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Promoting Civic Education in Teacher Preparation Programs

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Introduction

e are facing a civics crisis in the United States! Our Nation's Report Card, produced by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), reports that two-thirds of students scored below "proficient" on the last national civics assessment administered in 2010. Less than half of the 8th graders surveyed knew the purpose of the Bill of Rights, and only one in ten had an ageappropriate knowledge of the system of checks and balances between the nation's branches of Scores are even lower for lowgovernment. income and minority students. Unfortunately, there is more bad news according to the 2010 NAEP report:

- The US ranked 139th in voter participation of 172 democracies in the world
- Nationally, less than half of eligible young people ages 18-24 voted in the 2012 elections

• Latino and African American youth, who make up 59 percent of California's K-12 students, receive fewer high quality civic learning opportunities than their white peers.

Given these findings and more, it is not surprising to learn that civic participation in society is at an all time low! This is a major problem for our democracy ~ if we want to keep it! Citizens and groups nationwide are becoming more aware of this crisis and are speaking out, for example, we recently have heard "... it is vital to the health and future of our democracy that our schools prepare students for a lifetime of knowledgeable, engaged, and active citizenship" (NCSS, 2013); Education for Democracy: A Call to Restore the Civic Mission of Schools (2010); Educating for Democracy: Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools, (2011).

Martha McCarthy makes a good point in a 2011 article entitled "Why Civic Education Matters" (Civic Education in Action), stating the following:

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"The term civic education often is associated with a high school civics course in which students learn about the three branches of government, checks and balances, how bills become laws, and so forth. Although these topics are important, my central thesis is that such a civics course is not nearly sufficient. Instruction in civics should permeate the education system and not be relegated to a single high school course. For students to understand fully the scope of their rights and responsibilities in our democracy, they need to live civic education throughout their school experience" (p. 28).

We owe our teacher candidates the opportunity to do better than we have done in the past! It is our responsibility as teacher educators of social studies to prepare our university students – our future teachers – for excellence in teaching so that they can, in turn, make the difference in preparing their students for civic competence. And what better time? We are in the midst of implementing the Common Core State Standards, and the California History/Social Science Curriculum Framework is in the process of being revised. Further, educators now have the guidance of The College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards: Guidance for Enhancing the Rigor of K-12 Civics, Economics, Geography, and History (NCSS, 2011) which encourages the development of state social studies standards that support students in learning to be actively engaged in civic life.

The issue of how to develop civic learning in the K-12 system has been championed and advocated by a large number of national, state, and local groups. Some of those organizations and resources include, but are not limited to, the National Council for the Social Studies, the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE), the Annenberg Institute for Civic at the University of Pennsylvania, the California Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools, the California Courts Power of Democracy website, iCivics, the California K-12 Task Force on Civic Learning, and the California Council for the Social Studies.

This article addresses the significant responsibility that we have as teacher educators of social studies in preparing our future teachers to meet this challenge presented by McCarthy and others ~ to "permeate" their future classrooms and schools with instruction in civics. The focus of this article includes the understanding of what it will take to prepare our pre-service teacher candidates for excellence in the teaching of civics for the 21st century. **For the purposes of this paper, the authors use the term *civic education* and *civic learning* interchangeably as is often done by civic educators. This article is guided by the following questions:

What is civic learning from kindergarten to grade twelve and how does it relate overall to history/social studies and school programs?

What approaches and quality resources are available, offering sound methodology for the teaching of civics education?

What can teacher educators and professional development providers do to promote civic education in teacher preparation programs?

[** AUTHORS' NOTE: The terms "civic learning" and "civic education" are used throughout the paper with consideration to a slight distinction of difference in definitions. "Civic learning" is an umbrella term that indicates all educational goals and activities which contribute to civic understanding and support civic engagement in a broad range of venues including school, community, social groups, etc., but may be directed through schools and community programs. "Civic education" refers to more specific educational objectives and intentional curricular activities that have civic learning outcomes at various grade levels and in alignment with school goals, standards, and curriculum frameworks.]

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Civic Education and Civic Learning Components, Approaches, Resources, and Skills

In order to understand the purpose of K-12 civic education, it is important to note that civic learning is more than a methodology or a single-project curriculum. Civic learning embodies a full range of learning goals, curriculum connections, and development of citizenship skills across all grade levels, kindergarten through higher education. Civic learning consists of specific learning goals that encompass civic literacy, attitudes and dispositions, skill development, and content knowledge that is applied, evaluated, communicated, and creatively integrated. It is centered on skills such as problem solving, inquiry, research, expository reading and writing, taking a position and defending it, reasoning, and logic.

Learning about how to participate in a sustainable democratic society requires on-going attention to the development of an engaged and informed citizenry living in a diverse socio-political system that is characterized by a network of diverse communities. These skills are most often imparted through effective teaching, knowledgeable educators, and curricula that support civic literacy. Fundamental principles of civic learning include the following:

- 1. Effective civic learning is based on intentional goals, learning objectives, and specific lessons. If we assume that civic learning will occur by simply learning historical facts or reading a primary source document, we are minimizing the purpose of education and misleading students as to what it means to live in a democratic society. Prepared lessons that directly address civic learning must be intentionally planned, implemented, and assessed with attention to historical foundations of democracy, cognitive skills that include inquiry and multiple perspectives, participatory skills, dispositions of applied knowledge, and active student engagement.
- 2. Civic learning is centered on the research-based social science strategy of inquiry, argumentation, and engagement. In order to develop deeper understandings of the foundations of democracy and the building of a sustainable socio-political network, students must be actively involved in discussion, debate, and argumentation that is based on logic, reasoning, and multiple perspectives. Students demonstrate proficiency through presentations, writing, and discussion.
- 3. Civic learning requires a deep understanding and depth of knowledge in content, skills, and dispositions. Informed citizens are the bulwark of a sustainable democracy and the greatest skill and gift that we can give to our students is to allow them to explore and develop higher-order thinking skills that use strategic and extended thinking. Active learning allows students to develop the reasoning and logic that support effective argumentation, communication, and engagement.

Two important documents that outline the framework for an effective program in civic learning education are the *Guardian of Democracy: A Report from Carnegie Corporation of New York and CIRCLE* (CIRCLE: The Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement, 2011), and *The College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards: Guidance for Enhancing the Rigor of K-12 Civics, Economics, Geography, and History* (NCSS, 2011).

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Active learning means that K-12 students will be given the opportunity to consider, process, and discuss multiple perspectives, as well as apply democratic principles in real-life situations and participate in classroom and school activities that provide students with action research instructional strategies. Students that do not actively question, process information, and engage in dialogue about democracy are not or will not be able to experience true civic learning. More specifically, according to the *Guardian of Democracy* (p. 21):

"About a quarter of ninth-grade students in the United States were receiving neither interactive nor traditional civic learning at the time of the study. Educators need to find ways to minimize the number of students who are not experiencing civic learning. This group of students is especially likely to be deficient in knowledge and skills vital in the workplace, to have limited experience with cooperation and understanding others, to feel uncomfortable expressing opinions constructively, to hold negative attitudes toward minority groups, and to think it not very important to work hard, obey the law, or vote. A parallel analysis showed that this group is also likely to expect to drop out of school or to obtain no education past high school. These students are disproportionately from home backgrounds with limited educational resources."

As reported in the *Guardian of Democracy*: the six proven practices in civic education include:

- #1 Classroom instruction in government, history, law, and democracy
- #2 Discussion of current issues
- #3 Service-learning linked to formal curriculum and classroom instruction
- #4 Extra-curricular activities
- #5 Student voice in school governance
- #6 Student simulations of democratic processes and procedures

The inquiry process, as outlined in the C3 Framework document, includes four dimensions:

- Dimension 1: Developing Questions and Planning Inquiries
- Dimension 2: Applying Disciplinary Tools and Concepts
 - o Civic Education Disciplinary Tools and Concepts:
 - Civic and Political Institutions
 - ❖ Participation and Deliberation: Applying Civic Virtues and Democratic Principles
 - Processes, Rules, and Laws
- Dimension 3: Evaluating Sources and Using Evidence
- Dimension 4: Communicating Conclusions and Taking Informed Actions

A summary of scholarship in the field of civic education outlines the components of civic learning as the following:

- 1. Content knowledge of the foundations of democracy and living in a diverse society
- 2. Higher-order thinking skills
- 3. Participatory skills
- 4. Attitudes and dispositions that lead to active engagement in a democratic society

Foundational content and civic knowledge include but are not limited to the following:

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- Historical Content Context and Perspective
- Foundations of Democracy–Philosophical, Political, Social
- Government Structure, Function, How it Works
- Constitutional constructs
- Landmark Supreme Court cases
- Connections Historical, Political, Socio-Economic, Geographic
- Current Events

Civic learning cognitive skills for higher-order thinking of democracy include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Development of logical and persuasive argument (oral and written) based on facts, evidence, logic, and reasoning
- Consideration and understanding of multiple perspectives
- Evaluation and analysis of information and supporting evidence
- Recognition of bias
- Drawing conclusions based on evidence
- Effective decision-making skills
- Synthesis of knowledge and content from related fields such as economics, history, geography, and cultural studies
- Creative problem-solving, metacognitive thinking, and connections
- Cause and effect
- Comparison and contrasting of political issues and philosophies
- Ability to distinguish between fact and opinion
- Understanding of the significance of historical legacy and the role of democracy in contemporary society
- Development of in-depth understandings of diversity, multiculturalism, the global community, citizen engagement and responsibility, and current issues
- Logic and reasoning that lead to conclusions, actions, or positions

Participatory skills of civic learning include but are not limited to the following:

- Working together
- Listening and speaking skills
- Multiple perspectives
- Consensus-building and compromise
- Civil discourse
- Debate
- Team-building
- Communication skills
- Simulations of institutional processes (e.g., Mock Trial, Mock Congressional Hearings)
- Student voice (school and/or local governance)
- Community involvement and volunteerism

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Civic Attitudes and Dispositions

- Informed decision-making
- Equity and inclusiveness
- Democratic values and principles (e.g., fairness, due process, equity, access)
- Community issues interest and research
- Reasoned commitment
- Civic engagement
- Empathy and understanding
- Role models and career exploration
- Voting and campaign activism
- Civic virtue and "for the common good"
- Opportunities for school and community involvement
- Service learning aligned to the curriculum

It is critical that these concepts and foundations of civic learning be institutionalized as part of all teacher preparation programs at the post-secondary level. In concert with the myriad of programs in schools of education across the country, each university may develop a specific unit, class, or departmental program component that includes the following goals for high quality civic learning for prospective teachers:

1. Planning

- a. Teacher candidates will demonstrate proficiency in identifying and planning instruction that addresses civic learning and democracy education goals and learning objectives at specific K-12 grade levels.
- b. Teacher candidates will demonstrate proficiency in developing specific lessons that address civic learning goals and learning objectives at specific K-12 grade levels.

2. Instruction

- a. Teacher candidates will demonstrate proficiency in identifying and developing instructional strategies that provide students with knowledge, skills, and understanding of how to engage in a democratic society.
- b. Teacher candidates will demonstrate proficiency in planning, implementing, and assessing civic learning lessons, instructional strategies, and student-centered projects appropriate to specific grades levels, K-12.

3. Assessment and Reflection

- a. Teacher candidates will demonstrate proficiency in assessing student learning related to civic education goals.
- b. Teacher candidates will demonstrate proficiency in evaluating civic learning assessments and reflect upon how to adjust instruction for high proficiency levels for all students.

Accountability for civic learning may be established through required lesson plan templates, project requirements, supervisory components, and/or demonstration lessons.

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Classroom activities that teach and promote civic learning begin with a strong understanding of history and the foundations of democracy but reinforce civic learning through specific instructional strategies. Sample lessons and strategies for exemplary civic learning might include the following:

- Writing performance tasks that ask the students "how" and "why" questions
- Informed classroom discussion based on sources and evidence conducted with civil discourse
- Discussion and presentations that provide for opportunities in which students analyze, evaluate, consider multiple perspectives, make inferences, develop personal connections, apply knowledge, and draw conclusions
- The use of primary sources to discuss original intent, evidence, questions raised, and significance for today
- Structured debate and classroom discussion based on civil discourse
- Taking and defending a position (argumentation) or persuasive writing based on inquiry, research, and reasoning
- Interviewing of public figures and government staff
- Collaborative student work groups to propose public policy and community projects
- Simulations such as mock trials, mock hearings, news conferences, and model United Nations
- Service learning and active citizenship projects
- Analyses of current issues, political stands, multiple perspectives, and competing interests
- Direct instruction that nurtures development of in-depth understandings of diversity, multiculturalism, the global community, 21st Century skills, and citizenship responsibilities
- Reflection on implications and consequences, pros and cons, long-term vs. short term effects, alternative perspectives, bias, and other frames of reference in evaluative commentary

Civic learning in the K-12 classroom begins with a strong foundation in the principles of democracy but is reinforced with classroom activities in which students are engaged, thinking deeply and processing information, and making sense of a diverse democratic society. This type of instruction moves the teacher into the role of "facilitator" of learning as opposed to the "transmitter" of knowledge, and it demonstrates the foundational structures of democracy such as questioning, analyzing, communicating, evaluating, problem-solving, and creating. This is the foundation for a teacher preparation program that is inclusive of the critical role of civic learning in K-12 education. It is the foundation of education in general as civic learning promotes democracy in a sustainable future.

Civic Education and Civic Learning: Applications in Teacher Preparation

Teacher preparation is one way to guide and promote more civic learning in the K-12 system. It can shape the philosophical and practical instruction of our prospective future educators and presents an opportunity to instill the values of high-quality civic education and provide experiential learning activities at the university level. In fact, democratic applications and high quality instruction in the elements of civic education are essential in the shaping of a sound teaching philosophy in civic understanding and application. Universities throughout California and the nation have established required classes on topics such as access and equity, democratic foundations, democratic applications, and civic learning. While standardization of the criteria of these courses is not established nor desired, the very existence of these types of required forums for deeper thinking about civic learning ideas is a positive step in the establishment of universal civic learning goals.

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In teacher preparation programs, the integration and modeling of strategies are frequently used at the university level to both demonstrate and analyze how activities can be adapted for use in K-12 classrooms. Some of the activities that support this type of instruction at the university level include intensive questioning strategies with meta-cognitive analysis, identifying the essential principles and values of a democratic society, inquiry, analytical reviews of primary source documents of the foundations of democracy, evaluative discussion and debate on critical topics of today, current events discussion, community involvement, and literacy in civic learning. The protocols and structure of the classes at the university are excellent points of reference in the development of a democratic classroom.

Classes on access and equity at California State University, Chico will often focus on issues of diversity that are sensitive and can be potentially confrontational. It is imperative that classroom discussion guidelines be clearly outlined from the start. One section of the required "Access and Equity" class begins the first session with a group activity in which students develop protocol for classroom discussion with a list of discussion guidelines. In small groups of three, students begin brainstorming a short list of discussion guideline rules. After a few minutes of small group work, pairs of the groups of three will combine, forming a group of six. This larger group will share lists, combine like ideas, wordsmith for accuracy and succinctness, and identify four to five top priorities. These are displayed on large poster paper and posted around the room. All students are then given three post-it dots and as they walk around to survey the posters, students vote with the dots on their top three choices. The final set of classroom discussion guidelines are determined by those that receive the most votes. Compromise and collaboration are key features of this activity.

Along those same lines, history/social science K-12 methods classes at California State University, Sacramento often focus on civics through the examination of diversity and social justice issues. Pre-service teacher candidates are introduced to civics through the iCivics website (https://www.icivics.org/), a free website inspired and sponsored by retired Supreme Court Justice, Sandra Day O'Connor with lesson plans and games for learning civics. Specifically, at the beginning of class, students are provided an opportunity to *test* their own knowledge about American government and civics through a daily podcast called 60-Second Civics (Center for Civic Education.) After listening to the one-minute podcast, students then take the daily civics quiz and then discuss and reflect on topic. (See an example of the "60-Second Civics Daily Civics Quiz" below.) It is a quick and easy way to teach a civics topic that can be elaborated upon, depending on the focus of the class.



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Another example that is implemented in both the multiple subject and single subject programs are activities related to César Chávez and his role as a civics leader who fought through service and action to improve the working conditions of migrant farm workers. The pre-service teacher candidates often analyze, modify, and implement lessons provided in the K-12 César Chávez Model Curriculum. These lessons are grade-level specific so that they can be taught in their student teaching/practicum classes, generally on or around March 31st, the holiday designated as the César Chávez Day of Service and Learning. In follow-up, students are then introduced to an iCivics Persuasive Writing unit (https://www.icivics.org/curriculum/persuasive-writing) whereby they review the unit lessons and then are guided into making connections between what Cesar Chavez did to persuade and impact farm labor policies, and how they can teach their own students to analyze an issue, and then "argue on paper" through a persuasive essay or letter on a topic of interest to them such as the school's dress code rules. (Using persuasive writing as a civics tools is elaborated upon further below in this article.) Lastly, and when feasible, Sacramento State students have participated as volunteers as conferences and events organized by the California Council for the Social Studies, National History Day, and the California Council for History Education. As a result of these opportunities, future teachers are more inclined to become involved in such civics-related organizations, and to teach civics-based lessons.

At California State University San Marcos, service learning is a prominent part of many courses. Student participation in community service activities related to course materials and student's active reflection on the meaning of service has been beneficial for all students in creating an understanding of what it means to make a difference in the civic life of our communities and developing the combination of knowledge, skills, values and motivation to make that difference. Pre-service teacher candidates at California State University San Marcos are admitted to the credential program with a background relating to the importance of civic attitudes and dispositions, and an understanding of the value of community engagement that is rooted in social justice. In social studies methods courses specifically, students are exposed to quality resources that will benefit their future students in this understanding...we are modeling the methods we proclaim to be effective. For example, CSUSM has a strong partnership with the Superior Court of San Diego. Students learn more about the judicial branch through experiential learning and reflection. Credential students take a field trip with their class for a "tour" of the court. Much to their surprise, they find that the courtroom door closes and they are all asked to "rise" as the judge takes to the bench! Each student is given a role in a trial, and participates as a defendant, attorney, bailiff, clerk, juror, or witness. The operations of the judicial branch are experienced in an authentic manner. Students have the opportunity to interact with the judge and learn of many excellent resources and outreach offered by courts and bar associations that are available to teachers. These experiences become much more than a field trip! With reflection taking place back at the university, deeper understandings emerge within the rule of law that are critical to the understanding of our democracy: the role of the judicial branch within our system of government, the rights and responsibilities of citizens, and the impartiality of the judiciary.

Another activity that effectively reinforces higher-order thinking strategies can be conducted at both university level classes as well as secondary classes. This activity is based on a variation of the Socratic method of questioning. Socratic teaching emphasizes teacher-student dialogue through questioning strategies such as open-ended questions, in-depth discussion of ideas and implications, cause and effect inquiries, evaluative commentary, applications or connections, meta-analysis, and debate. Participants will read a passage that encourages critical questioning and thinking skills. Students may highlight, circle, and make notes on the text paying particular attention to the statements and claims that provoke questions, reasoned positions, implications, and connections. Students are divided into two groups (approximately 3-6 each). The groups are seated so that one group forms an inner circle and the second group forms an outer circle. The inner circle discusses the passage through questioning for approximately 10-12 minutes while the outer circle observes.

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The outer circle participants may take notes. The outer circle participants then pose questions to the inner circle group for deeper understanding and clarity on the reasoning, the evidence or support, and the conclusions drawn (approximately 10-12 minutes). In the final debriefing, the full class then provides feedback as to the effectiveness of the questioning of both the inner and the outer circles. The teacher provides feedback and reflective commentary. Focus questions for the inner circle may include: What are the key issues of the article? With which statements do you agree or disagree? What conclusions can be drawn from this document? How does this information or concept apply to schools today? Focus questions for the outer circle group might include: Why? What did you mean by...? How did you arrive at that conclusion? What variables or different circumstances would make a difference? Under what circumstances might the outcome be different? Can you give an example?

As discussed previously, persuasive letter writing is another civic learning assignment that can provide teacher educators and pre-service teacher candidates a tool by which to practice civics beyond theory and lesson planning. It falls within the genre and domains of argument (opinion) and informative/explanatory text and is a skill that is emphasized throughout the Common Core Standards as shown below in the California Common Core State Writing Standards and English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects 6–12 (p. 87):

GRADE 2

CCSS.ELA.W.2.1. Write opinion pieces in which they introduce the topic or book they are writing about, state an opinion, supply reasons that support the opinion, use linking words (e.g., because, and, also) to connect opinion and reasons, and provide a concluding statement or section.

CCSS.ELA.W.2.5. With guidance and support from adults and peers, focus on a topic and strengthen writing as needed by revising and editing.

GRADES 6-8

TEXT TYPES: 2. Write informative/explanatory texts, including the narration of historical events, scientific procedures/experiments, or technical processes.

a. Introduce a topic clearly...

RESEARCH: 8. Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources (primary and secondary), using search terms effectively; assess the credibility and accuracy of each source; and quote or paraphrase the data and conclusions of others while avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation...

Besides developing writing and literacy skills, persuasive letter writing develops critical thinking skills, empowers students to become active citizens in the 21st century, provides an authentic audience, and promotes civic participation. According to the National Assessment Education Program Writing Report Card (2007):

"Persuasive writing seeks to influence the reader to take some action or bring about change. It may contain factual information, such as reasons, examples, or comparisons; however, its main purpose is not to inform, but to persuade. The persuasive topics in the writing assessment ask students to write letters to friends, newspaper editors, or prospective employers, as well as to refute arguments or take sides in a debate" (p. 2).

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In Preparing Students for College, Career and CITIZENSHIP: A California Guide to Align Civic Education and the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science and Technical Subjects (2011), Michelle Herczog asserts that by

"Allowing students' opportunities to engage in discussions about controversial issues empowers them to paraphrase information, articulate complex ideas representing various points of view and practice the art of civil discourse. Writing informative, explanatory and persuasive writing further develops students' ability to analyze information, deconstruct complex ideas, and articulate arguments in an organized, coherent manner. English-Language Arts skills, developed in this manner within the construct of civic education not only furthers subject matter knowledge but strengthens students' cognitive abilities to think critically about important issues and provides them with the skills to respond in meaningful, relevant ways" (pp. 2-3 - see http://www.ccss.org/Resources/Documents/Herczog-CCSSNCSS%20Journal%20Article%20for%20Matrix.pdf).

An annotated example of an Argument persuasive letter can be found in the California Common Core State Standards English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects, Appendix C: Samples of Student Writing (see http://www.corestandards.org/assets/Appendix C.pdf). In this Student Sample: Grade 7, Argument "Video Cameras in Classrooms," students were "asked to a write a letter to their principal about a plan to install video cameras in the classroom for safety reasons. The abbreviated time frame of the assessment (and the consequent lack of opportunity to perform research and revise) explains the absence of information from sources and possibly also the occasional errors" (p. 40). As indicated, in order for students to be meaningfully engaged in civic learning, it is crucial that they be provided time and opportunities to learn in depth about an issue to critically discern and express their own opinions and solutions, whether it be through dialogue, debate, and/or writing a persuasive letter. In a teacher preparation program, teacher educators can model that process with their pre-service teacher candidates as a way to demonstrate the process of taking a stand via persuasive letter writing. They can begin by reviewing with students who the educational leaders, policymakers, and political representatives are in their community, and beyond. They can identify an issue, such as bullying in a school. They can then seek out information about a district's anti-bullying policies. and learn if it adequately addresses such an issue. If it does not, pre-service teacher candidates can write a persuasive letter to a school principal and/or district board member to express their views about their concerns. Once they have experienced this process, they can analyze how they can create a similar assignment to use with their own students in their practicum class as a way to engage them in an authentic exercise that promotes literacy and civic action.

Other examples include structured debate, in-class presentations and mock trials. A mock trial is an example of this type of learning activity that emphasizes thinking skills, questioning strategies, research, communication skills, and collaboration. Many different types of mock trials are beneficial for targeted objectives and multiple disciplinary content standards. Therefore, mock trial unit designs can vary and offer the opportunity for students to actively engage in the study of judicial branch processes, the application of logic and reasoning, evaluative thinking, multiple perspectives, current events, historical events, analysis of characters (historical or fictional), ethics, laws, and civil unrest. This is an activity that can be used in history classes, government classes, literature classes, and university issues. For K-12 students, Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts in the area of persuasive writing and speaking and listening can be addressed through mock trial projects.

Civic education is essential to have an effective representative democracy. In order to prepare our future citizens and workforce for the 21st century, civics education must be integrated throughout teacher preparation

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programs at all levels. It is important that teacher educators not only teach lessons about civics, but also provide their pre-service teacher candidates with knowledge about how to get involved with civics-based educational organizations such as the California Council for the Social Studies. (For more information on how to get involved with CCSS and in particular, its annual conference, go to https://www.ccss.org).

Conclusion

There is plenty of evidence indicating that Americans are not likely to ask what they can do for their country these days! Civic virtues and an understanding of our constitutional heritage and national identity must be taught. As professors at the postsecondary level, it is first and foremost our responsibility to understand the components of civic education and the depth of learning required for understanding this critical discipline. Furthermore, we do not have the luxury of assuming that our students at the university come to us with the necessary skills, knowledge and dispositions to understand that the teaching of civic education is much more than facilitating units of study or lessons in grades 5, 8, and 12!

For this reason, this article has focused on following questions:

What is civic learning from kindergarten to grade twelve and how does it relate to our overall history/social studies and school programs?

What approaches and quality resources are available, offering sound methodology for the teaching of civics education?

What can teacher educators and professional development providers do to promote civic education in teacher preparation programs?

Civic education is a complex discipline with many components, requiring not only knowledge, but an "attitude" and culture that needs to be developed consistently, beginning in the kindergarten classroom! In addition, civic learning "screams" for active engagement and critical thinking opportunities for all students at developmentally appropriate levels, K-12. In our postsecondary classrooms we need to be modeling the effective pedagogy we espouse as we explore the components of civic learning with our own students.

An example of this modeling in the college classroom includes the engagement of pre-service teacher candidates in the process of a civics-based writing assignment. Writing persuasive letters, and analyzing the unit's big ideas, essential questions and pedagogy in collaborative groups is much more effective than listening to a lecture about the curriculum! As a consequence, pre-service teacher candidates will be prepared to implement these model curricula in K-12 classrooms, following their own engagement and analysis of the work. There are many free quality resources available to teachers in the area of civic education, links have been provided for some of these resources.

Civics is life! If our students of today wish to be in control of the quality of their lives in the future, they must be taught to engage. Civics can no longer be an afterthought in our social studies methodology classes for teacher preparation. We must heed the words of Thomas Jefferson that still ring true after so many years, "The qualification for self-government are not innate. They are the result of habit and long training."

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Appendix

Civic Education Resources - FREE!

https://www.icivics.org

Free lesson plans and games for learning civics (inspired and sponsored by retired Supreme Court Justice, Sandra Day O'Connor.

http://www.courts.ca.gov/programs-lawrelated.htm

Lesson plans (by teachers) and other resources related to the Courts of California

http://courtsed.org

Constitutional Rights Foundation offers this free resource. Landmark cases relating to the Constitution are presented as cartoons (similar to Manga-style); engaging for students and reinforces units of study.

http://www.civiced.org

Under resources there are many free lesson plans publications, and resources for teachers.

http://www.annenbergclassroom.org

Annenberg Classroom, Resources for Excellent Civics Education.

http://www.socialstudies.org/c3/5thGradersTakeInformedAction

Short video that shows the C3 Framework in action in the classroom and gives an attachments with a lesson plan, Why Vote?, includes an assessment and handouts.

http://billofrightsinstitute.org/resources/educator-resources/lessons-plans/

Free lesson plans and resources for teachers.

http://picturingamerica.neh.gov

Picturing America is an initiative from the National Endowment for the Humanities, and it brings masterpieces of American art into classrooms – students study history and civics through the study and understanding of its art. Lesson plans and more!

http://www.generationon.org

Very well organized: extensive volunteer projects/how to begin a project or join a program to take action and make change.

http://www.crf-usa.org

Full of rich resources and opportunities, some free.

http://www.procon.org

Presents controversial issues in a straightforward, nonpartisan format, mostly high school.

[Note: All websites listed above were live and functional at the time of this article publication.]

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