

**2003 Education Leadership Colloquium
The Civic Mission of American Education
July 16 - 17, 2003, Denver, CO
Meeting Summary**

Wednesday, July 16, 2003

Welcome

Terry Pickeral, executive director of the National Center for Learning and Citizenship (NCLC) at the Education Commission of the States (ECS); Kimberly Barr, ECS executive vice president; Bernard Machen, Campus Compact Board of Directors chair and Randall Collins, NCLC Board of Directors Chair offered opening remarks and welcomed participants to the third annual ELC and the city of Denver. This year's participants came from 26 states (CA, CO, CT, HI, IL, IN, KS, KY, ME, MD, MA, MI, MN, NH, NY, NC, OH, OK, OR, RI, SC, TX, UT, VA, WA, and WI) and the District of Columbia.

ELC Overview and History

Elizabeth Hollander, Campus Compact executive director, introduced Campus Compact, an organization of 30 state compacts with more than 900 higher education institution members, and a co-sponsor of the ELC. She noted that one irony of hard economic times is that we tend to realize even more the need to educate our citizens. Currently, politicians seem to be clinging to the notion of citizenship education, but Hollander cautioned that there are many different understandings of what citizenship education means. The range includes everything from volunteerism, service-learning, knowing history, understanding policy and voting to serving on juries.

Terry Pickeral, NCLC executive director, introduced NCLC, co-sponsor of the ELC. He noted that NCLC is one center within the Education Commission of the States that is dedicated to citizenship education. The NCLC is currently exploring that notion of "what is citizenship education?" Hollander referred to and what it looks like in terms of civic competencies for P-12 students. NCLC recently held a thinkers meeting to begin NCLC's work on developing a framework of civic competencies.

General Session: Judith Torney-Purta

Judith Torney-Purta, professor of human development at the University of Maryland, provided an overview of the thinkers meeting NCLC held to develop a framework of student competencies. After reviewing six existing frameworks, the group concluded that none offered the rich and robust citizenship education benchmarks and indicators to meet the NCLC criteria, the group developed three strands of citizenship competencies: cognitive, behavioral and affective, which can be visualized as the three interwoven strands of a braid. Torney-Purta stressed the importance of the coherence of meaningful knowledge and practice across all three domains and provided a reminder that we must also consider the realities of the differences between the intended curriculum, the implemented curriculum, and the achieved curriculum.

Torney-Purta also shared some of the findings of the IEA Cross-National Civic Education Study which were released in *Citizenship and Education in Twenty-eight Countries: Civic Knowledge and Engagement at Age Fourteen*. The study showed that students in the United States had higher mean achievement on civic skills than on concepts of democracy, although there was wide variation within the U.S. with groups of students scoring both very high and very low. Across the 28 countries, there was consensus that obeying the law and participating in activities to promote human rights, protect the environment, and benefit the community were considered to be “citizen engagement,” while engaging in political discussion and joining a political party fell near the bottom of list.

Workshop: The Contested Meaning of Civic Engagement

Richard Battistoni (Providence College and Project 540), Joseph Kahne (Mills College) and Nick Longo (Campus Compact) led an interactive workshop on the contested meaning of civic engagement. The session began with a ranking activity on civic engagement developed by Rick Battistoni where participants were asked to individually rank order (from 1 to 15) actions that best model their own idea of civic engagement (Ranking options included varying civic actions, such as “Working for a candidate in a local election,” “Voting,” “Leaving your car at home and biking to work,” and “Tutoring a migrant worker.”). After a small and large group discussion where participants found that while there was agreement on some actions, others varied widely across individual ideas and conceptions of citizenship.

Joe Kahne then outlined a framework for “What kind of citizen?” he has developed (with Joel Westheimer) based on their research of youth civic engagement programs. Kahne three conceptions of civic engagement:

- **Personally Responsible Citizen**, who acts responsibly in her or his community, follows laws, recycles, etc. Kahne noted that this conception of citizenship is not necessarily connected with democratic citizenship.
- **The Participatory Citizen**, who actively participates in the civic and social life of the community at the local, state, and national level.
- **The Justice Oriented Citizen**, who use rhetoric and analysis that call explicit attention to matters of injustice and to the importance of pursuing justice.

After presenting these models, Kahne read quotes from people using similar language about the importance of citizenship, but with very different ideas of what that looks like in practice.

The session ended with a group discussion of the question, “Given the often competing conceptions of civic engagement, how can we promote civic engagement in our work?” The discussion that followed included practical strategies, as well as dialogue as to whether civic engagement was part of a spectrum- you move from one level to the next- or whether we, as educators should be promoting programs that offer deeper conceptions of civic engagement.

Workshop: What do we know from the research on Civic Engagement?

Shelley Billig, RMC Research, Andy Furco, Director, Service-Learning and Development Center, University of California at Berkeley

Andy Furco began the session with a caution regarding the use of research by service-learning and citizenship education advocates. As we believe in the concepts of service-learning and citizenship education, often we want the research to show positive impact and results. We need to be careful not to overstate or over-generalize the findings that do exist. We also need to advocate for high-quality research so the research stands on its own and legitimizes our work. Civic engagement research generally falls into one of three types: impact, implementation and institutionalization. He noted that most of the existing impact research on service-learning and civic engagement looks at impact on students, while little examines the impact on the community.

Shelley Billig shared findings from some of RMC's research on civic engagement. In higher education focus groups, the term citizenship was associated with status (i.e. I am an American), "civic engagement" was seen as process-oriented (i.e. voting), and "politics" always had a negative connotation. RMC's civic engagement survey showed a difference in frequency of civic engagement activities between students engaged in service-learning and those who did not. Studies of programs in Philadelphia and Hawaii showed statistically significant increases on state assessments for those who participated in service-learning as compared to those who did not. A study of the Colorado Learn and Serve program revealed that while high quality service-learning had high impact on civic engagement, low-quality service-learning had no impact. As with other areas of education, quality counts. RMC's research on service-learning has also shown the greatest benefits for the two ends of the spectrum: it seems to affect high and low achieving students more than those in the middle, and it seems to affect those in poverty and the more affluent than middle class students.

Following Andy and Shelley's presentations, interesting dialogues arose. One concerned how to approach policymakers with civic education and service-learning research. Many of the studies that exist are not at the high standards policymakers are demanding, and many are not in the context of standards-based reform. For now, researchers are approaching policymakers with a "preponderance of evidence" argument. While additional funding for civic education studies is needed, one barrier for researchers is that many schools will not allow random assignment of students, making it difficult to carry out as rigorous research that we (and policymakers) would prefer.

Panel Presentation: What are the Qualities of a Civically Educated Student?

Elizabeth Burmaster, Chair-elect, NCLC Board of Directors, opened the panel and facilitated the discussion on the definition of a civically educated student.

Joseph Kahne, professor of education at Mills College, said he believes that to be a good citizen in a democratic society, students need to be able to influence policy. They need to acquire the skills necessary for civic engagement in addition to gaining knowledge of democratic processes and issues. This includes: the ability to examine structural issues of social problems and identify possible solutions; a tolerance and respect for individuals and their beliefs; the ability to dialogue with and learn from those who hold different views and to think about commitment as well as values. In order to prepare civically educated students, educators need to consider the growth required for each individual student, as each will have different needs and must give students the knowledge of how to continually improve. He identified three strategies: building commitment

through positive experiences, building capacity to create a civic identity and by being active in the community and having active role models.

Judith Torney-Purta, professor of human development at University of Maryland, noted that many civic education programs are designed to “instill trust and respect in democratic institutions,” but some would argue that too much trust in institutions is not desirable, and that we should instead focus on building trust in others. Judith also mentioned questions regarding political efficacy. What is political efficacy and are we sure we want students to have political efficacy? Sometimes an activity intended to instill efficacy actually results in decreased efficacy. For example, students may think that working in a homeless shelter three hours per week won’t make a difference in combating homelessness, or they may discover that legislators often have their own agendas, or that they don’t want people to register to vote if they aren’t of the same political party.

Mark Lopez, research director at the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE), noted that CIRCLE’s Index of Civic and Political Engagement identified 19 indicators of civic and political engagement. He highlighted several of those indicators as qualities of civically engaged students, including political attentiveness, how often students pay attention to politics and general attentiveness, such as how often students watch the news. Activism is another important measure of civic engagement, which could be volunteering for a political campaign, or writing letters to legislators on issues of interest to the student.

Ben Brandzel, brought the perspective of a student to the panel and said that schools must offer civic education, students must accept civic education, and then must absorb civic education in order to become civically engaged students. Who will accept civic education? Students must be interested in bettering the world, interested in their ability to better the world, see their ability connected to their development, have an interest in the subject matter and be part of a social group with a social identity that makes it acceptable to participate. Who will absorb civic education? Students who have an enhanced ability to apply analysis to social problems and their own ability to be a leader/change-maker; refine their values and the change they want to make; increased confidence in ability to make change; awareness of options for involvement; and a clear vision of what life-long dedication would look like. He noted that students are tough to fool when equipped with analytic ability; must be in an environment that allows this analysis.

Burmaster then opened the session up for discussion and questions from the audience. A conversation followed Ben’s point regarding the school’s offer of civic education. The quality of the offer to students is important: does it include a voice for students? Does it provide the opportunity to develop the skills needed to work on issues of importance to students? Will it be collaboration with the school and does the system reflect the offer?

The role of technology also came generated significant discussion. Technology such as email and the internet have allowed for more personalized interaction with specific issues of interest and have become integrated into the current lifestyle. By the same token, some would argue that advances of technology in the civic arena have contributed to increased disengagement, especially as low-income, minorities, immigrant groups and those who did not attend college are among the least civically engaged.

Joseph Kahne brought up a structural question that we often refer to the civically citizen, but what would a civically engaged society look like? Schools would focus on social issues and the reasons we learn what we do, and the media would support dialogue between groups that differ.

Reflection

Terry Pickeral, executive director, NCLC, noted that due to time constraints, we would not have a group reflection, but assigned “homework” in its place. He asked the everyone read *Educating for Citizenship* and reflect upon the questions Judith Torney-Purta raised in her opening session. He also requested that each of us think about the “R words” mentioned so often in discussion today: relevance, rigor and relationships, and think about the long-term nature and challenges of our work.

Thursday, July 17, 2003

Opening Session

John Andrews, President of the Colorado State Senate, opened the morning’s meeting with a welcome on behalf of the members of the Colorado Senate and House, and Governor Bill Owens. Senator Andrews sponsored Senate Bill 36, recently enacted legislation that requires students to pass a high school course in American and state government in order to receive a diploma. A 1921 law already required districts to teach government, but did not include any accountability. SB 36 referenced the existing statute as the basis of the requirement. He noted that state senator Sue Windels convinced him and others in the legislature that one course is not enough, so she is leading, and he is participating in, a working group on civic education in Colorado.

Christine Durham, Chief Justice of the Utah Supreme Court, noted that most state constitutions identify citizenship and civic engagement as one of the purposes of education and/or government. She specifically referenced Chapter V, Section II of the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, as it includes magistrates as responsible for instilling civic virtues through education. She highlighted several efforts she’s been working on through the Utah court system’s outreach project, including a court-visiting program, where students visit the court and have the opportunity to meet with judges, law clerks, etc., and another program where a lawyer, judge or law clerk would be available to any teacher in the state for assistance with government courses.

Presentation of the Campus Compact Howard R. Swearer Student Humanitarian Awards

Lindsey Kozberg, Special Assistant to the President and Director of Public and Policy Affairs for USA Freedom Corps, and Bernie Machen, President, University of Utah, and Chair, Campus Compact, presented the awards. Each year, Campus Compact recognizes five students with the Howard R. Swearer Award for outstanding public service. The award also provides a financial award of \$1,500 to help strengthen or sustain service program of their choice. The 2003 Swearer Awards were presented to:

- Mei Elansary, University of Pennsylvania

- Emily Garr, Emerson College
- Karen Hoerst, Allegheny College
- Sohaib Mohiuddin, Virginia Commonwealth University
- Richard Rodriguez, College of DuPage

Lindsey and Bernie facilitated a discussion among the award winners focusing on the definition of citizenship and what the campus community can do to facilitate civic engagement among college students. The students believe that universities need to clarify their civic mission and make it explicit to students and faculty, that civic engagement is an exchange with the community and requires the sharing of resources, and that civically engaged students possess a sense of ownership, power and the belief that an individual can make a difference. They believe the campus community should model good citizenship, that faculty buy-in is essential, and should strive to spark students' interest beyond the classroom.

Student Panel on Definitions of Citizenship

Nick Longo, National Student Coordinator, Campus Compact, and Rick Battistoni, Director, Project 540, facilitated a conversation among two high school and two college students on their Project 540 or Raise Your Voice Campaign activities. Shelby Smith and Adam Young, of Yukon High School in Yukon, Oklahoma, participated in Project 540 and reached 1,600 of 1,900 students through the core curriculum in history. The students worked to create a unified high school student body, which culminated in a presentation before the school board and the purchase of a new public address system so students in the 9/10 and 11/12 buildings would hear the same announcements and follow the same bell schedule.

Summer Stowe, of Oklahoma State University, noted that “civic engagement” is a new term, one that must be defined. Summer worked with the Raise Your Voice campaign to hold dialogues and create an open-door policy between students and administrators to discuss campus issues. She stressed the need for reflection following the dialogues, which she did by asking the students if they knew that they participated in civic engagement or acted politically following the open-door discussions. Emily Yee, of the University of California at San Diego, participated in the Raise Your Voice campaign after recognizing that UCSD offered a number of opportunities for civic engagement every week, but often attracted little participation. She coordinated a week of action, by creating and distributing a calendar of events (each run by one of 30 participating student organizations) and raised awareness of the opportunities for engagement that regularly occur on campus.

Keynote Address: Anthony Welch

Anthony Welch, National Service-Learning Partnership Chair, delivered the keynote address. As August 28th will mark the fortieth anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s “I have a dream” speech, it is appropriate to reflect upon what’s become of Dr. King’s dream and how it fits with our efforts in citizenship education and service-learning. Welch believes Dr. King would respect and honor the accomplishments and achievements of women and people of color, but would be concerned with what we are (and are not) doing to prepare the next generation to be civically responsible and meaningfully engaged leaders in our country. Welch believes Dr. King would be pleased with the work we are doing, but ask that we re-double our efforts because so many children are not prepared for a life of leadership.

Welch suggested there are six main lessons from the civil rights movement that apply to our work:

- **Policy:** Working toward the passage of the 1964 Civil rights Act and the 1965 Voter Rights Act, non-violent marches created awareness and made it almost impossible to ignore the symbolic and dramatic action by so many individuals. Imagine a national day of civic education and service-learning (with peaceful marches at each state capitol, rallies, visits to state and congressional leaders, submission of specific legislation, with follow-up each week, calls and letters to legislators with articles and stories they need to make it happen) and the impact it could have.
- **Media and message dissemination:** Message dissemination and use of the media as a tool was essential to the civil rights movement , as people had the opportunity to see/hear/read about what was happening in other parts of the country. Imagine the effect of five positive and news stories in each state as a result of that national day of civic education: that would total 250 nationally! The visual image can also be a powerful tool.
- **Engagement of Business Community:** “Things in this country move when 40 or more business leaders decide to move.” Business leaders influence social policy. One example is State Farm’s dedication to service-learning through funding and strategic thinking; but especially in the peer-to-peer arena.
- **Need to ensure everyone has a role:** During the civil rights movement, anyone could march and everyone who wanted to be involved could be involved. We each have a role to play in moving service-learning and civic education. “Everyone is a potential advocate.”
- **Need to develop a strategic agenda:** A common misconception is that leaders worked together smoothly all the time during the civil rights movement. In reality, they often disagreed, but worked together to find a common vision. We should not expect to always agree with each other, but we must find complementary ways to work together. It’s ok if we all have different definitions of citizenship, but it’s essential to work strategically to achieve that common vision.
- **Courageous Leadership:** During the civil rights movement, people stood up for what they believed in, facing loss of employment, violence, etc. “If Dr. King and his colleagues could overcome their difficulties, surely we can overcome ours.”

Panel Presentation and Breakout Sessions: Designing Civic Education from the State Level

Nelda Brown, director of SEANet, introduced the presenters for this session: Representative Doug Hart, Michigan; Debra Henzey, Director, North Carolina Civics Consortium and James Applegate, Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education and explained that in lieu of a panel presentation, each would give a brief overview of their work at the state level and will lead a discussion group on the topic.

Terry Pickeral asked that the three discussion groups consider their discussions under the guise of the following four questions:

1. What are major strategies states could employ to advance citizenship education?

2. What is one resource currently available to states as they create statewide initiatives and organizations on citizenship education?
3. What are some of the strategies to reduce transitions for students between K-12 and higher education?
4. What are the major talking points we can use to encourage all education stakeholders to embrace citizenship education?

Discussion Group Overviews

The Role of State Legislators in Promoting Policy to Support Citizenship Education: Representative Doug Hart

Representative Hart began the discussion group by highlighting two initiatives he's worked on to advance citizenship education in Michigan. Hart and a group of interested lawmakers established the Michigan House Civics Commission to create a pipeline for students to access the legislature. The group of 21 legislators holds hearings within school sites to hear students' ideas for legislation. They worked with teachers to develop units to help students prepare for the hearings so the students were prepared. Approximately 1,000 kids participated in the first year, and legislation has been filed and enacted as a direct result of the students' testimony.

The House Civics Commission is also developing a speaker's bureau of over 100 individuals (legislators, magistrates and others) who are willing to go into classrooms and speak to students about government, the legislative process, and the role they play. The Commission also recognized that there was no avenue of communication to let kids know about the changes in law that impact them. As a result, the Commission recruited teachers and now issues legislative updates (tailored for grades 4-6, 7-8 and 9-12) that are shared with students so they are aware of "what the legislature is doing to them and for them."

Rep. Hart is also the founder of the Michigan Civics Institute, which commissioned a study that showed the students in Michigan were not learning what state and local government does and how it operates. As a result, the Institute partnered with educators and local officials to develop a year's worth of curriculum on state and local government. During the last school year, it was piloted in 33 districts; next year they hope to increase to at least fifty districts.

Discussion focused on how to replicate this program in other states, the logistics involved, resources required, and sustainability. Rep. Hart noted that the Institute is supported mainly through grant funding and in-kind contributions, and acknowledged that it wouldn't be possible without a fulltime staff person to coordinate with the teachers to ensure they are prepared for the hearings. A key piece, however, is maintaining interest in the legislature. If legislators aren't willing to serve on the committee, there is no sustainability. This is of particular concern in states with term limits, such as Michigan. Session participants suggested that by having students participate in the hearings year after year, they begin to have a vested interest in seeing the program continue.

Coalition Building: How to Start and Sustain a Statewide Civic Education Consortium: Debra Henzey

Debra Henzey, Director of the North Carolina Civics Consortium, gave an overview of the history of the NC Civics Consortium, which is housed at UNC-Chapel Hill. She noted that while being housed at the university gives the consortium resources and credibility, it can also be difficult. They must follow the university policies, which prohibit Debra from lobbying. As a result, she needs to make sure her steering committee members are politically connected and willing to lobby the legislature.

The Consortium was formed in 1997 with start-up funding from ZSRF, a local foundation. They began by holding numerous focus groups to find out what people wanted the consortium to focus on and what they could do that would have an impact. The consortium developed a strategic plan, which keeps the consortium focused. One of the consortium's most successful activities is their small grants program. Within three years, and with grants of only \$1,000 - \$10,000, the consortium funded promising practices in every county in North Carolina. This led to a compilation of civic education activities they can share with those looking for good ideas.

The NC Civics Consortium released its Civic Index, a statewide study of youth and adult civic competencies, in May 2003. The index gained widespread media attention and led to the enactment of new legislation just six weeks after released of the index. One legislator introduced a civics provision as part of the budget bill after seeing the index. The bill encourages every NC high school to have elected student councils through which students have input into the policies and decisions that affect them and will build civic skills and attitudes. It also encourages discussion of current events in a range of classes, including social studies and language arts.

Debra identified the next step for the consortium is to enter into another strategic planning process to guide the consortium's next set of work, and believes that most of the goals will relate to influencing policy.

Debra identified key lessons learned in developing their statewide consortium:

- The need for a supportive home (for the NC Civics Consortium, it's UNC-Chapel Hill)
- Focus on common barriers to engage diverse organizations with a variety of interests
- Start with a few small programs that meet important needs, then build out on your successes
- Enlist allies from all political parties and other key partners
- Celebrate successes and thank your allies publicly and often
- Target newsworthy events or products to gain media attention
- Practice various messages on different audiences
- Be willing to make people uncomfortable

Higher education and policy: Aligning education outcomes with civic engagement: Jim Applegate

The effort to create postsecondary institutions that are more engaged with public needs is, in part, a responsibility of state higher education governing and coordinating boards across the country. These boards serve as the interface between institutions and their publics both as

advocates for postsecondary education and stewards of the \$58 billion dollar investment the United States makes each year in postsecondary education. This presentation focused on how state level boards can foster public engagement using the work in Kentucky as an example. Postsecondary education experienced a substantial reform in Kentucky in 1997. Since that time the state coordinating board, for which Jim serves as Academic Vice President, as created an accountability system focused on a public agenda for Kentucky. Jim described accountability measures, goals, and reward structures that have been created in Kentucky to promote P-16 partnerships with P-12 schools and adult education, develop academic and service programs that link student learning to communities, and ensure students leave college with the motivation and skills to be effective citizens and workers. This “key indicator” system is available on line at www.cpe.state.ky.us

Challenges and Strategies for the Coming Year

Panelists offered their reflections on this year’s ELC and suggestions for future work. Bernie Machen referred to the ELC as a “light bulb” experience, one in which he was reminded of the civic mission of schools and of the need for Campus Compact to contribute and partner in civic engagement and service-learning within the K-12 system, particularly in high school. Libby Burmaster concluded that students will accept civic education if we empower them to, that the real revolution that needs to occur is to re-build students’ trust with democratic processes and politics, as students are engaging in service as an alternative politics. She leaves this meeting with a tremendous sense of hope that young people will rebuild that trust, if we let them.

Final thoughts for Campus Compact and NCLC from meeting participants included:

- Give students context for the content; they need to understand why they want to know what they’re learning
- Be explicit and intentional with students about the goals and activities of service-learning
- Don’t assume that teachers are using service-learning for civic outcomes
- The need for more research on how service-learning is effective at increasing students’ content knowledge
- Investigate P-16 councils as a resource for advancing service-learning. As student-centered organizations, they may be potential partners

Mark your calendars, the 2004 ELC will take place July 12-13, 2004 in Orlando, Florida!