

Striving for Critical Citizenship in a Teacher Education Program: Problems and Possibilities

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This paper reports on the first two semesters of an ongoing longitudinal study exploring how 22 pre-service teachers' involvement with change-oriented service-learning impacted their thinking about citizenship and civic education. Drawing upon Westheimer and Kahne's (2004) notions of citizenship, we analyzed three data sources: pre- and post-writing about citizenship and culminating reflections, and follow-up surveys (completed six months after the service-learning experience). Two central findings include: (1) students' participation in change-oriented service-learning pushed them to consider the importance of action and knowledge as essential aspects of citizenship in the short term; (2) students' thinking about the purposes and practices of civic education closely reflected their changing thinking about and enactments of citizenship over time.

Research in higher education reveals that among 18-22 year olds interest in volunteerism is at an all time high while political engagement is at an all time low (Sax, 2004; Spiezio, 2002). When disaggregated by major, those pursuing degrees in education tend to be some of the least interested in politics, with only 11.9% reporting discussing politics on a regular basis. This percentage falls well below the national average of 20% and significantly behind their peers majoring in political science, 57.6% of whom report discussing politics frequently (Sax). It stands to reason that general education majors may discuss politics even less often than secondary education majors charged with teaching civics, as the latter have likely spent more time in social studies related coursework. This research is alarming when we consider that our least civically engaged college students are in education programs preparing to assume responsibility for the civic education of our youth.

As scholars and educators committed to preparing students to become critically conscious, active citizens aware of socio-political contexts within which they live and work, we believe it is our responsibility to provide ample opportunities for students to experience and develop commitment to more critical understandings of citizenship. We ground this commitment within arguments for democratic citizenship that requires more than good character and loyalty to one's country, but the ability to "exert influence in public affairs" and work toward democratic ideals of justice, equality, and freedom (Griffin, 1996; Newmann, Bertocci, & Landsness, 1977; Westheimer & Kahne, 2004). With this in mind, we designed a longitudinal qualitative study to investi-

gate how pre-service teachers' involvement with a change-oriented service-learning project might impact how they understand citizenship (and themselves as civic actors), and what consequence this may have for their evolving conceptions of civic education. This paper reports on the first two semesters of this ongoing study, in which we followed a group of 22 pre-service elementary teachers during their methods and student teaching semesters.¹ Using Westheimer and Kahne's notions of citizenship as a conceptual lens, we analyzed three data sources: pre- and post-writing about citizenship and culminating reflections (gathered during the methods semester), and follow-up surveys (gathered during the student teaching semester).

Our reading of the data suggests two central findings: (1) students' participation in change-oriented service-learning pushed them to consider the importance of action and knowledge as essential aspects of citizenship in the short term; (2) students' thinking about the purposes and practices of civic education closely reflected their changing thinking about and enactments of citizenship over time. In what follows, we establish a change-oriented theoretical framework, exploring related literature on citizenship and service-learning. We then describe the study itself, delineate central findings, and conclude with a discussion of the implications for research and practice in higher education.

Citizenship and Social Action

Dewey (1916) wrote, "Democracy has to be born anew every generation and education is its midwife." He warns, however, that "education as a social

process and function has no definite meaning until we define the kind of society we have in mind" (p. 40). We understand civic education as the concerted effort to prepare students to assume responsibility for moving society forward in a more just direction where individuals are responsive and responsible to the larger whole, or common good. As such, teacher education is an appropriate place to foster commitment to the "society we have in mind" and to education as a means to achieve it.

What is "just," however, is widely debated in public discourse and often hinges upon one's interpretation of the balance between individual and social interest, or as Parker (2002) suggests, unity over diversity. Often, this balance tends to emphasize the individual over the greater good. In a recent study, Abowitz and Harnish (2006) found that the two most influential discourses of citizenship shaping current conceptions of civic education are "civic republican" and "liberal" in nature (p. 653). With their emphases on "community service, unity and loyalty to the nation-state," and the rights and responsibilities of individuals to "pursue their own definition of the good life" respectively, these discourses stress the need to teach students to cherish individualism and strive for good character (p. 661).

Westheimer and Kahne (2004) similarly argue that the vast majority of citizenship education programs are predicated upon notions of citizenship that emphasize personal responsibility in exchange for individual rights. Educators with this bent emphasize character education and personal responsibility for leading a moral life and contributing to the community in cooperative and positive ways (i.e., volunteering at a soup kitchen, picking up trash). This notion of citizenship is most closely related to the character education and community service movements due to its emphasis on individual character and behavior.

Other discourses of citizenship tend to emphasize concern for the greater good either in greater balance with, or as more significant than, individual interest. These include Abowitz and Harnish's (2006) "critical discourses" and Westheimer and Kahne's (2004) "participatory" and "justice-oriented" notions of citizenship. Proponents of participatory citizenship focus on "preparing students to engage in collective, community-based efforts" (Westheimer & Kahne, p. 241). Civic education predicated on participatory notions of citizenship highlight the importance of understanding how government works and what avenues are available for civic action.

A common critique of participatory approaches to civic education, however, is that they fail to equip students with the skills necessary to ask critical questions about the role of power and privilege in established systems and structures (Banks, 2008). We

align with those educators and scholars committed to more critically participatory ways of enacting citizenship. Westheimer and Kahne (2004) refer to this as "justice-oriented," meaning that they "seek to prepare students to improve society by critically analyzing and addressing social issues and injustices" (p. 242). We recognize that such a designation seems to suggest a devaluation of other claims to justice that are more focused on individual rights. We prefer to think of these more critical discourses of citizenship as simply more balanced in their approach to the "individual/common good" dilemma, with an emphasis on addressing issues that perpetuate inequitable access to individual freedom based on relationships of power and privilege embedded in societal and cultural structures. Thus, we have adopted the term "change-oriented" instead of "justice-oriented" for the purposes of this paper.

Dewey asks, "Who, then, shall conduct education so that humanity may improve?" (1916, p. 39). We believe that only critically thoughtful, change-oriented, socially-active citizens aware of socio-political contexts within which they live and work are capable of rising to this challenge. A change-orientation in the classroom challenges students to "identify and transform injustices" and "inherently fosters students to become agents of change" (Schultz, 2007, p. 173). We believe it is our responsibility to provide experiential opportunities for students to develop a commitment to more critical understandings of citizenship.

Service-Learning

Service-learning, which "integrates academic learning with meeting community needs to the benefit of both students and the community" (Donahue, 2000, p. 429), is increasingly heralded as a key curricular mechanism for promoting civic participation and social responsibility (Eyler & Giles, 1999). However, scholars differentiate types of service experiences as lending themselves to differing outcomes. Kendall (1990) posited that service-learning experiences should move students beyond acts of charity to address root causes of systemic social inequality. The poles of Kendall's continuum—charitable and change-oriented—are typically identified as competing paradigms within service-learning. Service-learning oriented toward charity, sometimes referred to as "philanthropic" (Battistoni, 1997), is an "exercise in altruism" and emphasizes "character building and a kind of compensatory justice where the well-off feel obligated to help the less advantaged" (p. 151). By contrast, change-oriented service-learning (Kahne & Westheimer, 1996), critical community service (Rhoads, 1997), revolutionary service-learning (Reich, 1994), and activism (Bickford & Reynolds, 2002) help students to develop a deeper understand-

ing of social issues and promote the development of skills necessary to work toward social change (Boyle-Baise & Langford, 2004; Donahue, 2000; Hart, 2006; Naples & Bojar, 2002). To guide our development of the experiential component of the course, we align with those who employ change-oriented service-learning, studying social problems, cultivating critical consciousness, “deepening students’ grasp of equity and fostering activism” (Boyle-Baise et al., 2006, p. 17; see also Baldwin, Buchanan, & Rudisill, 2007; Boyle-Baise & Langford; Butin, 2007; Cuban & Anderson, 2007; Maybach, 1996; Mayhew & Fernandez, 2007).

Within the field of teacher education, service-learning has been used to help teacher educators develop teachers’ commitment to community service (Wade, 1995), enhance teachers’ ability to develop integrated and/or experiential teaching strategies (Lake & Jones, 2008), deepen teachers’ understandings of diversity and commitment to the profession (Theriot, 2006), and for rationale building purposes (Dinkelman, 2001). Donahue (2000), in his case study of two pre-service teachers’ use of service-learning in their classes, observes that service-learning is political learning, and admonishes teachers to focus on “safe” or “apolitical” values “like responsibility... for which consensus is thought to exist” (pp. 446-7). Westheimer and Kahne (2004) also remind us that the politics of education for citizenship are unavoidable:

The decisions educators make when designing and researching these programs often influence politically important outcomes regarding the ways that students understand the strengths and weaknesses of our society and the ways that they should act as citizens in a democracy. (p. 238)

Yet, research on the role of service-learning in the teacher education context has been largely anecdotal and limited in scope. These studies tend to look at prospective teachers’ experience implementing service-learning projects within the K-12 setting as part of a methods or student teaching semester (Dinkelman, 2001; Lake & Jones, 2008; Wade, 1995; Theriot, 2006). Very few of the studies on service-learning and teacher education differentiate between types of service and the constructs of citizenship in which they are grounded,² leaving us to wonder, “What do we hope prospective teachers will learn? What types of learning outcomes are associated with different approaches to service-learning?” This study aims to address these gaps in the literature in its longitudinal design and grounding in a change-orientation.

Description of Course and “Take a Stand” Project

The initial context for this study was a social studies methods course for primary educators offered as part of an undergraduate degree in Early Childhood Education at a large, mid-western university. Students enroll in the course during their penultimate semester (methods block), along with four other content methods courses and a field seminar. They are concurrently placed in an elementary school where they spend two days each week. After completing the methods block semester, students move into their final semester to do their student teaching experience in an elementary school. The program in which students are enrolled leads to licensure for teaching children ages 3-8 (up through third grade). As such, the first two semesters focus exclusively on toddler and preschool education and the last three on K-3 teaching and learning.

*Take a Stand Project*³

In the methods course, we designed a change-oriented service-learning project, called the Take a Stand project, to foster pre-service teachers’ sense of civic competence as an essential aspect of preparing them to become civic educators. This semester-long assignment involved a series of steps: critical discussion about various social issues (e.g., poverty, immigration, and same-sex marriage) that we believed had particular relevance to our students’ lives, not only as citizens in their own right, but as future teachers of young children. From these discussions, students were assigned to identify one issue on which they would, individually or in small groups, “take a stand.” Students had the option of choosing an issue we discussed as a class or choosing another approved by the instructors.

As students began identifying topics of interest, we (as instructors) worked very hard to ensure that they felt free to explore multiple perspectives on issues and choose the focus of their projects. There were some project choices with which we didn’t ideologically agree, such as one student’s effort to promote and raise awareness of homeschooling for religious purposes (namely around the issue of evolution/creationism). However, pushing students toward a particular ideological stance was not our aim. We recognized, and conveyed to students frequently, that change-oriented work can take many forms and align with various ideological points of view.

Working with a local organization, students were expected to assess specific needs of their community (either campus or home) and enact a response to those needs that tended toward change rather than charity. Because students were at different levels of readiness for engaging in change-oriented work

(something we discuss in more detail in the findings section), their projects varied in the degree to which they addressed core causes of the social issues under study. However, all projects moved students toward greater understanding of the underlying causes of their issues and all had a positive impact on the local community. For instance, four students (Tami, Isabelle, Elizabeth, and Jessica⁴) worked with the local Family Service Center to research homelessness in the local community. In particular, they were interested in understanding the conditions that often lead to homelessness, homelessness rates in their community, and the services available to homeless families. Their research helped to open their eyes to the everyday circumstances leading to homelessness and how particular values and structures help to sustain these circumstances. Tami, for example, asked in her final reflection:

Is it fair that some people here (or anywhere for that matter) can afford nice houses, nice cars, college tuition, boats, etc. while there are others (maybe people we even walk by on the street) who have to scrounge to survive? I feel that it is not solely the fault of one person or of one group of people, but of the system in which we live that promotes the collection of wealth, even at the expense of others.

It was clear from these students' end-of-semester writing that their work on homelessness had a profound impact on their own thinking about the issue and their roles as citizens. But the project had a significant impact on the community as well. Tami's group came to the understanding that the greatest challenge to overcoming homelessness in the community was a lack of understanding among the public. They felt others were quick to dismiss homeless people as "others" who deserved to be homeless due to poor decision making or laziness. They turned their attention toward raising awareness in hopes of causing a swell of energy around both providing greater services to those in need and rethinking our own stereotypes and the culture that feeds them.

For their Take-a-Stand project, the group prepared a Power Point presentation, detailing all they had learned, which they shared with fellow students at a university-wide poster fair. Over the course of the morning, students stopped to chat with Tami, Isabelle, Elizabeth, and Jessica about their research and ask what they could do. To respond, Tami and her group had prepared for distribution a handout of local organizations and Web resources for students. The group then wrote letters to the editors of three local newspapers to further raise awareness.

As another example, Derek was concerned about the issue of sweatshops around the world and U.S.

corporations' role in perpetuating them. Derek attended a local hearing on the issue where he was introduced to the idea of asking for the state's divestment in corporations connected with sweatshops worldwide. He prepared a Power Point presentation to share with friends and family, included vivid photos as a means of gaining people's attention, and then offered them information about sweatshops and American-owned corporations known to support them. He then wrote a letter to the governor asking for the state's complete divestment from these companies, copied the letter and asked others to sign a copy, and sent 75 signed letters to the governor. Because students' work in the community was limited to this one semester, the scale of their projects may not warrant a change-oriented label. Nonetheless, our expectations and their efforts focused on identifying and addressing underlying causes of the issues they identified as well as assuring the community would benefit from their work. Upon completion of their stand-taking, students presented the results of their efforts at a class poster fair.

The purpose of the Take a Stand assignment was to teach students about the value of social action as a means of addressing the root causes of social problems rather than simply tending to their symptoms. Like Westheimer and Kahne (2004), we acknowledge the significance of participation that goes beyond volunteering and the value of providing students with authentic opportunities for enacting and reflecting upon such participation. But the course was about more than the taking a stand project. It was a complete service-learning course.

Service-learning is a form of experiential education that asks students "to test the merit of what they learn in the university classroom against their experiences" in the community (Chisholm, 2000, p. 330). Berry (1990) adds, "as service makes relevant and immediate the academic study, so the academic learning informs the [service] work" (p. 326). We sought to create an integrated experience for students, and thus, students' Take a Stand projects did not alone result in their shifts in thinking. Rather, their experience in the overall course led to shifts in thinking; as Stanton, Giles, and Cruz (1999) note, "action in the community and structured learning [can] be combined to provide...deeper, more relevant education for students" (p. 1). Because this is the first and only community-based service-learning experience in which students participate as part of the early childhood program, the impact of this experience is attributable to both the classroom and community components.

Methods

This longitudinal qualitative study is aimed at understanding how pre-service teachers' involvement

in change-oriented service-learning might impact their thinking about citizenship and themselves as civic actors, and what influence this may have for their evolving conceptions of civic education. The research questions include: (a) How did students' thinking about citizenship change over time (through methods and student teaching semesters)?; (b) How did students come to see themselves as civic actors as a result of their participation in change-oriented service-learning?; and (c) What effect does this seem to have on students' evolving conceptions of civic education?

Of note, it was not our methodological intent to discover what variables cause students' shifts in thinking; rather, we were interested in understanding how students' participation in service-learning led to changes in students' thinking over time. Our use of a qualitative design coupled with our experiential curricular strategy led us to identify a variety of data sources, which we believed would best illuminate students' thinking about citizenship generally and about themselves as citizens and citizenship educators more specifically.

Data Collection

We were systematic in gathering information and documenting experiences, collecting various data submitted at different points in the study.

Pre-Writing on Citizenship. On the second day of the methods semester, students were asked to write a response to the question, "What is citizenship?" These responses were collected and later analyzed for what they might tell us about students' initial conceptions of citizenship.

Post-Writing on Citizenship/Culminating Reflection. At the end of the methods semester, students submitted a 4-5 page paper reflecting on three central questions: (a) What is citizenship?; (b) How did your participation in the Take a Stand project push your thinking about citizenship?; and (c) How are you thinking about civic education? These reflections were collected and analyzed for what they would tell us about the impact of the course on students' evolving conceptions of citizenship, themselves as civic actors, and their thinking about civic education.

Follow-Up Surveys. During students' subsequent student teaching semester, six months after they completed their stand-taking projects, we invited them to complete a follow-up survey in which, through open-ended questions, they reflected on their prior semester's experience and present understandings of citizenship and civic education. Nineteen of twenty-two students returned these surveys.

Field Logs. Throughout the methods semester, the two investigators kept field logs in which we reflected on class meetings, kept notes about our shared sense-making, and documented conversations with

students about their Take a Stand projects. These field logs helped to serve as a record of our semester together, including our challenges, questions, and lessons learned.

Participants

College students majoring in education demonstrate one of the lowest rates of political participation (Sax, 2004). Thus, pre-service elementary teachers, with their responsibility of educating future generations of citizens, constitute a critical subset of the larger college population. Participants in this study included 22 of 23 pre-service elementary educators enrolled in the social studies methods course⁵ (The 23rd student declined to participate). Of these, 21 were female and one was male, two were African American and the remainder Caucasian. The majority described themselves as having grown up middle-class, although four claimed lower-class and two upper-middle income bracket on a demographic profile. All were between the ages of 20-24. Typical of other students enrolled in the Early Childhood Education program at our public regionally-serving campus, most students are from the local community and have spent the better part of their lives within 60 miles of their home. Many commute home on the weekends or continue to live with family while attending school. The majority work part-time while taking classes, and roughly a third are first-generation college students.

During the second semester of the study, 18 of 22 students were completing their student teaching requirement at elementary schools in the local area. They concurrently took one seminar course, which met weekly. Four students had left the state to complete their student teaching, and so participated in this seminar remotely.

Analytic Process

We drew upon established qualitative methods of coding and categorizing to identify broad themes across data sources looking first at the pre-post writing on citizenship. Findings presented here are the result of careful coding for *central categories* of resistance. Central categories are defined by Strauss and Corbin (1998) as those that "appear frequently in the data." We pulled out frequently used words and phrases in students' pre- and post-writing in response to the question, "What is citizenship?", and began by tallying how often they appeared across students.

We then returned to the pre- and post-writing data to complete a deductive level of analysis, using Westheimer and Kahne's (2004) three types of citizens (personally responsible, participatory, and justice-oriented) as an analytic lens for categorizing students' responses. Each student's writing was coded

Table 1
Central Categories Coded in Pre-Writing (22 students participating)

Central Category	Examples from Student Writing	Number of Students
Rights and Responsibilities	“Knowing your rights as a U.S. citizen” (Jackie) “you have all of the rights of the constitution” (Amanda), “respecting rights of others” (Cathi) “the duty to your country to uphold certain obligations” (Heidi) “sharing responsibilities with other citizens” (Samantha) “be a responsible member of the community” (Elizabeth) “knowing the rights and laws” (Rachel)	17
Membership	“You have to be a member of the US” (Amanda) “member of a small/large community” (Cathi) “sort of a membership” (Samantha) “being a responsible member of a community” (Tami) “being a member/a part of something” (Jessica) “to be a responsible member of the community” (Elizabeth) “a person’s status or relationship to a certain country and/or area” (Emily) “being a legal resident of the country” (Wendy)	15
Character traits	“To exhibit qualities of caring, kindness, respect and overall goodness.” (Elizabeth) “Being honest and trustworthy” (Melissa) “How we treat others... how we carry ourselves and respect one another... showing respect for ourselves, others, the environment, facilities in which we reside.” (Suzie)	11
Knowledge of one’s heritage	“Learning the history of how our country was founded and how we got our rights.” (Jackie) “Learning about our country.” (Melanie) “Being loyal to that country, knowing the rights and laws... knowing about the country in which you live.” (Rachel)	4
Action/ Engagement	“Learning to be an active member of society” (Melissa) “Actively contributing to the well-being of the whole” (Samantha) “taking an active role in their country” (Derek)	5

Table 2
Central Categories Coded in Post-Writing (22 students participating)

Central Category	Examples from Student Writing	Number of Students
Action	“We have to act” (Melissa) “I want to make sure I’m an active citizen who tries to make a difference rather than just sit on the couch” (Heidi) “Citizens should take stands on issues that they feel are important” (Rachel) “I feel that a citizen is anyone who puts some effort forward to actively participate” (Susie)	22
Knowledge	“Citizenship is an awareness of the issues that affect our lives directly or indirectly” (Kelly) “I know that part of being a good citizen is being well-informed” (Sam) “I think as a good citizen you should be knowledgeable about issues so you can support them in appropriate ways” (Cindy)	13
Connection with/Caring for Others in the Community	“Citizenship means... being connected to an area and caring about the issues that affect everyone living there” (Tami) “I am thinking citizenship is about creating community. As a citizen you need to work together making the community a better place to live” (Cindy) “A good citizen finds out what they can do to help and is interested in their own life as well as others” (Susie) “Citizenship... requires one to think of the greater good before themselves and to strive to make the place around them better for all who live there” (Elizabeth)	5
Respect for Diverse Others	“Citizenship requires an understanding of others and their differences” (Sam)	1

as demonstrating the personally responsible (PR), participatory (P), or justice-oriented (JO) citizen types. For instance, Rachel's pre-writing was coded as PR (personally responsible) due to its emphasis on individual rights and responsibilities and individual acts such as voting and demonstrating loyalty to one's country. She wrote, "Citizenship is living in a country, being loyal to that country, knowing the rights and laws, following the laws, knowing about the country in which you live, and voting on issues and political candidates."

Occasionally, more than one code was applied to stretches of text because the data suggested more than one tendency. For instance, Derek's pre-writing was coded as both PR (personally responsible) and P (participatory): "Citizenship is a person taking an active role in their country/government/society. This role should be positive with some sense of the group's well being." While the emphasis is still on individual action (personally responsible), there is a greater awareness of a common good and a need to be a part of something larger (participatory).

To demonstrate the coding for "central categories" in students' pre- and post-writing, we have appended two tables that include category names, examples from student writing, and the number of students whose writing was coded under each category (see Tables 1 and 2). Categories in bold were found in at least half of the students' writing.

Next, we wrote descriptive pieces to capture students' thinking at the beginning and end of the semester. We wrote these individually, then compared our writing to see what story we believed the data was telling about students' evolving conceptions of citizenship over the course of the semester.

From here, we turned to students' writing about their evolving conceptions of themselves as civic educators as captured in their culminating reflections. The initial coding phase employed a deductive process in response to our research question: *What consequences do students' experiences seem to have for their evolving conceptions of and commitments to civic education?* Once all reflections were coded, we compiled "reports" of our coded stretches of text for each research question. These reports were then analyzed independently using inductive processes, which served as the second phase of coding. A vine of codes grew, as did the need to establish "pattern codes"—a way of grouping "explanatory or inferential codes" into themes, sets, or constructs (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 69). We then brought our independent codes together to see how to subsume the "particulars into the general" (Miles & Huberman, p. 245).

Six months later, we collected students' follow-up surveys (19 of 22 were returned). We employed the

same analytic process described above, deductively using our three research questions, compiling these in a visual display, then writing descriptive pieces and returning to our descriptions from the spring semester to engage comparative analysis.

Limitations

One potential limitation of this study is researcher bias. As faculty committed to social justice education, the lens through which we view the data risks being clouded by our perspectives. However, strategies such as indicating how the analytic process includes checking the data and purposefully examining alternative explanations were employed to limit researcher bias in interpretation (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). Our use of independent coding coupled with comparing codes for agreement contributed to inter-rater reliability (Armstrong, Gosling, Weinman, & Martaeu, 1997). Further, our use of multiple data sources strengthened the study's design and contributed to the credibility of the findings (Patton, 1990).

Another potential limitation of the findings at the end of the spring semester may have simply reflected students' desire to please the instructors to receive a good grade in the class. In general, it is difficult to know if students' efforts are intrinsically or extrinsically motivated—often they are some combination of both (Hofer, 2002). Regardless of motivation, however, it is clear that students' constructs of citizenship broadened over the course of the semester to include more participatory and justice orientations. The longitudinal nature of the study was designed to measure the degree to which students internalized and continued to enact these understandings six months later. Thus, the study is not only about the immediate impact of change-oriented service-learning on students' thinking, but whether students' new ideas persisted once engagement with service-learning had ceased.

Findings

In this section, we present two central findings emerging from the data: (1) students' participation in change-oriented service-learning pushed them to consider the importance of action and knowledge as essential aspects of citizenship in the short term; (2) students' thinking about the purposes and practices of civic education closely reflected their evolving conceptions and enactments of citizenship over time.

Students' Evolving Conceptions of Citizenship

Pre-Writing. At the start of the methods semester, 18 out of 22 students' conceptions of citizenship (as articulated in their pre-writing) reflected the personally responsible type. They described citizens as

rights-bearing, with a responsibility to follow the law, having earned their status as citizens by virtue of living in a particular place. Jackie's writing exemplifies this characterization, with emphasis on rights and responsibilities, knowing about our collective past, and how to contribute to society:

Citizenship is knowing your rights as a U.S. citizen, knowing your responsibilities as a citizen (voting, making informed, educated decisions), learning the history of how our country was founded and how we got our rights, knowing what qualifies a person to be a citizen, learning to be an active member of society.

Kelly also points to the importance of rights and responsibilities, but adds a character dimension, suggesting the development of particular dispositions towards one's community:

Citizenship is being a part of your town, state, and country, allows you to have rights and responsibilities, a way of living in accordance with laws, rules, etc., an attitude you may have about living where you do, some feel a sense of pride or responsibility.

Similarly, Amanda speaks to a citizen's rights and responsibilities, but further notes one's duty to hold down a job and the right one has to education and land:

You have to be a member of the U.S., you have all the rights of the Constitution, you have a job and spend the money you make however you want, you have to follow the rules of the state you live in, earns you the right to receive free and public education K-12, can live anywhere you want, have the right to our land, have the right to vote and control aspects of the government.

Cathi specifies responsibilities to others in the community, including respecting their rights and beliefs:

Citizenship is freedom in the U.S., being a member of a small/large community (classroom, state, country), having rights as a U.S. citizen, respecting the rights and responsibilities of others, their property, and the law, keeping our town, state and country safe and clean, assisting others when needed, being non-judgmental, being collaborative when the time permits, respecting others' beliefs, stands, and opinions.

Seven students were coded as articulating participatory citizenship (three of these were also coded as personally responsible). Samantha exemplifies this kind of citizen in her emphasis on active participation in the social life of a community.

Citizenship is being a part of a larger community, actively contributing to the well-being of the whole, sharing responsibilities with other citizens, sort of a membership. It is like a co-op, being part of a group with similar beliefs/goals, the right to be part of a larger community.

One student, Melissa, was coded as articulating aspects of change-oriented citizenship (as well as personally responsible and participatory) when she wrote:

Citizenship is taking responsibility for the community, taking action to improve lives, helping others for no reward, being honest and trustworthy, character counts, accepting the difference of others.

Her emphasis on responsibility, not just for oneself but for the community as a whole, and a commitment to improve lives, is reflective of Westheimer and Kahne's (2004) justice-oriented citizenship.

Post-Writing. By the end of the methods semester, after completing the stand-taking project, all 22 students reflected again on their understandings of citizenship. In this post-writing on citizenship, all the students wrote about the importance of action, compared to only 5 at the start of the semester. Some, like Cathi, emphasized individual action:

This experience opened my eyes to the ways that I can be an active citizen. Before this class, I used to think, "I can't make a difference"... but I was wrong. Even the littlest efforts to help out in the community will make a difference. Even if you reach out to one person... All it takes is one person to make a difference.

Similarly, Beth wrote, "You can only try your best to do what is right. When you have the tools and resources to make a difference, you do it. Any respectful or good action is considered citizenship." For these students, the inclusion of action in their construct of citizenship marked a significant change in how they talked about citizenship.

For many, their statements about action revealed growth in their view that they possessed agency. For instance, Christie wrote,

I now realize that as a citizen, I have certain responsibilities that must be upheld if I want to keep my environment from negatively changing. This includes not only participating in actions to individually help the environment, such as volunteering to pick up trash, but to help educate others in the concepts I have come to better understand, in order to make a bigger difference in my community, and in the world.

Derek added,

We must actively care. We must be aware that things in our communities, country and planet are sometimes being done wrong and we can change them. If we gather knowledge and spread that knowledge, then others will have the means to actively care as well.

Students articulated their actions as not only individual engagement with their communities, but also in relationship with others; they described action as necessarily collective and concerned with the greater good. Suzie wrote, “A good citizen finds out what they can do to help and is interested in their own life as well as others’.” Cindy similarly wrote, “I am thinking citizenship is about creating community. As a citizen you need to work together making the community a better place to live. You need to be aware of the issues around and take a stand.”

Another theme that emerged from analysis of student’s post-writing was knowledge: the importance of being well-informed and gaining awareness about issues. Thirteen students wrote about knowledge as an essential component of citizenship. In students’ pre-writing, knowledge was mentioned by only four students and included “knowing your rights and the laws,” “knowing government and procedures,” “knowing cultural expectations,” and “knowing about the country in which you live.” Only one student at the start of the semester stated that “making informed and reasoned decisions” was important for citizens. At the end of the semester, more than half of the students included statements about the importance of being informed or educated about current events or issues. Cindy wrote, “I think as a good citizen you should be knowledgeable about issues so you can support them in appropriate ways.” Similarly, Colleen wrote, “Citizens need to think deeply and create ideas and thoughts independently and with reason.” Samantha wrote, “I know that part of being a good citizen is being well-informed. Being well-informed allows one to make decisions that will contribute to and impact society.”

For four students, action and knowledge combined in a desire to understand and address underlying issues impacting the community. For instance, Tami wrote,

I believe that citizenship means so much more than simply living in an area. It means being connected to an area and caring about the issues that affect everyone living there. It means not closing your eyes to the problems that face other citizens, but opening them to see and even act upon the things that affect the community.

Similarly, Elizabeth wrote,

Citizenship requires not only active participation in one’s place of living, but also the ability to make change, and in the least attempt it. It requires one to think of the greater good before themselves and to strive to make the place around them better for all who live there. Citizenship is not just about volunteering and being active, but also being passionate about an issue and having your voice heard.

From the beginning of the semester to the end, students’ thinking about citizenship changed. At the end of the semester, 12 students were coded as personally responsible as opposed to 18 at the start of the semester. Yet, as we noted earlier, this simple coding does not reveal the qualitative differences in their writing. Students moved from predominantly thinking about citizenship as a personally responsible endeavour, emphasizing individual responsibility and demonstrating good character, to the inclusion of action and knowledge as essential components. Beyond this, however, 12 students were coded as participatory at the end of the semester compared with 6 at the beginning, and 3 were coded as change-oriented compared with 1 at the beginning.

Conceptions of Civic Education

Educating Active Citizens. At the close of the methods semester, students’ thinking about civic education closely aligned with their changing conceptions of citizenship. When asked what they envisioned to be most important for children to learn about citizenship and how they envisioned helping children learn about citizenship, 12 out of 22 students talked specifically about teaching children to become active citizens through active engagement in class. Jackie wrote,

It is my goal to encourage my students to find an issue they truly care about, educate themselves, and do what they can to make a change... To do this, I want to find an issue that as a class we can take a stand on. I can teach children the importance of taking advantage of our freedom to take a stand.

Students credit their stand-taking experience for this newfound commitment to active and critical civic education. Eleven students discussed the power of the Take a Stand experience for providing them an example they could share with students or even strive to replicate in their own future classrooms. Elizabeth wrote, “I am now aware and have had practice at being an active citizen. It is important that I had this experience if I am to help my students become active citizens as well.” Rachel wrote, “I now have an example to share with students about what it means to ‘take a stand.’ I can use this experience to show

what citizens can do to help.”

Students’ thinking about civic education seemed to closely resemble their thinking about citizenship at the close of the methods semester, pointing to the significance of community action and knowledge of issues impacting the community. Five students who did not specifically talk about action or knowledge pointed instead to the importance of “hands-on” learning, writing, “students will actually be doing instead of just talking” (Heidi). These students also identified the importance of helping children become connected to one another, building community in the classroom. Kelly wrote, “I want to stimulate thinking about the good of the community... This starts with community building activities that create a sense of being connected to others in the classroom.” Of these five students who neglected to write about action or knowledge, all remained within the personally responsible definition of citizenship at the end of the semester, suggesting there may indeed be a relationship between how students understand and experience citizenship in their own lives and the meaning they make of the role and content of civic education.

Six Months Later: When surveyed six months after their completion of change-oriented service-learning projects, student reports reflect a lapse in their civic involvement and a reversion to thinking about citizenship education as primarily having to do with community building within the classroom and teaching the golden rule. In stark contrast to students’ strong commitment to action as an essential aspect of effective citizenship and civic education in their post-writing/culminating reflection, few students articulated this view six months later. Eight students reported some civic involvement during the preceding six months, citing volunteering, donating money, tutoring, and mentoring in the community. Only one student was active in equivalent ways to the expectations of the stand taking project: “I have been involved in raising awareness for a new school in my community. I’m participating in council meetings and door to door campaigning” (Isabelle). A few other students indicated that while they were not civically active, they were increasing their awareness of issues, though only one of these students named a specific issue. The remaining students stated they had not been active in their communities. Many of these students pointed to the demands of student teaching to explain their inaction. This data suggest that students’ evolving conceptions of citizenship, with emphasis on being civically active, does not persist even six months later.

In addition to their lapse in personal civic action, their description of citizenship education had largely reverted to conceptualizations of rights-bearing citizenship as articulated in their pre-writing. The major-

ity of students described civic education as helping children learn to appreciate difference, developing respectful and cooperative communities, and teaching children about their rights and responsibilities. This view is exemplified by Emily’s description of a contract that children in her classroom would recite each day:

I pledge to try to do my best every single day. Listening, learning, and being fair when I work and play. Keeping hands and feet to myself, treating others with respect. Making sure our things are neat is what we should expect. I’ll listen when my teacher speaks and follow every rule. I pledge I’ll be a good citizen in my classroom and my school.

Of note, when asked what opportunities they believed would best allow children to develop their understanding of citizenship, several students identified “being active,” “hands on” education, and “taking a stand” as important. However, their beliefs about how students should engage civically did not necessarily reconcile with what students believed children should learn about citizenship. For instance, Rachel indicated students should have opportunities “to participate in a ‘take a stand’ project at their level” but identified that children should “learn about their rights and responsibilities as citizens.” Isabelle, also advocating civic action, indicated “children should be involved in community events;” she added that children should have the opportunity to “participate in a cause and see what happens when they become involved such as volunteering at a soup kitchen.” Her example, however, suggests that students’ conception of active and involved citizenship, and thus their beliefs about taking a stand, align with personally responsible citizen acts rather than participatory or change-oriented ones.

Discussion

A Commitment to Action and Knowledge

Over the course of the methods semester, students’ conceptions of citizenship began to shift from emphasizing rights and responsibilities to a focus on action and knowledge. Even those whose thinking remained with the personally responsible type shifted to include individual action and knowledge as essential aspects of citizenship. Involving them in critical dialogue around social issues and social action to address those issues, it seems, pushed them to consider other aspects of citizenship, namely action and knowledge. These findings resonate with others who have examined how service-learning provides opportunities to cultivate deeper understandings of citizenship, social justice, and themselves

(Baldwin, Buchanan, & Rudisill, 2007; Einfeld & Collins, 2008; Manley, Jr., Buffa, Dube, & Reed, 2006; Roschelle, Turpin, & Elias, 2000).

Westheimer and Kahne (2004) have not suggested that their three types of citizenship (personally responsible, participatory, justice-oriented) share any particular relationship. Rather, they identify the three types as three distinct conceptions of citizenship. Data from this study suggests, however, that over time, students either expounded upon their earlier conceptions of citizenship or moved from one to another, suggesting that the three types of citizenship may share a linear and perhaps even additive relationship. A vast number of students began their post-writing like Hannah, who wrote, "I used to think that citizenship was voting and participating in local events. I now understand that it is that and much more..." So it was not that students abandoned one construct of citizenship for another, but began to explore new dimensions of what it might mean to enact citizenship and added them to their earlier understandings. We believe this finding also suggests that there may be multiple constructs of citizenship embedded within each of Westheimer and Kahne's (2004) categories, which are worthy of further exploration (see also Morton, 1995).

Challenging Dominant Constructs of Citizenship

Both at the end of the methods semester and six months later, there appears to be a relationship between students' personal enactments of citizenship and their thinking about the purposes and practices of civic education. When their conceptions of citizenship emphasized action and knowledge, they wrote about engaging children in community action and helping them to become "informed" citizens. Months later, when students had largely abandoned engagement in their own communities, they reverted back to thinking about civic education as primarily having to do with social and character education. This relationship has not been adequately explored and deserves further attention.

Given most college students have spent the better part of their lives socialized in schools dominated by a discourse of personally responsible citizenship (Abowitz & Harnish, 2006; Westheimer & Kahne, 2004), it is perhaps not surprising that one semester engaged in change-oriented service-learning failed to contribute to shifts in thinking over time. And yet, if civic education is to fulfill its mission to prepare youth for democratic citizenship, the cycle of socialization must be broken. With this in mind, we suggest increased intentionality across the curriculum to engage students in change-oriented work. We recommend teacher education faculty discuss ways in which to thread experiential components, and in par-

ticular change-oriented strategies, across the curriculum. We believe this work underscores the importance of continued faculty dialogue about the purposes of our work in preparing students for their roles as citizens and the ways in which we can foster more complex thinking about these roles. In these dialogues, we also must assess students' developmental readiness for transformative learning experiences.

Students' Readiness: Building Bridges

While students' stand-taking did not move them fully into change-oriented citizenship, all students shifted in their thinking about citizenship from the beginning to the end of the methods semester. Further, some students' attention to moral responsibilities (i.e. developing caring relationships rather than giving charity), an aspect of change-oriented citizens acts, suggested that some were approaching a transition in their thinking. For instance, Tami and her group researched and worked with the local family services agency to better understand the circumstances that give rise to homelessness and the consequences of homelessness for the community at large. As noted earlier, they then prepared a Power Point presentation, which they shared with other students at a university-wide forum and wrote letters to the editor to three local papers to raise awareness of the issue. Tami began the semester writing about citizenship in a personally responsible and participatory way. By the end of the semester, however, her writing was more change-oriented, considering the underlying inequities that may have given rise to the issue she tackled.

King and Ladson-Billings (1990) described their attempts to help pre-service teachers consider critical perspectives "as a continuum that begins with self-awareness and knowledge and extends to thinking critically about society and making a commitment to transformative teaching" (p. 26). Educators should not expect students to "take up immediate residence in the new [cognitive] world" (Love & Guthrie, 1999, p. 75). Faculty are encouraged to create programs that acknowledge students' current patterns of thinking and "quite deliberately create the circumstances for its productive undoing" (Kegan, 1994, p. 46).

Kegan's (1994) conception of a "consciousness bridge" is instructive as we think about how to promote more complex reasoning. His basic premise is that there exists a mismatch between the "curriculum" of contemporary culture and our cognitive capacity to deal with the demands of modern life. Applied to the instructional context, faculty must be bridge builders, anchoring the service-learning experience in a way "that is both *meaningful* to those who will not yet understand that curriculum and *facilitative* of a transformation of mind so that they will

come to understand that curriculum” (Kegan, p. 62). Intentionally designed reflection is often cited as essential for establishing the habit of interrogating one’s experiences and stimulating individuals to see and understand experiences in different ways (Eyler & Giles, 1999; O’Grady, 2000; Rhoads, 1997). Kegan also suggests “sympathetic coaching” to provide the needed support for when students get in over their heads. Coaches provide “welcoming acknowledgment to exactly who the person is right now as he or she is” (Kegan, p. 43) while the student gradually grows to a new way of knowing the world.

Conclusion

As we reflect on the data collected in the initial phase of this study, we are inspired and dismayed. We are inspired by the possibility of change-oriented service-learning for pushing students’ thinking about citizenship, and dismayed by how quickly their new-found commitments to action and knowledge were lost once alternatives to the powerful “personally responsible” discourse were absent. We also are intrigued by the apparent relationship between students’ evolving conceptions of citizenship and their thinking about the purposes and practices of civic education. We are hopeful that this study will offer a useful starting point for delving into study of this relationship and that the longitudinal data the study continues to yield will offer further insight.

The complex social issues that continue to plague the U.S. (and the world)—homelessness, poverty, hunger, to name a few—demand that higher education develop citizens committed to justice and social change (Maybach, 1996; Mayhew & Fernandez, 2007). Scholars call for more than academic knowledge to address social problems that face society: for college graduates to “situate themselves as citizens with attendant responsibilities to identify and deal with social problems” and for students to draw upon the skills, expertise, and commitment “to use one’s energies and abilities in service to a collective society” (Hamrick, 1998, p. 450). Providing opportunities for students, and in particular pre-service teachers, to experience change-oriented citizenship has the potential not only to help our graduates become more active and change-oriented in their communities, but also help to ensure that schools will be places where future teachers will prepare generations of citizens able and ready to assume their rightful place as active members of a democratic society.

Notes

¹ We are currently entering a third phase of this study in which we intend to follow students into their initial year of teaching.

² Wade’s (2007) study of 40 elementary teachers’ efforts to engage their students in social justice-oriented service-learning is an exception, but this study is situated outside of teacher education.

³ The Take a Stand project is adapted from an assignment developed by Bickford and Reynolds (2002).

⁴ When names are provided, they are pseudonyms.

⁵ Human subject approval was gained and all participants signed an informed consent form.

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