Creating Significant Learning Experiences through Civic Engagement: Practical Strategies for Community-Engaged Pedagogy

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This article examines two case studies that describe different ways of working with community partners to create civic engagement experiences in undergraduate education. Analysis of the case studies yields guidance about practical decisions involved in planning, designing, and executing pedagogy that uses engagement to generate what Fink calls "significant learning experiences." Emphasis is placed on several key considerations of goals, process, and outcomes for designing courses with community partnerships. The article also highlights a rationale for sponsoring community-engaged pedagogy and identifies the types of resources such work requires to be effective.

Most institutions of higher education espouse civic learning goals within their overall mission. Many scholars project that dynamic relationships with communities outside of the institution are on the rise. For example, the Talloires Network, a global coalition on this topic, continues to grow in institutional membership, evidencing increasing commitment by universities around the world to community engagement (Watson, et al., 2011). In recent decades, this movement has emphasized civic engagement as a permanent part of the curriculum (Austin, 2002). Central to this goal, then, is the importance of supporting college faculty members' participation in civic engagement endeavors (Austin, 2002; Boyte, 2004; O'Meara, 2011; O'Meara & Jaeger, 2008). While multiple modes of support are identified in the literature – including campus culture, workload, and reward systems – the need to support via faculty preparation and implementation of civic engagement within course designs is perhaps both the simplest and most crucial. For college faculty who have little experience with or background in forming community partnerships and supporting student engagement with these partners, the prospect of designing and managing a course with a successful field component can be daunting (O'Meara & Jaeger, 2008). In this article, we describe decisions, dispositions, and strategies we hope are instructive to faculty who seek insight about or examples of how to incorporate civic engagement into college courses.

Civic engagement within courses can happen in many ways. In this article, we describe our experiences in two courses with significant civic engagement components that employ different types of community partnership. By "community partner," we refer to off-campus communities of interest, such as a non-profit organization or school, with which we connect college courses to achieve a mutually defined set of objectives. One type

involves students working as a group with a single partner, and the other type involves students working individually in partnership with different organizations. A number of distinctions exist between the two models worth noting. Moreover, we aim to highlight the similarities in goals, process, and outcomes that relate them as pedagogy that promotes civic engagement. Because educators can integrate civic engagement into a course in myriad ways, we do not aim to provide a step-by-step guide to the decisions one must make to foster significant learning. Indeed, the contexts in which undergraduate educators operate are too numerous and organic to account for in one article. Rather, our aim in discussing the cases is to generalize a set of considerations in order to support educators in their particular efforts to work with community partners to generate significant learning experiences.

Defining Civic Engagement in Higher Education Pedagogy

Despite its expansive presence in both institutional missions and scholarly literature, the concept of civic engagement in higher education is not one with a singularly clear definition (Jacoby, 2009; Saltmarsh, 2005). The central tenets, however, are clear: civic engagement involves "social action for a public purpose in a local community" (Langseth & Plater, 2004, p. 10). For the purposes of faculty aiming to implement such goals into their teaching, it may be most useful to identify the ways in which civic engagement is similar to yet distinct from service-learning as an instructional approach. Both focus on grounding course content in experiential settings, especially communities. Both require that students "learn and develop through active participation in thoughtfully organized service experiences that meet actual community need" (Campus Compact, 2000). Both rely on intentional, critical reflection activities to generate student learning. Both hinge on reciprocity of constituents, working with and not for.

Civic engagement breaks away, though, as it deliberately invokes social activism that may or may not be present in service-learning, by definition. At its core, civic engagement aims to "bring about social change [which] transcends the traditional apolitical approaches of service-learning" (Welch, 2009, p. 176). As a means to this end, developing students' sense of personal value within the context of the experiential learning is a critical accomplishment. In other words, while service-learning requires application of course content into the field, "knowledge and skills are acknowledged to be necessary but not sufficient [in civic engagement]. Values, motivation, and commitment are also required" (Jacoby, 2009, p. 7). In practice, then, both service-learning and civic engagement courses include community-based experience and/or research, but only civic engagement pedagogy taps students' intentional reflection on values and position within the larger social landscape. Establishing a sense of personal identity in relation to the experiential context is also an important outcome of civic engagement. It is the duty of the faculty member, then, to design a learning experience that guides

the student in recognizing herself or himself within the larger context of the community and society.

The Current Drive for Civic Engagement in Higher Education

With historic roots in colonial higher education and university land grants, the civic mission of colleges has seen significant growth in the past 30 years. To wit, the American Association of Colleges and Universities recently issued a National Call to Action to resolve a "crisis" of civic engagement (The Crucible Moment, 2012). The authors of the report specifically charge higher education faculty with the duty of connecting students' civic experience with "rigorous study, engaged pedagogies, and opportunities to grapple with the pressing problems of the day" (p. 31).

Given this mandate for faculty to centralize fruitful civic partnerships in their teaching, today's college educators may find themselves unprepared to produce the "civic ethos" demanded. The necessary foundational tasks of creating and guiding civic partnerships are unfamiliar exercises to many faculty members who are anxious to participate in more civically engaged pedagogy but without the preparation and/or support to do so. In particular, this charge may be challenging for faculty in disciplines with little to no established work in civic engagement; faculty with little to no personal experience with this form of pedagogy; and faculty in institutions that do not support such learning goals (O'Meara, 2009). One way of facing these challenges is to create pedagogical strategies that are informed by the lessons and insights of the movement within higher education that promotes active learning.

Significant Learning Experiences

Concurrent with the increased attention to civic engagement, the last two decades have seen a pedagogical movement within higher education in the United States that steers away from a content-centered education paradigm toward one that is learner-centered (Bain, 2004). In practice, this has meant that educators have looked for alternatives to the lecture-discussion model of learning, which has been the dominant model for much of the 20th century. Educators have instead gravitated toward a set of approaches recognized as "active learning" strategies. Bonwell and Eison (1991) describe active learning as "anything that involves students in doing things and thinking about the things that they are doing" (p. 2). Indeed, active learning refers to a family of pedagogical approaches that emphasizes and enrolls students in experiential and/or reflective learning that align well with Dewey's (1916) belief that learning must be grounded in real-world experience and practice. Recent advances in the scholarship of teaching and learning also provides empirical support for the efficacy of active learning approaches (e.g., McGowan & Graham, 2009; Michael, 2006; Prince, 2004; Smith et al., 2005;

Taylor, 2009; Timpe et al., 2006). This body of scholarship has produced new theories of learning that privilege the use of experiential and reflective learning (e.g., Fink, 2003; Weimar, 2013; Wurdinger & Carlson, 2010). We now turn to one such theory elaborated in Fink's (2003) *Creating Significant Learning Experiences.*

For Fink, significant learning results from experiences in which learners are engaged and invested in their learning, and which produce lasting changes in the learner. Thus, a significant learning experience entails both a process of learning and an outcome. In the context of higher education, courses that promote significant learning will have students engaged and focused on learning and will result in changes that continue for the student well after the class is over. Moreover, Fink (2003) emphasizes that in a significant learning experience, what a student learns "has a high potential for being of value in their lives [after college], by enhancing their individual lives, preparing them to participate in multiple communities, or preparing them for the world of work" (p. 7). Active learning strategies play an essential role in fostering significant learning experiences. Fink builds on Bonwell and Eison's (1991) definition of active learning as doing things and thinking about the things one is doing. Fink (2003) theorizes that active learning involves experiences which result from participation in doing something and/or observing other's participation, and reflection on "what one is learning and how one is learning" (p. 104). Fink places considerable emphasis on the importance of reflection for helping students understand the personal, societal, and academic significance of their experiences based on the premise that reflection helps learners derive meaning from their experiences. Indeed, reflection, in Fink's theory, is essential for significant learning because it prompts students to invest in the process of learning and create lasting interpretations of what the experiences mean. Active learning strategies that combine experiences and purposive reflection are necessary to create significant learning experiences, but these alone are not sufficient.

For Fink, learning entails change, and significant learning results in lasting change. In order for experiential and reflective learning to culminate in lasting change in a person, faculty need to promote several, if not all, of the following types of learning:

1. Foundational knowledge: understanding and remembering information and ideas;
2. Application: engaging in intellectual, physical, or social action and learning skills necessary to engage in such action;
3. Integration: seeing and understanding connections between ideas or people;
4. Human dimension: enhancing one's understanding of self and others;
5. Caring: developing new or deepening existing feelings, interests, or values;

6. Learning how to learn: improving one's ability to learn independently or participate in particular modes of inquiry.

These six types of learning are interactive – accomplishing one type of learning supports the potential for accomplishing other types. Thus, in order for experiences to contribute to significant learning, educators need to intentionally craft activities that engage students in these six types of learning.

The similarities in the process of creating significant learning and civic engagement course experiences are striking. Both involve the movement from secure foundational knowledge to adept application, from content shallowness to interpersonal and intrapersonal depth, and from simple understanding about a topic to a more complex meaning for oneself and beyond. In this way, we see significant learning and civic engagement efforts as interconnected instructional approaches that result in rich and lasting outcomes and understanding each approach helps us better pursue the other. The examples that follow describe two strategies of intentionally incorporating such approaches in the higher education classroom.

Designing Courses for Civic Engagement

As established above, courses in higher education that civically engage students and contribute to their significant learning are in great demand. This article intends to furnish readers with pedagogical suggestions developed through the experiences of two distinct types of course-based community partnerships. The following descriptions illustrate how group- and individual-based civic engagement projects can be integrated into undergraduate coursework that is designed to promote significant learning experiences.

The first focal course employs a group-based community partnership to achieve a civic engagement experience that Trudeau offers through the Department of Geography. This course explores urban social inequality and invites students to participate in a semester-long group research project in collaboration with a local nonprofit community partner. The community partner and project changes each time the course is offered and so for the sake of illustration we examine a single project. The particular project discussed in this article was developed in conjunction with a coalition of five organizations endeavoring to understand people's access to healthy food in several high-poverty neighborhoods of St. Paul, Minnesota. Students went into these neighborhoods to administer a survey to learn about residents' access to food. Each student spent 30-40 hours over the term to collect responses, enter them into a database, and analyze the results, which were presented to the community partners at the end of the course. This experience fosters significant learning by connecting students with an effort to resolve a societal problem (caring and human dimensions). At the same time, the assignment of producing reliable research helps students learn foundational knowledge of social science and how to apply this in practical ways.

Moreover, the experience provides a powerful touchstone for students in the course's exploration of theory regarding the causes of social inequality in cities and how to address these. Finally, significant learning through civic engagement is fostered through the several interim and one final reflective writing assignment that students complete.

The second focal course utilizes an individual civic engagement design. Offered by Kruse through the Department of Educational Studies, the intermediate, interdisciplinary course introduces the student to the field of youth development, including psychological theory, sociological frameworks, and educational implications, while grounded in a youth-focused community field placement. Students commit to 30 hours with a single community partner of their own choosing; that is, in a class of 20 students exist potentially 20 different field sites. Yet, the environment of the classroom and shared curriculum of the course hold the students and their diverse civic experiences together as a single learning community, as described in the next section. The course seeks significant learning by enabling students to secure foundational knowledge that is then applied alongside an exploration of their inner selves in relation to the societal complexity of diverse youth development practice.

Integration of Civic Engagement

The following section describes a general process that faculty may follow in order to integrate civic engagement projects into a course. Specifically, we examine the important considerations we routinely confront when incorporating civic engagement projects into our courses. We describe this process as a series of steps in order to aid critical decisions and discuss the ways in which group- or individual-based projects may have additional or divergent points to consider. Our step-wise description is a heuristic approach to illuminate the terrain on which these determinations are made. However, the issues we examine are, in reality, relational and always interacting. The ensuing discussion is summarized in Table 1, which highlights what we find to be key considerations and necessary steps in the process of incorporating civic engagement into any course design – namely, how we find opportunities for civic engagement; what strategies can be used to embed these opportunities in a course; how will these strategies be implemented in practice in order to facilitate significant learning, and how can we bring the learning experiences to a close for students and partners.

Table 1.
Key Considerations for Integrating Civic Engagement in Your Course

Necessary Steps	Key Considerations
Find opportunities	- Lean on students - Contact public officials - Use professional networks - Use academic institution (e.g., civic engagement center) - Assess your tolerance for uncertainty
Plan for civic engagement in your course	- Document expectations - learning contracts & memoranda of under-standing - Determine logistic requirements for participation in civic engagement and find appropriate support - Align civic engagement activities with learning goals and assessment - Establish ethics protocols - Provide students with frames for doing civic engagement
Integrate learning exercises	- Facilitate personal and group reflection - How and when students will check in - Allow for student-initiated inquiry about learning - Include a culminating project
Bring closure	- Arrange for students to share their learning with community partner(s) - Solicit feedback from community partner(s) - Maintain relationship with community partner(s)

Community Partnerships

First among the key steps to incorporate civic engagement into a course is locating and securing community partnerships, which can demand a considerable amount of planning. This step can be initiated prior to the start of the semester. In the group project, Trudeau makes arrangements with

a community partner well in advance of the start of the course hosting the project. For instance, in his food access project, he contacted a city councilman six months before the start of the semester to inquire about suitable projects. He was subsequently put in contact with representatives of the nonprofit organizations studying food access, and together they identified an opportunity to have students administer surveys to residents of the study neighborhoods. Over the next four months, Trudeau worked with these representatives to create a suitable civic engagement project for his course on urban social inequality so that students were able to begin work during the first week of the course. The decision to work with the nonprofit organizations was motivated, in part, by their agreement to train students to administer the survey, provide the materials and transportation necessary for students to conduct the survey, and accommodate students' somewhat irregular availability.

In the individual design case, Kruse first establishes a list of numerous potential community partners via web research, phone calls, and in-person visits to a number of sites. As each semester begins, she furnishes students with the list and encourages them to seek, explore, and secure community experiences that are relevant to their own specific interests. For example, because this course focuses on youth development in community settings, students with a desire to exercise fluency in their non-native language may choose a site with bi- or multilingual youth. This step aims to also fulfill a course objective of better understanding the context of the community in which students will be civically learning. Through individual meetings with students as needed, Kruse supports their decision-making by prompting questions about interest in site type, distance and transportation, logistics and scheduling, and previous experience. Students then make initial contact with intended community partner and complete any necessary background check processes and orientations as they commence their new role.

In both approaches, our own professional networks of colleagues in the community have afforded us the ability to form partnerships with specific organizations whose work is relevant to our respective classes. Moreover, both approaches benefit from tapping into the resources created by our home institution. One key resource includes our college's Civic Engagement Center, a non-academic center that explicitly supports student engagement with off-campus communities via internships, volunteering, service-learning, and civic engagement. Staff in this center supports these forms of engagement through both curricular and co-curricular activities. Both of the cases discussed in this article benefit from the networking and problem-solving abilities of the staff who contribute to the creation and management of civic engagement activities in a variety of ways, including acting as a liaison between the academic institution and the community partner, supporting the use of learning contracts and memoranda of understanding, and helping students travel to off-campus engagement sites in a safe manner. But even without such institutional support, the creation of a partnership requires cre-

ativity and initiative on behalf of the instructor. This investment can yield a significant benefit so long as the partnership will continue beyond a single experience. Moreover, these community-university partnerships can be forged almost anywhere there is a willingness to do so.

Documentation of Expectations

Once a partnership is secured, it is important to establish expectations for how students will work with a community partner. As part of the pre-term planning process, we find it useful to create documentation that codifies expectations for the conduct of both community partners and students. These documents should clearly specify the scope of activities and the timeframe for their completion. In cases where the civic engagement work is highly scripted or demands extensive planning and coordination, we recommend having this documentation finalized before the class begins. In other cases, particularly where students work in individual civic engagement projects, it is important to have these individuals sign a contract as such an act signifies not only agreement to the expectations, but also a commitment to them. Specifically, the "learning contract" that Kruse's students complete and submit to her includes contact information for the community partner and the student, the anticipated days and times the student will be working with the community partner, and a list of activities in which the student will likely engage (See Appendix). As a demonstration of commitment, both student and community partner then sign this form.

Ethical Considerations

After the course begins and early on in the semester, we bring attention to the kinds of ethical considerations students will have to observe while working in the community. Ethics here emphasizes the key role "reciprocity" plays in civic engagement – the expectation that students show respect to others, particularly the communities with which they are working. For instance, in the group project, Trudeau works with the Institutional Review Board in the weeks before the class begins to create an acceptable set of research protocols. He then integrates into the course learning about the need for research ethics and training to help students observe the research protocols. In the individual-design course where students are in frequent direct contact with the community partner, one class period is dedicated fully to the ethics of civic engagement, facilitating students to assume a position of gratitude, humility, and respect for the community partner site. Kruse underscores that the students have much to contribute and yet even more to learn in the placement – about the discipline, the practice, and themselves. Reciprocity is doing with, not "for" or "to," but "with" the community partner.

Orientation to Civic Engagement

We share with students explicit frameworks for thinking about their activities in terms of civic engagement. Specifically, in both cases, we introduce students early in the semester to definitions of civic engagement and citizenship and hold discussions about what these mean in the context of class activities and course goals. For example, Kruse assigns Welsh's (2009) "Moving from Service-Learning to Civic Engagement," and Trudeau has students read Staeheli's (2005) "Can Cities be Sites of Citizenship?" Toward the goal of extending the learning from a service-learning mode into one that fosters civic engagement, as described in this article's opening, we take the approach of intentionally identifying the importance of learning about personal values and one's identity as a citizen or as a person within a profession. These frameworks are particularly useful in conjunction with reflective exercises.

Reflective Exercises

Reflection is a critical part of fostering civic engagement, and it is thus important to encourage students to reflect intentionally, in a structured way, and with regularity. Reflection is also essential to significant learning (Fink, 2003). In addition, reflection enables students to check in with the instructor about their learning in a way that contributes to the learning process. Reflection is productive work in its own right and so in our experience students tend not to regard it as "busy work." At the same time, the ease with which students can engage in reflection allows instructors to gauge student progress, and more importantly, to spot relatively early on in the course students who are struggling. We thus use reflection both as a strategy to promote significant learning and as a course management tool.

While reflection is crucial to civic engagement and fostering significant learning experiences, it is likewise important to acknowledge that some students may lack the necessary skills to reflect or may be unsure about how to do it. Therefore, we build in necessary supports that demonstrate to students how to reflect and on what to reflect. For example, we often ask students to write in response to structured prompts, as well as direct them toward shared reflection in targeted group discussions. We facilitate student reflection at two levels throughout the courses, individually and as a group.

To accomplish goals of individual reflection, we assign students several short (400-500 words) writing tasks in which they reflect on their course-related activities. This offers students a key first step in thinking about what they are doing and the roles they are playing with their respective community partners. Students share these written reflections in a variety of ways, both with us and with peers. Prompting questions for this writing draws the students' attention to theory and field experiences (and the converging or diverging elements within), as well as their own perspec-

tives about themselves, about community, and about power and privilege in this "real-life" setting. This approach helps students explore autonomously their community experiences while simultaneously guiding them to discover meaning within the course themes and in relation to civic engagement.

While individual reflections are a necessary component of civic engagement, reflection as a group of learners affords opportunities for enhancing students' significant learning. One way in which students can do this is by sharing their individual reflections with their peers, in blog and web forum, noted above. In addition, it is also important to facilitate interactive dialogue among students during class meetings. In our experience, such dialogue is most rich and better reaches its potential for significant learning when the dialogue is live as students are prompted to participate in the construction of their own and one another's reflection about community experiences. Consequently, we favor in-class meetings for this work, but see that it could also be accomplished through online media. Group reflection provides an opportunity for learning different perspectives and values from one another and for working collaboratively to solve problems.

In the individual-design course, students use perspectives of others as a springboard for individual action with their community partners. Specifically, Kruse embeds three or four "peer workshops" throughout the semester, which provide in-class time to problem solve in small groups around central issues defined by the students (e.g., challenges with youth behaviors at the community site).

In the group-project course, facilitated group reflection can help students determine their interdependence with the single community partner. Group reflection is also used for individuals to identify and share challenges they confront in conducting research and for the entire group to collaborate in generating an appropriate response. The collaboration required in preparing to share research findings with the community partner also helps students approach the task of building interdependence.

Closure to the Experience

In concluding our courses, we take intentional steps to bring closure to the experiences of the students and the community partners. First, just as we have built into our course designs the preparation for students to begin the relationship with a community partner, we also intentionally facilitate a respectful exit. This begins several weeks before the end of the course; for instance, students in the individual-design course are prompted to remind their community partner of their departure date and prepare a plan to conclude their activities as appropriate. In the group project, preparation for the presentation to the community partner also serves as a way to help students bring closure to their relationship with the partner.

Second, the students produce a final reflective writing assignment that relates their overarching experience with civic engagement activities

to ideas and themes relevant to the course. The point of this assignment is to help students derive meaning from their work, from the course, and the interaction of the two. This is typically a brief writing assignment, but one that specifically asks students to interpret the personal, societal, and academic significance of their learning experiences in ways that ask them to articulate what they learned about themselves, in terms of personal values and self-identity, and how this learning helps them connect with others. For example, each of us asks students a variation of the question: What have the civic engagement experiences and course concepts helped you learn about yourself and how might this affect your actions in the future? In this way, the final assignment is intended to help students synthesize previous reflections and bring this to bear on the kind of person they want to be. The students' reflective process culminates in a final paper that traces their learning through reflecting on their research or field experiences. The prompting questions aim to ensure that the significant learning goals (Fink, 2003) have been achieved and that the roots of civic engagement have taken hold for the student within their particular learning experience. Additionally, in the group-design course the culminating presentation asks students to present a unified interpretation of the research findings with the community partner. Students engage this high stakes task in a way that generates considerable reflection on their particular experiences, including how one's own positional views affect scientific interpretation, and what findings ought to be communicated (as well as how to contextualize them) in the presentation to the community partners. This moment also provides an opportunity for students to bring their relationship with the community partner to a close.

Soliciting feedback from the community partner provides an avenue for assessing the effectiveness of the experiential relationship as well as a way of sustaining the relationship with the community partner. Before the students complete their final writing assignment, we contact the community partners to inquire about their experience working with students. This can take a variety of forms and is different to each project, though we recommend engaging in this sort of communication for a single reason – to help instructors reflect on and improve their own pedagogical practices, especially as these relate to working with community partners. In our own cases, Kruse's approach is to contact the placement site supervisors, usually the staff or another volunteer to whom the student reports, and ask them to complete a short evaluation (a written form that solicits both open-ended responses and a rating of individual students performance on several dimensions) at the end of the semester to provide feedback about each student's participation. This evaluation contributes to the final grading for the semester. Kruse shares these with the students as valuable insights to both improve their contributions in the future, as well as to help situate their experience within the civic engagement framework of the course. In the case of the group-design course, Trudeau meets separately with representatives of the community partnership with whom students worked in order to examine process and

outcomes of the collaboration. Trudeau and the representatives discuss the ways the collaboration aided – or may not have aided – the research project. In both cases, we also ask community partners about their willingness to collaborate in the future.

Conclusions

If higher education is to take seriously the concerns about and consequences of a lack of civic engagement, as presented in *A Crucible Moment*, then it will be increasingly important for faculty to develop skill and experience in fostering civic engagement. This endeavor does not rest solely on the shoulders of faculty. On the contrary, it is important for higher education institutions to provide leadership, training, resources, and staff that support faculty who take on and experiment with efforts to promote civic engagement. Ultimately, though, faculty must be willing and capable in taking on these efforts. We hope the strategies and experiences described in this article inspire our fellow faculty members to incorporate civic engagement into their teaching and begin to inform them about how to do it.

As part of this effort, we have highlighted two distinct instances of connecting undergraduate students in social science courses with civic engagement experiences. Taken together, our cases describe practical steps and cognitive dispositions involved in engaging this pedagogical approach in general. Furthermore, the cases also begin to demonstrate that there are multiple pathways to integrate civic engagement. It is beyond the scope of our article to show all the ways in which this approach to teaching can unfold (nor do we claim to know them). We nevertheless expect that there are other ways in which faculty can integrate civic engagement into their teaching and that integrating civic engagement into courses in the natural sciences, humanities, or fine arts will demand additional considerations outside of what we have described. While this is no doubt a strength, we also encourage our fellow faculty members to temper their approach to incorporating civic engagement into their teaching by attending to one final issue.

Faculty members should incorporate civic engagement into their teaching in ways that serve to complement curricular goals. To be clear, we are not advocating a position that all courses can benefit from civic engagement projects or that all faculty should find ways to incorporate such projects. Rather, we believe faculty in any discipline can find ways to incorporate civic engagement into their teaching, and we further maintain that faculty should be particularly selective about the circumstances under which they do this. One does not have to think too creatively to see ways in which civic engagement would be out of place in some subjects and perhaps would serve an entirely misguided or at least inefficient approach to active learning.

Beyond the obvious points of disconnection, we encourage our fellow faculty to attend to the ways in which civic engagement aligns with professional practice. There are at least three dimensions to consider here.

First, evaluation of student learning should be aligned with the activities through which students perform civic engagement. Second, to the extent that courses align with particular programmatic goals at the departmental or institutional level, faculty should incorporate civic engagement into courses that can reasonably accommodate emphasis on learning about personal values, public life, and skills necessary for engaged citizenship. Last, faculty should also be sensitive to the ways in which their efforts to support civic engagement will be registered in performance evaluations. We have indicated that incorporating civic engagement involves a considerable amount of labor and there is always a risk that, despite this investment, the experience will not turn out as planned. Faculty should thus have a clear sense of whether their institutions recognize this and value experimentation in ways that do not exclusively look at end of term course evaluations. While these alignment issues demand careful consideration, the decision about whether and how to incorporate civic engagement into their courses ultimately hinges on an analysis of the personal costs and benefits of supporting civic engagement.

To this end, it is important to recognize that incorporating civic engagement into one's teaching is not without a cost. Our case studies demonstrate that faculty will need to engage in a time-intensive preparation process, which may begin months before the start of the course in which the civic engagement experience is positioned. The labor involved in such a process may be distributed among a group of individuals, particularly in cases such as ours where our institution provides support staff for civic engagement. Nevertheless, there is an added cost to this sort of work for which faculty must account if they intend the experience to achieve any measure of success. In our own experiences, courses in which we integrate civic engagement require more time to prepare and manage over the duration of the term than do courses without such an experience. Moreover, there is a personal psychological cost to managing courses of which civic engagement is a part because students routinely operate in settings outside of our control. As a result, incorporating civic engagement requires that instructors are willing to deal with uncertainty and adapt to the unexpected. This can be taxing, to be sure, and so we typically take on only one civic engagement course per term.

At the same time, incorporating civic engagement into one's teaching is tremendously rewarding. As a way of fostering significant learning experiences, students who participate in civic engagement are highly motivated and engaged in their learning. For some students, these experiences become formative moments in which they understand with greater clarity what they want to pursue in their working life or the kind of citizen they want to be. These moments can be inspiring to students and they can be wonderfully satisfying for faculty. This emotional appeal is part of the reason why we will continue to incorporate civic engagement into our teaching. Yet another important reason is that the learning which the students

experience through civic engagement is personally – and socially – relevant, long-lasting, and sometimes transformative, and is thus more substantive than a lecture-discussion approach to learning (Courts & McInerney, 1993; Li & LuXi, 2012; McGowan & Graham, 2009). What's more, participation in programs that aim to understand and move toward resolution of a societal problem also provides students with experiences that animate and breathe new life into theories and debates covered in course readings. Students also learn skills, perspectives, and strategies that are valuable for taking action on matters of public interest – and they are often made aware of ethical considerations relevant to doing this work. Last, but not least of all, by helping students contribute to organizations and movements in our local community, we engage in volunteerism that can be especially satisfying, particularly when the busyness of academia can forestall participation in many conventional volunteering opportunities. For these reasons, we believe that the rewards of incorporating civic engagement courses outweigh the costs.

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Appendix: Sample Learning Contract

Field Experience Agreement

Student: _____

Name of Field Placement Site: _____

Program, ages: _____

Supervising Staff:

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Field experience activities may include some of the following:
- Observation as a precursor to contribution
- Assisting during large group activities
- Assisting individual youth
- Assisting in the preparation of materials
- Facilitating small groups
- Presenting a short lesson or a portion of the activities
- Assisting in supervision of youth participants
- Assisting in research or grant proposal process, as appropriate

A minimum of **30 hours of field experience** within the semester will be completed on the following schedule:

Signatures:

_____   _____
Supervising Staff   Student

Acknowledgement

Authors

Dan Trudeau, Ph.D. is an Associate Professor in the Department of Geography and Director of Urban Studies at Macalester College. He teaches courses on the political geographies of nationalism, research methods, and urban geographies of the United States. His research investigates processes of social exclusion and inclusion and has focused on processes of minority group segregation and incorporation, political economies of urban service delivery, and geographies of urban sustainability movements.

Tina Kruse, Ph.D. has been a faculty member at Macalester College in the Department of Educational Studies since 2004. With a Ph.D. in Educational Psychology, her courses include studies in motivation, educational equity, student exceptionality, community-based education, and advocacy for all children. Professor Kruse's research interests center on early childhood educational quality, community youth development initiatives, civic engagement, and preparation of teachers for culturally relevant pedagogy.