Same words different ideas: Why educators and students need to make explicit implicit notions of civic engagement

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Abstract:

At the same time when civic engagement is gaining increased recognition as a key learning competency within many colleges and universities, numerous studies suggest declines in student involvement in communities and political affairs. These differences may be due, in part, to different understandings among students and scholars with regard to the goals and activities that comprise civic engagement. This review of pedagogical design uses two case studies to examine the importance of making implicit notions of civic engagement explicit in classroom discussions. The authors build upon Battistoni's finding that distinct conceptual frameworks of civic engagement exist across academic disciplines and offer recommendations on how to apply Battistoni's conceptual models to clarify pedagogical designs and communication with students.

Article:

INTRODUCTION

More than 350 colleges and universities across the United States are recognized by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching as Community Engagement Institutions. This elective classification recognizes campuses that partner and collaborate with local, regional, state and national communities for the mutual beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity (Carnegie 2015). The application process for the recognition is time-consuming and requires broad participation and support from throughout the faculty and administrative ranks. Although the Carnegie Foundation has established a single definition of community engagement, the process of applying for recognition can reveal significant differences in how faculty, staff, students and even community partners conceptualize community, or what some synonymously call, civic engagement.

As faculty and administrators, we came to understand that although we both were highly engaged in promoting community and civic work, each of us approached and lived out civic engagement very differently. Knowing that our institution was striving to earn the elective classification and that it was difficult for the institution to quantify and qualify the practices, measures and outcomes that defined our collective engagement, we began to have deeper scholarly conversations about the topic. As our conversations evolved, we realized that if *we* were struggling on how to define and measure civic engagement, it was highly likely that others were equally challenged.

Civic engagement and similar terms, such as 'community engagement', 'democratic engagement', 'political participation', 'public scholarship' and 'social responsibility' are widely and commonly used as synonyms. As such, they are often vaguely defined. Our investigation in civic engagement teaching and learning literature, as well as our own subsequent investigations through examination of students in our classes, suggests that faculty and students, in fact, frequently do not share a common understanding of civic engagement. For example, in Musil's (2009) study of rising high school and college seniors, she asked the students in focus groups how they defined civic engagement. She found that while in her mind civic engagement included any engagement with 'democratic institutions' such as public debate, deliberations and voting, most of the students did not have a personal working definition of civic engagement.

Further supporting the idea that conceptions of civic engagement may be fundamentally different among individuals, and faculty and students in particular, Cohen (2008) recounts a story when he taught undergraduates about 'public scholarship'. It was not until the course was nearly completed that he realized that several of the students had conflated the term 'public' with 'poor'. While he meant to reference society, as in 'the public', generally, which included the students themselves, their friends and their families, some students imagined he was speaking about serving those in poverty. The idea that faculty and students are talking past each other has been highlighted by students, and not by faculty alone. For example, the student authors of the *Wingspread Statement on Student Civic Engagement* argue for broader and more contemporary views of civic engagement:

> The manner in which we engage in our democracy goes beyond, well beyond, the traditional measurements that statisticians like to measure us by, most notably voting. Indeed, student civic education has multiple manifestations including: personal reflection/inner development, thinking, reading, silent protest, dialogue and relationship building, sharing knowledge, project management and formal organization that brings people together. Cultural and spiritual forms of expression are included here, as are other forms of expression through the arts such as guerrilla theater, music, coffee houses, poetry and alternative newspapers.
>
> (Long 2002: 1)

Speaking on behalf of the 33 students from 27 campuses, who attended the meeting to discuss their views of civic engagement, the report states civic engagement could not be measured accurately or fully using traditional activities, such as public rallies and protests, letter writing campaigns or voting in elections. Instead, civic engagement can be deeply personal. It is 'defined less in terms of civic obligation than of the social responsibility of the individual' (Long 2002:

5). The report from the meeting proposes, 'How one treats others and how one lives her or his daily life is a civic act'. The students emphasized individual attitudes, actions and responsibility – 'the personal is linked to the political' (Long 2002: 5) – and thus de-emphasized conventional 'democratic institutions'.

The purpose of this article is to illustrate our finding that students and faculty often have different conceptions of civic engagement, and to make the case that making explicit implicit notions of civic engagement can improve instruction aimed at student civic learning and development. It can also help us as instructors to be more intentional and focused in planning course curricula and measures of student learning. Beyond simply identifying the presence of differences, this article describes a scholarship-informed approach to identifying different categories of conceptions.

FIVE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS OF CIVIC ENGAGEMENT IN THE SOCIAL SCIENCES

Richard Battistoni's Conceptual Frameworks for the Social Sciences (2002) suggests that academic disciplines hold diverse views of civic engagement. Diverse conceptions ultimately reveal differences about desired outcomes for civic learning. Battistoni's scholarship was instructive in our own efforts to better understand the differences among students and teachers with regard to how they conceptualize and operationalize the skills, knowledge and outcomes required for civic engagement. Although Battistoni identifies thirteen frameworks, reviewing those from the social sciences is sufficient to make the case that while educators and students may be using similar terms, they may each have different meanings. The disciplinary frameworks of civic engagement presented here include constitutional citizenship, communitarianism, participatory democracy, public work and social capital.

Constitutional citizenship is rooted in early American history and continues to be significant in the conceptualization and enactment of politics, law and policies. Central to constitutional citizenship are the inalienable rights of individuals and the role of the government in protecting individuals' rights and interests. A 'good citizen' is one who knows and upholds the laws and is active in maintaining and protecting individual interests through voting, lobbying and joining special interest groups (Chambers 2005; Noddings 1987). Constitutional citizenship is a primary tenet of individualism and a dominant value-orientation in the US culture. Supporters of this view of civic engagement believe that voluntary participation is not a necessary activity as long as individual rights are adequately protected (Battistoni 2002). This is a position supported by Theiss-Morse and Hibbing when they state 'it is in the political realm where important policy decisions are made that will have a fundamental effect on people, young and old' (2005: 237). As such, those who ascribe to this orientation favour policy formation over voluntary participation.

A tenet that underlies *communitarianism* is the 'belief that we suffer from an overemphasis on individual rights to the detriment of collective responsibilities' (Battistoni 2002: 14). This stands in contrast to constitutional citizenship, which promotes the image of the universal individual who has certain needs and rights. The communitarian seeks a harmonious union between the individual and the political community (Rawls 1999). Wood describes communitarians this way:

'Moving beyond a traditional state/individual dichotomy (characteristic of liberal forms of citizenship), communitarians advocated that communities could offer the social connectedness necessary for civil and social order' (2012: 18). Communitarians also value living in a defined community whose members feel a sense of responsibility and commitment to the wellbeing of their community. Thus, central to communitarian principles is the belief in shared values that form the foundation of effective communities.

Participatory democracy, as its name indicates, emphasizes active and engaged involvement in public debate and deliberation. As Battistoni (2002: 14) suggests, those who hold a participatory view of citizenship believe that 'democratic self-governance is not a spectator sport'. Boyte (2009: 15) similarly argues that civic politics is not a spectator sport, but rather that politics is concerned with 'question[s] of what to achieve, but also of how to achieve it'. Boyte agrees in stating that civic politics 'is concerned with questions of meaning, purpose, justice and even beauty' (2009: 15). Thus, those who espouse this orientation, and are pushed into the sidelines, will not be held back for long. As Coley et al. summarize participatory democracy: 'One of the most important acts of civic participation by adults is their willingness to vote and participate actively in political campaigns' (2012: 12).

Public work theory emphasizes the value of both paid and unpaid work roles, allowing for the co-production of public goods, which has at its base the individual as the change agent (Boyte 2008). As a result, the collective work of citizens generates artefacts, including public deliberation, that are valuable to society. Those who hold a public work view of civic engagement have a twofold emphasis on process and product. The process is decidedly public. That is, 'the public' consists of all individuals regardless of differing values, morals, experiences or opinions; each voice is significant in identifying and solving meaningful public problems. No less important than the process of ensuring the inclusion of diverse voices is the product, whether it is the enacting of laws, the changing of public perceptions or the building of physical structures. Following this process *and* product metaphor, Boyte and Fretz assert that students who engage in organizing activities can learn through the process that individuals from all walks of life 'can create trusting, public relationships with the right people' and can generate social change as the product of their work (2010: 77).

A central precept of *social capital* is the belief that individuals rely on associations with others to maximize their own well-being and that of society in general. Vorhaus defines the term as 'our access to institutional resources, but also in terms that extend to the levels of trust and related resources found in the social networks we are embedded in' (2014: 29). Having social capital is the ability to draw on the resources of others, whether those resources are goods, services, information or emotional support. In early American history, Alexis de Tocqueville (1966) observed and wrote about associations that prevented isolation and built goodwill and prosperity in a fledgling republic. More recently, Putnam (2000) chronicled the decrease of Americans' involvement in social organizations, using bowling leagues as an example. He argued for the importance of regaining social networks and social connectedness to resist Americans' lack of public trust and self-efficacy, which could result in a dearth of individual involvement in democratic governance. Social capital advances the view that the relationship with others is, itself, a resource through which information, goods and services are shared and distributed. According to Aslam et al., 'The central theme of social capital theory is [the] network of

relationships [that] support the people in performing social affairs' (2013: 26), hence social capitalists are more likely to engage in voluntary efforts as a way of realizing their goals. Although the nature of the relationships may differ in form and function, it is the collection of these varied resources that deepen a group's level of connectivity and, thus, social capital (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992).

PUTTING BATTISTONI'S FRAMEWORKS TO WORK: WHAT DID WE DO?

In light of how each of these conceptual frameworks is explained, it is readily apparent how one's orientation to civic engagement may influence their perception of what is or is not civic engagement. Therefore, faculty members' ability to make learning relevant for students – and find ways to connect theory-to-practice and practice-to-theory – across the disciplines is all the more challenging. Consequently, we should encourage our students to seek out courses throughout their collegiate experience that will help them encounter 'different disciplinary lenses and modes of knowing that will deepen their understanding of their location and responsibility to the larger world' (Musil 2003: 5). In light of our own experiences with our students, colleagues and the community, we decided to use Battistoni's Conceptual Frameworks for the Social Sciences with our students to see how their conversations would unfold and whether new insights from the students' perspectives could be obtained.

We chose Battistoni's frameworks over others because it went across the curriculum to explore various civic skills that could be incorporated into our courses. This feature has been heralded as a strength in his approach. Saltmarsh asserts that Battistoni's frameworks are 'perhaps the best resource available for framing a civic skills component for curricula in a variety of disciplines' (2005: 54). O'Connor agrees with Saltmarsh, stating that of the many service-learning information sources available, Battistoni's are 'among the most valuable' (2006: 54). More recently, Fishkin argued that we need to understand civic engagement beyond 'mere cognitive development' and states that Battistoni's frameworks provide clarity 'to understanding that citizenship is a perspective that needs to inform our teaching' (2011: 3). Despite looking for both praise and criticisms of Battistoni's work, we found only positive support for his conceptual model.

In light of the above, we decided we would enquire about students' perception of civic engagement as part of two courses related to civic engagement with very different aims drawing on distinct student groups. During the semester in which we did this, one of us was an assistant professor in the Political Science Department of a mid-sized regional university in the state of North Carolina, and the other was the assistant director for the Office of Leadership and Service-Learning at the same university. The faculty member taught 'Civic Engagement and Political Participation', a special topics class recommended for junior and senior political science students, while the student affairs professional taught 'Building Communities: Leadership, Service and Society', a course for first-year students as part of the university's First-Year Experience college course offerings.

'Civic Engagement and Political Participation' had the goal of teaching students about the role of public dialogue in democracy. The course focused on American public life, civic engagement and political participation. Questions surrounding who participates in politics and why do social

groups adopt particular political strategies were examined. The state of American civic engagement and the role of the non-profit sector in providing formal and informal methods of democratic engagement were other themes discussed.

Learning objectives for the course included understanding the major theories that have shaped American political life, analysing political and organizational context of civic engagement and political participation and conducting research on contemporary issues regarding civic participation and political inequality. To apply their learning, students also learned how to utilize various methods for fostering community dialogue, which aided them in improving their research, writing and public-speaking skills. These learning objectives were assessed individually, but also collectively with the students working collaboratively on a semester-long project to design and implement the 'Democracy in America' community-wide (town and gown) forum, developed by the National Issues Forum, to discuss the role of individuals in a democratic society. The National Issues Forum is a non-partisan, nationwide network of locally sponsored public forums for the consideration of public policy issues (2015).

'Building Communities: Leadership, Service and Society' required students to engage in direct service. Students fulfilled the course requirements through a range of experiences, including assisting persons experiencing homelessness in searching for employment and completing job applications, participating in a child development programme with teenage mothers and spending time with individuals who were infected or affected by HIV/AIDS. The purpose of the course was to introduce students to actions they could take in building and sustaining communities as a form of civic engagement.

Both of us had the underlying goal in designing our courses so that students would be encouraged to look beyond the classroom and find ways to engage diverse forms of civic activities. We believe, with Zivi, in 'the potential of service-learning to encourage an active or experimental learning process that is reflective and community orientated' (1997: 50). We also incorporated reflection into our courses because, as Zivi writes, 'learning is furthered when students are encouraged to think about what they're doing at their service site in relation to academic work' (1997: 50). 'Civic Engagement and Political Participation' fulfilled this through classroom discussions on civic engagement exploring service-learning and its objectives. 'Building Communities' required students to participate in weekly classroom discussions of their service. Through this, we hoped to achieve the goal Al-Khasawneh and Hammad articulate for service-learning methodologies that provide 'students with the opportunity to create and implement systems in real-world, public service-oriented social contexts' (2013: 191).

Ultimately, we sought to examine how the students in our classes conceptualized civic engagement. Our belief was that if we could identify our own conceptions, as well as our students' conceptions of civic engagement, we would be better able to support the learning of students enrolled in our courses. To do this, we worked with each other to develop assignments wherein we could elicit students' conceptions of civic engagement, as defined further below. We reviewed students' journal entries, reflection papers, discussions, scenarios and role plays throughout the semester to identify themes based on Battistoni's five constructs (Saldana 2011).

For the purpose of this article, we are reporting on what we learned from the seventeen students enrolled in the political science course on 'Civic Engagement and Political Participation'. The course consisted of twelve female and five male students. Ten of the students were juniors and five were seniors. The racial/ethnic background of the students was ten white students, three black students, one Hispanic student and one Asian student. This study received approval from the Institutional Review Board and students signed consent forms to participate in this study voluntarily.

During our first class meeting, students were asked to answer the following question: 'How do you define civic engagement?' Then, after a series of journal entries and readings on the topic of civic engagement, Battistoni's frameworks were presented to the students. By this time their views of civic engagement, what it looks like and why it is important, had already been explored. However, by introducing Battistoni's frameworks, we wanted to see which one of the frameworks the students favoured or most identified with. This initial enquiry led to a series of discussions throughout the course to determine whether their perceptions of what it means to be civically engaged would change throughout the term. In subsequent classes, students reviewed, discussed and reflected on their initial views on civic engagement in written essays and class discussions based on the course readings and textbooks. The data collected included quizzes administered every two weeks, written essay assignments, students' observations, journal entries and reflective exercises, as well as class discussions throughout the semester.

With this information, we started to see a pattern in how students identified themselves and their approaches to civic engagement. In short, the most informative development was that for these students, there was a relationship between their approach to engagement and their academic discipline. Although seventeen students is not a sufficient number of people to generalize from, we believe that it provides valuable information to educators and students who are seeking to arrive at a shared understanding of civic engagement and how that may affect their actions. What we present below are the findings that surfaced from the 'Civic Engagement and Political Participation' course students.

Civic engagement in their own words

What follows are the most illustrative excerpts from students about how they positioned themselves along Battistoni's Conceptual Frameworks for the Social Sciences. On some occasions we have identified the declared major for the student. In reviewing the framework and identifying the major of the student, it appears that the academic orientation one is coming from may be an influencer in one's orientation towards civic engagement. Or, students may seek out majors that support their own implicit, if not explicit, conceptions of civic engagement. Either way, our experience suggests that Battistoni's conceptual framework held true on our campus across various social science disciplines.

Constitutional citizenship

Realizing that this was a course within the political science department, several students commented on how constitutional citizenship was a 'given' when it comes to civic engagement. In short, everyone must 'uphold the law'. One business student stated that 'if we fail to uphold

the law, then chaos would ensue, therefore civic engagement at its foundation must include obeying the law'. From this very general premise, another student expressed that it was more than simply obeying the law, but that one must vote people into power so that the laws reflects one's wishes. In light of these comments, another more nuanced view of constitutional citizenship emerges, as written by another student:

> At the most basic level, civic engagement could be identified by as little as voting. By voting, you are electing the officials in whom you choose to run your community, state, or country. The next level of civic engagement goes to community work, such as volunteering and participating in community events. The highest level of civic engagement in American society is participating in politics.

This political science major articulates the view that issues of governance are the root of civic participation and that *both* law creation and law abiding are important.

Another student said he believed in constitutional citizenship and related this to his plan to become an attorney. He believed that protecting the legal rights of others is essential to a functioning democracy. Even though he was living in a residential living – and learning – community, which was expressly intended for students who had a passion for service through volunteerism, in his mind, a career in law would be his primary contribution as a civically engaged person. Throughout the term, this student in particular struggled with valuing alternative forms of civic engagement because of his already preconditioned view of constitutional citizenship. At the conclusion of the term, he stated that 'although I can understand that people may have different views about civic engagement, I have always been taught that voting and abiding by the law, is our duty as Americans. If we don't do this then we are un-American'. Hence, as we learned through his papers, this student's view of civic participation had been inculcated in him at an early age and was promoted in his family. Thus, years of instruction and even his choice of major and profession, all were in alignment with his understanding of civic engagement. Admittedly, this student out of the class of seventeen students was the least wavering in his position throughout the term. Moreover, as the semester continued his position on constitutional citizenship only solidified.

Communitarianism

When developing this course, we suspected that because it was designated as one of the university's service-learning disciplinary special topics courses it would attract these types of students. We were right. This view of engagement was evident from the beginning to the end of the term among the students, even if it was not the primary framework from which they operated from. These students regularly commented that 'we need to care for others', 'we need to understand our shared values' and 'we need to serve one another'. The belief was that no matter what the law says, the community is who decides how the law is implemented. A sociology student stated, 'we are the ones who interpret the law and carry it out, so if we do not understand a community's shared values how can we effectively carry the law out?' Consequently, 'understanding the community' was vital to students, who share this orientation, prior to engaging in civic action. A social work major made the following comments:

As part of a community [no matter the community] we have some form of obligation to that community. It is not just enough to know about your community and watch others contribute, but we as individuals must get involved as well. Once we take that step to become involved and associate ourselves with others that is when we have reached a point of civic engagement.

Those who agreed with this idea believed that doing community service not only benefits them and their own interests, but the community as a whole. A political science major in reflecting about this approach stated that by being engaged in community service, through service-learning courses like this one

[…] it made what I am learning more relevant to me and my community. It helps me feel as though I am part of a larger community, beyond the university and that when I graduate I can plug into to various organizations to help my community.

Thus, for students who are nearing the completion of their undergraduate studies, the fact that several of the students were seeking to orient themselves towards the greater good and not simply their own personal interests also reflects how those who espouse this view conceive of civic engagement.

Participatory democracy

Students in the class found the concept of participatory democracy to be a blend of constitutional citizenship and communitarianism. When students did not see the two frameworks in isolation, they often defaulted to this perspective because it 'made sense to them' due to their primary and secondary schooling about US government. Students would say things like 'in civics class our teachers told us the US is a republic', 'the US government is a democracy' and 'we elect delegates to represent our needs and wants'. But they would also make the following statements: 'But voting for our representatives is not enough, we need to hold them accountable, we need to see how their votes impact our lives' and 'we need to do our part in the community so that those in power can do their part to lead us effectively'. A sociology student made the point that 'if we are a government for the people and by the people, then that must mean that *we the people* must participate in how we decide to govern ourselves' (original emphasis).

As the term continued students' understandings of both participatory democracy and their own views evolved. The following statement from an education major exemplifies the growing realization of how civic engagement and democratic participation are interdependent:

Civic engagement can occur with non-political circumstances as a way to boost community engagement. Moreover, civic engagement helps impact political participation as more people work to get their community involved with the political process. The more education people have about that process, the more engaged they will become.

The student's statement illustrates how those who maintain a participatory democracy framework believe it is not enough to do community service or to vote in elections. Instead, individuals must take measures to be aware, to construct well-developed and reasoned positions,

and to influence decisions made on their behalf. As a result, those who embrace this view are keen on developing and evaluating policy as a way of exercising their influence over society.

Public work

Students who were interested in public policy, advocacy and grass roots organizing gravitated towards this framework. They understood the concept of the public being the entire community and that it takes work to get people to come together. A social work major stated, 'I want to be a lobbyist, I prefer that over being a politician. A lobbyist works on behalf of specific communities to advance their interests, whereas a politician has to be responsive to all constituents' needs'. Later on in the term, this same student realized that public work, both paid and unpaid, also includes the work lobbyists, and their communities of interest engage in, to influence politicians' views:

> Maybe I was naïve to think that the briefs, memos and talking points lobbyists' use to communicate their stakeholders' position was not part of public work. But upon reflection, learning that lobbyists can be contracted to represent many different communities and sometimes those who have opposing positions, I can better appreciate how their work may be just as challenging, if not more so, than politicians.

A political science student identified how he had grown to appreciate grass roots organizing, 'I had never really understood what grass-roots organizing was until this class and learning about Saul Alinsky's work made me realize that all of that organizing work must lead to a product that will benefit the public'. Fund (2012: 18) describes Alinksy as the 'father of the community-organizing model' who utilized conflict and 'ruthless political realism' to make change. Another student stated that

> The way we learn about grass-roots organizing is very romanticized; but when you *really* see how hard it is to bring different people together to address a social issue and find ways to fix it, you can appreciate the rights you *do* have (original emphasis)!

According to one history major, 'Civic engagement is essentially another term for "problem-solving"'. The student further stated,

> When a civic problem arises, certain individuals feel a calling to resolve this problem, often with different solutions in mind. These individuals then drum up support for their sides and take their concerns to the involved community, then attempt to resolve both the problem and their differences through peaceful, civic means.

This student suggests that the role of the individual is to follow prescribed processes for raising public awareness and support to influence changes on policies, programmes and services. Because there is a growing movement on college campuses promoting a public work tradition, some students are finding that this orientation has enabled them 'to find participatory, inclusive, open, creative and deliberative ways of addressing public problems' (Longo and Meyer 2006: 10). As a result, those who promote a public work orientation may be more supportive of policy formation efforts as a means through which to co-create knowledge and solve problems for their

communities. Mathews advanced a similar argument when he described the public work orientation as 'political that is not called politics' (1993: 3).

Social capital

Some students in the class suggested that they could fulfil their obligation to society by joining associations, social networking and learning about the importance of social connectedness. An undergraduate communication studies major stated the following:

> Over the past twenty-five years, as a public, we have become less involved with community organizations, elections and even our families. This decrease in social capital, or the networks of reciprocity that we create, can have a bad effect on public policy.

As the students got closer to the day of the community forum, they began to recognize how their *own* social capital had increased throughout the term.

> I was very scared and overwhelmed at the beginning of the term when you told us we were going to do this community forum. Besides club work on campus I had not done anything that was really for or with the community.

Another student during this same time period stated, 'I did not think that we could pull this off. We had to learn the issues, build trust among us [as students] and identify existing networks on campus and in the larger community to plan, fund-raise and promote this event'. After the 'Democracy in America' forum, several students wrote about their experience. Overwhelmingly, the students made comments such as the following: 'a personal sense of accomplishment that I had not experienced before', 'increased skills that I can use beyond graduation' and 'greater understanding of the community and my role in it to help people get connected to one another'.

A communication major after the event, when we took our group photo for the media, exclaimed with glee: 'We did it! I'm exhausted, but can't wait until we do this again'. Others laughed and responded in agreement. When we debriefed about the event, the students reviewed the notes they took during the forum and reviewed their reflections and overwhelmingly stated that they 'felt more connected to the local community', 'the college bubble burst and I can now see the needs of the local residents' and 'I want to be a bridge between the university and the community I live in and become more involved off campus'. Statements like these demonstrate that the students not only understood the social capital within themselves, but also within the community and how working in concert with one another deepened existing connections, but also created new ones.

TOWARDS A CIVICALLY ENGAGED CLASSROOM

In our experience when there was discussion regarding what makes a civically engaged person, our students struggled to come up with words, as if developing their own thoughts about the idea for the very first time. Once we began deconstructing the five social science frameworks of civic engagement, it became clear that students' ideas about what civic engagement meant to them

varied widely. This was similar to Cohen's (2008) experience, when his students looked blankly at him after engaging in similar conversations.

But what was even more insightful was how the students' views were quite distinct from our own, as educators. For example, the faculty member wanted students enrolled in her course to view themselves as civil servants within their future professions. Rather than experts with answers, she wanted students to leave her course having a strong sense of collaborative problem-solving and public dialogue. Students had hands-on experiences to engage as public workers by planning, implementing and evaluating a public forum for the community entitled 'Democracy in America'. This made them, as the Center for Democracy and Citizenship articulated in *Reinventing Citizenship* (1995: 1), 'serious actors with insight and capacity to bring problem-solving in public settings'. While many of the students enrolled in the course shared similar public work values, others did not.

The use of Battistoni's (2002) frameworks as a teaching tool in our classes helped to facilitate intentional conversations about the various conceptions of civic engagement and how that might affect one's response to various civic activities. Through written assignments and discussions based on the readings, while keeping the frameworks in mind, students became aware that individuals tend to hold very different implicit, yet specific, notions about what it means to be civically engaged. They explored the important implications of how alignment with particular frameworks can affect one's affinity or dislike towards particular activities, types of skills, knowledge and attitudes others hold towards civic engagement. Consequently, we agree with Battistoni that various pedagogical orientations are likely to facilitate specific civic engagement outcomes among students.

In light of what we were discovering in the classroom, we proposed to conduct a workshop at a state-wide conference sponsored by Campus Compact, the same organization that convened the 33 college students in 2001 to discuss their views about civic engagement. We wanted to engage in a dialogue with other faculty about their experiences in teaching and learning about civic engagement to see whether their experiences were similar or different from our own. Just as we found Battistoni's framework useful in advancing conversations with our students, we found the same to be true among the conference participants. The faculty attending our session engaged in a lively discussion regarding how their respective academic disciplines approach the instruction of civic engagement and how this varied on the basis of disciplinary-based civic perspectives.

As a result, we came to believe the conceptual framework may also be useful for guiding faculty discussions about student learning outcomes. For example, the framework was introduced to a group of 25 faculty members who had convened for a day-long workshop to discuss the incorporation of civic engagement into general education learning outcomes. Given a university's commitment to service, we wondered how 'engagement' was operationalized via the students learning outcomes created by the faculty. Similar to the classroom exercises, we asked the faculty to consider which of the frameworks most closely aligned with their views of civic engagement, particularly with what it meant with regard to university graduates. Faculty members' choices were recorded on a flip chart at the front of the room and the diversity of responses was incredible. All of the options were represented, though some, such as communitarianism and public work, had more tallies than others, such as constitutional

democracy. Asking faculty to consider their underlying values, to make them explicit and to then consider the implications of the different orientations among the faculty, helped to raise awareness about how faculty members may be unaware of the disciplinary similarities and differences they may be perpetuating throughout the academy. Values that these actions may influence how they shape, instruct and train students to become civically engaged. On the surface, community engagement, the term that was used by the conveners of the meeting, seemed fairly straightforward. However, after spending several hours together investigating the various conceptions and their implications, as guided by Battistoni's frameworks, later conversations about students learning outcomes for community became more precise.

IMPLICATIONS FOR CIVIC ENGAGEMENT EDUCATION

Civic engagement education has implications that reach far beyond academia and into the community. Cross-sector partnerships (e.g., non-profit, for-profit and public sectors) with faculty are needed to enhance course curricula in such a way that it expands students' educational opportunities and prepares them for the workforce (Morey 2001). Curricular and co-curricular experiences help individuals develop and practise democratic competencies that facilitate public engagement beyond the college experience. Zlotkowski asserts that 'by developing curricular projects linked to community needs, faculty can further their students' technical skills while helping them simultaneously develop greater interpersonal, intercultural and ethical sensitivity' (1996: 5). Students and faculty who understand that they are a part of the larger social system behave in ways that benefit themselves and their communities.

Our premise for this article was to raise the issue of clarifying what is meant by 'civic engagement', to introduce varying conceptualizations of the term and to offer a useful framework that can serve as a practical tool for helping educators and students better understand and explore multiple paths towards active democratic civic engagement. According to Cohen, students who are enrolled in courses that intend to teach students how to become civically engaged 'require nuanced teaching far beyond the casual engagement of emotional journal reflection, supported by carefully drawn readings and explicit scholarship, to teach the class that in a democracy, "We the People" are the public' – and not just the poor (2008: 165). If one intends to make a significant difference in the lives of others, one must be clear in how to go about it.

According to Battistoni's Conceptual Frameworks for the Social Sciences, students, faculty, community members and academic disciplines may each have their own orientation and preferences on how one should be engaged. Guided reflection for critical analysis has the potential to assist students and faculty in discussing real concerns focused on democracy and engagement. Intentional reflection can provide a deeper level of understanding of the frameworks and how students represent their own views of civic engagement, both within their own discipline and possibly others. Each framework has its own virtues and proponents and no one approach to civic engagement will capture the full breadth and depth of what a civically engaged, educated citizenry can do for the advancement of democracy. Thus, faculty should be proactive in understanding how students conceptualize civic engagement at the beginning of their courses and foster opportunities for students to expand their existing knowledge and application of those concepts in relation to academic course content, while being aware of

perpetuating disciplinary boundaries that may constrain the development of the concept and ultimately the students' thinking.

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