but also how such generative and shared literacy practices facilitate an interrogation of the self. Rather than leading to possible deficit (and exclusionary) orientations toward adolescents, reading and discussing YAL in book clubs fostered sympathetic knowledge through shared awareness.

Like writer Eduardo Galeano (1983), we do not “claim that literature on its own is going to change reality,” but we do believe it would be foolish to “deny that it can aid in making this change” (p. 177) for PSTs. Our data shows that there is still work to be done to help PSTs elicit varying frequencies and types of sympathetic understandings of their future students. Their ways of thinking about adolescents differed amongst one another, but also shifted through their discussions of characters’ experience. Thus, one implication is that teacher preparation programs need to find more opportunities for PSTs to navigate and negotiate their current and shifting identities with others through collaborative book club discussions. One YA literature course is not enough. Additionally, future studies may also explore the effects of professors’ involvement in YAL book club contexts (authoritative interruptions, text selection, etc.), as we did not focus on that for this study.

We believe the results of this study illustrate the need for storytelling to bring adults back to their adolescent selves, as Shayna in the opening quote noted, to help facilitate sympathetic understanding of underrepresented youth populations like in Coleman-King and Groenke's (2015) work, or more generally about adolescents as a whole. It is through YAL book clubs' relational and social dynamics that

our PSTs were able to come to sympathetic understandings that framed themselves alongside and in fellowship with their future students. As Addams (1902/2002) stated, "without this fellowship, we may never know how great the divergence between ourselves and others may become, nor how cruel the misunderstandings" (p. 155).

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