Adapting Civic Education to New Opportunities: What Changes are Underway in the US? What Innovations Might We Make to Best Practices in the Future?

Suzanne Soule

soule@civiced.org

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"A man may possess a vast knowledge with regard to the workings of our social and political machinery, and yet be absolutely untrained in those things which make a good citizen." (Arthur Hadley, 135)

"People, regardless of their age or generation, are more likely to participate in public life if they have the motivations, skills, resources, and opportunities to do so. To the extent that young people of any generation are encouraged and assisted to develop these motivations, skills, resources, and opportunities through family discussion and parental modeling, formal and informal school programs, outreach by nonprofit and political organizations, the medial and the like, they are more likely to respond by becoming engaged." (Zukin et al. 2006, 203).

Introduction

As civic educators, how are we facing the evolving challenges posed by technological shifts? Are we, or should we, meet changes due to patterns of new media usage? We certainly know more about best practices for civic education, yet in the U.S., less time is available for instruction. Increasing diversity due to economic inequality and immigration add urgency to the need to equip citizens with skills, dispositions and knowledge to work together to bring about positive change. However time devoted to democratic education has continued to shrink, and it is precisely in those schools that have the greatest diversity that high quality civic education is less likely to be implemented. This may be one reason for why, despite the fact that more Americans are attending college than ever before, on average the public does not possess higher levels of political knowledge than previous generations. As educators are we considering how to shape policy, to build institutions, to create formal and informal curricula and authentic experiences that will provide future citizens with enough knowledge, civic skills, and dispositions to face and resolve problems confronting our republic and our planet? In this paper I will address societal, technological, and institutional changes underway that pose challenges and provide opportunities for civic educators.

Societal Changes in the United States: Increasing Economic Inequality, Diversity and the Effects of New Technology

Increasing Economic Inequality

The United States has held out a beacon to immigrants to improve their economic prosperity. However, well paying manufacturing jobs have moved overseas, and the

middle class has been shrinking. Indeed the U.S. scores 40.8 on the Gini index, a measure of inequality in income and expenditures, putting it on par with Sri Lanka, Georgia, Ghana, Mali, and just ahead of Thailand and Turkey. By contrast, income inequality in Germany is much less, 28.3. and Sweden is 25 (2007-08 UNDP Report). In the U.S., the top one-fifth of the population takes home over 50% of all income. This share has been increasing steadily since 1968 (http://www.leftbusinessobserver.com/Gini_supplement.html). Even more startling is that the top 1% percent of households received 21.8% of all pre-tax income in 2005, more than double what that figure was in the 1970s, which is the greatest concentration of income since 1928, when 23.9 percent of all income went to the richest one percent (Piketty and Saez 2003). The average American family carries $8,565 in debt (Morgenson, 2008). This is significant for a variety of reasons, not the least because decades of research have shown that a thriving middle class provides the bedrock for stable democratic institutions (Moore 1966). Further, full political participation reduces income inequality, while income inequality tends to skew political participation in favor of moneyed interests. Government may authoritatively allocate how goods, services and values are allocated (Zukin et. al 2008, Easton 1968). However, younger generations have come of age in an era where government has been considered the problem, with market populism and individual solutions to collective problems reigning as the dominant ideology (Zukin et. al 2006). Not surprisingly, many Americans have come to equate freedom with economic prosperity, and young people are placing a higher emphasis on achieving prosperity (Sax 2004).

Should income inequality concern democratic educators? In his defense of democracy, Dahl reminds the goal of equality is far from self-evident (Dahl, 1998; 62). But he feels that this principle is justified on the grounds of morality, prudence, and acceptability. Dahl argues that the American founders, Jefferson, that commitment to political equality among citizens of a democratic state is reasonable and morally defensible (Dahl 64-66). Dahl introduces the notion of “intrinsic equality” to argue that one person’s life, liberty and happiness is not intrinsically superior or inferior to that of any other, so “we ought to treat all persons as if they possess equal claims to life, liberty, happiness, and other fundamental goods and interests” (64). Government cannot possibly “give equal consideration to the good and interests of every person bound by those decisions” with an unequal playing field. This generation also faces environmental challenges posed by degradation and will need to consider how to resolve this crisis through more inclusive politics. While I acknowledge the inevitable tension between market economies and democracies, I feel that the U.S. has reached a point where our market-capitalist economy is impairing political equality, and the equality of public education (schools still receive much of their funding through local taxes). We will all lose if wealthy Americans abandon the school system and hive off into separate gated communities and private schools.

One effect of economic inequality is that more American parents are working full-time, causing a decline in membership in associations like the Parent Teacher Association (Putnam 2000). By some estimates, half of American children now have a one-eyed babysitter (a television) in their bedroom; one study of third graders put the number at 70 %, and documented attendant declines in sleep, school achievement, plus increases in weight gain and consumption of goods (Parker-Pope 2008). Another casualty has been time parents spend with their children around the dinner table discussing political issues. Political discussion among families is important. These discussions have been shown to develop skills, knowledge and interest in public affairs among youth, as well as increase rates of volunteerism (Civic Mission of the Schools 2003; Kahne 2005).

Income inequality possesses a disturbing and persistent racial dimension, whereby the median household income of Hispanic families was $13,500 less than that of white families; the median household income of black families was nearly $20,000 less than that of white families in 2006 (PEW Hispanic Center Statistical Portrait of Hispanics in the US, 2006. Table 33: Median Household Income by Race and Ethnicity: 2006). Despite increasing racial diversity, residential patterns reflect economic realities. Schools were less integrated in 2004 than they were in 1970 (Orfield & Frankenberg 2004). And, while record numbers of Americans are attending universities, graduation rates reflect socio-economic status. Eighty one percent of white young adults (25-29 years) reported attending "some college or more," but only 50% of young black, and 31% of Hispanics reported the same (US Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic Supplement, 2003). Data from the 2003 census reveal that 62% of white young adults (25-29 years) reported having obtained a bachelor's degree or more, compared to 17% of black and 10% of Hispanic young adults.

Increasing Diversity

Will these trends continue even as America diversifies? Currently, 66% of the U.S. population is white, and this is expected to decline to 46% in 2050. White non-Hispanics make up about two-thirds of the population, but only 55% of those younger than five. By 2050, whites will make up 46% of the population, and blacks will make up 15%, a relatively small increase from today. Hispanics, who make up about 15 percent of the population today, will increase to 30% of the population in 2050, according to the new projections. Asians, currently about 5% of the population, are projected to increase to 9% by 2050. Plus, the population is aging: those 85 and older are projected to more than triple by 2050, to 19 million (US Census Bureau News 2008). Youth are more diverse than older cohorts, as one out of 18-32 year-olds had one immigrant parent and of those under 18, 25% had at least one foreign born parent (Kasinitz et al, 2008). Diversity is concentrated in certain areas, like New York City for instance, where 35% of all New Yorkers were foreign born (Kasinitz et. al 2008, 2). Since 1965, immigrants have come

mostly from nations other than Europe, resulting in large new groups that aren't "black" or "white," who use transnational technology to remain connected to their communities of origin.

The type of community in which a student lives and attends school is a strong indicator of educational success. Community characteristics, such as the number of children per household, percentage of community residents who did not complete high school, percentage of unmarried individuals, the concentration of minorities within a community, the proportion of Latinos in the population, poverty, the need for public assistance, male unemployment, single motherhood, English as a second language, and the degree of urbanization of a community are only some of the indicators that have been shown to be positively related to the dropout rate of their community (see: Ekstrom, et.al. 1986, Kaplan et al., 1997, McNeal, 1995, Rumberger, 1983 & 1987, Figueira-McDonough, 1992 & 1993, Marsh, 1991). A recent study from "The Editorial Projects in Education Research Center," using data obtained from the 2003-04 academic year, demonstrates that students attending urban schools have a graduation rate 15 percentage points lower than their peers in the suburbs (Swanson 2008). Additionally, when looking at the largest metropolitan areas in the US, urban students are graduating at half the rate of their suburban peers (Swanson 2008). On the national level, 1.2 million students fail to graduate with a high school diploma in the US, 23% of whom resided in one of the 50 largest cities (Swanson 2008).

Given the challenges associated with increasing diversity, what skills and knowledge are needed to foster thoughtful, informed and effective citizens? To be able to act politically to accomplish public purposes within and across diverse groups will require negotiation skills. Moral and civic virtues such as political tolerance an acceptance of compromise are essential. Educators need new skills and knowledge, including how to teach English language learners in their mixed classes, how to lead controversial discussions about current issues in diverse groups, and how to incorporate civics components into their already packed curriculum. Heterogeneity will accentuate the need for the creation of equal educational opportunities to provide democratic participatory opportunities for all as training for effective political participation in adulthood. The United States will suffer if large groups of citizens lack the economic and social skills to engage effectively in the economy and polity. The story of African Americans attests to the pitfalls and tragedy when a group becomes marginalized and prevented from participating fully in society. The civil rights movement in the U.S. provides an excellent example of how inclusion can be achieved, and what ensuing benefits accrue to our nation, both materially and morally, when full participation expands to include more citizens. Students today are keenly aware of racial inequality and injustice. When surveyed, they express higher levels of tolerance than previous generations. However, they are less likely to feel a more traditional sense of civic obligation, which played a key role in motivating previous generations to vote. This may

be a byproduct of diversity, for people who grow up in diverse communities are less likely to emerge with norms that underlie political engagement, chief among them the belief that a citizen should vote (Campbell 2006). Increasing ethnic, religious and economic diversity then, adds urgency to the need for quality civic instruction. School themselves need become communities for youth where democratic norms are practiced and embodied. Analysis of longitudinal data revealed that attending a high school where the norm encouraging voting was strong boosted the likelihood of turning out to vote by 10% (Campbell 2006, 169).

Technology

Youth have always embraced the new, and today, the amount of time that young people devote to television, online and video games, texting, and the internet is increasing steadily (Hess 2008, 6). In 2005, 87% of American youth between 12 and 17 were found to use the internet, and of those, 78% say they used it at school (Lenhart, et al. 2005). As might be expected then, youth are much less likely to read books and newspapers.[i] It is true that youth read online, but this type of reading has been aptly termed "power-browsing," for online readers tend to skim and to read quickly. Researchers are just beginning to explore what the effects of this may be on the brain. Over time, will we be able to contemplate deeply, take the time to make connections, or bring our interpretation to text rather than simply decode information (Carr 2008)? A title of a forthcoming book, "The Dumbest Generation" is a bit insulting, and may be off the mark. The aggressive use of technology by youth, who are creating wikis, blogs, creative social networking sites, may teach political knowledge and skills in ways that we have not yet foreseen (Bauerlein 2008). Certainly youth are mastering information gathering online. And they are turning to the internet to provide information on the elections. Last fall for instance, some colleagues and I researched the issue positions for the top 12 presidential candidates and created a website, Votehelp.org. Visitors to "Votehelp" type in their issue positions and how strongly they felt each issue, and are then matched to the closest candidates. So far, nearly half a million people have come to the site, and Votehelp is only one of many candidate calculator sites. So there is a real hunger for sites that provide unbiased, objective, and verifiable data on candidates' issue positions. Youth also use the internet to assist them with assignments: 37% of teens themselves say that "too many" teens use the internet to cheat on schoolwork (Lenhart, et al 2005).

Tests continue to show a lack of political and historical knowledge among many American youth. The NAEP history test found only 43% of seventeen year-old know the Civil War was between 1850 and 1900, while only 50% knew that *The Federalist Papers* sought to gain ratification of the Constitution (Hess 2008, 7). By not reading, this generation misses important cultural connections. For instance, media often make reference to totalitarian states though such metaphors as "Big Brother is watching you".

But only 1 in 2 seventeen year-olds could identify the plot of George Orwell's *1984* (Hess 2008, 7). The danger, according to one essayist is that through constant use of the internet that we become "drained of our 'inner repertory of dense cultural inheritance" and risk turning into "pancake people --spread wide and thin as we connect with that vast network of information accessed by the mere touch of a button" (Richard Foreman quoted, Carr 2008, 6). Will our thinking take on a staccato quality?

Privacy is an important issue to the "digital generation," who are also being bombarded with embedded advertising through their cell phones, computers and other devices. Young people seem to care deeply about privacy, as evidenced when 700, 000 young Facebook users organized an online protest in 2007 in response to Facebook posting their information to other members without obtaining their permission. Facebook, which as of January 2008 had over 58 million active members, ranked fifth among the most popular websites in the U.S., right behind YouTube (Melber 2008). This popular social networking site allows users to post their information, photos, and stories to a network, and emblemizes the growing popularity of online networking, whereby youth who can connect with hundreds, indeed thousands of people. But Facebook, Myspace and other similar sites have lengthy user agreements that most readers skip. So while a Carnegie Mellon study found that students on Facebook rank privacy above terrorism as an important issue, most Facebook users have no idea that all of the 2.7 billion photos they post, and all their personal information, indeed whatever they post, is now owned by Facebook (Melber 2008). After all, who has time to read lengthy disclosure agreements when signing up to use sites?

Does today's generation have a different idea about privacy altogether? This generation debates opting in versus opting out in terms of digital privacy, not whether what they should have absolute privacy on a website. The shift is from the absolute right to be let alone to an emphasis on control (Danah Boyd, quoted in Melber 2008). What is the effect of growing up cognizant that corporations are tracking your every move online? Or that cameras are trained on you in public spaces? Or that your text messages may be read by a bureaucrat housed in the Department of Homeland security? Coming generations may feel silenced or they may come to accept this as a normal course of human events. Companies, for instance, are blurring the lines between advertising and content. While youth have challenged corporations over content, most have grown up with it, and accept it as is simply normal. In a very real way, the public space of this generation is digital, but much of that real estate is corporate. And corporate consolidation of all media is still underway. For instance, MySpace was bought the News Corporation for $580 million (Montgomery 2008, 34). Will impressionable young people conflate brand and civic identity? If civic identities are rooted in relationships and opportunities, there is a good chance they might, as these are becoming increasingly intermingled on social networking sites. Youth may be the defining voice of this new media, where they can develop blogs, sites, diaries, launch

new enterprises, and create their own culture, but they are simultaneously being hit with marketing and, depending upon the forum/site, subject to corporate control.

How public then, is this new digital "public sphere"? Before internet had even been invented, Habermas defined the public sphere as follows:

> By public sphere, we mean first of all a domain of our social life in which such a thing as public opinion can be formed. Access to the public sphere is open in principle to all citizens. A portion of the public sphere is constituted in every conversation in which private persons come together to form a public. They are then acting neither as business or professional people conducting their private affairs, nor as legal consociates subject to the legal regulations of a state bureaucracy and obligated to obedience. Citizens act as a public when they deal with matters of general interest without being subject to coercion; thus with the guarantee that they may assemble and unite freely, and express and publicize their feelings. (Habermas, quoted in Rheingold, 2008, 101-102).

If we consider his definition carefully, we realize that many of the sites we all use, and this is even more true as we move to social networking sites instead of email, are often corporate owned. Do youth self-censor given that the spaces they inhabit online aren't really public by this definition? They are censored if they post something a networking site deems offensive, so in that sense there is no private conversation, hence the norms are enforced. Further, there remains inequality in access to the digital world, even in postindustrial nations. Income shapes access to technology, with the African American youth and Latinos having approximately 20% less access to home computers and a slightly greater gap in access to internet at home than their white peers (Montgomery 2008, 39, data reported form 2005). Research has found significant but small effects of political efficacy, knowledge and participation in the 2000 National Annenberg Election study (Kenski and Stroud 2006). But the authors caution us from hoping that the internet would provide a boost for overall political engagement at this juncture. While the internet might be expected to increase civic engagement through offering relative ease of access to information, providing venues for social connection, organizing like-minded individuals, or simplify calls to action from leaders, so far it seems that the data are mixed, and that those who are already more engaged participate more in this medium too, while those with lower incomes participate less online well (Kenski and Stroud 2006, Bimber 1998).

Education Policy: Fewer School Hours Devoted to Civics, History and Social Studies Generally

Before we begin to discuss possible reforms, I want to provide an overview current educational policy, best practices and delivery of quality civic education to American youth. Over the past half century, educational policy has shifted from local control to increasing federal intervention. This is due to problems perceived by federal policy makers that they are better qualified to solve, such as the need for desegregation within schools that was facilitated by the 1964 Civil Rights Act and ensuing legislation (Davies 2007), and with the creation of a U.S. Department of Education in 1979 (Anderson 2007). In 1983, an influential report entitled *A Nation at Risk* called for excellence across a wide variety of subjects, including civic education. However, the push for excellence across all subjects washed away with Title 1 Legislation that passed by Congress in 1994, and called for states to create standards and testing, *but only in mathematics and reading*. Today, academic achievement is focused on reading and math skills to the detriment of traditional liberal arts. Data from the U.S. Department of education show that the amount of weekly instructional time spent on history and social studies in primary school fell 22% between 1988 and 2004 (Hess et. al 2008, 6).

We also might ask "What is social studies?... Is it history with attention to current events? Is it a merger of history, geography, civics, economics, sociology, and all other social sciences?" (Ravitch 2003).This cramming of subjects together reflects the narrowing time slot teachers may allocate to all subjects outside of what is being tested. The 2001 No Child Left Behind Act continues the shift toward federal intervention in state education policies, even among conservatives. Will the increasing attempts at federal oversight of what was once a sacred state and local prerogative continue further? Both liberals and conservatives find legitimate reasons for expanding the role of the federal government in education. However, unfunded mandates and testing are unpopular. And now there is competition between models for school reform: standards-based, market-based, and school-based, each of which can currently find support in both federal and state policies (Kaestle 37).

Should civic educators insist on being tested? Studies have shown that what is tested is taught. However, current forms of testing, the data from which are used to reward and punish schools encourages broad, shallow interpretation of history and politics. Standardized exams are not measuring whether students understand the political ideas and values that guided the drafting of the constitution, nor concepts like the potential problems of majority rule. What follows contrasts similar questions from two exams, one currently found on the College Board website (Scholastic Aptitude Tests, SAT, see www.collegeboard.com) and the other from 1901, both used to determine college admission.[ii]

SAT questions from today:

1) Which of the following statements is generally true of the framers of the Constitution?
   a) They believed in the supremacy of the executive branch of the federal government.
   b) They had great faith in the goodness and rationality of people.
   c) They were opposed to the development of political parties.
   d) They incorporated into the Constitution the most democratic ideals of the Declaration of Independence.
   e) They believed the new American republic would be stable because of the unanimity of public opinion in the country on major policy issues.

Compare to a similar question from 1901: (Students were required to answer one in each cluster)

1) Explain the purpose of the last three amendments to the Constitution.
   a) State 1) parties involved, 2) questions at issue, and 3) result of the two most important compromises in the Constitution.
2) a) State 1) time, 2) object, 3) provisions, 4) result, of any of the following:
      i) Alien and Sedition Laws, b) Virginia and Kentucky Resolutions, c) Nullification ordinance, Silver Bill, d) Kansas-Nebraska Bill, e) Bland Silver Bill.

Another SAT question from today:

1) Which of the following Presidents is correctly paired with an event that took place during his administration?
   a) Lyndon B. Johnson . . . the establishment of diplomatic relations between the United States and the People's Republic of China
   b) John F. Kennedy . . . resolution of the Suez Crisis
   c) Richard M. Nixon . . . the reduction of United States forces in Vietnam
   d) Gerald R. Ford . . . the signing of the Camp David Accords
   e) Jimmy Carter . . . resolution of the Cuban Missile Crisis

Compared to a similar question from 1905:

1) Relate the events in the public career of Benjamin Franklin after 1775; of George Washington before 1775; of Abraham Lincoln before 1860.
2) State briefly the facts in the public careers of Calhoun, Clay, and Webster.

Or another question from 1905 under the subject heading of "Legislation":

1) What reasons prompted the passage of four of the following laws: Chinese Immigration, Civil Service Reform, Alien and Sedition, Homestead, Fugitive Slave, Independent Treasury, National Bank?

An essay question from 1904 on the subject "United States and Europe" (Answer 1 or 2) asked:

1) Mention some controversy that has arisen between the United States and each of three of the following countries, and state how each question has been settled: a) Russia, b) Germany, c) France, d) Turkey.
2) State in regard to the Monroe Doctrine: a) its origin, b) its scope, c) its application on one occasion.

It is true that both set of questions require recall. However, the earlier items require more knowledge and synthesis to answer the questions adequately. This partly reflects the question format, multiple choice versus open-ended response. However, the only essay required for admission to good liberal arts college today is a personal essay explaining one's accomplishments and aspirations. This type of personal essay provides important information about volunteer work, and challenges, including income inequality and minority status, which might be overlooked if the essay were omitted. What these tests lack is a place for students to demonstrate skills, or in depth knowledge about citizenship, constitutions, democratic theory or public policy. How will we assess students one hundred years hence?

Ironically, given the thin level of knowledge being tested and the decrease in time for democratic education, scholars have identified promising practices for democratic education. Summarizing the findings from the "The Civic Mission of Schools," points to the following best practices:

- Emphasize formal instruction in government, history, law and democracy, because teaching social studies or civics really does increase political and civic knowledge. And civic knowledge predicts political interest, engagement and tolerance.
- Incorporate discussions of current events into classroom discussions on local, national and international issues that students feel are important. The real exchange of diverse perspectives and opinions has a positive effect on civic learning.
- Provide students with ample opportunities to apply formal classroom learning to community service projects that connect back to the school curriculum. If volunteering is explicitly linked to civic content, students are able to make the connections.
- Offer extracurricular actives to provide students opportunities to get involved in schools and communities. Providing democratic experiences increases student's skills and improves democratic dispositions.
- Allot students some responsibility and voice in how schools are to be governed, and they will become more interested and knowledgeable about politics and current events.
- Provide simulations of democratic processes, including, legislative hearings, courtroom trials and other deliberations. Role playing in quality simulations is related to increases in civic knowledge, sills, and dispositions, and exposes students to novel problems and situations.

These best practices engage students on multiple levels, including their emotions. A growing body on the role of emotion and learning finds that:

> "Emotions are an integral part of educational activity settings. In the 2000s, researchers interested in teaching, learning, and motivational transactions within the classroom context can no longer ignore emotional issues. Emotions are intimately involved in virtually every aspect of the teaching and learning process and, therefore, an understanding of the nature of emotions within the school context is essential" (Schutz & Lanehart, p.67).

Not all emotions are positively related to learning. For instance, test anxiety can impair complex learning and achievement (Pekrun 1992, 360). And a recent study found that anger depressed participant's information seeking about candidates in a political campaign (Valentino et al. 2008). However, this same study found that a form of anxiety, about real world problems in this instance, boosted information seeking and learning (Valentino et al. 2008, 247). Student's emotions stir when they debate real issues, role play in public simulations, or interact with each other in a school that they feel is their community. Anxiety that students experience when taking part in simulations, which they can mitigate through preparation, may promote learning and the synthesizing of new information.

Unfortunately, many American students don't have access to quality civic education programs. A study of high school civic opportunities found that a student's race and academic track, and a school's average socioeconomic status (SES) determines the availability of the school-based civic learning opportunities that promote voting and broader forms of civic engagement (Kahn and Ellen Middaugh 2008). High school students attending wealthier schools, those who are college-bound and white, get more of these opportunities than low-income students and students of color. Schools, rather than helping to equalize the capacity and commitments needed for democratic participation, appear to be exacerbating this inequality by providing more preparation for those who are already likely to attain a disproportionate amount of civic and political voice. The authors suggest that, "A more equity focused approach would be to institute structures that engage all students in senior projects and perhaps also freshman projects where they identified and studied a civic or political issue about which they cared. Ideally, students would consider varied ways to respond to the issues they were studying and, where appropriate, might act. Similarly, many extracurricular opportunities might productively be incorporated into classrooms of all levels to ensure equal access." (Kahn and Middaugh 2008, 20)

Adapting Civic Education to Changing Opportunities

Are the institutions for civic education that were created in democratic countries during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries are no longer adequate (Dahl 1998)? Do we

need to create new institutions to supplement the old ones? In summarizing the challenges and trends, I offer questions and possible directions for civic educators.

Income inequality and increasing diversity are going to put pressure on teachers. Schools with the poorest and most diverse students may not even be able to offer quality democratic education, in which case we can expect the gaps to grow between groups. The trend away from democratic instruction may be met by civil society, and the actions of NGOs who have created a coalition to campaign to reinstate the civic mission of schools (see http://www.civicmissionofschools.org/). The above noted best practices for democratic education, including formal instruction and simulations, require time, but the trend has been to reduce time spent on civics.

In addition, teacher quality has been found to improve students' outcomes in nearly all studies conducted by the US DOE. Why not invest in and inspire teachers, through institutes like those conducted by Center for Civic Education in Birmingham, Alabama or in the Navajo Nation in Arizona, where they have an opportunity to learn from participants and to "touch history" through learning firsthand about key events in the places they transpired? How can we improve teachers' pay and status in poor districts? What can we do to improve civics teachers' content knowledge and pedagogical skills to bring the subject alive for all students, including limited English speakers? Kahne and Middaugh argue that, "we need professional and curricular development to prepare and support educators to help students thoughtfully engage civic content in a way that aligns with such best practices as introducing students to role models, use of simulations, and service learning." (2008, 19).

What will be the result of growing diversity in classrooms and schools? Certainly educators and students need to acquire skills to identify, to express, to negotiate, and to organize around their interests. This requires listening skills, willingness to compromise and a host of other skills. Can we incorporate tests that require synthesis and deep understanding, that allow students to demonstrate diverse skill sets?

Technology is pushing us to create a curriculum that teaches youth how to discern quality information when using internet for research. What is the best means to teach youth to be more critical users of all media? Are we teaching them how to cite online sources and how to synthesize information so that they don't simply plagiarize? Further, internet search engines direct users toward sites with the most hits, not necessarily the best quality scholarship. Unless researchers have a good online library to access, they can only use abstracts from journals, or pay premium fees. Will more universities open their online libraries and publishers give permission to open up, so that scholar's articles can be accessed by the public at large?

I am still skeptical that current sites can create real online communities that are deep and emotionally engaging where students engage with diverse others and practice democratic skills. Face-to-face meetings and simulations that embody collective action, have real outcomes and give students a chance to interact seem to me to be more likely to fully engage youth. Diversity, working parents and residential patterns

have increased the need for living communities that demonstrate core civic values. Civic educators might take up the challenge to create multiuser virtual environments that can create compelling democratic experiences by situating personal values in the context of an online community (Bers 2008, 143). Communities have long been known to shape thinking and moral behavior, but can this take place through virtual technology? Youth initiated and driven projects seem essential in this medium.

Finally, I would like to present an interesting model put forward by Lance Bennett is that there has been a profound generational shift form a "dutiful citizen model" (still adhered to by older generations), to an "actualizing citizen model" (Bennett 2008, 14; but see also Russell Dalton). Is this model compelling, and if so, how should civic educators adapt their curricula?

Table 1
The Changing Citizenry: The Traditional Civic Education Ideal of the Dutiful Citizen (DC) versus the Emerging Youth Experience of Self-Actualizing Citizenship (AC)

Actualizing Citizen (AC)	Dutiful Citizen (DC)
Diminished sense of government obligation – higher sense of individual purpose	Obligation to participate in government centered activities
Voting is less meaningful than other, more personally defined acts such as consumerism, community volunteering, or transnational activism	Voting is the core democratic act
Mistrust of media and politicians is reinforced by negative mass media environment	Becomes informed about issues and government by following mass media
Favors loose networks of community action – often established or sustained through friendships and peer relations and thin social ties maintained by interactive technologies	Joins civil society organizations and/or expresses interests through parties that typically employ one-way conventional communication to mobilize supporters.

Bennett, W. Lance. "Changing Citizenship in the Digital Age." *Civic Life Online: Learning How Digital Media Can Engage Youth*, Edited by W. Lance Bennett. The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation Series on Digital Learning. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2008. 1-24.

Dalton suggests changing citizen norms are also in two clusters, one revolving around "Citizen Duty, " such as voting, paying taxes, obeying the law, to "Engaged

Citizenship," whereby citizens are independent, assertive and concerned with the rights of others (2008, 4). Bennett argues that given the absence of group and class-based influences, which assigned identities to members, youths' underlying sense of citizenship today is based more on individuals being responsible for the "production and management of their own social and political identities" (Bennett 2008, 13). This new "network society" is one where individuals seek support and recognition based on different conceptions of membership and commitment. Top-down, one-way models of political communication may , but appeal to the dutiful citizenship style (DC), but don't work with "actualizing citizens" (AC), who are skeptical of official news sources. Bennett criticizes civic course in public schools for either failing to provide civics instruction, or when it is often taught, it uses a stripped down version covering basic government functions and "cleansed of the kinds of political issues and active learning experiences young people might find authentic and motivating" (2008, 16). For instance, in 1949, 41.5% of schools taught a course called "problems of democracy"; by the 1970s, fewer than 9% of transcript had that course listed, and today it has disappeared (Bennett citing the Civic Mission of the Schools report, 2003).

How can we create an interactive, communication-driven curricula the addresses controversy and engages young people? Bennett suggests that we need to make information interactive, involving the audience in rating, editing, and evaluating the information before decisions and actions take place. However, if politics continues to be an insider's game where money matters more, and media continue their long march toward consolidation, then youth's deep skepticism may be warranted. Should civic educators try to hook into the "more personally expressive aspects of youth politics" rather than adhere to a more government-centered approach (e.g., voting, following public affairs)? How can the two approaches be successfully combined? Civic educators face the challenge of creating meaningful democratic experience in the formal and informal curriculum for digitally inspired citizens.

[i] The report mentions that the percentage of 17-year olds who report reading for fun daily declined from one in three in 1984 t one in five in 2004. In 2006, 15-24 year-olds on the whole reported reading and average of seven minutes a day on weekdays and 10 minutes a day on weekends. See Hess, 2008, "Still at Risk: What Students Don't Know, Even Now," p 6.

[ii] The Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) is a widely used tool to gauge the performance of college applicants. The College Board was founded in 1900 to promote equal access to college for all students. Prior to its founding, college admissions were conducted independently, with each school establishing their own requirements and little oversight or objective observations of the selection process. In an article on admissions to Harvard and Yale printed in the 1965 edition of *Higher Education Quarterly*, "one Yale Admissions Officer stated that 'a hundred years ago a professor would line up the applicants outside his study door, admit them one by one, give them a stiff oral test in Latin or Greek, and tell them to come back the next day for his decision-a method that some of our faculty members think would still work as well as any that the modern experts have concocted'." Following the establishment of the College Board, admissions exams switched to an essay format, with identical questions being used across schools and a guide for scoring the essays.

Questions from the 1901-1905 tests were cited because they mark the beginning of the standardized test for college admissions. Historically, students taking the "History" exam had to demonstrate an intimate knowledge of both US History and Civics. The "History" portion of the exam consisted of questions on six subjects: Ancient History, Greek and Roman History, Medieval and Modern History, English History, American History and Civil Government, and English and American History. The American History and Civil Government Test was an essay exam with an allotted time of 2-2 ½ hours to gauge both breadth and depth of knowledge.

Currently, there is no separate section for government/civics on the SAT. The subjects are incorporated into the U.S. History subject test. All questions on the U.S. History test are multiple-choice (there are no open response questions on this subject). There are 90 to 95 multiple-choice questions covering political history (32-36 questions), economic history (18-20 questions), social history (18-22 questions), intellectual and cultural history (10-12 questions), and foreign policy (13-17 questions).

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