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**Reawakening the Heart of Civics Education: Activating Critical Civic Empathy and a
Sense of Civic Responsibility in Undergraduate Students**

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2023

MERRIMACK COLLEGE

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IN

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

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AUTHOR: Meg Meadows

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Abstract

We are at a critical juncture in history. Our country is politically divided, and our trust in democratic institutions is wavering. As a result, there is an urgent call on higher education to rededicate themselves to their civic missions and prioritize civic learning and democratic engagement (CLDE) to develop civically minded graduates who are motivated to engage across differences to advance the public good. The *Reawakening the Heart of Civics Education* curriculum uses CLDE pedagogies and critical civic empathy theory to move students beyond voting and volunteering to full civic participation with an awakened sense of civic responsibility and social empathy. Six thought leaders in higher education, civic engagement, and youth development reviewed this curriculum. All six reviewers rated the curriculum favorably and would recommend this curriculum to their students and colleagues. They stated that this curriculum differentiated from other CLDE curricula due to its nuanced approach of centering students' voices and experiences throughout the lessons. In addition, they also found the student-led civic project and intergroup dialogue components to be effective teaching strategies. This curriculum puts the heart back into civics education and moves the needle toward meaningful civic participation on college campuses.

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Reawakening the Heart of Civics Education: Activating Critical Civic Empathy and a Sense of Civic Responsibility in Undergraduate Students

Higher education institutions often claim that the bedrock of their institutional mission is to prepare students to be active citizens and contributors to the public good (Collins et al., 2022). Nevertheless, colleges and universities are shrinking the public purpose of their mission to cement the view that higher education is a private good and should prioritize workforce development. However, research indicates that civic learning and democratic engagement pedagogies and practices profoundly support student leadership and 21st-century skill development. Thus, when our country is politically divided, and trust in our democratic institutions is wavering, there is an urgent call for higher education to revitalize its civic mission. This reinvestment in civic learning and democratic engagement will benefit students and begin to mend our societal and political fissures.

The lack of investment in civics education does not start in higher education but is apparent in our K-12 public school systems. According to a recent Rhode Island State of Civics Education Report, K-12 teachers reported that civics is not a priority for their school or district. In addition, only 10% of school administrators reported that there is an attempt to integrate civic learning across the curriculum (Siegel-Stechler, 2022). This lack of commitment and resources to civics education is not just in Rhode Island school systems but nationwide. Despite all states requiring some statutory civics education in K-12, the “outcomes are inadequate and highly unequal, even within states that have strict requirements” (Levine, 2013, p. 137).

Furthermore, there is a growing sentiment amongst young people that democratic engagement and political involvement “rarely has any tangible results” and that politics today are “no longer able to meet the challenges our country is facing” (Harvard Kennedy School Institute

of Politics, 2022, para 1). Consequentially, young people enter higher education with little civic experience or knowledge and dwindling confidence in democratic and public processes.

In addition, when undergraduate students are at college, they have limited opportunities to develop their civic identity because higher education has reprioritized workforce development over civic participation, social activism, and public advocacy. This “decoupling of mission from infrastructure and activities” has left significant gaps in civic learning and democratic engagement programming, not to mention missed opportunities in student development and leadership (Evans et al., 2019, p. 31).

Research has indicated that civic learning, democratic engagement, and social action foster 21st-century leadership skills which are transferable to various sectors and career paths. According to CIRCLE (n.d), research has identified that “there are clear and compelling links between core civic participation and leadership skills and competencies and skills that are valued in the workplace” (n.p.). CIRCLE also claimed that youth participating in civically engaged activities expand their social networks and receive mentoring and counseling (n.d.). In addition, civic learning and democratic engagement can be viewed as a viable “pathway to readdressing inequity and advancing social mobility” among youth and college students (CIRCLE, n.d, n.p.). If emerging research points to the benefits of civic learning and democratic engagement on student learning, development, and achievement, then why aren’t these pedagogies deeply embedded into institutional programming and campus culture?

Many campuses claim that their mission is to advance the public purpose of education. If that is the case, colleges and universities must build ample opportunities for students to develop their civic identity across disciplines and co-curricular activities. Civic identity development refers to understanding how democratic experiences impact one’s life and belief systems,

developing an action-oriented set of attitudes and values, and engaging in public processes. In addition, civic learning and democratic engagement curricula and programs must move from episodic civic actions, such as voter registration, that are cyclical and lightweight to ongoing and interdisciplinary approaches for civic identity development and leadership. Students cannot just be civically engaged every four years during a presidential election; democracy demands continuing involvement and participation. Therefore, higher education must rise to the occasion and answer the call to protect and expand democracy and dedicate the resources to growing and graduating civically-minded students.

This capstone paper will share a civic learning and democratic engagement curriculum that uses a novel and practical framework to help students understand their social position, empathize with their peers and community, and instill a sense of civic responsibility for advancing the public good.

Literature Review

One of the goals of a democratic society is for citizens to be aware of processes that impact their lives and participate in democratic systems to advance the public good. Civically-minded people are “knowledgeable of and involved in the community, and have a commitment and sense of responsibility as members of that community” (Bringle & Steinberg, 2010, p. 429). To be civically engaged means taking action, individually or collectively, to define and address public concerns. In essence, civic engagement “involves people coming together to solve the problems of community living” (APA, 2009; Hylton, 2018, p. 87). Hence, to be civically engaged, one connects individual self-interest to the common good and dedicates themselves to such efforts (Hylton, 2018).

Civic engagement is often used broadly to describe a swath of community-based experiences (Jacoby, 2009). Keeter et al. (2002) broke down civic engagement into three categories: (1) civic activities, (2) political voice activities, and (3) electoral activities. *Civic activities* include voluntary participation in associations that support the health and well-being of a community (Hylton, 2018). For example, belonging to a religious organization, volunteering for a community-based organization, such as a food pantry, or being part of a community or professional association, such as the small business bureau or a neighborhood task force, would be considered a civic activity. *Political voice activities* are collective actions that try to shape and influence social institutions (Hylton, 2018). Participating in a protest, organizing a boycott or petition, or providing written or oral testimony on a piece of legislation are examples of political voice activities. Lastly, *electoral activities* include efforts that influence the outcomes of the electoral process, such as voting, registering others to vote, or volunteering on a campaign (Hylton, 2018).

In recent years reports have demonstrated a decline in civic literacy, a decrease in community-based organizations and association membership, and diminishing trust in government (Winthrop, 2020). One could argue that we are at a critical social juncture where democracy is increasingly threatened with each election cycle, and political divisions are widening. There is a pressing need to expand and enhance civic learning and democratic engagement opportunities in the United States, particularly in higher education, where most institutions claim this is part of their purpose and mission.

The following will provide an overview of 1) the civic mission of higher education institutions, 2) the civic learning and democratic engagement (CLDE) theory of change, and 3) critical civic empathy theory. In addition, this section also highlights CLDE's benefits on student

engagement and achievement, intergroup and deliberative dialogue, and collective civic problem-solving and project-based teaching and learning.

The Civic Mission of Higher Education

Our education system's foundational purpose, notably higher education, is to prepare students to be active citizens and community leaders. Many higher education institutions include this in their mission and institutional goals; however, defining and operationalizing civic engagement in higher education is multifaceted and convoluted (Evans et al., 2019). In addition, competing priorities, such as career readiness for the labor market and the rise of online teaching and learning, have weakened civic engagement programs across campuses (Evans et al., 2019).

Young people report that they are overwhelmed by society's complex problems, feel like the country is increasingly polarized and that their rights are under attack (Harvard Kennedy School Institute of Politics, 2022). These threats to young people's sense of freedom and safety have reportedly led to increased voting rates among young people and higher levels of political involvement. In addition, 76% of young people recently surveyed reported they believed their age group has the power to change things (Booth, 2023). However, despite this hope, young people reported that they *plan* to take future action or *would* if they were presented with an opportunity but did not indicate current involvement. In addition, many reported that they did not feel informed or qualified enough to participate in politics (Booth, 2023). Thus, one could infer that young people believe they have the power to make a difference, but they do not see themselves, at this stage in their lives and development, as the agent of change. This then begs whether higher education institutions give students enough opportunities to actualize their civic participation and leadership.

Noteworthy American figures, from Thomas Jefferson to W.B. Du Bois, have cited that higher education should prepare citizens to participate actively in the democratic process and be defenders of the common good (Evans, 2019; Wendling, 2018). For example, Du Bois stated that college was “the vehicle for shaping civically minded, educated individuals who, upon graduation, had a duty to return to their communities and fight against the injustices that their community endures” (Wendling, 2018, p. 289). In addition, Du Bois pointedly claimed that curricula need to be based on the local community, and knowledge should be applied through action (Wendling, 2018).

Today, scholars and advocates have called on colleges and universities to revisit their civic mission and institutional purpose. For instance, colleges should not prioritize career placement over educating students to be active members of our democracy (Kermiet & Locke, 2021). Even though many institutions claim they are dedicated to civic engagement, Kermiet and Locke’s (2021) research identifies varying degrees of implementation and even more contradictory outcomes. One could argue that this is because civic engagement is broadly defined and difficult to measure. However, there may be another reason: higher education institutions have claimed that civic engagement is a priority because it signals legitimacy in academia. Although, once one moves past this facade, one will recognize that there is little institutional support to actualize civic learning and democratic engagement on most college campuses.

For this reason, higher education leaders need to consider the “infrastructure, learning, and culture within the institution that enable students to be active contributors to and creators of a thriving democracy” (Kermiet & Locke, 2021, p. 144). Furthermore, there is a call for higher education to deepen civic engagement programming beyond voting and volunteering and support

students in becoming “builders of democracy and co-creators of the community” (Collins et al., 2022, p.155).

Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement Theory of Change

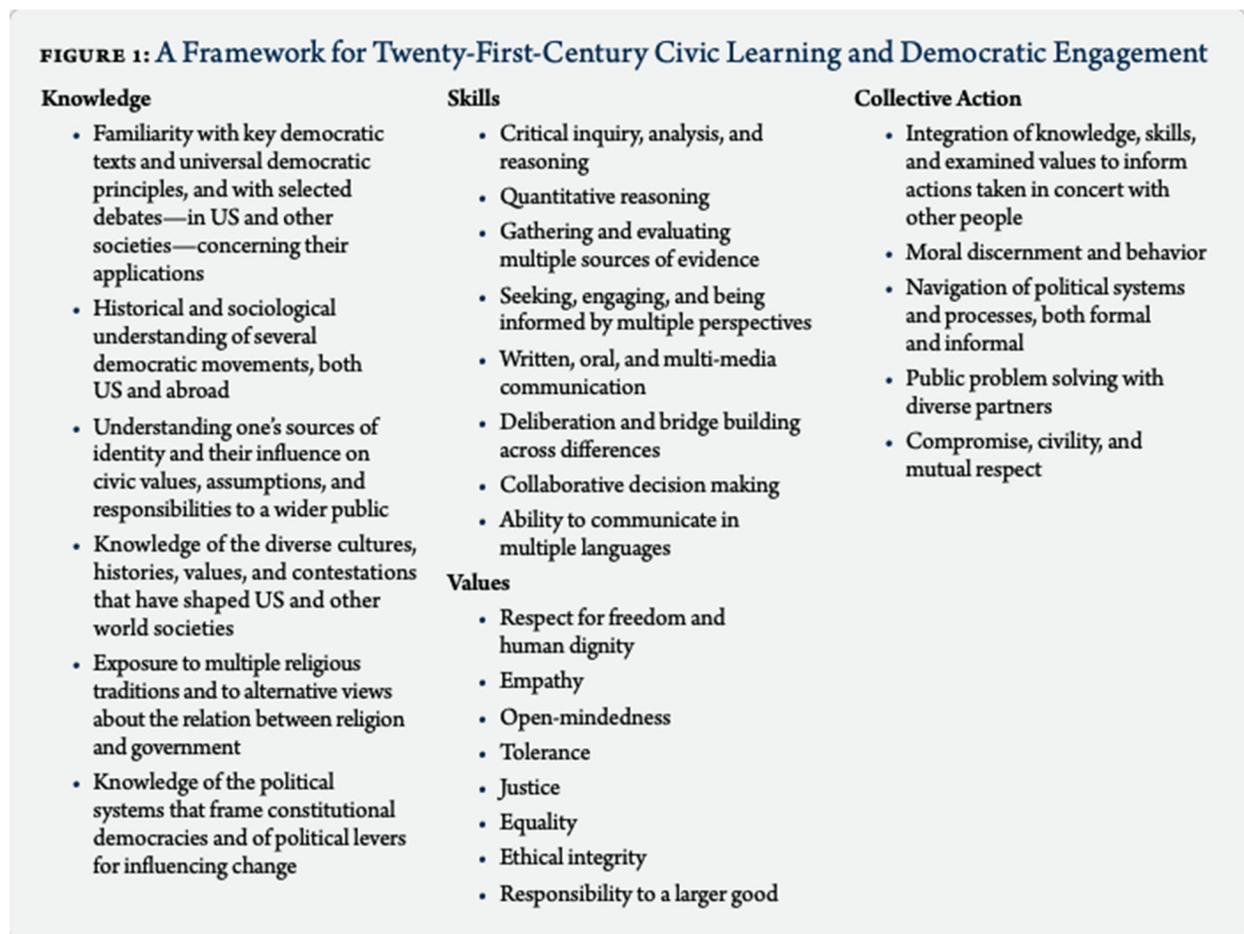
In 2012, The National Task Force on Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement released a ground-breaking report, *A Crucible Moment: College Learning and Democracy’s Future*, which called on higher education institutions to grow our nation’s civic capacity. In addition, this report laid a framework for institutionalizing and operationalizing civic learning and democratic engagement (CLDE) in colleges and universities. *A Crucible Moment* had a rippling effect, sparking nationwide attention on campuses. A decade later, its compelling message remains alarmingly accurate, but whether we have moved the needle on CLDE efforts in higher education remains in question.

Civic learning and democratic engagement have many definitions and pedagogical practices. The *A Crucible Moment* report grouped ‘civic learning’ and ‘democratic engagement’ intentionally together to “emphasize the civic significance of preparing students with the knowledge and for action,” and since then, it has become a widely adopted theory of change in the field of civic education and community engagement (National Task Force on Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement, 2012, p.3). The civic learning and democratic engagement (CLDE) theory of change framework includes four categories– knowledge, skills, values, and collective action.

Through this “schema of civic knowledge,” students embrace a civically-engaged mindset and are committed to full civic participation and action (National Task Force on Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement, 2012, p.3). As *Figure 1: A Framework for Twenty-First Century Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement* highlights, the CLDE framework prompts

students to understand the historical and sociological contexts of critical democratic principles, systems, values, and movements, as well as discern how their civic identity and influences are connected to, and impact society and the public (National Task Force on Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement, 2012, p.4). In addition, this framework emphasizes 21st-century skills development such as critical reasoning, seeking multiple perspectives, engaging across differences, and collaborative decision-making.

Figure 1: A Framework for Twenty-First Century Civic Learning and Democratic. (2012)



Furthermore, the CLDE theory of change focuses on building individual and collective capacities in 1.) civic literacy and skill building; 2.) civic inquiry; 3.) civic action; and 4.) civic

agency (Noble & Kniffen, 2022). *Civic literacy and skill building* is when students have a baseline understanding of democracy and its principles, connect historical and sociological events to current affairs, and understand what fulfilled democratic values look like in society. *Civic inquiry* is the ability, and capacity, to consider multiple perspectives and viewpoints and be curious about how these influence and impact decisions and policies. According to the CLDE framework, *civic action* is the “development of moral and political courage to take risks with the goal of achieving a greater public good” (Noble & Kniffen, 2022, p.174). Lastly, *civic agency* is the capacity of citizens to engage across differences to address social issues and problems (Noble & Kniffen, 2022).

As mentioned, a central tenant of the CLDE framework is the connection between individual self-interests and interconnected positions in the community and society (Hylton, 2018). Through CLDE pedagogies and practices, students apply theory to real-world situations and better understand the complexity of social issues and their root causes (Messmore & Davis, 2020). In addition, the CLDE framework prompts students to engage across differences and better understand how communities comprise different social identities (Messmore & Davis, 2020). Finally, students can apply these observations to the interconnected systems that make democracy function.

Benefits of CLDE on Student Learning and Achievement

There has been much research on the positive impacts of civic learning and democratic engagement on student learning, graduation rates, and voting rates (Chittum et al., 2022). For example, the Association of American Colleges and Universities (2012) reports that civically engaged students have higher satisfaction rates with their college experience, higher GPAs, higher retention rates, and are more likely to complete their degrees. Research also indicates that

CLDE improves a student's academic performance in college and instills a lifelong dedication to civic learning and democratic engagement. For example, completing a four-year college degree is positively associated with civic engagement activities such as regular volunteering and voting in presidential elections (Collins et al., 2022). In addition, national data suggest that students involved in civic engagement activities, whether within academic programs or extracurricular, coupled with an institution's commitment and integration of civic engagement, impact a student's post-college civic engagement (Chittum, 2022).

In addition, a study by Soria et al. (2019) found that courses with a service-learning element— service-learning is considered to be a CLDE pedagogical approach— had positive impacts on lower and working-class students' sense of belonging. This sense of belonging is an essential psychological factor in students' decision to persist and graduate (Soria et al., 2019).

While research highlights the benefits of civic engagement on student learning and leadership development, there are CLDE several different models and pedagogical approaches. The *A Crucible Moment* report highlights intergroup and deliberative dialogue and collective civic problem-solving as exemplary pedagogical methods that advance CLDE (National Task Force on Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement, 2012). These methods and a nuanced emerging theory of critical civic empathy are the basis of the *Reawakening the Heart of Civics Education* curriculum.

Intergroup and Deliberative Dialogue

Dialogue is a “communication process that aims to build relationships between people as they share experiences, ideas, and information about a common concern” (Schirch & Camp, 2007, p. 6). Moreover, dialogue aims to achieve mutual understanding, and its purpose is not to win over or convince another of one's argument or position. At the most basic level, a dialogue

will foster respect and compassion for others, and in the best cases, it moves a group towards a common goal.

Dialogue has been a long-time tool in CLDE to develop civic attitudes and capacities to engage across differences. Though they have many core principles and parallels, deliberative and intergroup dialogue are two different pedagogical approaches. Deliberative dialogue emphasizes discussion that reaches a consensus on the best course of action to solve a particular issue or problem (National Task Force on Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement, 2012). Intergroup dialogue focuses on bringing individuals together from different backgrounds to understand their lived experiences better.

Zuniga et al. (2007) describe *intergroup dialogue* as an innovative practice that “prompts student engagement across cultural and social divides, fostering learning about social diversity and inequalities and cultivating an ethos of social responsibility” (p.1). In the context of CLDE, this approach brings students from different social identity groups together to understand one another better and find common ground toward actualizing a greater public good.

Diaz and Perrault (2010) studied the post-college impacts of sustained intergroup dialogue on students’ civic life. This study revealed that students who participated in sustained intergroup dialogue reported long-lasting civic outcomes in five domain areas: cognition, behaviors, attitudes, skills, and hopes and plans for the future. Highlights included students reporting an increased knowledge of intergroup relations, engagement in political activities and advocacy, increased motivation and interest in social issues, transformation of one’s values or experiences concerning social issues, and future plans to engage in community activities, volunteer, and join civic associations (Diaz & Perrault, 2010).

Collective Civic Problem-Solving and Project-Based Teaching and Learning

Collective civic problem-solving constitutes as a project- and problem-based teaching and learning pedagogy. Research in cognitive psychology indicates that project-and problem-based pedagogical approaches are highly effective in student learning and engagement. McTighe and Willis (2019) elaborate that when “students have opportunities to design and conduct investigations and then evaluate their proposed solutions to real and personally relevant problems, they can construct greater problem-solving skills, understanding, learning, and memory” (p.131). In addition, neuroscience research also supports the effectiveness of project- and problem-based pedagogies on student learning as research states that this approach strengthens the brain’s natural learning processes (McTighe & Willis, 2019). For example, students need to have ongoing opportunities to connect what they are learning and apply it to the real world because young people’s brains need to “construct and expand neural networks...[this] extended neural network creates new synapses and makes connections among previously isolated memories and concepts” (McTighe & Willis, 2019, p.132).

Thus, building off the project and problem-based teaching and learning methodology, civic problem-solving centers on a civic issue and designs a project in collaboration and deliberation with community members and other civic stakeholders (i.e., elected officials or government). In the collective civic problem-solving framework, students “learn cooperative and creative problem solving within learning environments in which faculty, students, and individuals from the community work and deliberate together” (The National Task Force on Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement, 2012, p.62).

Critical Civic Empathy Theory

Mirra (2018) developed the *critical civic empathy theory* to teach English courses promoting literacy learning and civic engagement. While this theory has not been widely adopted

or even cited in the civic learning and democratic engagement field, its fundamental principles echo the CDLE framework of fostering civic literacy and social empathy in students. Critical civic empathy is motivated by mutual humanization and oriented toward social and political action. Individuals understand that their humanity is wrapped up in others and are motivated to work towards a greater public good as they understand the interconnectedness of themselves, their community, and civic life (Mirra, 2018).

The American Psychological Association defines *empathy* as “understanding a person from [their] frame of reference rather than one’s own” (n.d., para 1). Expanding on traditional concepts of empathy, *critical empathy* applies an analytical lens when understanding another person’s perspective. It encourages one to recognize and identify how they are privileged or marginalized in public life and how that influences their interpretation of the lived experiences and perspectives of others (Mirra, 2018). Mirra (2018) also highlights the civic aspect of empathy as going a step further from empathizing on a personal level to nesting this personalized empathy within the context of civic participation and public life. *Civic empathy* understands that our experiences and other people’s experiences are shaped by our overlapping social/civic identities, which then informs how we participate or do not participate in civic life. This multilayered, complex understanding of others should drive us toward civic action, equity, and social justice.

In summary, Mirra (2018) defines *critical civic empathy* as more than “simply understanding or tolerating individuals with whom we disagree on a personal level; it is about imaginatively embodying the lives of our fellow citizens while keeping in mind the social forces that differentiate our experiences as we make decisions about our shared public future” (p.12).

In addition, Mirra outlines three guiding principles in critical civic empathy theory, which include: 1.) beginning with the analysis of one's social position, power, and privilege and then exploring the analysis of all parties involved; 2.) then focusing on the ways personal experiences matter in the context of public life and 3.) fostering democratic dialogue and civic action committed to equity and justice (Mirra, 2018, p.12). *The Rewaken, the Heart of Civics Education* curriculum builds on these foundational principles and sequences them into its units and lessons.

Curriculum Plan

The Reawakening the Heart of Civics Education: Activating Critical Civic Empathy and a Sense of Civic Responsibility in Undergraduate Students curriculum is focused on developing student leaders that are activated to move beyond viewing civic engagement as just voting but as their civic responsibility to advance democracy and a greater public good. This curriculum prompts students to see themselves as agents of civic change and provides a framework for engaging with others toward collective civic action. Drawing from favorable CLDE pedagogical approaches such as intergroup and deliberative dialogue, effective teaching strategies like project-and problem-based learning, and a novel theory, critical civic empathy, this curriculum first has students explore their social identity in the context of public life and civic participation. After that, students engage in deep listening, storytelling, and discussions to understand their peers' social identities and how these intersect with their civic participation or barriers to participation. In the following units, students develop skills through a student-led, human-centered project that addresses a civic or democratic issue. The curriculum integrates individual and group reflection and facilitates dialogues to build bridges between students and their communities.

At a time when students and young people are voting at record levels, there is a ripe opportunity to advance students along a civic ladder of engagement and increase their motivation and confidence to step into leadership roles and organize collective civic action.

Situation Statement

There is a decline in civic knowledge and participation and a growing distrust in public institutions in the United States (Winthrop, 2020). One could argue that we are at a critical juncture in protecting democracy. Higher education institutions should strengthen civic learning across disciplines to instill a steadfast commitment to democratic values and community-building in students. However, many institutions prioritize career readiness over civic engagement, and if they do support civic engagement activities, the buck stops at voter registration (Kermiet & Locke, 2021; Collins et al., 2022). In addition, growing research shows that civic engagement positively influences student learning, achievement, and leadership development (Chittum et al., 2022). By not investing in nor institutionalizing CLDE pedagogical approaches and practices, higher education is doing a disservice to the next generation of civic leaders and, consequently, democracy.

Curriculum Goals

This curriculum takes a nuanced approach to civic identity development, drawing on critical civic empathy theory to examine individual social identity and its situation within civic participation and democracy. After that, through storytelling, discussions, and dialogue, students become aware of and understand other people's civic identities and how they are expressed and developed in today's democracy. Scaffolding off this micro-and-meso level of awareness, students then unpack and analyze the root causes and effects of today's civic and social issues. Finally, through a student-led initiative, students design an intervention or project to address the

aforementioned social issue, working with their peers to reach common ground and advance a greater public good. The overarching goal of this curriculum is to activate a lifelong commitment to collective civic engagement and action beyond voting and volunteering. In addition, students will learn 21st-century civic learning and democratic engagement skills, such as critical thinking, deliberation, bridge-building across differences, and gathering and evaluating multiple sources of information and evidence. Specifically, this curriculum's learning outcomes and goals are:

- Goal One: Students will increase their confidence in talking to others about civic and public issues and things that matter to them.
- Goal Two: Students will have increased knowledge of engaging with others across differences and have empathy and compassion for others.
- Goal Three: Students will begin to see themselves as agents of change and gain confidence in their leadership abilities.
- Goal Four: Students will be motivated to participate in their communities and defend civic and democratic values for a greater public good.
- Goal Five: Students have knowledge and tools for becoming lifelong engaged citizens.

Target Audience

The curriculum's target audience is college and university students. Higher education is a formative time for civic identity development; thus, this curriculum is for a traditional college-age audience, 18-29 years old. However, since this curriculum offers a framework for students to learn about activism and advocacy, unlock leadership skills, and motivate them to participate in their communities and democracy, it can also benefit high school students and adult learners.

The reviewers of this curriculum include faculty, campus administrators, and civic engagement professionals who have all taught or coordinated civic and community engagement

courses, projects, or programs at undergraduate institutions primarily in New England, however two reviewers have a national reach.

The Curriculum's Central Message

Youth voting turnout has increasingly climbed over the last election cycles. There is momentum building amongst Gen Z; they feel like their generation has civic power and can make a difference. However, they think they need more knowledge or opportunities to be civically or politically involved. Simultaneously, higher education institutions are shrinking their civic engagement resources and programs. This curriculum addresses this disparity by taking a nuanced approach to civic identity development by drawing on civic learning and democratic engagement pedagogies and practices and critical civic empathy to teach students how to fulfill their civic responsibilities beyond voting and volunteering.

Key Elements of the Curriculum

The *Reawakening the Heart of Civics Education: Activating Critical Civic Empathy and a Sense of Civic Responsibility in Undergraduate Students* curriculum is comprised of five units sequenced to maximize student engagement and learning. As shown in Table 1, each unit includes lectures, interactive activities, individual and group reflection opportunities, and guided intergroup dialogue. Students will design a collective action addressing a civic and social issue that concerns them using project- and problem-based teaching and learning strategies. While this curriculum can be delivered online, it is strongly suggested for in-person instruction.

*Table 1: Curriculum Outline***Unit One: Orienting to Your Story & Committing to a Greater Public Good**

During this first workshop session, participants will examine their social position, power, and privilege through the delivery of a lecture, individual and small group exercises, and large group discussions.

Workshop Activities

- *Lecture* that introduces the concepts of social identities, privilege, and power, what it means to be civically minded and engaged, and why now more than ever, we need to fight for compassion, justice, and a greater public good.
- *Individual reflection/interactive exercise*–“What is Your Story?”–on one’s social identity, position, and capital, and includes completing a social identity wheel worksheet and a reflective free write.
- *Small group interactive exercise*–“Telling Our Stories & Building Trust,”–prompts individuals to share one of their social identities and listen to others’ lived experiences.
- *Large group discussion*–“Understanding What You Heard,” –to develop deep listening skill and critical civic empathy. Students begin to recognize systemic injustices.
- *Large group debrief* will allow participants to share any learnings, things they did not get to say, anything they do not understand, and how they will apply skills developed during this workshop to their life.

Assessment of Student Learning

- Prior to the workshop, all students will receive a civic-minded graduate self-assessment tool.
- A post-workshop evaluation instrument that includes reflective writing prompts will be disseminated at the end of the workshop and is before the next workshop.
- Participation in the large group discussion and debrief.
- Instructor will complete observational tools for the writing prompts and discussions.

Unit Two: How Personal Stories Show Up in Public Life & Today’s Biggest Social and Civic Issues

This workshop session scaffolds the “Understanding What You Heard” session on building trust and exchanging experiences with others and introduces key concepts of social justice and a greater public good theories. In this workshop, participants will learn about the power of storytelling, the

interconnectedness of today’s social issues and complex problems, and a successful social and civic movement case study.

Workshop Activities

- *Lecture* on interdisciplinary ‘wicked problems,’ theories on how to advance the public good, how storytelling can be a powerful tool in organizing and advocacy, and examples of historical and social movements that addressed a civic issue.
- *Interactive exercise*–“The Story Behind the Image”–connects storytelling, art, and social change concepts.
- *Pair and group activity and discussion*
 - Pair activity: “What Matters to You” to practice deep listening.
 - Small group discussion: Share reflection on the deep listening activity and discuss how stories and social issues are woven and interconnected.
- *Large group discussion* on how stories connect to today’s ‘wicked’ and social problems.

Assessment of Student Learning

- Outputs from interactive exercise.
- A post-workshop evaluation instrument that includes reflective writing prompts will be disseminated at the end of the workshop and is due before the next workshop.
- Participation in the large group debrief and an observational tool completed by the instructor.

Unit Three: Intergroup & Deliberative Dialogue and Identifying & Analyzing a Social and Civic Issue

This workshop session will prompt participants to reflect, examine, and share a problem (tied to a civic and social issue) that concerns them. Through dialogue prompts, participants will understand an issue from multiple perspectives and learn how to share their vulnerabilities and concerns openly. Through small group discussion and interactive in-class polling, participants will identify a civic and social problem they want to focus on for the remainder of the workshops. Once this problem is identified, participants will begin to analyze the issue’s root causes and current realities.

Workshop Activities

- *Individual reflection* prompt on what issues of today concern them.
- *Small group dialogues* on civic and social issues.

- *Large group interactive activity* that unpacks the root and systemic causes of identified civic and social issues.
- *Interactive polling* to select one social and civic issue they want to focus on for the remaining workshops.
- *Lecture* to introduce civic collective action and democratic/social movements. Assign social movement case study for Unit Four pre-read.

Assessment of Student Learning

- Outputs from polling and interactive exercise.
- A post-workshop evaluation instrument that includes reflective writing prompts will be disseminated at the end of the workshop and is due before the next workshop.
- Participation in small and large group dialogues/discussions.

Unit Four: Democratic and Social Movements & Designing for Civic Action

Scaffolding from the democratic and social movement case study pre-read assignment in Unit Three, instruction will be provided on what defines a successful civic action/intervention/movement and strategies for implementation. Then participants will co-design a civic action(s) that addresses the identified civic and social issue from Unit Three.

Workshop Activities

- *Lecture* on the attributes of successful democratic and social movements. Overview of human-centered design and design thinking.
- *Interactive small group exercise and discussion* identifying critical components of successful social movements and how to integrate design thinking into civic collective action planning.
- *Large group* human-centered design-thinking activity on the identified social and civic issue.

Assessment of Student Learning

- Outputs from interactive exercise.
- A post-workshop evaluation instrument that includes reflective writing prompts will be disseminated at the end of the workshop and is due before the next workshop.
- Participation in the large group design activity.

Unit Five: Activating Brave Civic Leaders & Deepening Your Civic Commitment

This last session will prompt participants to reflect on their experience and learning and make connections on how they may apply these lessons in their community. In addition, participants will learn about the skills and attributes of courageous civic leaders and how to activate these parts in themselves. To conclude, participants will identify and share one small, courageous step they will take post-workshop in the ‘real world.’

Workshop Activities

- *Lecture* on brave and courageous civic leaders and how to make a difference in your community.
- *Individual reflection* and writing prompts on leadership, compassion, and courage
- *Small group discussion* on civic-mindedness and leadership skills and attributes.
- *Large group activity and discussion* “Now What,” that prompts students to reflect on how they will take what they learned in these workshops and apply it to their communities.

Assessment of Student Learning

- Participation in small and large group discussions and large group debriefs.
- Statements of what students learned and how they apply it to a real-world situation.

Curriculum Review Plan

Six civic engagement thought leaders reviewed this curriculum from March 1-15, 2023.

The reviewer’s names and identifying information have been removed for privacy purposes.

- Reviewer One is an executive of a higher education nonprofit organization.
- Reviewer Two is an executive officer at a private liberal arts college.
- Reviewer Three is a Sociologist, former professor, and community engagement practitioner at a private liberal arts college.
- Reviewer Four is the former director of a national civic engagement organization that worked with colleges and universities.

- Reviewer Five is a community and civic engagement officer at a private liberal arts college.
- Reviewer Six is an Associate Professor of Politics at a public university.

Implementation Timeline

This capstone project's curriculum assessment and evaluation portions were conducted from January to April 2023.

| | |
|---------------|--|
| January 2023 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Outreach emails to curriculum reviewers and confirm their participation |
| February 2023 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Curriculum finalized ● Curriculum review feedback form developed ● Curriculum sent to reviewers with feedback form ● Scheduled interviews |
| March 2023 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Conducted curriculum review interviews ● Analyzed feedback and findings |
| April 2023 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Capstone project finalized and paper submitted |

Logical Framework

This curriculum implemented a *so-that* logical framework to strengthen project design, implementation, and evaluation.

The Reawaken the Heart of Civics Education Curriculum’s Logical Framework

| |
|---|
| <p>We Will</p> <p>Design a student leadership curriculum that moves college students from episodic civic learning and democratic engagement to activism, advocacy, and full civic participation.</p> |
| <p>So That</p> <p>Students learn to engage across differences, develop critical civic empathy, and find common ground oriented toward civic action.</p> |
| <p>So That</p> <p>Students develop leadership skills that inform and expand the development of their civic identity.</p> |
| <p>So That</p> <p>Students are activated to participate in ongoing and collective civic actions in their communities.</p> |
| <p>So That</p> <p>Students have knowledge and tools for becoming lifelong engaged citizens.</p> |
| <p>So That</p> <p>Students graduate with civic leadership skills that they can apply to the real world.</p> |
| <p>So That</p> <p>This curriculum can be used for broad dissemination and future research to influence the next generation of civic champions.</p> |

Methodology

Six professionals from higher education institutions and nonprofit organizations reviewed the *Reawakening the Heart of Civics Education: Activating Critical Civic Empathy and a Sense of Civic Responsibility in Undergraduate Students* curriculum. The six reviewers were emailed the curriculum and a feedback form for initial feedback. After that, I conducted one-hour interviews with each reviewer for a comprehensive curriculum assessment.

Participants

The six curriculum reviewers were selected from my professional network based on their expertise and experience in the field. Collectively, they have 137 years in civic and community engagement, social movements, undergraduate student development and engagement, and higher education administration. I recognize that since the reviewers are current or former colleagues, their feedback may be biased; however, they were intentionally selected because of their robust knowledge of the subject matter.

Materials

All reviewers were provided with the 5-unit curriculum outline. The curriculum outline included a blueprint of each unit that detailed the content to be delivered, unit activities, student learning outcomes, and a material list of readings and media. Accompanying the curriculum outline, each reviewer also received an initial feedback form. The form asked for input on the overall curriculum and unit-per-unit feedback. Each unit had three categories for feedback: 1.) content, 2.) activities, and 3.) materials. For each category, the reviewers were asked to rate (1=lowest; 5=highest) its relevance, effectiveness, and consistency. Relevance was defined as how well the curriculum connected to CLDE and the student learning outcomes. Effectiveness was described as how well the units (content, materials, and activities) contributed to the desired

goals of the curriculum. Lastly, consistency was defined as how well the curriculum adhered to civic learning and democratic engagement core principles and the coherence of the units.

In addition, I conducted individual one-hour-long Zoom interviews with each reviewer. During this interview, I asked a series of questions on each unit based on their initial feedback form. Interview questions included an impression of the overall impact of the curriculum and whether there were opportunities for improvement.

In addition, I provided each reviewer with a summary of their post-interview to ensure my notes adequately captured their responses.

Procedure

All reviewers were recruited from my professional network and contacted via email and telephone to confirm participation. An expanded version of the curriculum outline (Table 1) was delivered via a unique Google Document for each reviewer to drop notes and comments directly into the curriculum outline document. Accompanying the curriculum outline, each reviewer also received an initial feedback form. This feedback was delivered in two formats, Google Forms, and a Google Document template, to accommodate reviewers' preferences. The reviewers were asked to review the curriculum outline and submit their form no later than three weeks after receipt. The individual interviews were conducted four weeks after the reviewers received the curriculum and one week after submitting the feedback form.

Each reviewer provided feedback through a one-hour Zoom interview. Each interview was conducted separately due to scheduling constraints. I interviewed each reviewer with a standardized script that followed questions on the impact of curriculum and unit-by-unit feedback. All responses were captured via comprehensive note-taking. The notes were transcribed into a shareable format to ensure accuracy.

Lastly, the data from the initial feedback forms and individual interviews were uploaded into a Google Spreadsheet to calculate quantitative and qualitative findings. I calculated the mean rating of the overall curriculum and the mean rating for each unit and its subcategories of content, activities, and materials. Responses from the individual interviewers underwent a thematic analysis to identify patterns and themes.

Results

All six reviewers submitted an initial feedback form. Overall, the reviewers rated the curriculum favorably, with a mean rating of 4.7 (1=lowest; 5=highest). In addition, all units' activities and content were favorably rated. As shown in Table 2, *Unit Two* (4.8) and *Unit Three* (4.8) were rated most favorable. While most of the initial feedback was positive, there were identified areas of improvement. In particular, *Unit Four* had the lowest mean of 4.4. In addition, each unit's materials were rated lowest.

Table 2: Results from the Initial Feedback Form

| | Unit 1 | Unit 2 | Unit 3 | Unit 4 | Unit 5 |
|--------------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Overall rating | 4.6 | 4.8 | 4.8 | 4.4 | 4.6 |
| <i>CONTENT</i> | | | | | |
| Relevance | 4.7 | 4.9 | 4.7 | 4.6 | 4.7 |
| Effective | 4.7 | 4.7 | 4.7 | 3.5 | 4.7 |
| Consistent | 4.5 | 4.8 | 4.7 | 4.2 | 4.5 |
| <i>ACTIVITIES</i> | | | | | |
| Relevance | 4.8 | 4.9 | 4.9 | 4.7 | 4.8 |
| Effective | 4.6 | 4.9 | 4.8 | 3.8 | 4.6 |
| Consistent | 4.7 | 4.8 | 4.8 | 4.0 | 4.6 |
| <i>MATERIALS</i> | | | | | |
| Relevance | 4.3 | 4.7 | 4.6 | 4.5 | 4.5 |

| | Unit 1 | Unit 2 | Unit 3 | Unit 4 | Unit 5 |
|------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Effective | 4.4 | 4.6 | 4.6 | 4.0 | 4.6 |
| Consistent | 4.4 | 4.7 | 4.5 | 4.0 | 4.5 |

Based on the results from Table 2, I tailored interview questions to solicit additional feedback. All interviews followed a standardized format and lasted sixty minutes. All six reviewers participated in an interview via Zoom.

Unit One: Orienting to Your Story & Committing to a Greater Public Good

The overall rating for Unit One was 4.6; thus, the reviewers rated it favorably. All reviewers thought the activities were effective. In fact, all reviewers commented that they thought it was compelling to start with the “What is Your Story” exercise, which included students completing a social identity wheel workshop and then moving onto dialogue and small ground discussion with the “Telling Our Stories and Building Trust” exercise. One reviewer stated that more time should be dedicated to this exercise since sharing stories about social identities can be challenging and requires a skilled facilitator. The materials for this unit were rated the second lowest of the five units. The reviewers thought the materials on the concept of a greater public good and common good and social identity theory could be strengthened. One reviewer stated that it was essential to “get these foundational concepts and materials right” and suggested tying in other civic learning and democratic engagement core concepts. All reviewers were intrigued by the civic-minded self-assessment tool that was developed for this curriculum. One reviewer stated this tool was “innovative,” and another said they would like to distribute it to their students.

Unit Two: How Personal Stories Show Up in Public Life & Today’s Biggest Social and Civic Problems.

Unit Two was tied for the highest-rated unit, with an overall mean average of 4.8. Reviewers commented that the activities and the content were very strong. Four of the reviewers shared that they thought integrating storytelling into examining social and civic issues was an innovative approach. Furthermore, these four reviewers also stated that centering the students’ voices and experiences in this unit differentiates it from other civic learning and democratic engagement curricula. The reviewers also commented that integrating art, music, and poetry into this unit was creative and made the unit content more engaging. In addition, one reviewer questioned whether the materials on deep listening fit the unit activities and whether these deep listening materials and activities should be introduced in Unit One.

Unit Three: Intergroup & Deliberative Dialogue and Identifying & Analyzing a Social and Civic Issue

Unit Three was tied for the highest mean rating (4.8). All six of the reviewers commented that they appreciated the integration of dialogic approaches in Unit Three and how this deepened a student’s understanding of social and civic issues. One reviewer questioned whether intergroup dialogue could be implemented during such a short time frame as it does take substantial time for group bonding and comfortability for intergroup dialogue to be effective. This same reviewer wondered if more time should be devoted to each unit specifically for preparing and supporting students in intergroup and deliberative dialogue and added that additional materials around dialogue be incorporated into this unit. One reviewer commented that this unit feels “very unique in theory” but would love to see it in practice. This question led to their input on the need to test

these activities to see whether they are effective or not. All reviewers appreciated the large group interactive activity that analyzed a wicked civic problem.

Unit Four: Democratic and Social Movements & Designing for Civic Action

Unit Four had the lowest overall mean of 4.4. All six reviewers questioned about being able to deliver unit content during the allotted time (90 minutes) as well as concerns about the human-centered design pedagogical framework. While the reviewers indicated that using a project-based and problem-based teaching and learning approach was relevant to demonstrate collective civic action in this unit, four of the reviewers questioned whether the design-thinking methodology was the best pedagogical framework. Only one reviewer had previous knowledge or experience in the design-thinking framework. In addition, the reviewers thought the materials for this unit had to be strengthened. They thought the unit required more instruction on what makes a collective civic action successful and the attributes of powerful social movements. All six reviewers commented that having the students co-design and work on a project together was an essential component of this curriculum. Two reviewers thought this project concept should be introduced earlier on in the curriculum. One reviewer commented that this unit “had all the ingredients, but it’s a matter of simmering and making the flavors are right.”

Unit Five: Activating Brave Civic Leaders & Deepening Your Civic Commitment

Unit Five was rated favorably, with an overall mean rating of 4.6. All reviewers commented on the importance of having significant time to reflect individually and within the group and thought the “Now What” activity was effective for activating future civic participation. One reviewer appreciated that it was “forward-leaning” and got the students to think about how they might apply their learning to a future civic scenario. Another reviewer

commented that more time should be built into this unit to identify and discuss the different concepts of leadership and the characteristics of a 21st-century civic leader.

Lastly, all six reviewers said they would recommend this curriculum to a colleague and an undergraduate student. One reviewer commented, “This curriculum makes civics fun and engaging and puts the student in the driver’s seat of change.” Another reviewer said, “Compared to other civic learning and democratic engagement curriculums, this addresses social issues that affect students head-on. Students learn from each other and realize they can make a difference. It leaves them motivated and uplifted...we need to instill more hope and resiliency in our students”.

When asked whether the sequence of the units maximized student learning, all six reviewers agreed. Interestingly, three reviewers suggested that implementing an overarching book may help tighten the progression and transition from each unit.

Discussion

As previously shared, six thought leaders in higher education, civics, and youth development evaluated and assessed the curriculum in March 2023. All six reviewers rated the curriculum favorably and would recommend this curriculum to their students and colleagues. In addition, based on feedback, this curriculum seemed to capture the desired learning objectives.

Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement Curriculum’s Relevance Today

Curriculum reviewers highlighted the urgency and importance of civics education and developing civic empathy in today’s political and educational landscapes. As outlined in previous sections, civics education is lackluster in K-12. As a result, many students enter college without a solid foundational knowledge of civics, which may hinder growth and development in civic leadership. In addition, the relevance of the curriculum’s content, activities, and materials

was also highlighted as an impactful and timely methodology for teaching social justice and civics. One reviewer commented that this CLDE curriculum feels particularly timely, due to its integration of bridge-building, storytelling, and dialogue. Another reviewer commented that it was ‘refreshing’ that this curriculum did not solely focus on voting, which they described as the ‘low-hanging fruit’ on the ladder of civic participation in higher education.

Critical Civic Empathy

When asked whether the sequence of the units maximized student learning, all six reviewers agreed. This sequence adheres to the critical civic empathy theory’s foundational progression; thus, implementing this theory seemed successful. Reviewers commented that they appreciated starting with the individual’s social identity and thought the curriculum’s activities exemplified how these intersect with today’s society and democracy. Another common theme from the reviewer’s feedback was that this curriculum felt “forward-leading” toward collective action. They identified this as a unique attribute in the CLDE framework.

Interestingly, despite their extensive experience in the field, only one of the reviewers heard of the critical civic empathy theory. Nevertheless, all six reviewers were impressed with its principles. This feedback confirms that this theory has promise in the field of CLDE.

Increased Knowledge and Understanding of Civic and Public Issues

This curriculum provoked an understanding of how personal lived experiences are impacted by civic and public issues. In addition, reviewers thought having the students select a civic and public issue that concerns them to analyze and develop a project on was an effective teaching strategy. One reviewer commented, “I liked how the class as a team picked the issue they wanted to unpack and then design a project around. I imagine that will keep them engaged with course material”. In addition, through the intergroup dialogue and discussions, students got

to witness the civic and social issues their peers are concerned about and reflect on how personal stories are interwoven in these systemic issues.

Engaging with Others Across Differences

In particular, the reviewers highly rated the integration of storytelling, art, and student-led activities into the curriculum. They exclaimed that this was an innovative strategy to engage students across differences. In particular, reviewers highly favored the intergroup dialogue approach and the multiple opportunities the curriculum built for small and large group discussions. All reviewers agreed that there is an urgent need to develop students' attitudes and capacities in this area. All commented that they had noticed less debate and deliberation in their classrooms or places of work. Thus, they thought having this integral objective in the curriculum was timely and relevant. In addition, one reviewer questioned whether these exercises would excel in a seemingly homogenous group of students, such as a predominately white institution.

Leadership Development and Agents of Change

Students got hands-on experience designing a collective civic action through the project- and problem-based learning activity. If the length of this curriculum was expanded from 5-units to a multi-month course, students could also implement these civic actions on campus and in their community. Whether students implement the action or not, working with their peers to design a solution-oriented project based on lived experiences and critically analyze social issues allows students to apply their learning to a real-world situation. By doing so, they take leadership roles and begin to see themselves capable of making a difference. The reviewers agreed. One reviewer exclaimed that these applied learning opportunities activate leadership skills and instill a sense of resiliency and responsibility in students. In addition, the last unit of this curriculum intentionally focused on sharing the stories of successful civic leaders and had students reflect on

their leadership skills. Many students have difficulty recognizing leadership characteristics that are not Westernized (i.e., individualism, personal attainment, charisma); thus, the last unit takes a novel approach to reflect on whole-person and community-driven leadership. As a result, students walk away having a more in-depth understanding of how they contribute to a democracy and civic action how these skills are transferable to other areas in their life.

Motivation Towards Civic Action and Participation

If students can reflect on ways they can contribute to a flourishing community and democracy, then they are more likely to be motivated to do so. One reviewer stated that this curriculum put students on “the path towards action.” Another reviewer exclaimed that this is a “forward-leaning curriculum.” In addition, this curriculum also highlights the systemic injustices many people face in this country and perhaps students will even hear from their peers how these injustices impact their own lives. Knowing someone who is personally affected by an issue increases one’s motivation to stand up for their right and take action. In addition, students will gain confidence in their leadership skills, and often when someone is confident in their ability to do something, they are more likely to be motivated to do so. In addition, the last unit of the curriculum asks every student to share one small, courageous action they plan to take. This was intentionally integrated to increase future civic action and participation.

Civic Identity Development and Life-Long Engagement

While many colleges and universities focus on voting and volunteering in terms of civic engagement, the reviewers stated that this curriculum develops civic-minded graduates who understand their social position, develop skills to deeply listen to those from diverse backgrounds, critically assess systemic social issues, and work on projects that instill a sense of

civic responsibility. This development of attitudes, beliefs, and values point to the development of a civic actor who will continue to be engaged post-graduation.

While the reviewers overwhelmingly rated this curriculum positively, they offered suggestions for improving the delivery and effectiveness of content. Additionally, there were other lessons learned and limitations of this project that could influence future projects and implementation.

Limitations of the Project

First and foremost, the overarching limitation of this project is that this curriculum has yet to be delivered to undergraduate students; thus, the impact on student learning is unknown. While the feedback from the reviewers was insightful, they are a step removed from the learners, so it is difficult to accurately evaluate how this curriculum may impact student learning and leadership development. Despite this, the reviewers have a collective history of 137 years in civics education and were able to offer strategic feedback on the curriculum's content and pedagogical merits.

The reviewers suggested that this curriculum should be right-sized given its desired goals and learning outcomes. Simply put, more than five 90-minute units are required to deliver curriculum materials adequately. While suggestions varied, most reviewers suggested that this curriculum should be the length of an eight-to-sixteen-week course.

In addition, the reviewers had various opinions on whether this curriculum should be delivered as a curricular or co-curricular course/workshop. Since this curriculum has yet to be delivered to undergraduate students, the appropriate length and format are unknown.

Another limitation of this project is that the activities have yet to be tested. As a result, two reviewers questioned whether or not they would have the desired impact on student learning.

In addition, another reviewer thought testing the activities would refine the delivery of course content.

In addition, as previously noted, I had prior professional relationships with all of the reviewers. While all were instructed on the importance of unbiased and honest feedback, it is difficult to assess whether or not previous social engagement with them influenced their assessment of the curriculum. In addition, nearly all of the reviewers consider themselves knowledgeable in the field of civic learning and democratic engagement. Thus, it is difficult to assess the effectiveness of the curriculum for introductory civics educators. It should also be noted that all reviewers consider themselves moderate to progressive liberals; thus, testing this curriculum on a more politically diverse audience is needed.

Implications for Future Projects

This curriculum took a nuanced approach to civic learning and democratic engagement, yet it has not been tested on its target audience—undergraduate students. If this curriculum is delivered, it will be interesting to see whether it can meet the needs of different higher education institutions (e.g., community colleges, HBCUs, private, public). Consequently, it will also be interesting to understand what types of undergraduate students this curriculum resonates with and if the curriculum meets the needs of particular students. This curriculum should also be tested in a curricular and co-curricular context to determine the most appropriate and effective format.

In addition, this curriculum needs more cohesiveness from unit to unit. It was suggested that an overarching text or book might support this, yet such a book still needs to be identified. This curriculum should also be tested at different grades and development stages to determine the targeted educational level for curriculum delivery.

In the future, I will also expand the circle of reviewers to include teachers and educators from different backgrounds, including demographics, disciplines, and stages of careers. Similarly, I plan to circulate this curriculum more widely to those not in my social networks to improve the curriculum design.

In conclusion, this curriculum has merit in the field of civic learning and democratic engagement, and it will only be enhanced and refined once delivered in an undergraduate learning environment.

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Appendix A

EVALUATION TOOL

Curriculum Reviewer Interview Script & Questions

One-hour interview with each curriculum reviewer conducted over Zoom.

Interview Introduction

Thank you for taking the time out of your schedule to review my curriculum; I'm curious to hear your feedback, given all your experience in the field. As I mentioned in my email, this curriculum is part of my capstone project and thesis, and I hope to be able to offer this workshop series to interested colleges and universities post-graduation in May.

I received your initial feedback via the curriculum review last week, which was really helpful— thank you for taking the time to do that. This interview builds off that feedback and allows me to follow up on your observations and get your reactions on a few other items... I know how valuable your time is, so let's kick off; I want to ensure we end promptly at [insert time].

Interview Questions

Okay, so I will go through each unit with you, and then at the end, I will ask you a couple of questions about the overall impact of the curriculum. If at any time you find a question to be confusing or you are unsure of what I am trying to ask, please just let me know. Also, please know that I hope for constructive feedback to strengthen this curriculum, so your honesty is greatly welcomed and appreciated.

Let's get started on Unit One: Orienting to Your Story & Committing to a Greater Public Good

- You ranked the overall effectiveness of this unit as [insert x].
 - If favorable ranking— What made you rank it as positive? What worked well?
 - If unfavorable ranking— What areas were ineffective? Do you have ideas on how this could be strengthened?

- Do you think the materials referenced are suitable for the concepts of social identity and position and a greater public good? Are there any other materials you would suggest?
- What are your reactions to the workshop activities? What was most effective? What could be strengthened? Would you add anything else here? Or remove any activity?
- Anything else you would like to add about this unit?

Now, we are moving on to Unit Two: How Personal Stories Show Up in Public Life & Today's Biggest Social and Civic Problems.

- You ranked the overall effectiveness of this unit as [insert x].
 - If favorable ranking– What made you rank it as positive? What worked well?
 - If unfavorable ranking– What areas were ineffective? Do you have ideas on how this could be strengthened?
- Do you think the materials referenced are suitable for understanding the concepts of storytelling and dialogic approaches, deep listening, a greater public good, today's most pressing social issues, and social movements? Are there any other materials you would suggest?
- What are your reactions to the workshop activities? What was most effective? What could be strengthened? Would you add anything else here? Or remove any activity?
- Anything else you would like to add about this unit?

Okay, for Unit Three: Intergroup & Deliberative Dialogue and Identifying & Analyzing a Social and Civic Issue

- You ranked the overall effectiveness of this unit as [insert x].
 - If favorable ranking– What made you rank it as positive? What worked well?
 - If unfavorable ranking– What areas were ineffective? Do you have ideas on how this could be strengthened?
- Do you think the materials referenced are suitable for understanding the concepts of intergroup and deliberative dialogue, engaging across differences, today's civic issues, and how to conduct a root cause analysis of a civic issue? Are there any other materials you would suggest?

- What are your reactions to the workshop activities? What was most effective? What could be strengthened? Would you add anything else here? Or remove any activity?
- Anything else you would like to add about this unit?

Unit Four: Democratic and Social Movements & Designing for Civic Action allows participants to design an action/movement/campaign/intervention based on a civic problem the group/class identified in unit three. Participants will be led through the design-thinking process, prompting members to adopt a human-centered designer mindset. This unit was developed from the feedback I was hearing from students involved in dialogue and social justice work; they really want an action-oriented framework as they discuss complex issues. That said, I feel like this unit is really important, and I would love to hear your feedback.

- You ranked the overall effectiveness of this unit as [insert x].
 - If favorable ranking– What made you rank it as positive? What worked well?
 - If unfavorable ranking– What areas were ineffective? Do you have ideas on how this could be strengthened?
- Do you think the materials referenced are suitable for understanding the concepts of civic issues, human-centered design, and civic actions and interventions? Are there any other materials you would suggest?
- What are your reactions to the workshop activities? What was most effective? What could be strengthened? Would you add anything else here? Or remove any activity?
- Anything else you would like to add about this unit?

The last unit, Unit Five: Activating Brave Civic Leaders & Deepening Your Civic Commitment, largely serves as a time to reflect on lessons learned, skills introduced and developed, and applying this knowledge/skills to real-world situations. At the end of this unit, participants will be able to identify a civic leadership skill they have or want to grow and a future, small civic action they intend to take in the future.

- You ranked the overall effectiveness of this unit as [insert x].
 - If favorable ranking– What made you rank it as positive? What worked well?
 - If unfavorable ranking– What areas were ineffective? Do you have ideas on how this could be strengthened?

- Do you think the materials referenced are suitable for understanding the concepts of civic leadership, 21st-century leadership skills, reflection, and civics meaning-making? Are there any other materials you would suggest?
- What are your reactions to the workshop activities? What was most effective? What could be strengthened? Would you add anything else here? Or remove any activity?
- Anything else you would like to add about this unit?

Ok, we went through each unit; thank you so much for all this wonderful feedback I intend to incorporate to strengthen this curriculum. The last set of questions is focused on the overall curriculum, and I would love to hear your thoughts on...

- Do you think the student learning outcomes adequately capture the curriculum?
 - Let me ask this another way, does this curriculum lead to the student learning goals/outcomes?
- How does the flow of the curriculum work?
- Do you think 90-minute sessions are a good time frame? What about the 5 units? Any opportunities for restructuring or reformatting to make the delivery more effective?
- What kind of settings do you see this curriculum implemented in? Is it curricular or co-curricular? Through a particular club or office?
- Overall, would you recommend this curriculum to a colleague? To an undergraduate student? Other?

Interview Closing

That's it for my questions, but I want to make sure we have some time for any final thoughts you may have. Is there anything else you would like to share? Are there questions that you hoped I asked that I didn't? If so, what are they?

That wraps us up. I just wanted to sincerely thank you again for your time and input. My final capstone thesis will be uploaded into ScholarWorks by [insert date], and I will be sure to alert you when it does. In the meantime, are you open to me reaching out if I have any lingering questions? Also, are you okay with being referenced in my thesis as a reviewer?

[end of interview, final salutations]