

Teaching Civic Education in a Democratic Society: A Comparison of Civic Education in Hungary and the United States

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In recent decades increasing numbers of Americans have disengaged from civic and political institutions and it appears that young people are following this trend. According to a current report published by the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE) and the Carnegie Corporation (2003), young people in the United States are “less likely to vote and are less interested in political and electoral activities such as voting and being informed about public issues than either their older counterparts or young people of past decades” (4). Young people who follow this trend may not be prepared to participate fully as a citizen in our democracy now or when they become adults. This is a sobering thought in light of the recent terrorist activities in the United States and abroad. The need to understand and effectively practice the rights and

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responsibilities of citizenship is equally important for citizens of countries that have recently overthrown the repressive governments of the Soviet Union and its Central and Eastern European satellites as they build new governments based on democratic principles. Education is one of few means at our disposal to inspire voluntary participation of our citizens. The ability to maintain democracy rests upon the success of education for democratic citizenship in schools and in our education of teachers (Patrick & Leming 2001).

This study investigated obstacles to teaching civic education in the United States, a country whose government was established on democratic principles over 250 years ago, and Hungary, a European country presently making the transition to a government based on democratic principles. The purpose is to compare the obstacles within these two countries as they seek ways to provide their young citizens with the training and experiences necessary to be responsible, effective citizens in a democratic society. In addition, the need for intensive teacher training in civic education is emphasized to assist young citizens in developing the critical thinking and problem solving skills necessary to make informed decisions as a responsible citizen in the future.

Methods

Comparative analysis was used to investigate the obstacles to teaching civic education in the United States and Hungary. This approach qualitatively compares similarities and differences in educational events. McMillan and Schumacher (2001) explained analytical research as the act of describing and interpreting the past or recent past from selected sources. A deductive approach was taken in examining the obstacles encountered in teaching youth about democratic principles. In "Teaching Democracy in an Unpopular Democracy" (1995), János Setényi, director of Civitas Association-Hungary, outlined three levels of democracy as he described the challenges Hungary faces in teaching civic education. These were (1) social and political concepts, (2) institutions, and (3) the knowledge, attitude, and skills that operate a democracy. A comparative analysis of the obstacles faced by the United States and Hungary was conducted on these three levels to determine similarities between the two countries. In addition, analysis of teacher education and instructional methods used to teach civic education in these two countries was conducted to determine needs for training teachers. These two areas of investigation should assist teacher preparation institutions, as well as educational policy makers, as they prepare for the future.

Sources used to complete the analysis for this study include unpublished papers written by university faculty and others from the United States and Hungary involved with Civitas, an international civic education exchange program. Also used were official government websites, Civitas program evaluations, and other pertinent journal articles.

Civitas: An International Civic Education Exchange Program

When the countries that had been under communist rule began the process of changing to a government based on democratic ideals, they looked to the United States for assistance. Civitas: An International Civic Education Exchange Program, administered by the Center for Civic Education, supports collaboration between the United States and emerging democracies around the world to help make democratic ideals a reality. The Civitas Exchange Program is funded through a grant from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of State and its affiliated offices throughout the world (Center for Civic Education 2001).

The Civitas International Civic Education Exchange Program is active in more than 22 U.S. states and 30 countries. Its aim is to strengthen effective education for informed and responsible citizenship in new and established democracies around the world. The program provides leaders in civic education opportunities to learn from and assist each other in improving education for democracy in their nations. The program addresses civic education activities from the development of educational policy, standards, curricular frameworks, and materials to teacher education, classroom implementation, and research and evaluation (Center for Civic Education 2003). The Civitas partnership with Hungary, Florida, Mississippi, and Texas sponsors a variety of programs to enhance civic education for school aged children as well as classroom teachers in Hungary and the participating U.S. states (Florida Law Related Education Association 2002).

In spring 2002, these authors were members of a group of university teacher education professors from Florida, Mississippi, and Texas that traveled to Hungary to experience civic education in a new democracy, the process of civic education institutionalization, and the teacher preparation process (Florida Law Related Education Association 2002). This exchange provided the opportunity for a greater understanding of the similarities between our two countries in regards to civic education and the obstacles we face in teaching our young people to be responsible, participating citizens. It also provided the opportunity to discuss possible solutions through our common knowledge of teacher education preparation.

The Importance of Civic Education

Citizens in a society based on democratic principles must depend on the knowledge, skills and veracity of their fellow citizens and elected officials. Furthermore, they must understand that their general welfare is dependent upon the wellbeing of others in the community. Being an effective and responsible citizen requires knowledge of the democratic principles and the ability and willingness to be an informed participant in the process. It also requires the development of certain qualities of character that increases the individual's capacity to participate in the

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political process and contribute to the effective functioning of the political system and improvement of society (Center for Civic Education, 1994).

Because trends reveal that Americans' participation in the democratic processes is declining and because of the decision Hungary made to establish a new form of government, it is imperative that young citizens in these two countries are provided the opportunity to fully understand the democratic principles and participate effectively in the democratic process. Teacher training institutions and classroom teachers must play a major role in providing the training these young citizens need. By examining the obstacles these two countries face, some problem areas may be revealed that will provide educators with a better understanding of the issues that negatively effect participation in civic life. This understanding would be beneficial to teacher training institutions as they prepare teachers to train young people who will take on roles as adult citizens in a democratic society one day.

Civic Education in Hungary

Since the transition to a government based on democratic principles in the early 1990s, Hungary has taken significant steps toward making changes to its educational system through the Public Education Act of 1993. The Public Education Act established, through the government, a National Core Curriculum (NCC) that outlined the compulsory requirements common in every school for the first ten years of education. For secondary education, the requirements are outlined in the regulations specified for the Secondary School-leaving Examination. The core curriculum requirements are formulated according to ten comprehensive fields of knowledge, one of which is Man and Society. Subject framework and content elements of civic education can be easily incorporated into this field of knowledge. In addition to the NCC, changes are expected in the techniques and strategies teachers use in the classroom (Balogh, Halász, Imre, Lannert, Nagy, Palotás, Radó, Szekszárdi, & Vágó 2001; Halász, Garami, Havas, & Vágó 2001).

In 2000, the Hungarian Minister of Education published the Framework Curricula. This framework, based on the fields of knowledge defined in the NCC, guarantees the unity of subject content within the countries' schools. By dividing the fields of knowledge, the framework curricula restores the subject system, determines types of tasks and activity formats to ensure skill and capacity development and sets a minimal number of lesson hours for teaching individual subjects. Each local school is required to develop their own curriculum based on these sets of guidelines (Balogh et al. 2001; Halász et al. 2001).

This movement towards national standards has meant a sizeable shift since 1998 away from the strong predominance of natural sciences in the Hungarian course schedule towards social sciences. However it was noted that Hungarian social science education is still decidedly limited to the teaching of history, as opposed to the American-European model, which focuses much more on current

issues (social, civic, and legal issues) (Balogh et al. 2001; Halász et al. 2001). Mátrai (1999) explained that those who teach these social science subjects are mainly history teachers. These teachers regard social studies and civics as secondary and usually neither their theoretical knowledge nor their teaching techniques adequately prepare them for the job. Civitas Association-Hungary is assisting teachers in making these changes through teacher training, materials, and support (Center for Civic Education 2003).

Civic Education in the United States

In the United States, schools bear a historic responsibility for the development of civic competence and civic responsibility within young citizens. Education has a civic mission to prepare informed, rational, humane, and participating citizens committed to the values and principles of American constitutional democracy. Schools fulfill that duty through both formal and informal curricula which spans the entire academic career of its youth (Center for Civic Education 2001).

There is no National Core Curriculum in the United States as in Hungary; however, voluntary national standards have been developed by learned professional societies for virtually all academic content areas taught in the K-12 schools. These standards serve as guidelines to state departments of education, teacher-training institutions, and local school districts to assure that expectations for student learning and skill development are uniform across the country. Use of these standards is not mandatory, however, in many cases, accreditation for school districts and teacher-training institutions is dependent upon meeting these national standards. State departments use these standards as they develop state curricula and, in turn, school districts develop their local curricula by the state guidelines. Teacher training institutions also realize the importance of insuring that new teachers are familiar with these national standards as they begin their teaching career (National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education 2003).

The National Council for the Social Studies and the Center for Civic Education developed national standards that provide guidelines for what students in the United States should know about civics and the responsibilities of being an effective citizen. According to the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) the primary purpose of social studies is to aid young people as they develop the skills necessary to make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good as citizens of a culturally diverse, democratic society in an interdependent world. Civic competence, the knowledge, skills, and attitudes required of students to be able to assume the office of citizen, is a major focus of social studies programs (National Council for the Social Studies 2002). The National Standards for Civics and Government, developed by the Center for Civic Education in conjunction with several professional organizations, were established to serve as guidelines for

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schools as they include civic education into courses of study and school curriculum (Center for Civic Education 2002a).

Obstacles to Teaching Civic Education

Teaching citizens in a democracy, particularly young people, the necessary knowledge, skills, and attitudes of responsible citizenship is of great importance. This has, however, proven to be a difficult task in Hungary for several reasons. “Teaching Democracy in an Unpopular Democracy”, an unpublished paper written by János Setényi (1995), director of Civitas Association-Hungary, emphasized the obstacles facing Hungarian educators in their efforts to teach their young citizens the values and principles of democratic citizenship.

Setényi stated,

the relative unpopularity of Hungarian democracy renders our work even more difficult. . . . The fact that living in a democracy has become an everyday experience does not necessarily mean that these values have become automatically deeply rooted as well. (1)

Setényi (1995) outlined three levels of democracy to be considered when describing the challenges Hungary faces in teaching about democracy. These are (1) social and political concepts which include the philosophy and the history of culture and civilization, (2) institutions which include the theory of society or social sciences, and (3) the knowledge, attitude, and skills that operate a democracy.

Because the United States was established on concepts of a constitutional democracy, it is imperative that its people understand and participate as effective, responsible citizens in society. However, there are elements in our society that parallel the concerns that Setényi (1995) raised in the recently established democratic society of Hungary. There have been many instances in our history that have caused the citizens to become skeptical and distrust our government. As Setényi’s paper outlined the three levels of democracy in Hungary, it was easy to draw parallels to activities in the United States and realize that we face some of the same concerns evident in Hungarian society and schools. Table 1 summarizes the obstacles and reveals the similar challenges to teaching about civic education in the two countries.

Social and Political Concepts

The first level that Setényi (1995) addressed in his paper outlining difficulties in teaching about democracy was that of social and political concepts. This obstacle includes the philosophy and the history of their culture and civilization. According to Setényi, it is essential that Hungarian youth have the opportunity to become familiar with the most important theories of democracy as well as the conflicting ideas of these theories. Contributing factors to the problem of reaching this goal are that there is no well-defined and commonly embraced 20th century Hungarian

Table 1
Obstacles To Teaching Democratic Principles and Civic Education

	Hungary	United States
Social and Political Concepts -Philosophy and history of their culture and civilization, important theories of democracy and the conflicting ideas of these theories	There is no well-defined and commonly embraced 20 th century Hungarian history or Hungarian vocabulary of democratic concepts.	Students do not score particularly well on national assessments of US History which includes the theme change and continuity in American democracy.
Institutions -Theory of society or social sciences - the stability and everyday functioning of democratic institutions is important even though there is the existence of sometimes corrupt and inefficient institutions	Findings of one report revealed that although an overwhelming majority of the population supported the political changes, confidence in the functioning of economic and political institutions of democracy were rather low.	There have been many instances in US history that point to corruption within the institutions of government and big business that provided the American public with means to distrust the "system".
Knowledge, Attitude, and Skills Citizens should have a good understanding of the knowledge, attitude, and skills that operate a democracy. This means not only the understanding of civic ideals but also the ability to apply those concepts. Obstacles are often a result of parental and family influences, nonuse of democratic teaching methods, and little knowledge of civic rights and duties.	Parental and Family Influences-cultural background/financial status	
	The doctrine held by many in Hungarian society "understands" the importance of efforts to maintain balance in one's private life or in the family and holds that the outside world is a mere enemy. Apathy about such civic duties as voting also influences student desire to learn civic education	Results from the IEA Civic Ed assessment indicated that ninth grade U.S. students who performed well on the civic knowledge test attended schools with a small percentage of students who were eligible for the free and reduced lunch program, had parents who had completed comparatively more years of school, and had many home resources, such as books, and a daily newspaper. Apathy about such civic duties as voting also influences student desire to learn civic education
	Nonuse of Democratic Teaching Methods	
	The incorporation of democratic principles into the classroom curriculum is a practice that until now has not been a part of teaching expectations in Hungary.	Theory which promotes the importance of providing opportunities for students to develop civic attitudes and behaviors has been evident in the professional literature for years; however, many social studies educators continue to teach in the traditional manner.
Knowledge of Civic Rights and Duties		
Citizens, among them young people, know very little about laws and rights or understand the necessary balance between civil rights and duties such as paying taxes or participating in elections.	The overall results of one study indicated that the majority of students had partial mastery of knowledge and intellectual skills that are necessary for competence in civics. Perhaps part of the reason for low knowledge level is the lack of emphasis that is placed on social studies and civic education in the weekly curriculum.	

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history, no prior experience with democratic principles, or Hungarian vocabulary of democratic concepts.

In the United States, the National Assessment of Educational Progress measures the U.S. History knowledge and skills of 4th, 8th, and 12th graders. One of the historical themes included in the assessment is: change and continuity in American democracy (ideas, institutions, practices, and controversies). The results of this assessment showed that the typical or average student scored at the Basic level in grades 4 and 8 and scored below Basic in grade 12 (U. S. Department of Education 1999).

Institutions

The second level that Setényi (1995) addressed was the world of institutions. This includes the theory of society or social sciences. He firmly stated that it is of primary importance that the young understand that the stability and everyday functioning of democratic institutions is a value itself. This is a difficult task indeed in light of the changes that have taken place in the peoples' lives since the change in government. Mátrai (1999) noted that the Hungarian people's trust in the institutions of democracy had considerably lessened by the end of 1995. He noted the findings from a public opinion poll that related the following: political parties, the government, Parliament, and the trade unions were toward the bottom on a 100 point scale of confidence (22 to 32 points). These findings seemed to reveal that although an overwhelming majority of the population supported the political changes, confidence in the functioning of economic and political institutions of democracy were rather low. Mátrai also reported that up to the present, the majority of the people have experienced a worsening standard of living, very high taxes, inflationary prices, uncontrollable corruption, and an invisible economy gaining ground. The result is growing economic disparity and social uncertainty. These changes in lifestyles have certainly influenced student attitudes towards learning about a government based on democratic principles.

In the United States, there have been many instances in our history that point to corruption within the institutions of government and big business this has jaded the panacea of the democratic institution for American citizens. Examples of these include the Vietnam War in the 1960s (Young 1999), Watergate in the 70s (Grolier 2002), the saving and loan scandal of the 80s (Potter 2002), the campaign contribution reforms of the 90s (Smith 1998), and the present day fall of big businesses such as Enron (Pellegrini 2003). Government officials could be directly or indirectly linked to all of these scandals in some way. These occurrences provided the American public with means to distrust the "system". This evident wrong-doing and the distrust it has created within the American people makes it difficult to help students understand the importance of these institutions and the role they play in a democratic society.

Knowledge, Attitude, and Skills

The third level addressed by Setényi (1995) was the knowledge, attitude, and skills that operate a democracy. He stated that this is an area that is very difficult to define for public education. It means not only the understanding of civic ideals but also the ability to apply those concepts. This is difficult because, to a great extent, students are unable to learn these ideals from the textbook. The application of democratic principles is much more easily understood if the students experience the principles within the home and within the classroom settings as the teacher sets the environment and models the behaviors aligned with the democratic principles. This incorporation of democratic principles into the classroom curriculum is a practice that until now has not been a part of teaching expectations in Hungary. Often, family environments in the United States don't shed a positive light on the democratic way of life. Nor do social studies teachers model the democratic principles well. Setényi's discussion in this section focuses on three areas: parental and family influences, nonuse of democratic teaching methods, and knowledge of civic rights and duties.

Parental and Family Influences

There is evidence that the influence of values and beliefs that young people adopt from the family impacts their beliefs and behavior. In Hungary, the basis for values and forms of behavior is often provided by the Kadarean Bourgeoisie. This doctrine "understands" the importance of efforts to maintain balance in one's private life or in the family and holds that the outside world is a mere enemy. This is exemplified in the results of a study cited by Mátrai (1999) which reported that about 70% of the respondents thought that the changes in Hungarian government serve the interests of only a few; the worsening financial situation of families played the major role in forming this belief. This could indicate that the respondents felt the outside world had control over their ability to maintain balance within their private life. In addition, in 1995, 85% considered the reduction of income differences between the rich and the poor as a basic responsibility of the government. These attitudes towards the democratic government could certainly influence the willingness of young people to learn about and participate in democratic activities.

The influence of parental attitudes and beliefs can be demonstrated in many forms. In a publication by The Joint Center of Eastern Europe for Democratic Education and Governance (Zsigó 1995), it was indicated that Central Europe is experiencing increased apathy, corruption, and alienation. It was found that people feel removed from politics and politics is viewed as a battle-ground between various political interest groups. It was also reported that voter turnout in many by-elections is alarmingly low. In addition, in the international IEA Civic Ed study, there were 164 attitude questions on democracy and politics, national identity, social cohesion and divergence. Answers by the Hungarian students indicated that for most

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young people, and very similarly to the adult population, democracy denotes a welfare state, and that within civic rights they consider social rights superior to political ones. Adult attitudes and behaviors can very easily influence their children's beliefs (Balogh et al. 2001).

In the United States, one indicator that the youth of our country do not have a strong grasp of these concepts could be evident in the results of the 1998 Civics Report Card for the Nation (Lutkus, Weiss, Campbell, Mazzeo, & Lazer 1999). The development of this assessment was guided by the National Standards for Civics and Government and focused on the three interconnected components of civic knowledge, civic skills, and civic dispositions. In this study, the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) reported on the educational progress of students in grades 4, 8, and 12 in civics. The overall results indicated that in grades 4, 8, and 12, the percentages of students performing at or above the Basic level (partial mastery of knowledge and intellectual skills that are necessary for competence in civics) of civics achievement were 69, 70, and 65 percent respectively. The percentages performing at or above the Proficient level (fully competent performance) were only 23, 22, and 26, respectively (Patrick 2000).

Overall results on the international IEA Civic Education study cited previously indicated that United States ninth grade students performed "well" when compared with the other 27 participating countries (U.S. Department of Education 2001). In the area of civic content, six countries scored significantly higher than the U.S. The U.S. students scored significantly higher than all other countries in the area of civic skills. It seems surprising that students in a country that was founded on the democratic principles do not have full mastery of the necessary civic knowledge and skills as measured by these two studies.

In addition, Setényi's (1995) comment, "the fact that living in a democracy has become an everyday experience does not necessarily mean that these values have become automatically deeply rooted" could very well apply to the US citizen. This could be evidenced through the occurrence of voter apathy among US adults. The whole premise of democracy is based on representation by the people, however, it is interesting to note that between 1990 and 2000, the eligible adults voting during mid-year elections ranged from 47 to 56 percent. During the same time period, on presidential election years — 1992, 1996, and 2000 — the percentage of voters ranged from 73 to 75 percent. In 2000, those not voting indicated that they were not registered, were sick, or didn't have time (Center for Political Studies 2002). In addition, a 1999 study commissioned by the National Association of Secretaries of State found that in the previous presidential election less than 20% of eligible voters between the ages of 18 and 25 bothered to vote (Quigley 2003). This seems to convey the notion that the U.S. adults do not always value the rights and responsibilities they have as citizens. Setting this type of example could influence their children's behavior as well.

Nonuse of Democratic Teaching Methods

Also related to the third level, Setényi (1995) posited that it is essential for the presentation of the democratic principles to take place in an atmosphere of democracy where open, honest discussion and debate prevail. The question seems to be whether the Hungarian school, which traditionally delivers knowledge from books, can make the change to managing the classroom by democratic principles. He further revealed that in Hungary speaking publicly about issues of social life has been avoided or criticized for many years. There is no pattern in the tradition of the Hungarian school system to guide teachers in making this change in teaching methodology. Training, materials, and publications through Civitas have assisted in this concern (Cornett & Dzuban 2001).

In the United States, social studies educators have long supported the merits of democratic classrooms, however, little research can be found which documents this pattern of classroom interaction. Theory, which promotes the importance of providing opportunities for students to develop civic attitudes and behaviors, has been evident in the professional literature for years; but many social studies educators continue to teach in the traditional manner. Despite the history of the U.S. as a model for democratic theory and practice, few public school teachers above the elementary level actually implement the theories in their classes. Instead, like in Hungary, teachers tend to adopt a parallel role to what Setényi labeled the “professional distributor of knowledge” (Cornett 1996).

Results of the international IEA Civic Ed assessment confirm this occurrence. The study indicated that students in U.S. schools were more likely to report reading a textbook or filling out worksheets when studying social studies than engaging in activities such as visits from leaders or writing letters to give their opinion (U.S. Department of Education 2001). In addition, the results in the Nation’s Report Card: Civics for both 4th and 8th grade student samples found that in both grades, the highest percentage of students were taught on a weekly basis with “traditional” instructional activities: using the textbook, worksheets, hearing a teachers’ lecture, and using books, newspapers, and magazines. Teachers in both grades generally rated themselves as much less well prepared to use the voluntary national standards for civics and government (Lutkus et. al. 1999).

Another concern related to teaching is the lack of emphasis that is placed on social studies and civic education in the weekly curriculum. In the Nation’s Report Card: U.S. History, the National Center for Educational Statistics reported that 37% of fourth grade public and nonpublic school students spent 1-2 hours a week on social studies; 31% spent 2-3 hours, and only 19% spent more than 3 hours (U.S. Department of Education 2001). Much more emphasis is placed on reading and mathematics presumably because these are the subjects that are most heavily tested on standardized tests. With teacher and school accountability in the spotlight,

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insuring that scores on these subject areas are high is top priority at the expense of social studies and civic education.

Knowledge of Civic Laws and Duties

Finally, regarding the level of knowledge, attitudes, and skills, Setényi (1995) noted challenges faced in the field of civic knowledge. He explained that citizens, among them young people, know very little about laws and rights or understand the necessary balance between civil rights and duties such as paying taxes or participating in elections. An individual's civil rights is an element of society that falls within this challenge. The Council of Europe, indicated in one of its recent publications that the creation of a tolerant Europe free from racism and prejudices is a most urgent task (Kaltenbach 2001).

The 2001 Report on the Activities of the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Rights of National and Ethnic Minorities stated,

According to the majority of education experts the Hungarian school system doesn't prepare the students for accepting the variation and heterogeneity of the society and for understanding the otherness from any aspect of different groups of people. There were also shortcomings found in the preparation of educators in this direction. (Kaltenbach 2001)

The Public Education Act of 1993 placed very strong emphasis on meeting the needs of all students regardless of ethnic or racial background, as well as students with special needs.

The United States has a long history of racial problems as well. The movement for the past 50 years toward more positive race relations and treatment has not been an easy one. The Supreme Court case of *Brown V. the Board of Education* in 1954 (Supreme Court of the United States 1954) was the turning point from racial discrimination to a more cohesive population in this country. Since that time great strides have been made to change the attitudes and understandings of all citizens of the U.S. to gain acceptance and equality for all citizens. In addition, influence of parental attitudes towards such civic skills and dispositions as voting and providing community service can also influence their children's desire to learn about democratic principles.

Much has been revealed about the obstacles that exist in teaching the principles of civics and democracy to the citizens of our two countries. It is interesting to note the similarities in the challenges we face in light of the fact that the United States was established on the principles of democracy over 250 years ago and Hungary's democratic system of government was established only a decade ago. These challenges, that span time and cultures, are societal problems that cannot be corrected quickly. However, education in civics can help alleviate some concerns by providing background knowledge and understanding to our youth that will help them develop into responsible, effective citizens in the future. If education is the

key to ensuring that our people are responsible effective citizens, then we must look to the teachers to assist in carrying out this feat. The single most important action any country can take to improve schools and student learning is to strengthen teaching. Preservice teacher training with a strong emphasis on civic education is a very important aspect to undertake.

Teacher Education in Civic Education

Someone once said that democracy is something you live, not something you teach. The parallel here is that if the purpose of schools and social studies is to prepare youth of the society for democratic citizenship, we need to give them some experience with democratic process and ideals prior to sending them out to face the world. Students cannot learn the responsibilities of democratic citizenship while sitting in a classroom run by dictators. (Welton 2002, 37)

It is of utmost importance that teachers in these two countries understand this concept. Preservice teacher education and in-service professional development must emphasize the need for K-12 students to have a greater understanding of civic and democratic concepts. This cannot be accomplished through the traditional methods of teaching and rote memorization but only through methods of instruction and teacher behavior that models the democratic concepts and allows the students to actively participate. Table 2 compares teacher education in Hungary and the United States on four levels: Standards, Teaching Training and Certification, Teaching Methods, and Assistance and Support Provided.

Standards

Civitas has played an important role in assisting Hungary in making this change by creating standards for teacher training in civics. These Civic Studies and Skills Standards were developed following the guidelines set by the NCC, especially with its regulations on teacher training. NCC's field of knowledge, Man and Society, allows for many opportunities to introduce studies in democracy throughout the program. With these standards in place, the education system is better able to accomplish its goal of conveying democratic political basic values and forming civic competences and responsibility within future adults (Setényi 1996).

These standards are an unusual innovation in Hungarian higher education. The Civitas standards focus on including the standards of civic attitudes and skills as well as the important elements of methodology. The areas covered within the standards include: civic knowledge-history, tradition, values, democratic institutions, public policy; civic behavior and skills in the society, social environment; and methodology of teacher training-curriculum development, communication practice, internship and community service learning (Setényi 1996).

The standards of the Civitas program constitute a unified system within the

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Table 2
Teacher Education in Civic Education

Hungary	United States
Standards	
Civitas has played an important role in assisting Hungary by creating standards for teacher training in civics. These Civic Studies and Skills Standards were developed following the guidelines set by the NCC, especially with its regulations on teacher training.	The National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) has developed national standards for social studies teachers. Within the standards are included Subject Matter Standards and Pedagogical Standards. INTASC Standards have been developed to provide guidelines for what new teachers should know and be able to do when they complete the teacher training program, NBPTS standards were developed to uphold high standards for professional performance among the nation's accomplished teachers. NCATE standards serve as the education profession's control to help establish high quality teacher preparation programs.
Teacher Training and Certification	
Universities and teacher colleges have become more involved in training teachers in the concept that learning is a lifelong process. The Hungarian Accreditation Committee reviews each program prior to implementation	Guidelines for training teachers are included in the national standards listed above. Individual states are responsible for certification standards. Within the United States, there are only 13 states that report offering certification in civics and/or government for high school teachers, with 10 of these also offering certification in civics and government for middle school or junior high teachers. Twenty-three states reported requiring teachers to pass a standardized test of civics knowledge before being certified to teach civics content.
Teaching Methods	
Teaching is generally characterized by the teacher giving lectures, explaining material, and demonstrating experiments as the students take a passive role by listening, taking notes, and learning the content of subject areas. Because of the change in Hungarian government and the move towards different approaches to teaching, teachers must assume a new role. Today, teachers must be leaders of discussions and facilitators of debates. They must provide an atmosphere of openness, trust, and honesty.	Many sets of standards are in place in the United States to ensure that teachers are meeting the needs of students at all levels; however, many social studies teachers continue to hold on to the traditional way of teaching through lectures and worksheets. In addition, instructional time to teach social studies content is a limitation in most school districts.
Assistance and Support Provided	
Civitas has provided materials, training, and support to teachers as they begin the process of incorporating instruction related to civic education into their classes.	Training and professional development specifically for civic education is provided regionally and nationally by the Center for Civic Education. The Center provides materials, support, and training for teachers.

teacher training institutions across Hungary. The most characteristic feature of the standards is the interdisciplinary approach that is new for Hungary's education system. Another characteristic is that they contain practice-centered elements that allow students to apply the skills and concepts learned in actual settings. Civitas was also instrumental in publishing and providing students and teachers with materials about civic education that were not available to them (Setényi 1996).

In the United States, standards have been developed by professional societies for virtually every content area taught within the schools. These standards provide guidelines to the K-12 teachers on what students within the nation should know and

be able to do and often include indications of the type of methodology that should be used in teaching these standards. Integrated into these standards are the skills development of critical thinking and problem solving. In addition, national standards have been developed which establish guidelines for what new teachers as well as experienced teachers should know and be able to do. Teacher training institutions have a monumental task in making sure that new teachers are aware of the standards and are able to successfully incorporate these standards into their teaching.

The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) serves as the education profession's control to help establish high quality teacher preparation programs. The system of accreditation developed by NCATE assists in developing competent classroom teachers and other educators who work to improve the education of all P-12 students. The guidelines established by NCATE for these programs include strenuous requirements for program development ensuring that content standards and research based methodologies are documented and practiced (National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education 2003).

NCATE also plays a pivotal role in the newly emerging system of quality assurance for the teaching profession. This system, which serves the three phases of teacher development, is comprised of sets of standards for the accreditation of teacher preparation institutions by NCATE, performance-based state licensing for first year teachers through the Interstate New Teachers Assessment and Support Consortium Standards (INTASC), and board certification of accomplished teachers through the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS). These three organizations work together, developing and implementing standards and assessments through which teachers progress during their continuing development (National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education 2003).

In addition, the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards (National Board of Professional Teaching Standards 2003) were developed to uphold high standards for professional performance among the nation's accomplished teachers. These standards are the keynotes in efforts to improve teaching and thereby improve student learning. Many colleges and universities are aligning their teacher preparation curriculum to reflect these standards. Additional standards are currently being developed for content areas. The performance-based standards are based on five core propositions:

- ◆ Teachers are committed to students and their learning; foster students' self-esteem, motivation, character, civic responsibility, and their respect for individuals, cultural, religious, and racial differences.
- ◆ Teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to students; appreciate how knowledge in their subject is created, organized, and linked to other disciplines and applied in real world settings; develop the critical and analytical capacities of their students.
- ◆ Teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring student learning; know how

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to engage groups of students to ensure a disciplined learning environment; are adept at setting norms for social interaction among students and between students and teachers.

◆ Teachers think systematically about their practice and learn from experience; exemplify the virtues they wish to inspire in their students (curiosity, tolerance, honesty, fairness, respect for diversity and appreciation of cultural differences) and the capacities that are prerequisites for intellectual growth (the ability to reason and take multiple perspectives, to be creative and take risks, and to adopt an experimental and problem-solving orientation).

◆ Teachers are members of learned communities; contribute to the effectiveness of the school by working collaboratively with other professionals on instructional policy, curriculum development, and staff development; find ways to work collaboratively with parents, engaging them productively in the work of the school.

The Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC) is a consortium of state education agencies, higher education institutions, and national educational organizations dedicated to the reform of education, licensing, and on-going professional development of teachers. INTASC has developed a set of licensing standards for new teachers that embodies the kinds of knowledge, skills, and dispositions that teachers need to practice responsibly when they enter teaching. Based on core principles of NBPTS, its work is guided by one basic premise: An effective teacher must be able to integrate content knowledge with pedagogical understanding to assure that all students learn and perform at high levels (Council of Chief State School Officers 2003).

The National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) has developed national standards for social studies teachers. Within the standards are included Subject Matter Standards, which outline in some detail the social studies content that social studies teachers should know and the skills and dispositions they should possess in order to teach social studies to students appropriately, and Pedagogical Standards, which outline in very general ways the pedagogical knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed for general teacher effectiveness. The subject matter standards are the main focus of the document. They describe the subject matter that NCSS as an organization believes teachers should know and be able to teach. The pedagogical standards, on the other hand, are more general and are stated very briefly because NCSS is only one of many professional educational organizations that have described and explained expectations of this type (National Council for the Social Studies 2002b). In addition, the National Standards for Civics and Government, developed by the Center for Civic Education in conjunction with several professional organizations, were established to serve as guidelines for schools as they include civic education into courses of study and school curriculum (Center for Civic Education 2002a).

Teacher Training and Certification

Training for the teaching profession in Hungary is gradually becoming one with the concept that learning is a lifelong process. As a result, universities and teacher colleges have become more involved in training teachers along these lines. The Hungarian Accreditation Committee reviews each program prior to implementation (Halász et al. 2001).

One teacher training institution, the Juhász Gyula Teachers' Training College at the University of Szeged, developed the first degree granting program with civics education as the major focus. The program prepares preservice teachers to integrate the Civic Studies and Skills Standards into the national framework curriculum, as well as in extra-curricular activities that are built into the educational program of the schools (Kiss 2002).

Within the United States, guidelines for training teachers are included in the national standards discussed earlier. Individual states are responsible for certification standards. Presently, there are only 13 states that report offering certification in civics and/or government for high school teachers, with 10 of these also offering certification in civics and government for middle school or junior high teachers. The most common state certification for teachers of civics topics is a broad history and social studies certification. Twenty-three states reported requiring teachers to pass a standardized test of civics knowledge before being certified to teach civics content (Quigley 2003). The states that do not offer a specific certification in civics and government most often rely on teachers that do not have the necessary training. Hahn (1999) found that when teachers in a focus group were asked what preparation they had had, they cited personal experiences rather than courses they had taken in a degree program.

With all of the standards described earlier in place to insure that teachers are well equipped to teach American students social studies, there is concern about the effectiveness of this approach. Martel (2003) brings attention to the fact that college-level courses on methods of teaching social studies focus on the methodology and process of teaching, not on historical or geographical content. In addition, most universities only require one or two core courses in the social studies area for graduation requirements. He further noted that what prospective teachers need is a content background that closely matches the scope of the courses they will be teaching. His concern is that the social studies standards we have in place now don't inform the prospective teacher about what they are supposed to know, only how they are supposed to teach the content. His argument is that standards should broadly describe the content a prospective elementary teacher and a prospective grade 7-12 teacher should know in the subject areas included in social studies. .

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Teaching Methods

According to the National Institute of Public Education (Baloch, etal 2001) in Hungary, connecting the teaching and learning processes are not a traditional practice. Teaching is generally characterized by the teacher giving lectures, explaining material, and demonstrating experiments as the students take a passive role by listening, taking notes, and learning the content of subject areas. Because of the change in Hungarian government and the move towards different approaches to teaching, teachers must assume a new role. Today, teachers must be leaders of discussions and facilitators of debates. They must provide an atmosphere of openness, trust, and honesty. The Public Education Act of 1993 emphasized the importance of establishing classrooms in which students developed critical thinking and problem solving skills so that they will be able to make informed decisions in the future.

In the United States, the national standards outline specifically what students within the nation should know and be able to do at certain grade levels. These standards often indicate the type of methodology that should be used in teaching these standards. Integrated into these standards for P-12 students is the skills development of critical thinking and problem solving. Teacher training institutions are responsible for providing instruction and practice in these instructional techniques to preservice teachers.

Assistance and Support Provided

In Hungary, Civitas has provided materials, training, and support to teachers as they begin the process of incorporating instruction related to civic education into their classes. *Civitas Institute for Hungarian Civic Educators* developed for preservice and inservice teachers, focuses on the Center for Civic Education's *Foundation of Democracy* curriculum in which American master teachers and university faculty facilitated instruction on the elementary and secondary curriculum addressing issues of privacy, responsibility, authority and justice. The three year program impacted over 120 teachers and an estimated 12,000 Hungarian students. In addition Civitas provides support to teachers as they assist their students in preparing for the various civic academic competitions sponsored by Civitas (Center for Civic Education 2003; The Florida Law Related Education Association 2001).

Training and professional development specifically for civic education in the United States is provided regionally and nationally by the Center for Civic Education. The Center provides materials, support, and training for teachers in the United States as they prepare students to participate in civic education programs. Two programs by the Center for Civic Education have involved more than 26 million students at all levels nationwide. 'We the People . . . The Citizen and the Constitution,' a leading constitutional studies curriculum for elementary, middle

and secondary students in the United States, engages students in the study of the history and principles of the US constitution. Project Citizen focuses on active citizenship and public policy at the middle school level. Students work together to identify, research and pose public policy solutions to local problems. Participating students present portfolios of their particular projects in local, state, and national competitions. In recent years, many schools and individual teachers have also encouraged students to get involved in community service activities (Hahn, 1999)

It is evident that teacher training in both countries focus a great deal of attention on pedagogy and methodology and less on simple mastery of content knowledge. The practice of implementing activities in which students can participate in hands-on learning in democratic classroom environments is much more effective in teaching young people about the principles of democracy. Teachers that have the knowledge and abilities in civic education to assist students in the development of critical thinking and problem-solving skills are much better prepared to teach our youth what they need to know to become effective, responsible adult citizens.

Conclusion

Even though these two countries stand at different places in time in their journey to establishing a responsible citizenry in a democratic society, there are many similarities in the obstacles they face. It is interesting to note one incident described by Zsigó (1995) that spotlights our similar struggles. “At a recent workshop in Budapest where a political attitude survey was read, phrases like ‘we feel powerless’ and ‘politics has nothing to do with people’ were abundant. When asked where the survey may have been taken, participants generally agreed that it was done in Hungary. Much to their surprise, the survey was done in the U.S. Central Europe has inherited the political woes of the established democracies of the west” (1).

After investigating the obstacles we face to training our youth to be responsible, effective, participating adult citizens, what can we learn from one another? It seems that civic education has taken a backseat in both countries to other subjects such as reading, mathematics, and science. It also appears that parents and families influence attitudes and behaviors exhibited by students. Adult attitudes are often colored by the corruption in our institutions of government and big business and this can possibly be related to the lack of participation in civic duties and responsibilities. School-aged students are generally below expected levels in their mastery of civic knowledge, civic content, and civic skills. There are other generalizations that can be made from the results of this investigation, however, the question should be “How can we make changes to improve the situation?”

One possible answer may be found in the standards established by the Center for Civic Education that are recommended to guide the development of policy on civic education in every state and school district in the nation (Quigley 2003).

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Hungary could benefit from incorporating these policies as well. These policies state that:

- ◆ Education in civics and government should not be incidental to the schooling of youth but should be treated as a central purpose of education essential to the well-being of democracy.
- ◆ Civics and government should be considered a subject on a level with other subjects. Civic and government, like government and history, constitute an integrative and interdisciplinary subject.
- ◆ Civics and government should be taught explicitly and systematically from kindergarten through 12th grade, either as separate units and courses or as readily identifiable parts of courses in other subjects.
- ◆ Effective instruction in civics and government should include attention to the content of the discipline as well as to the essential skills, principles, and values required for full participation in and reasoned commitment to our democratic system.

We must train our young people in the principles and practices of democracy by modeling what it means to live in a democracy within the schools and community and by allowing students to participate in the democratic process. Teacher preparation institutions must train our teachers to provide the type of instruction that will help students understand the importance and value of living in a democracy. It is also important to develop within new teachers the abilities to carry out this type of instruction even if the more experienced teachers in the schools are following the traditional methods. The changes advocated will not take place overnight and the changes may be difficult with attitudes and beliefs as they presently are, but perhaps we can plant the seeds of knowledge and understanding within our youth that will prepare them to be more responsible, participating adults of the future. And hopefully their attitudes toward living in a democracy will be perpetuated in their children in both countries: the United States and Hungary.

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