Creating Social Change by Growing Good Food Together: The Escapades of an Academic Gardeners' Collective

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This interactive presentation will introduce the local University of Toronto Gardeners' Collective beginning with a presentation of the history of the collective from 1998 to the present and the values that guide the collective. The role of the Gardeners’ Collective in citizenship-building and promoting life long learning processes through shared gardening activities, dialogue, and contemplation will be highlighted. Links between the work of the collective and academia will be explicated, including the role of the Advisory Committee. The presentation will conclude with a discussion of the strengths and challenges of the collective’s approach to lifelong learning in public spaces. Participants will be encouraged to engage in a lively dialogue with the presenters, Geraldine (Jody) Macdonald, who has served on the Advisory Committee for the Gardener’s Collective since the 2000/01 academic year, and Vera Etches, the current Co-ordinator of the Gardners’ Collective.

History and Vision

Vera Etches:

Out of concern about growing problems of poverty and homelessness in Toronto, students at the University of Toronto formed the Gardeners' Collective in April 1998 to establish a food-producing community garden on campus. An on-campus survey of the nutritional needs of students, lent support to the idea that hunger was a very local problem. The vision continues to be of an organization run by consensus that seeks to cultivate organic community gardens on University of Toronto land and rooftops to feed those in need and act as a model for urban agriculture and environmental education. The Gardeners’ Collective contributes twenty-five percent of the harvest to the U of T campus food bank, which otherwise lacks fresh produce, and gardeners share the rest with their families.
Approval to begin planting first came in April 2000, from the Multicultural History Society of Ontario, on Queen’s Park Crescent East. Since then, the neighbouring Toronto School of Theology and the Neuman Centre on St. George St. have welcomed Collective gardeners’ to transform the grass and shrubs in front of their buildings into food-producing plots. This growing season, the space has been dedicated beside the historical Hart House building has for a “Native Healing Garden,” developed in partnership with the U of T First Nations House and Native Students’ Association.

Jody Macdonald

Prior to joining the Advisory Committee of the Gardeners’ Collective I was active on the Centre for Health Promotion, Healthy University of Toronto Committee. At our inaugural event at Joker’s Hill, in King City, the new Chair of the Governing Council, Wendy Cecil Cockwell welcomed representatives from staff, faculty, and students to our one day planning event. One of the outcomes from that event was a survey undertaken to identify health needs on campus. Students identified that nutrition was a key concern, particularly a poor diet, lacking in fresh fruits and vegetables, including hunger, linked to low incomes, high rents and tuition, and limited employment availability associated with the rigours of scholarship. As a faculty member in the Faculty of Nursing, I was concerned with the findings, and identified a direct link between nutrition and economic stability, both determinates of health, and student health and well-being. When I was invited by the co-ordinator of the Gardener’s Collective, Doug Moore, to join the Advisory Board in 2000/01 I readily accepted. I supported the value of this work and identified important connections between health and the Gardeners’ Collective, connections that impact upon Primary Health Care, a course that I taught in the Faculty of Nursing.

Citizenship-building and Learning Processes

Vera Etches:

Participants in the collective are high school students, undergraduate and graduate students, (from faculties as varied as economics and engineering to anthropology and public health), retired librarians and weavers. The meeting of people with diverse experiences in the public gardens fosters lifelong learning as relationships are built. Dialogue takes place in multiple languages in the garden, including: French, Spanish, Korean, Cantonese and English. Many volunteers are new residents of Canada seeking to practice their English and learn about being Canadian citizens. As people invest their time and energy in the gardens, they become more attached to their particular place in Toronto. International volunteers' involvement last summer suggests that this local initiative may also promote global education.

Some learning takes place in silence: planting, weeding, watering and watching plants grow. The Gardeners’ Collective has deliberately sought to promote contemplation but offering meditation sessions once a week. Meditation practices have included Chi Gong, Yoga and Buddhist practices, particularly from the engaged Vietnamese Buddhist monk Thich Nhat Han. The campus Chaplains have also provided some financial and assistance and other support to the collective.
Further structured opportunities for learning include workshops that are open to the public but guided by members’ interests. Past workshops and meetings have included: seed starting, as well as seed harvesting, garden illustration, sharing a meal while learning to cook with herbs, discussions on alternatives to neo-liberalism, learning from Janice Longboat, an elder from Six Nations Reserve, and the children in the Spiral Garden…

Informal discussions often centre around the desire to grow food personally, organically and locally rather than rely on large corporations that use herbicides, pesticides and fungicides and transport produce many thousands of kilometres. Work with the Native Students’ Association has increased others’ awareness of Aboriginal history in the Toronto area.

**Jody Macdonald**

I always take time in my Primary Health Care course to talk about the work of the Gardeners’ Collective. There are important links with the determinants of health including social support, meaning in life, food security, intersectoral collaboration and citizen participation. What’s fascinating to me is that all members of the collective, including the advisory committee members, have improved well-being through engaging in supporting and/or participating in the work of the collective. It is a wonderful example of synergy in action. It also speaks to the development of life long learning skills, and individual and community capacity building.

**The Academic Advisory Committee**

**Vera Etches:**

In addition to links with the University of Toronto through land and student gardeners, the Gardeners’ Advisory Committee has Faculty members that offer their experience to help guide the group and unite practice with theory. Advisors have included professors of pharmacy and nursing as well as theology. Each advisor brings different areas of academic interest, such as in Aboriginal healing practices, community development, naturopathic medicine, and interfaith dialogue.
Jody Macdonald
My role on the Advisory Board of the Gardeners’ Collective has mainly been supportive. My support has included being part of the governance required by the university for campus groups, attending presentations given by the members of the Gardeners’ Collective to University Committees related to land use, directing three work study students and finally, encouraging the Gardeners’ Collective members to engage in academic presentations and writing. On a personal level I have visited the gardening sites and learned a great deal about the notions supporting urban gardening, including the importance of urban gardening for food security locally and internationally. I have a great deal of pride when I go by the gardens in the fall and see the flowers and vegetables sprouting on the campus. To look at a beautiful cabbage in the Native Healing Garden site was powerful. It is such an image of strength, of values of caring and community, and of transformation. Who would have thought that the University of Toronto would ever be growing cabbage?

Strengths and Challenges

Vera Etches
The strengths of the Gardeners’ Collective's approach to lifelong learning in public spaces include:

- Fostering informal and formal teaching for people of all ages, with flexibility to adjust to members’ interests and needs
- Creating multi-cultural, interfaith and interdisciplinary dialogue
- Linking theory and practice, mind and body work
- Creating a sense of citizenship in downtown Toronto
- Demonstrating an alternative to a world of corporate food production and food insecurity.

Vera Etches

On the other hand, the Collective faces the following practical and ideological/theoretical challenges:

- The growing season spans the summer months when fewer students are at the university
- Participation varies between gardeners depending on their time available for the task and their interest in the activities, and student turnover is high
- Grant proposals for funding have been rejected, likely because of the small size and lack of experience of the collective
- The aesthetic of growing vegetables, herbs and native plants is more “wild” than the usual manicured appearance of university property, and the collective has received complaints that “the garden looks too green.”

Conclusion

Vera Etches
Gardening is a unique venue from which to approach lifelong citizenship learning and promote social change, with the practical benefit of feeding people. Potential areas of future research
include: urban agriculture and food security, ethnobotony, landscape architecture, environmental art, group psychology and participation, and interdisciplinary dialogue.

**Jody Macdonald**

The Gardeners’ Collective is a community collective that is dynamic, fluid and alive. The vitality that it creates is contagious. There is such a rich potential for this group to grow, to contribute to the University of Toronto community spiritually, physically, cognitively and emotionally that it can be identified as an integral part of the learning community on campus. I see a powerful future for the Gardeners’ Collective, a future that will enhance peace and security on our campus and connect us to our wider community.
Our Democratic Deficit and what our voting system has to do with it

June MacDonald

OISE/UT

Over 10 years ago, I attended an educational computer conference presentation that was not about computers but delivered by the noted Canadian feminist, Doris Anderson on why European countries consistently elect many more women representatives to their parliaments than does Canada. She concluded that the proportional representation systems used in these countries was the reason.

Fast forward three years to my search for a doctoral theme; I wanted to examine this issue as well as incorporate my work related to computers in education. The result was my thesis: An exploration of the use of an online Delphi method within an advocacy group.

Fair Vote Canada is a new advocacy group, formed to educate Canadians and lobby parliamentarians to change our present, First-Past-the-Post (FPTP) voting system to one with “broad proportionality”. This means that if a party gets 45% of the vote, as is typical, it should get only 45% of the seats and therefore only 45% of the power reflecting the voters’ intention. The reality under FPTP systems is quite different. Currently, the winning party gets its majority of seats not from the voters but from distortions in the FPTP system.

Apart from better political representation, there are many ancillary social benefits that go with proportional representation (PR) systems. Better representation for many social or demographic groups not adequately represented under the current Canadian system is the result and often policy reflecting their needs results. Countries with proportional representation systems termed as “consensual” democracies have a greater voter turnout, effective environmental policies, less spread between the very wealthy and very poor, and better social programs.

In this study, approximately 40 members of this advocacy group were recruited from across Canada to participate in a newly created online environment that enabled discussion, decision-making and participation on topics pertaining to voting system change. The environment was modelled on a modified Delphi interaction in which questions or statements are presented for discussion and are then voted upon. The results of the discussion and vote are made available and in a second round, participants are again asked to discuss, then decide and vote. Delphi interactions usually extend to three rounds but maybe more or less.

The questions / or statements used for participants’ discussion were dialectical in nature, intentionally designed to be controversial to generate online conversation. However, all statements were consistent with the type of comment that a member of the advocacy group is likely to have to discuss with members of the public or with politicians who may be confrontational on this controversial issue.

The questions are grouped under four broad headings using an analogy of our democratic deficit as an illness:
Section #1 What are the symptoms of our democratic deficit (illness)?

1. "Electoral turnout for the last federal election was barely 60%, indicating Canadians' lack of interest in their government."

   Median = 5

   Many participants provided an explanation for the turnout decline, which was that Canadians were essentially voting with their feet. Many Canadians see voting as a waste of time since their vote has no impact or influence on their government. Their votes have no power and this most basic duty of democracy is not being fulfilled. The voting system is a factor but it is one cause among many according to the participants. The study participants described the disconnect between the expectations of their vote and the actual outcome as generating "alienation, powerlessness, frustration, disillusionment and disgust".

2. "A party attracting 40% of the popular vote often receives 55% or 60% of the seats in parliament and 100% of the power."
Although several observed that the figures were exaggerated, many agreed that there is an imbalance between the voters’ intention and the resulting composition of a legislature. This is usually an over representation but for some, under representation was the greater concern. Several pointed out for representation, that the figures are not exaggerations for when only half the eligible voters turned out to vote then the percentage of the population who chose the "winning" party is even smaller. The overrepresentation gives an undeserved mandate to make changes since parties with only 40% of the popular vote act as though they have a mandate to make change without consultation with any of the 60% of the voters who didn't support them. As several noted that they need to find at least 50% plus one to put together a real majority to support any change.

3. "It appears regional animosity gathers strength with every new election"
Median = 5

Several themes emerged: Is there really animosity? Is it really increasing and what is the effect of the voting system? Most rejected animosity as a descriptor of how Canadians see each other. They preferred softer descriptions of alienation or disconnect. They did not see this as necessarily threatening but part of the ebb and flow of the ‘normal’ regionalism in a large diverse country. Instead they blamed, for the most part, systemic factors for artificially creating schisms between Canadians and exacerbating regional differences.

4. "Women and minority groups are under represented in parliament because they are either not interested or not competitive enough"
Median = 2

The majority rejected this statement, citing the many systemic deterrents to participation or representation in politics by women and minorities. Examples of deterrents included: structural obstructions such as family duties, lack of universal childcare, lack of money and time as well as the competitive, male political culture. The political “old boy’s club”, which controls riding nominations, invariably restricts nominations to those who are considered to most likely appeal to the electorate, usually white males. Therefore, it was thought a PR system will help to make a more representative parliament however, changes to financing and support for other groups is necessary to have a representative legislature.

5. "The Liberal party, individual MPs, and even Cabinet ministers have been disempowered by an unprecedented concentration of power in the Prime Minister's Office (We have, in fact, not one-party rule, but one-office rule.)"
Median = 9

Most of the discussion revolved around describing the nature of the power of the PM and the MPs and other powerful players. Words such as “dictator” or “tyrant” were commonly used. The sense of indignation was palpable. Although, there was near unanimity on the vote on this question, the comments reveal the depth and seriousness of this problem in the participants’ understanding and the urgent need for change. They saw no panacea in voting reform but a start
to a solution. One participant asked why we are getting this concentration of power only now and what is the impact of the present voting system when we have had it all along. Some attempted to provide answers such as trick majority governments, the image of PM controlled by corporate media, the power of PM to make appointments and designate nominations, and the neoliberal environment which extols executive privilege.

Section #2 What's effective or not effective about our existing 'treatment'? (FPTP)

6. "With FPTP you get strong, stable majority governments."
Median value =5

This statement was a challenging for many participants. Thirteen selected 5 since it was difficult to deconstruct the statement. On the surface it appears true but with a little digging, it was anything but. One of the long-touted conventionally stated attributes of FPTP are its ability to produce strong, stable majority governments. Many pointed out that majorities were not always obtained and when they were, they were frequently false or bogus ones giving the “majority” government a false sense of entitlement to rule. However the adjective stability generated a lot of attention by the participants. Many rejected stability as a valid attribute. Several agreed that indeed there was stability but it was the stability of inertia and lack of activity. Some noted over the course of several governments there is great instability and that over this longer period there is more stability with PR. Many mentioned that coalitions formed under PR are more likely to be stabile over a longer period have better representation.

Many mentioned the high cost of this bogus stability to democracy. Many stated that the present situation was equivalent to dictatorship or tyranny. FPTP works with two parties but does not prevent more parties emerging and with more parties the democratic deficit increases. Finally a number asked who benefited most from keeping the present system. Most agreed that corporate, moneyed or vested political interests would lose if the system were to change.

7. "We should keep FPTP because it is so simple to understand and other systems are too complicated for Canadians to learn."
Median = 1
The participants unanimously rejected both parts of this statement. The participants strongly disagreed, were almost indignant, insulted by the apparent dismissiveness or condescension of the statement. Most said the statement was not a good argument; that Canadians can easily learn a new voting system especially if other nations’ people could. At any rate fairness is more important than mere simplicity, they felt.

However, although most would not doubt Canadians’ intellectual abilities in learning a new, potentially more complicated voting system, because Canadians are unfamiliar with PR, some effort and challenge will be required to educate them about more complicated systems. At least one thought it might be difficult to get across the concept that the majority does not win. Another thought that it was important to be prepared for the “too complicated” argument and be prepared for it by pointing out “the fraud or deception of FPTP”. An important component of preparing people for change was to involve them in creating a new system.

8. "FPTP countries have a greater spread between the very wealthy and the very poor than non FPTP countries."
Median=5

As was expected, many people said they had no information about this topic. A very few stopped there but the majority of people citing no information went on to say that intuitively it made sense at least in Canada and the U.S.A citing the influence of capital on the political process, that the wealthy ran our country. They ‘guessed’ that with a PR voting system that there would be more equality and more cooperation. Several pointed out that this statement was true but only applied to leading industrial countries. One disingenuously asked was this not the reason that FPTP was invented. Another pointed out that FPTP countries are more aggressive.

Still others agreed that there was a disparity between wealthy and poor but that there was no correlation with the voting system. Others cited capitalism more common in FPTP countries and that was a factor. Another said you would get the same disparity in PR countries. One person said he lacked knowledge regarding non industrialized nations. Another stated that the statistical sample of Canada, the UK, the USA was too small to draw conclusions.

9. "FPTP countries are just as 'green' as PR countries."
Median=3

Most noted that there was some connection between FPTP nations and lack of a green influence in government. All the commenting participants, either explicitly said the lack of a
green presence in government in FPTP countries was related to the voting system, or made observations which implicitly indicated the statement was probably wrong.

One commented that even if there is Green representation in government, does it follow that green policies result? Another cautioned about compromises that might have to be made in exchange for power. Another lamented the lack of informed debate and how the voting system has eliminated “the social conscience of the people”, observing there was no one to represent social or environmental issues.

10. "FPTP is important to Canadians since they value the link to their MP more than the party affiliation which that member may represent. That is, they vote for the member not the party."
Median =4

Many participants considered the party label more important. One participant noted that surveys consistently show 22% of voters vote for the member whereas 78% vote more for the party or its leader. Another rejected the statement as well noting the resentment that occurs whenever a member crosses the floor. However, many who agreed that the party was the more important admitted that Canadians value a representative and that between elections the local representative becomes important. Several participants differentiated between rural and urban needs, observing that rural people have no other advocate to deal with their issues. However, in urban areas, Canadians often do not even know the name of their MP. As well, a few noted that the domination by the PM's office virtually obliterates that value of the link to the MP”.

Section #3 What is likely to be effective about a new treatment? (PR) etc.....

11."We don't want PR 'cause we will get the instability of Israel and Italy."
Median =2

Many participants felt this to be an unfair statement since it did not mention the majority of countries using PR which are stable. Instability does not exist in most European countries using PR such as: Belgium Netherlands Postwar Germany Scandinavia etc. Others mentioned New Zealand, Scotland and Wales. The examples of Italy and Israel were criticized pointing out that Israel has severe problems and Italy is not as bad as one would think. Canada has its own problems which have to be dealt with but neither Israel nor Italy resembles Canada or its problems even remotely. Several noted hybrid systems might work well here: a made-in-Canada solution based on what we want, what is realistic and applicable to our own situation.

12. "PR allowed Hitler to gain power in Germany."
Median =2

This is an example of another statement often used to discredit PR. Several participants were very critical of the question, calling it “a greatly distorted view of history”. Some were quite definite that no voting system would have affected what happened citing that conditions in Germany at that time. Most put the blame squarely on post WW1 reparations and the subsequent
depression for preparing the way for the Nazis. One participant noted that it should be remembered that Germany was being severely punished after WWI. The depression in Germany was blamed on these severe sanctions. Desperation brought the Nazis to power.

In the opinion of several, the Nazis would have been elected sooner if FPTP was being used. As many pointed out, Germany had more parties with its double ballot voting system before WWI than it had with PR after. On the other hand, FPTP would have given Hitler a massive majority government in 1933. “As it was, he had to seize power, start fires, and generally manipulate the system in extra-legal ways.”

13. “We need PR to get more women representatives"
Median=6

This was an interesting statement since the majority voted that they agreed with the statement but the comments were overwhelmingly very cautious and even sceptical. Only six people stated outright that instituting PR would give more women representation. Most saw it as a potential and welcomed side benefit to PR but did not necessarily guarantee more representation and should be not the sole reason for instituting PR. There was some divergence on strategy, with one person wanting to soft peddle the promotion of PR effects for women and another did not.

14. “In PR countries, minority parties hold larger parties hostage.”
Median = 4

This is a frequent criticism of proportional representation in that it might give a platform for extremist parties and that these extremist parties will hold up legislation needed for the majority to satisfy the demands of a minority. The majority of participants voted against this statement. Most saw the power held by small parties as a positive attribute of voting system reform or, at least, not an issue. They point out that small parties that abuse the balance of power are punished in later elections. Arguments were made to suggest what we have now is the balance of power in the hands of a minority having a false majority.

15. "In PR countries you choose your representative from a list prepared by political party bosses."
Median= 5

The median value of 5 reflects the general feeling of many participants that this statement is essentially true: that the party infrastructure does in many instances control who is selected for the lists. However, very few supported this statement outright without qualification. Many did not think this was necessarily a bad thing even if using closed lists. Closed lists permit parties to effect good representation of women and control aspects of the party. Others noted that even with closed lists, you still have PR and all the benefits that are attendant with that voting system.

Also many pointed out: how is that different from FPTP currently? Party bosses still choose representatives without providing the benefits of PR. But a majority noted that there are many varieties of PR which mitigate this problem. MMP or STV systems give more control to
the voter and there are many varieties of open systems where voters can have more choice. However, a few cite problems with open systems—that they are not necessarily that open. Still others suggest devising a system unique to Canada.

Section #4 What's a good cure?

16. "Canadians are a profoundly cautious people. They will never go for a 'way out' system such as the pure PR used in the Netherlands."
Median = 6

Most thought Canadians definitely cautious but with education will change but not likely to a form of pure list with multi members. Most suggested a form of PR with regional representation. Some challenged the need for regional representation but at least one pointed out the constitutional need for provinces to have representation. Much depends on education and campaign strategy since it was thought a modification of PR would suit Canadians needs and would be acceptable if presented properly.

17. “MMP, such they have in Germany and New Zealand, will never fly here since Canadians will never tolerate ridings double the current size or, alternately, twice the number of MPs."
Median = 3

Most rejected the statement and wanted MMP (Mixed Member Proportional) to be acceptable and went to some length to suggest ways of making it work in the Canadian context given the limitations of the constitution and suggested limiting new members of parliament yet adding enough to get some proportionality. Strategy played a big part in this discussion since most felt that Canadians would accept this if presented in an acceptable way. As noted, we already vote mostly for parties without regard for the individual candidate. A party ballot makes the common practice explicit.

Several offered different combinations of slightly increasing riding size and slightly increasing the numbers of representatives to give some proportionality with minimal disruption. Some commented that ridings were already too large and that the cost would be minimal to increase the number of representatives considering the benefits in improved representation.

18. “Alternative Vote (AV) will be most attractive to Canadians since it is so similar to our present system."
Median = 3

Those criticizing this system mention that phony majorities are created from the voters’ second and third votes. Others mentioned that it is not proportional and that there was more value in choosing a form of PR over AV. Some had varying degrees of reservations; for example, one woman observed that it was used only in Australia and made the link between gender discrimination and the choice of voting system. Another felt that if it gained a hold as a
temporary measure, it would be unlikely that PR will be obtained in the long run. Several felt that education was a key strategy and that once informed, people would not want this system.

19. “STV such as they have in Ireland would be ideal for Canada.”
Median = 5

Many more participants looked on STV (Single Transferable Vote) favourably although those who were opposed were very definite about it. Those opposing did not like the complexity of the system. The fact that the countries using it had no more greater numbers of women in parliament was a detraction.

20. "Being essentially conservative, most Canadians will likely vote to retain FPTP in a referendum."
Median = 2

Most rejected this statement but noted that education was essential and spent a considerable amount of time discussing strategy. Participants felt once Canadians were informed of the undemocratic nature of our voting system that they would vote for proportional representation. Some groups tackled the conservative issue head on—most said we are not conservative or it cannot be proven. One said a proof was the 35% of the popular vote for the Conservative party. “With respect to the political system, Canadians are essentially dissatisfied without really knowing why. Others made the case that polling and election results suggest that Canadians are mild social democrats who embrace change when the case is made and the political plan is in place. Many expressed concern with moneyed and corporate interests derailing the grassroots campaign as almost happened in New Zealand.
When you are inspired by some great purpose, some extraordinary project, all your thoughts break their bounds: Your mind transcends limitations, your consciousness expands in every direction and you find yourself in a new, great and wonderful world. Dormant forces, faculties and talents become alive, and you discover yourself to be a greater person by far than you ever dreamed yourself to be. – Patanjali

The publication of a new, peer-reviewed scholarly journal is an auspicious occasion. It holds the promise of advancing understanding, practice, and experience, of stimulating and engaging a newly participative dialogue, and of fostering interdisciplinary and intercultural exchange, which in turn develops the field, its depth and its meaning. We approached the task, opportunity, and challenge of founding and editing this new journal both humbled and enthusiastic. We welcome this opportunity to introduce the new Journal of Transformative Education (JTE), its genesis, rationale, perspectives, initial collaborators, and inaugural articles to a key stakeholder group, the participants in a transformative learning conference. The way in which the Journal came to be is telling of its intentions and goals.

Another Journal of Education?

In the fall of 2000, with sponsorship from Fielding Graduate Institute and the Link Foundation, Will McWhinney sent invitations to a conversation to the leaders of 20 educational organizations in the U.S. and Europe, selected for their interest in transformative education (TE). Almost all responded positively. We assembled for three days at a monastic retreat center near Santa Barbara, California, to share our involvements and concerns for a form of education that must be developed in response to the rapidly changing demographics of the world’s population.

Most societies have well-developed, if underfunded, programs of education for the socialization of children, the maturation of adolescents, and the instrumental learning that supports adult working the institutions of culture. But few societies have recognized for need for a fourth order of education that serves adults who are asking, “What follows the years of raising a family, proving one’s prowess, and serving the economy?” Increasingly large portions of our populations, on reaching middle-age, can expect three or four more decades of healthy engagement, yet the institutions of propagation, work, and social management were designed with the assumption that most adults would depart from active involvement by the time they were 65. We live with 300-year-old social customs and school systems created 150 years ago to staff the factories of Europe and New England. They need transformation as well.

Our group of educators came together to review the instruments we have for transforming that would open the search for new meaning, opportunities, and responsivities. We noted that in every culture, ancient and current, there are respected traditions of a fourth-order education. Those traditions give form to transformations of a work-a-day perspective to a broader awareness of humanity, often of spiritual and ecological dimensions, and one’s roles within
one’s relationships, organizations, community, and world. The ritualized retreat allows the student/learner to encounter the reality of one’s own mortality, accept the loss of loved ones, and the emptiness of earthly pursuits.

There is a body of knowledge on how to guide such transformations, and some current experience provided by such institutions as our conversants lead, but little support in our society for creating a broad venue for adult transformations. Rather, resources for adult education are increasingly being directed to reinforce the instrumental needs of the economy, depreciating the needs of emerging age cohorts, and ignoring significant marginalized populations that have restricted access to education.

We came together in Santa Barbara to collect an understanding of such educational needs, review what we knew of transformational processes, and find ways of encouraging research and design of relevant programs and institutions. One outcome of that occasion was Laura Markos’ idea and initiative to found this journal.

No, not yet another journal of education.

*JTE* is the journal of another education.

**From ancient to post-modern roots**

Transformative education is practiced in a number of contexts: as transformative learning, new career training, programs for humanitarian service, rehabilitation, and spiritual renewal. It is supported in local reading groups, community colleges, universities, training centers, experiential and travel groups, correctional and rehabilitation facilities, and religious and spiritual organizations.

While the roots of TE stem from ancient wisdom and ritual, current practice began in new-age colleges, men’s midlife experiential groups, 12-step programs and the like, following the leadership of humanists such as Rollo May and Carl Rogers, educational theorists such as Paulo Freire and Jack Mezirow, and innovators such as Frederic Hudson and Myles Horton of Highlander Research and Educational Center. It has grown in the shadow of mainstream education, for many educators see transformation as beyond their institutional responsibilities. In one form or another, something transformative takes place in certain learning processes, something that contributes profoundly to the lives of adults and the effectiveness of whole societies. TE can make contributions across society, to individuals, groups, organizations, and communities.

A number of societal and global trends also converge to support the current interest in and development of TE, including:

- the aging population in Western and Northern societies, and the basic issues arising from the potential of average human life to extend productively well into one’s 80s;
- the increasing gap between rich and poor, have and have-not, and north and south, highlighting systemic needs for educational processes to stem life-threatening disease, famine, and ecological shifts, and global needs for social change, equity, and opportunity;
- the technological changes that call for continually renewing one’s work skills, and the response of educators to direct traditional education and the instrumental needs of consumer society;
- the increasingly stressful and competing demands of work, consumption, family and community, including trends toward greater self-employment; multiple careers across the life span; the decline of industrialized society and the patriarchal employer; the
growth of the knowledge society; and the search for greater meaning in work and life; and
• the opportunities provided by advances in pedagogical practice and the availability of distributed learning.
Despite these trends, transformation has not yet had the mainstream support of academic institutions offering TE, nor publications devoted to its research, theory, and practice (see, e.g., Duerr et al, 2003). Nor, in turn, have the institutions of adult education transformed themselves to facilitate transformative emphasis. With the intent to bring visibility, critical examination, and further opportunities to TE, we initiated the Journal.

Rationale

We believe the field of transformative education, particularly as it is becoming more visible in a growing number of disciplines and constituencies, is ripe for articulation, exposition, and rigorous dialogue. We view the field as inclusive of diverse disciplines, critical in approach, addressing issues of significance to scholars and practitioners concerned with diverse aspects of transformative education, within, among, and particularly beyond traditional students, educational institutions, organizational cultures, and social environments. We support innovative and provocative research, scholarship, methods, and practice informed by diverse orientations.

We believe that this colloquy will reflexively inform the resulting dialogue and bring greater insight and integration to otherwise distinct realms. We do so not only in the interest of dialogue and scholarly exchange, but also because we see the intersubjectivity of these disciplines as of more than scholarly interest. The interactions of individual, group, organization, culture, and society are integral aspects of the transformation process itself.

We recognize that certain pertinent boundaries are unresolved: between learning and education; adult learning, adult education, and lifelong learning; learning and transformative learning; education and transformative education; change and transformation; individual and organizational transformation; and societal change and transformation. Yet we believe, in setting out on this endeavor, that the process and effort to engage at the edges, gaps, and overlaps of these various disciplines will both disrupt and inform each, in pursuit of better understanding and transformative process.

We invite JTE’s diverse audiences to embrace reflexive interdisciplinarity, and, in the case of diversity or contradiction, to avoid “the tendency, when both scholars are reputable …to regard the problem as stemming from different sorts of minds taking hold of different parts of the elephant [such that] a third opinion would but add to the embarrassment (Geertz, 1988, pp. 5-6).” As an alternative, we propose to suspend judgment, not as to the quality of scholarship but as to its approach and orientation. We propose to tolerate ambiguity in appreciative embrace of a variety of viewpoints, origins, disciplines, and methods that will come across the pages of the journal. We propose deference to what can be learned from embracing multiple paradigms, engaging in alternative approaches, seeing through others’ lenses, viewing through multiple frames. We propose to engage collaboratively in what we hope will be a transformative process in and of itself.

We seek articles that will navigate is the various levels and capabilities of TE:
• personal -- transformative learning, understanding, belonging, and seeking;
• relational -- dialogue, deep engagement, connectivity with and beyond one’s world;
• institutional -- environments, processes, and tools for transformation; and
global -- social action and responsibility, emancipation, sustainability, and ecological and spiritual holism.

In navigating these differences, we must remain mindful of limits, pejoratives, our ability to communicate across diversity, and ultimately transferability. TE is clearly political, requiring conscious positioning of oneself in one’s culture, organizations, and society.

With these origins, contexts, roots, and supporting trends as a backdrop, and having shared our goals and concerns for the reflexive interdisciplinary dialogue to be engaged, we invite your participation in this venture, to broaden and expand its view, and enhance the opportunities of populations all over the world to experience new meaning and engagements across their life spans.

Transforming Perspectives

A popular assumption in Western cultures is that once people reach physical maturity their basic values, purpose, and learning styles will remain constant for the balance of their lives. The social pressure to stay with the images of youth is so great that few enter the mature adult phase comfortably, let alone with a sense of completion and anticipation of what opportunities can be opened for their later years. The headlong drive to attain power and its symbols in early adulthood has thrown the later adult years into a shadow. Maturing beyond physical maturation, particularly in one’s 40s and beyond, has yet to gain a significant place on the social or educational agenda of Westernized cultures.

In the first decade of this millennia the 40 to 60 age group has become the largest in the developed world. Men and women are employed more heavily than before, more are educated through college and graduate levels, and are in better health than ever, perhaps having more vitality than 30-year-olds had 100 years ago. But in the latter decades of their lives, opportunities to use their energy and skills narrow. Only a small portion find occasion to make the best of their lives or to contribute broadly to their society.

In developing nations, the ravages of poverty, hunger, and disease have cut short many lives, while youth find themselves members of generations threatened by such tragedies as HIV/AIDS. These same cultures, striving to overcome such systemic challenges, find the needs for adult education, literacy, and the potential for individual and cultural change all the more urgent. And in developed and developing nations alike, the shifts from agrarian to industrial to knowledge society displace older and experienced workers if they do not have opportunities to develop new skills and roles through which to remain active in the workforce and society itself. These shifting demographics require organizations and communities to find new ways to attract, retain, re-educate, and motivate older workers, as the population of younger workers diminishes. Failure to recognize the needs and resources of this newly significant population will lead to worker shortages, so-called brain drain, and a loss of cultural and organizational memory and wisdom, while increasing the numbers of economically dependent citizens.

The vitality, creativity, and wisdom of people across the life span are critical to society's functioning in this era of increasing turbulence. The energy once directed primarily to the satisfaction of the needs of the individual and family can be extended to new socially responsive roles when there is support for further development of skills needed for these enlivening ventures. One indicator of how little we have recognized the potential for development to new levels of maturity is the paucity of educational situations attuned to people in midlife. We lack not only institutions for learning that focus on the issues and potentials of those in midlife and beyond, but an appreciation that such institutions need different processes and content than
programs developed for youth or young adults. Our concern is to make visible processes that are supportive of new opportunities across populations and the life span, and to increase opportunities for people of every level of education and prior achievement. In pursuing opportunities for learning, we are committed to avoiding elitism to serve global variety in approaches, philosophies, and political orientations.

We hope this journal will encourage research, give visibility to exemplary cases, and present alternative processes for education of emerging and underserved populations. We will achieve this goal through the contributions of those of you who write for the Journal and readers who test proposed methods and put into practice the insights that appear in *JTE*.

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- Christopher Bache, Youngstown State University; California Institute for Integral Studies (USA)
- Ronald M. Cervero, University of Georgia (USA)
- Patricia Cranton, St. Francis Xavier University (Canada)
- Laurent Parks Daloz, Whidbey Institute; Antioch University (USA)
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- Olga Ebert, University of Tennessee (USA)
- Matthias Finger, Swiss Graduate School of Public Administration (Switzerland)
- Kenneth J. Gergen, Swarthmore College; Positive Aging; Taos Institute (USA)
- Pierre Hébrard, University Paul Valéry (France)
- Ponnuswami Ilango, Ageing Research Foundation of India; Bishop Heber College (India)
- Dennis Jaffe, Saybrook Graduate School and Research Center; NTL Institute (USA)
- Robert Kegan, Harvard University (USA)
- David Lane, Professional Development Foundation (UK)
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- William H. Maehl, Fielding Graduate Institute (USA)
- Peter Mayo, University of Malta
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- Jill Mattuck Tarule, University of Vermont (USA)
- Mark Tennant, University of Technology, Sydney (Australia)
- William R. Torbert, Boston College (USA)
- Carlos Alberto Torres, University of California, Los Angeles (USA); Instituto Paulo Freire (Brazil)
- Alan Tuckett, National Institute for Adult and Continuing Education (UK)
- Max van der Kamp, University of Groningen (The Netherlands)
- Shirley Walters, University of the Western Cape (South Africa)
- Atsu-hiko Yoshida, Osaka Women’s University (Japan)

**FIGURE 1. Journal of Transformative Education editorial board.**

As we enter our second volume and year of publication, we are pleased to have been able to attract the editorial advice and counsel of an outstanding team of scholar-practitioners. Our
editorial board (see Figure 1) is exemplary of the cross-disciplinary and intercultural exchange we want to engage in JTE. We are honored and enriched by their collaboration.

Synergistic Sources: JTE’s First Volume

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<th>Change, Transition, Transformation, Reorganization</th>
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<td>• TE-relevant change theory – from individual and organizational to systemic, cultural, and global, is also welcome.</td>
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**FIGURE 2. Journal of Transformative Education Volume I source disciplines and articles**

From the initiation of JTE we have invited and advocated interdisciplinarity. Our goal of engaging a multidisciplinary dialogue involves reflexive discourse across and among the erstwhile silos of the academy, pulling together for collaborative and synergistic debate the knowledge, research, and practice developed in various forums relative to transformative education. Thus far we have seen the participation and engagement of many, but not yet all, of the disciplines one might expect to engage in this conversation. Figure 2 demonstrates the diversity of the first volume.

**In Closing**
We hope that this overview of the Journal’s genesis, rationale, and synergistic transdisciplinary sources and voices provides a useful invitation to researchers, theorists, and practitioners across these diverse fields to come forward and engage in this growing and important dialogue. In concluding, we underscore our commitment to international, interdisciplinary, and cross-cultural dialogic processes. We invite readers and researchers to contribute and respond to the Journal’s articles, and to participate in the development of the field with your own research, essays, reviews, and letters to the editors as well. JTE’s editorial guidelines are available online at www.sagepub.com/jted. We welcome your insights and commentary. Most of all, we look forward to the co-development of the field of transformative education, across its diversity, opportunity, and promise for adults worldwide, and particularly for those populations underserved by traditional educational institutional processes.

References


Authors’ note: Previous versions of portions of this paper were published in Markos & McWhinney (2003a) and (2003b), and are adapted here with permission of the publisher. This paper is to be presented by Laura Markos at the Transformative Learning Center Conference 2003, *Lifelong Citizenship Learning, Participatory Democracy and Social Change*, University of Toronto, October 17-19, 2003; and Will McWhinney at the Fifth International Transformative Learning Conference, *Transformative Learning in Action: Building Bridges across Context and Disciplines*, Teachers College, Columbia University, October 23-35, 2003.

Author Biographies

Laura Markos, Ph.D., is founding coeditor of the *Journal of Transformative Education*. She is an independent organizational change consultant to nonprofit, educational, and business organizations, specializing in facilitation of systemic cultural change. Her practice draws on over 30 years’ experience as an international consultant, change agent, corporate executive, and volunteer. She has taught graduate-level professional course, published several professional manuals and articles on change, and is a frequent conference speaker and facilitator. Her most recently completed work includes book chapters on strategies for organizational and systemic change in building an age-friendly workplace, and higher levels of adult development and fulfillment in professional development for the lifelong learner.

Will McWhinney, Ph.D., is founding coeditor of the *Journal of Transformative Education*. He has been working as a faculty member at the Fielding Graduate Institute (FGI) and leading workshops for mid-career adults for more than 30 years. He has been a designer of educational programs at Leeds University (England), the University of California at Los Angeles, FGI, and in corporate settings, and is continuing to create new learning opportunities for transformative engagements. His lifelong fields of special interest have included systems thinking, myth and metaphor, and their practices in organization and community development. These focuses are combined in his 1997 publication, *Paths of Change*, and further elaborated on in a newly completed work, *Grammars of Engagement*.
One of the spaces available to me as an educator is that of getting involved, by responding to a public call for applications, in a group appointed by the National Curriculum Council in Malta, to prepare plans for the development of Maltese schools as community learning centres, in keeping with one of the recommendations of the country’s new National Minimum Curriculum (NMC) document.

It would be appropriate, at this stage, to provide some background information regarding this project. In 1988, a National Minimum Curriculum was established by the Malta Government (the Nationalist Government which is Christian-Democrat) covering primary, secondary and post-secondary institutions of learning in Malta. This curriculum was criticized (see Wain, 1991; Borg et al, 1995; Borg and Mayo, 2001b) for the top to bottom and therefore non-participatory manner in which it was introduced, a reflection of the centralization which has for years characterized the Maltese educational system. It was also criticized by Darmanin (1993) and Borg et al. (1995) for its politics of absence with respect to issues concerning social class, ‘race’/ethnicity, gender, religious orientation and disability. These criticisms, and others appearing in the press and in workshops (Borg, 1991), reflected a concern for the current state of education in Malta (Borg and Mayo, 2001b, p.67). A change of Minister led to a consultative committee on education being set up, comprising members from a broad spectrum of the Maltese educational sector. This committee produced what can safely be regarded as a very progressive report on the state of education in the country and its prospects for the future (Wain et al, 1995), a report that provides guidelines as to the kind of changes that need to be made in the interest of greater social justice. Prominent in this committee were colleagues of mine who are well known for their contributions to critical pedagogy. In my view, the key term, among the four key principles outlined in this report (entitlement, effectiveness, equity and economy), which indicated the report’s clear option in favour of subaltern social groups, was that of equity. (Borg and Mayo, 2001b, p.68) They argue:

By equity we are not referencing ‘sameness’, or even ‘equal resourcing for all.’ Students will bring different intellectual, cultural, social and financial resources to the school, and when we ignore these differences hoping to conjure away distinctions, by treating all students equally, we inadvertently reinforce these same differences, and create new ones along the way (Wain et.al, 1995, p.9).

The publication of the document just referred to is considered the first step in the long process of reviewing, or rather revamping, the old national curriculum (Borg and Mayo, 2001b, p.68). Soon after, the ‘review’ began which entailed a broad process of consultation involving social partners and the general public. Numerous formal invitations for submissions were sent out and the public was invited to contribute through a series of activities including a press conference. On the basis of the submissions received, a draft document (Vella et.al, 1998) was prepared for wide circulation (Borg and Mayo, 2001b, p.68). “The tenor of the draft document was quite radical” (ibid, p.68). The document was meant to trigger off a national debate which would culminate in the agreed on principles being contained in what would be a final set of curricular guidelines.
The draft document proposed such ideas as “destreaming at the primary level, the elimination of the 11+ examination and the comprehensivisation of secondary education” (ibid). Among other things, the draft document also called for an acknowledgement of the full range of sexual identities, an open attitude towards sexuality and respect for people of different sexual identity (Vella et al, 1998, p. 42; Borg and Mayo, 2001b, p.69). The focus throughout is on a socially inclusive educational system.

One of the proposals submitted for public consideration through this draft document is that schools be developed as community learning centres. This particular provision in the Curriculum, as well as the provision on sexual identities, is among those that remained untouched when the final document (Ministry of Education, 2000) was produced in light of the reactions to the draft document. The final new NMC document states:

Schools should serve as community learning centres that also cater for the adult members of the community. This principle combines the commitment of this Curriculum to a holistic education with the recognition of the importance of lifelong education and the need for stakeholder participation in the educational process (Ministry of Education, 2000, p. 89).

Needless to say, being primarily a social consensus document, this final NMC document reflects the long process of negotiation and compromise that occurred in reaction to the draft. The commitment towards an inclusive politics was retained and there are elements that gesture in the direction of greater interdisciplinary approaches to knowledge although, of course, not to the extent attained by the curricular reforms carried out by the Education Secretariat in São Paulo when Paulo Freire was education Secretary there (O'Cadiz et al, 1998). Certainly, given the Maltese context in question, the São Paulo Education Secretariat’s idea of having generative themes as the basis of teaching and learning within an interdisciplinary curriculum, though laudable and justifiable from the point of view of an approach intended to promote a critical reading of the world, did not feature anywhere in the proposals contained in the NMC document in Malta. Apart from the fact that knowledge of the São Paulo reforms strikes me as being quite minimal in my country, this approach would have been considered as too sudden and too drastic a change, representing a major overhaul of the system of education. It would have probably been counter-productive and suffered a fate larger than that of the proposal for comprehensivization where compromises were made. These compromises occurred possibly because of the still vivid memories, among the older and influential sectors of the population, of the sudden comprehensivization policies introduced by an overzealous Labor Government in Malta in the 1970s. This might explain why, at present, a more gradual approach to changes in education seems to be favored and is being widely advocated.

The above compromises notwithstanding, the proposal for schools to be developed as community learning centers seems to have been accepted, probably owing to the fact that much of the discussion has centered mainly on the ‘after school’ (read: after conventional school hours) program. Of course, this concept also implies changes to the way education occurs among children during the conventional school hours. One wonders what the reaction would be when proposals regarding the day program start being made. Once the NMC document was released a series of working groups, consisting of representatives of different stakeholders, were organized, each to provide policy guidelines in a specific aspect of the document. I happened to be invited
to join the group concentrating on schools as community learning centers. I naturally accepted and contributed, together with others, to the production of a set of guidelines which were presented by the group’s coordinator at a national conference on the implementation of the NMC held in June 2000 and which attracted a large number of participants, with different stakeholders from different walks of life. The reports of the various working groups and the conclusion of workshops focusing on the specific themes were captured in a volume containing the conference proceedings (Giordmaina, 2000). The executive summary of the report by the working group on schools as community learning centers states that the project should initially be restricted to a few pilot schools and that: "A call for project proposals from School Councils interested in implementing this initiative in their locality should be issued. Co-ordinators are to be employed by School Councils following a call for applications and interviews. An Interviewing Board should be established composed of one representative each from the School Council, the Local Council and the Monitoring Panel. The main function of the Monitoring Panel is to monitor the development of this initiative. This document outlines the main principles, broad aims, specific objectives, and the roles and responsibilities of stakeholders. It is being recommended that the interests of marginalised and potentially marginalised individuals and groups are held uppermost in any strategies and plans formulated by the Schools Councils through the Co-ordinator..."(in Giordmaina, 2000, p.355)

In 2001, a number of focus groups dealing with different aspects of the NMC were set up following a public call for applications. I applied to join the focus group ‘on schools as community learning centres’ and was selected to form part of a focus group combining this area with that of parental participation in schools. It was argued that one could not occur without the other. I was subsequently elected as the group coordinator and an action plan for the implementation of this project was drawn up with appropriate budgetary recommendations. Importance was devoted to the preparation of personnel to be involved in this project. One idea in the Action Plan, derived from Freire’s experience as Education Secretary in São Paulo, is that of “Designing and running an Induction Course in the idea of Schools as Community Learning centres for non-teaching staff of schools participating in the initiative.” They have an educational role to perform within this setting. Like the cooks and janitors in the ‘popular public’ schools in the Brazilian city, they too must be prepared to serve as educators. The more immediate task however, apart from the need to carry out meetings with heads of schools, mayors and local councils representatives, is that of carrying out a preparatory course for those wanting to be involved as coordinators, and educators in connection with this project. The preparatory course will also coincide with a call, targeting local councils and school councils, to submit proposals for their local schools to be developed collaboratively as community learning centres. Following the approval of a smaller budget than was originally proposed by the Group, three schools will now be selected to serve as pilot ‘community learning centres.’ The intention is to help develop these ‘pilot schools’ into models of community learning centres before involving other schools in the project.

There are several reasons that justify the development of schools as community learning centres. It has often been argued that schools have traditionally operated as enclaves with little interaction between them and the rest of the community. They are “daytime enclaves that most students and teachers leave only for lunches or special outings”, places that “Community members rarely enter” (Curtis, Livingstone and Smaller, 1992, p. 113). By serving as community learning
centres (see Parson, 1990), schools can make an important contribution to the development of the public sphere. They would provide educational services to members of the community at large. Furthermore, the community, in which the school is located, can be conceived of as a learning community.

Schools, especially state schools, are public resources. Their conception as community learning centres can therefore be seen as an attempt to make democratic use of public resources, rendering them accessible to and more popular with a wider section of the local community than is the case at present. This invites parallels with the PT’s conception of Popular Public schools. There is also an economic argument to be made given that the cost, per capita, of public resources in a micro-state such as Malta is higher than that incurred in larger states. One must make better and maximum use of resources lest these resources become ‘idle capital’ for several hours during the day and entire months during the calendar year. There are also powerful pedagogical arguments to be made for conceiving of schools as community learning centres. It is not only adult members of the community who benefit from such schools but also children. In forging strong links between schools and the community one would be creating greater space for the involvement of more stakeholders, such as parents, in the educational process. This has the potential to forge closer ties between schools and their pupils’ immediate home environment. In the words of Francisco, a teacher in one of São Paulo’s popular public schools:

"There is no point in handing children books to read if they are not understanding what is happening on their own street. So only [by] departing from her [the child’s] daily life experience can we form a critical citizen and [instill] the idea of the right to citizenship.” (in O’Cadiz, et al, 1998, p.189).

Recall Freire’s statement that the learner’s “concrete localization” constitutes the starting point “for the knowledge they create of the world” (Freire, 1994, p.85) or the much cited phrase from Pedagogy of the Oppressed: “The starting point for organizing the program content of education or political action must be the present, existential, concrete situation, reflecting the aspirations of the people” (Freire, 1970a, 1993, p. 95). The surrounding community provides a significant part of the culture in which the children are immersed. This culture provides them with an important framework of relevance. The community can therefore serve as an important learning resource for the teaching of children during the morning and early afternoon hours. There are teachers for whom this is not necessarily a new challenge. From conversations I carried out with older members of the teaching community in Malta’s public education sector, when I visited schools, throughout the past year, to evaluate student teachers on their practicum, I was told about their previous experiences in inviting community members to share with children their first hand and, in many instances, professional knowledge of a specific topic included in the syllabus.

The idea of developing schools as community learning centres, however, has implications for the initial and ongoing formation of teachers. It would seem appropriate for student teachers, especially at Primary (elementary in North America) level, to be initiated into the task of researching the community in question prior to the start of their teaching practice session.. Fourth year students in our pre-service primary (elementary in the US) teacher-education course will shortly be engaged in such a research project for which they will obtain credit. Knowledge of the school’s surrounding community can serve as an important teaching tool. It can help render what is taught more culturally relevant and meaningful to pupils. This derives from the
unmistakably Freirean approach to work in the cultural circles; those involved as educators in the cultural circles were to spend some time in the community where they were going to be engaged. The intention is for the educators, working in tandem with other members of the circle, including learners, to immerse themselves in the culture of the community, expose themselves to the people’s speech patterns and gain access to their universe of knowledge (see Chapter 3):

…the investigators begin their own visits to the area, never forcing themselves, but acting as sympathetic observers with an attitude of understanding toward what they see…During this decoding stage, the investigators observe certain moments of the life of the area-sometimes directly, sometimes by means of informal conversations with the inhabitants. They register everything in their notebooks, including apparently unimportant items: the way people talk, their style of life…They record the idiom of the people: their expressions, their vocabulary… (Freire, 1970a, 1993, pp. 110-111).

The idea of pupils researching the community where they will be carrying out their practicum is, in my view, an important aspect of their initial formation as educators. This development owes its origin to a group of Faculty members whose pedagogical thinking has been inspired by Freire.

This is not to say that teaching should begin and end with the community. That would smack of ‘basismo’ to repeat the widely used Latin American term. National and international perspectives remain crucial to the broadening of the child’s universe of knowledge. What is being called for, here, is a more inclusive approach whereby, to provide one example, a lesson on ‘Houses’, delivered at Primary level, would involve an appreciation of not only international types of houses, through foreign textbook illustrations (a form of ‘cultural invasion’), but also the types of houses available in the surrounding community. Items and surroundings that are familiar to the children in their everyday life gain legitimacy by becoming part of the school’s ‘official knowledge’. Of course, the one great challenge in this context, and in relation to subjects such as ‘houses’, is to relate the issue to a social theme within the school’s surrounding community.

The theme would serve as a codification, as with the Interdisciplinary approach used in the ‘popular public school’ project. The issue of social housing and of tragic deaths caused through poor and decrepit housing remains a very relevant one in this context, as is the theme of homelessness in most contexts worldwide. Of course, in a polarized society (in terms of party politics) as is Maltese society, there is always the risk that the use of such themes would be viewed with suspicion by those who support the party in government as they would regard the introduction of these themes by teachers as a way of criticizing government social policy. In contrast, the use of similar social issues as generative themes, in São Paulo, were regarded by PT detractors as subtle propaganda by the party in municipal government. There is also a challenge for heads of school (‘principals’ in Canada and the USA) who have an important part to play in the whole project. They would have to handle effectively many of the logistics involved in allowing children to leave the school premises, under their teacher’s care, to observe things and visit places, within the surrounding locality, that relate to matters being taught as part of the subject syllabus and school curriculum. Heads of school also need to collaborate with other stakeholders and personnel, particularly the coordinator entrusted with the task of running programmes held, on the school premises, after conventional hours. It is heartening to see the area of education and the community being included in the University’s evening diploma course in ‘Educational Administration and Management,’ the formal qualification intended for those aspiring to take up an administrative position inside Maltese schools, especially the position of
Head of School. This course targets prospective heads of school and assistant heads (vice-principals).

The idea of developing schools as community learning centres poses a number of challenges for those working in and around them. It is not only teachers and heads who face these challenges. Many other stakeholders are being called upon to face this challenge. Parents feature prominently among the stakeholders, as I have had occasion to show in a previous section.

Different stakeholders need to collaborate and to do so not on their own ‘narrow’ terms. There is also the challenge for local councils and school councils to avail themselves of this opportunity and work together to help transform the school culture for this purpose. They need to ensure that funds available for physical adjustments to the building are secured to render the place accessible to and suitable for learners of different ages. One cannot expect adults to learn in an environment meant to accommodate children. And where it is necessary to build new schools, the local councils and school councils should ensure that these schools are designed as multipurpose community learning sites. The emphasis placed on the school councils’ and the local councils’ active role in this venture should not imply a decrease in the State’s major responsibilities in this regard. The councils’ action should also include making legitimate demands on the State to honour these responsibilities. As with the popular public schools in São Paulo and with any project elsewhere concerned with social justice, education is regarded as a right, something to which each citizen is entitled. It is conceived of as a public good which needs to be safeguarded and, in certain contexts, retrieved, given that this right is constantly threatened by the New Right’s onslaught on the public sector, an onslaught born out of a conviction that the services traditionally provided by this sector are ripe for commodification and privatization.

Many of the foregoing issues will be borne in mind and discussed in the forthcoming preparatory course in community learning, commissioned by the National Curriculum Council in Malta, on the basis of recommendations by the relevant Focus Group, and held under the aegis of the University of Malta. The course is intended to prepare prospective personnel wanting to fulfil an active role in ‘changing the face of the school’ by transforming it into a community learning center. Soon after the this TLC conference is over, a number of people will gather at the National Curriculum Centre in a specific locality in my home country to be briefed about the certificate course. As with São Paulo’s Grupos de Formação, those who are to be involved as community workers, adult educators, teachers and other cultural workers in schools, that accept to take on the task of being developed into community learning centers, will be provided with opportunities for co-learning.
Care(full) deliberation: deliberation theory and citizenship education

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The Reconceptualist movement in educational theory has transformed our understanding of curriculum and pedagogical practices, emphasizing economic, political, cultural, gender and race based ideologies on schools and learners; deconstructing the instrumental rationality of traditional views of curriculum has been an important focus of educational scholarship. An outgrowth of this critical analysis has been a renewed interest in the goals, purposes and practices of citizenship education in North America and European jurisdictions. Similarly, democratic political theorists have renewed their interest in the discursive practices of citizenship: increasingly concerned with what is described as a “democratic deficit”1 in the engagement of citizens in democratic governance. Given the historical role of schooling in preparing students for their role as citizens such a concern should not go unaddressed by educators. Drawing from the work of political theorists while emphasizing the discursive context of a post modern society and increasing demands to engage in a politics of recognition, offers educators an opportunity to problematize the traditional role of the citizen and citizenship education. Deliberative political theorists in particular offer theories that postulate broader democratic involvement and dialogue among citizens in communities. I will briefly review this literature and then consider how its modernist perspective needs to be deconstructed, particularly in light of the issues of recognition, reciprocity and difference. I will argue that it is a lack of attention to the emotive responses of individuals engaged in dialogue and deliberation has served to limit its theoretical and practical applications, and consider how this may have particular relevance to a pedagogy for citizenship education.

What is deliberation?

The idea of deliberation in political life is not new; first articulated by the early Greeks as direct democracy, it assured discussion through an assembly of citizens who engaged in debate and rhetoric in a public realm, and resulted in citizen led decision making (Elster, 1998). Joseph Bessette (1980) is credited as the first modern political theorist to resurrect the idea of deliberation in his article “Deliberative democracy: The majority principle in Republican Government” (as cited in Elster, 1998). His writings focused on the revitalization of deliberation in republican style governments. Others have built on this concept of citizens as deliberators as fundamental to a healthy democracy.

Elster (1998) defines deliberation as the act of collective decision making by all who will be affected, and the use of procedures that ensure engagement in rational and impartial argument. Habermas (1989) using his discourse ethics framework describes the ideal of reflection as a means of rational, impartial decision making in the public sphere. Gutmann and Thompson

1 Democratic deficit is a term used to describe the perceived gap between democratic structures and processes and the public’s satisfaction with these traditional means of civic engagement. Often characterized by an increasing level of cynicism and apathy on the part of citizens, particularly younger voters, researchers and politicians in the Americas, Europe, the UK and Australia, and international development agencies have used this term to describe a complex array of problems and issues which arise from a decreasing level of public involvement in legislative structures.
(1996) begin in a similar fashion, describing deliberation as a process focused on public, political concerns. However, they relocate the importance of deliberation by focusing on disagreement, rooted in the moral nature of conflict and decision making. Fundamental to their view is the principle of reciprocity. Here, the idea of social necessity and communicative interaction becomes important, centered in socially constructed moral thinking and values (Gutmann and Thompson, 1996).

Each definition stresses the fundamental purpose of deliberation as communicative process, designed to resolve issues of contention among citizens in a forum that promotes dialogue, understanding and an appreciation of difference. All stress the public nature of deliberation: it is focused in and among the community on issues of public concern. It is seen as methodologically most applicable to the standards of openness required when individuals act together in public life.

Benefits of deliberation

Maeve Cooke, in her article *Five arguments for deliberation* (2002) lists the important advantages of deliberation within democratic processes. Broadly these benefits can be seen in two classes: process and outcome benefits. Specifically she addresses the following: educative power, community-generating power, fairness, quality of outcomes and congruence with social values. Central to this paper’s focus however, is the discursive situatedness of deliberation. Cooke (2002) makes clear that the process of deliberation is not a matter of individual self-reflection and parallel empathetic expressions of respect, but is a collaborative, co-constructed dialogue. Knowledge is built together in a community of mutually understood values and principles. This acknowledges deliberation as a change process, one that invites parties to deliberation as a dynamic, interconnected process that moves beyond bargaining, compromise or consensus: it builds both respect and care. It moves beyond the rationality of reason and includes the emotive, affective qualities of social beings who will relate to each other as they engage in acts of deliberation. This will be an important criterion by which to judge the success or failure of deliberative models considered in this paper.

Habermas’s (1994) discourse theory of rights also deals with how participants must treat each other when they are engaged in deliberative processes. However he frames these obligations within a judicial model: any deliberative process “…would contain precisely the basic rights that citizens must mutually grant one another if they want to legitimately regulate their life in common by means of positive law” and describes rights as conferred by citizens through an ongoing discursive process “…that allows them to exercise their political autonomy in an inclusive and non-oppressive way” (as cited in d’Entreve, 2002, p.184-185). This assumes a willingness on the part of citizens to act in ways that permit the surrender of competing claims so agreement can be accommodated to reflect the beliefs, perspectives and values of others: it is a deontological framework emphasizing justice and care. His theory puts moral obligation as central to deliberation.

In contrast, Noddings (2002) critiques the self as a rational and neutral deliberator. She problematizes the assumption we can act as pre-social individuals, rational agents that can suspend emotions, social connectedness and experiences in decision making. Our lived experiences in home, community, family are foundational to our identity and therefore to our actions as citizens. She deconstructs the modern belief that situates ethical, reasoned care as superior to the natural care that arises from our relationships with others in family and community.
Citizens as deliberators: a capacity for care

As the above discussion has noted, benefits of rational systems of deliberation flow to both the individual and the collective group. While these liberal democratic models provide a systemic framework that can distribute the benefits of the deliberative act, these benefits could not be realized unless each person within the deliberative model acts in ways conducive to successful deliberations. In other words, the act of deliberation as a process depends on the affective capacity of individuals and their willingness to engage in an open dialogical process.

This idea is described as moral obligation by Gutmann and Thompson (1996). Their work has focused on the nature and qualities of disagreement in public, political deliberative practices, creating a bridge between theories about moral reasoning, public deliberation and social obligation. They center their theory on three basic rights necessary for all participants when practicing deliberation: liberty, equality and opportunity. While acknowledging that deliberation cannot guarantee just outcomes, “…when citizens deliberate in democratic politics, they express and respect their status as political equals even as they continue to disagree about important matters of public policy” (p. 18). They also postulate that moral disagreement cannot be understood only on the basis of personal interest, but must be linked to the moral values held by other participants. This relies on several participant accommodation measures including reciprocity, publicity, and accountability.

Reciprocity, in Gutmann and Thompson’s (1996) analysis has both a moral and empirical basis. In deliberative democracy the primary job of reciprocity is to regulate public reasons, the terms by which citizens justify to one another their claims regarding all other goods. The “good received” is that you make your claims on terms that I can accept in principle. The “proportionate return” is that I make my claims on terms that you can accept in principle. “Deliberative reciprocity shares with prudence this basic concept of mutual exchange but gives it moral content that formally resembles impartiality” (p.55; emphasis added).

On the empirical side, reciprocity demands that claims be substantiated, or at the very least, have plausibility. Such claims often invite appeals to authority. This Gutmann (1996) notes can be problematic, particularly if they involve secular claims. They therefore add an additional requirement: the test of reciprocity fails if they require claims to secular knowledge “…as a condition of gaining access to the moral understanding that is essential to judging the validity of one’s moral claims” (p. 57).

However, placing conditions on who qualifies for appeals to authority allow this model to privilege the status quo. In doing so inevitability the views of some are oppressed when their claims to authority are rejected by mainstream discourse: this illustrates the complexity of deliberation in practice and illustrates how difficult this process becomes when faced with competing moral claims and experiences. It also highlights a central attribute for successful deliberation: recognition. Recognition must be achieved if conditions for inclusive deliberation are to be met.

Gutmann and Thompson (1996) rely on the value of “mutual respect” as foundational to the process of deliberation. They describe this as an attribute of character that permits citizen deliberators to “…[be] open to the possibility of changing their minds or modifying their positions at some time in the future if they confront unanswerable objections to the present point of view” (p. 79-80). This consistency between communicative intent and action is described as civic magnanimity or open-mindedness. This includes a willingness to acknowledge the moral
convictions of others and a willingness to consider, when their views are successfully challenged, a parallel capacity to accept some change or modification in their own views. Even if agreement cannot be achieved, it provides a fair, mutually respectful framework under which to operate. Recognition arises then from the character of citizens: it is a personal virtue.

There are some key assumptions about recognition embedded in these liberal/communitarian concepts of democratic engagement that deserve examination. Each depends on an assumption of a willingness to acknowledge and engage in deliberative processes. How legitimate is such a claim? Christiano (1997) suggests there are several important components of recognition, including the capacity to be taken seriously by others; the presence of cognitive bias on the basis of our own understandings; power, status and authority; and ability to articulate and persuade.

The absence of conditions that will fully permit the recognition of “others” who represent views, perspectives, values, beliefs or ideologies that differ from social norms will make the processes of equitable deliberation either succeed for fail. From the perspective of the “other” these biases are inherently present and severely limit the capacity to act as fully deliberative citizen when dealing with issues of controversy or disagreement. Can addressing these conditions ensure equitable recognition occurs? Power dynamics are a real dimension of social life, especially for those who exist “at the margins” of mainstream dialogue and practice. To what extent can there be a real accommodation of difference, when many of the dominant social attitudes and values of mainstream society will be seen as inherently “right”? Bohman (1997) attempts to answer these questions: he invites deliberative theorists to carefully examine the degree to which recognition is assumed, yet unrealized. He stresses the use of educational systems as the means of achieving equity among citizens, so that all may have capacity to participate. This opportunity for deliberation and its implications for full status as citizen are of paramount importance to citizenship educators: I will return to this theme in the final section of this paper.

Post modern alternatives: care[full] deliberation

I have argued that recognition and reciprocity are fundamental to an inclusive model of deliberation. Problematizing the privileging of rational truth claims serves to deconstruct the Eurocentric/western bias central to deliberation theories and demands we consider alternative models permitting all full recognition. In doing so, I have found the work of Boler (1999) and Noddings (2002) particularly enlightening.

Like Noddings (2002), Boler (1999) places empathetic care between individuals as key to effective deliberation. Problematizing traditional views of empathy, she suggests we rely on passive empathy, a practice which maintains distance between ourselves and other, rather than permitting the deep level of engagement required. She argues that passive empathy is centered in fear: we are motivated only out of concern for finding ourselves in a similar situation. Perhaps more importantly, she suggests it is rooted in the binary of difference and therefore maintains distance.

Empathetic identification requires the other’s difference in order to consume it as sameness… [This] model is a binary power relationship of self/other that threatens to consume and annihilate the very differences that permit empathy (p. 160).

To step beyond this “passive empathy” and binary of difference challenges traditional means of recognition, reciprocity and engagement. Boler (1999) draws on the feminist/ post colonial practice of testimony as an alternative that bridges this distance and destabilizes issues of power.
and domination. Here the empathetic view serves to connect actions with personal meaning making. In other words, it requires a heightened effort for self reflection, and an acknowledgement of our own complicity in reproducing power imbalances and acting as oppressor. We cannot be passive listeners, but active agents who use what we have gained through the deliberative context to act for change.

Testimony does not rely on objective truths: it is an intertwining of the emotional connections to the experience and stories which illustrate grief, rage, or injustice. Testimony requires us to listen and attend to the emotional needs of the other: we must put aside our rational selves and feel the truth. We are forced to situate ourselves in a place of real discomfort as we reflect on how social systems have invoked this trauma and accept that we cannot always find rational co-constructed agreements as we explore value claims. Testimony permits all statements, narratives and emotions to be recognized as legitimate forms of deliberative engagement: an aesthetic engagement in the act of empathizing, coming to know and recognizing the other. Testimony then, offers a powerful window to the act of recognition.

Noddings (2002) would argue that at the core of recognition lies the theory and practice of care. Care is a social orientation, centered in the relationships between and among people. Rather than describe it as a virtue, a characteristic of behaviour, Noddings describes it as “a mode of shared control” (p. 14). Like Boler (1999), she expresses concern with terms such as empathy or sympathy. For Noddings (2002) recognition is best expressed in the term “engrossment” (p. 14). It means asking the question of the cared-for, “What are you going through?” It is receptivity, a fragile condition, a state of self that permits openness to seeing, hearing, and feeling with the cared-for. It is a two step process that requires a “receptive attention”, that is, a willingness to receive, but it must also features “motivational displacement” (p. 17): a sympathetic engagement, or emotive connection. Her theory also requires reciprocity from the cared-for; that is, there needs to be a mutuality which implicitly completes the relational aspect of the caring relationship.

Construing care as an attribute of a relation draws our attention to both parties in a situation… In a relational view we have to ask about the effects on the cared-for, and the carer’s actions are mediated not only be the initial needs of the cared-for but also by the observable effects of whatever the carer does. Monitoring effects becomes especially important as episodes of care are strung together over time (p. 19).

The idea of caring over time is a focus not considered in the models of deliberation considered to date. Might recognition be enhanced if care is expressed frequently and can be remembered in new encounters? Caring speaks to the development of long term, emotionally engaged relationships that are built on trust. Unlike deliberative models focused on the rationalized self, this view implies a socially constructed situational context for how recognition can be developed and achieved. In light of post modern criticisms of structuralist theories, this offers a framework for engaging in emotive techniques that more fully acknowledge difference, recognize the unique quality of each encounter and attempt to bridge these differences through cognitive and emotive means. It offers a way in which a classroom might well offer an advantage in engaging in care-full deliberation.

**Deliberative theory: its implications for citizenship education**

I will now comment briefly upon several themes that arise from this examination of deliberation theory, and how it can inform contemporary concerns of citizenship educators. Sears
(1996) notes that citizenship education is considered central to the social studies curriculum in provincial educational programs; policy documents indicate a strong commitment to discussion of contemporary social issues, democratic practice, critical thinking, multicultural and anti-racist education, and globalization as central themes. (p. 8). Pedagogical strategies central to this model are in-class discussion and critical thinking. Yet teachers express almost universally a reluctance to engage in what are described as “controversial issues”, because of concern with a negative reaction from parents in the community (Osborne and Seymore, 1988 p. 73 as cited in Sears (1996) p. 10). My own field research found this same concern among BC educators (McGregor, 2002). I believe this reluctance arises, at least in part, from teachers concerns over how to engage in issues of a moral and ethical nature with a process that avoids conflict and engenders respectful engagement among students. This may be where the deliberative theory can enhance current models of critical thinking and discussion strategies: as Bailin, Case, Coombs and Daniels (1999) note, critical thinking models require an active engagement in the knowledge field and understanding of the methods and principles inherent in good thinking (p. 272). Importantly for this discussion the “willingness or disposition to do so” (p. 272) is highlighted. However, to meet conditions for recognition and reciprocity will require classroom teachers to move beyond a competency based approach to one of critical engagement, one that engages in a care perspective, asking the question as Noddings (2002) does: “What are you going through?” Giving opportunities for students to engage with one another and examine competing perspectives while discussing contemporary social, political, and economic issues would be an important precursor to using deliberation techniques in a public forum or an open classroom discussion.

Like Boler (1999) and Noddings (2002), Hebert (1997) stresses the importance of the affective and cognitive dimensions in students becoming knowledgeable about their role as citizens. Recognizing the multiplicity of values and beliefs among students she also highlights the need to develop self-reflective practices that permit students the opportunity to question existing political actions and seek socially just outcomes. In particular she notes the need for dialogic and narrative pedagogies what enable students to understand identities and how they have been shaped.

If care and genuine empathy are necessary for a personal orientation that will create a sense of solidarity in relationships permitting both recognition and reciprocity to be achieved for effective deliberative engagement with one another, how can teachers develop this capacity in their students? Mimicking or modeling deliberative strategies based on the principles discussed in this paper seems an obvious starting point. Discussion, debate, and conversation are all pedagogical strategies used by teachers to achieve this purpose. However, as Holubec-Johnson, Johnson and Johnson (1992) note, much debate that happens in a classroom only serves to solidify already held opinion, and competitive mechanisms emphasize winning arguments rather than finding socially responsible positions (p. 77). Such shortcomings, I suggest, can be addressed by developing a more inclusive emotive orientation among students prior to applying the deliberative models represented in this discussion. In this final section of my paper, I want to

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2 Bailin (2001) attributes critical thinking models from the field of cognitive development; critical thinking is frequently conceptualized as a cognitive process centered in thinking, or as skills which can be developed and taught. Yet in doing so, it differs little from what might otherwise simply be labeled “thinking”. What makes critical thinking “critical” is to take a philosophical approach, one that questions and considers adherence to criteria and standards (p. 368). Critical thinking is contextual and develops a “complex array of understandings” (ibid).
briefly review three important themes I believe must be central to the pedagogical practice of teachers if care-full deliberation is our goal.

Aesthetics and citizenship: Narrative as a pedagogical practice

Aesthetic strategies offer windows into the emotive qualities of living and a variety of ways of responding to the complexities and ambiguities of social life, as well as reflexively examining personal meaning. While a full discussion of aesthetic response as a practice of citizenship is beyond the scope of this paper, I want to briefly consider one aesthetic strategy: the written narrative.

Written narrative techniques may offer important mechanisms that develop a level of trust and provide a safe space in which students can practice the skills of self-reflexivity necessary for developing a strong “civic culture” built on empathy and recognition. Considered central to the feminist perspective, narratives permit alternative perspectives to be recognized and explored as a means of coming to understand the contextual and social situatedness of what is often considered a “truth”. Other processes that characterize the reflexive turn of the postmodern philosophical tradition include personal journal writing and critical ethnographic writing. By exploring their own experiences and responses to controversial issue discussion, students can find personal voice and critically question perspectives. Specifically assigning students written tasks such as taking the imagined perspective of another, or fictionalizing biographical detail would permit a high level of empathetic engagement. Zebroski and Mack (1992) suggest teaching students how to engage in ethnographic research inquiry as another effective means of emotively connecting with others. Their work focused on students producing written narratives in a classroom publication, but other forms of performance including dramatic enactment, poetry readings, philosopher cafes, video critiques or online Zines could be instructional strategies that offer a safe space for voicing alternatives and enhancing recognition.

Schools and classrooms as civic cultures

However, schools themselves need to more effectively build a “civic culture”, one that models processes of critical engagement and opportunities for practicing citizenship. Student cynicism and lack of regard for political systems is only reinforced when we fail to respect the principles of civic culture in schools. Gutmann and Thompson (1996) suggest that “civic integrity” is central to deliberative practices; similarly scholars such as Bailin et al (1999) and Seigel (1998) describe a “critical spirit” as necessary qualities and behaviours of the skilled thinker. However, as Sears and Mark Perry (2000) note, there is often a serious mismatch between stated curriculum goals for emancipatory teaching and learning and the actual practice of teachers and administrators in schools: power and authority structures and normative practices preclude student efforts at leadership which challenge the status quo. Their work highlights the power of social context and normative standards in a student’s sense of efficacy and agency and their beliefs about citizenship. Hahn’s (1998) international research into citizenship pedagogical practices and curriculum concludes:

…researchers have found that instruction can influence political attitudes and behaviours in a positive way when students perceive their class to have an “open climate” in which

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they are encouraged to explore and express differing views on controversial public issues. (p. 179).

An example can serve to illustrate: in my earlier research among social justice teachers, a Vancouver area high school organized student leadership teams who were trained in anti-racism and dialogical debriefing strategies, and are deployed as a school based resource when racist based incidents occur in their school. This illustrates a setting where student citizenship is linked directly to action and provides a meaningful context to demonstrate the value of citizenship practices.

**Teacher as critical pedagogue**

The importance of teachers engaging in critically reflective practices and an examination of their own complicity in privileging rational discourse and the status quo is critically important to a pedagogical approach to citizenship education. Schultz, Buck and Niesz (2000) examined the voices of high school students in several social studies classrooms, demonstrating the links between debate and discussion, teacher power, identity development, community, and difference/diversity represented in their classrooms. In particular, the dynamics of emotions and reason were noted in many of the students’ interactions. Their three year study concluded that the dominant discourse rewarded by teachers reinforced the traditional hegemony of the largely white, middle class community. They also found however, that focus groups set up to assist students in exploring respectful and empathetic ways of discussing race, gender, and other social barriers to equality developed what was described as “bridging language”. This example demonstrates the power of testimony and emotive narratives, as well as the need for teachers to model their own struggle with privilege.

**Conclusion**

This paper began by proposing that a careful look at deliberation theory could enlighten our practice as citizenship educators within an increasingly complex, fragmented, post modern world. While offering theoretically rich models for democratic engagement, most failed to adequately consider recognition, care and empathetic engagement as necessary to fully realizing the principles of full deliberation. The more care-full deliberative model suggested by my analysis offers promise as a pedagogical strategy that can be used by citizenship educators. There are, as noted, a number of conditions necessary for its success: engaging students in emotive recognition strategies, a commitment to civic culture, and an orientation to critical self-reflexive practice. All three conclusions reinforce a discursive pedagogical model as appropriate for citizenship education. A collaborative, field based research proposal is suggested as a next step to more fully developing this model and providing a practical approach for teachers.

**References**


Beyond Bowling Alone: Learning Democracy in Social Movements and in Deliberative Democracy

Margo Menconi

Introduction

Robert Putnam, in his landmark book, *Bowling Alone* (1999), brought before the public eye the dramatic decline in many indicators of social capital in the United States in recent decades. These indicators included decreased participation in political activities, such as voting, and participation in political parties (Putnam, 1999).

In contrast to this apparent growth in isolation and apathy, more participatory approaches to democracy encourage citizen involvement and citizenship learning, and also provide opportunities for increased social capital (Cooke., 2000; Welton, 1993). Recognizing that not all types of social capital are the same, I would suggest that both deliberative democracy and social movement involvement have the potential to increase social capital that is both individually and collectively empowering (cp. Erben, Franzkowiak, & Wenzel, 1999).

In keeping with the theme of this conference, which focuses on citizenship learning, this paper will highlight two grassroots approaches to social change and individual citizenship learning connected with them. While social movements have been around for at least centuries, they have only been studied more widely and in-depth since about the 1960s (Turner and Killian, 1987), and only much more recently have adult educators paid attention to learning connected with social movements (cp. Welton, 1993). While some trace the roots of deliberative democracy back to the early democracy in Athens, Greece, the last 10 years have witnessed an upsurge in theoretical discussion and application of deliberative democracy forms, and even more recently studies have been carried out to understand what is actually happening in experiments in deliberative democracy. Learning has only been a peripheral issue in such studies.

Discussions on learning in both deliberative democracy and social movements could include learning on a societal level, community learning, group learning, or individual learning. The main focus of this paper will be on individual learning. Having said that, I should add that this does not mean that learning on collective or group levels is less important, nor does it mean that separation of individual learning from collective learning can be easily made. It is only due to time and space constraints, as well as a desire to respect the conference theme, that focus is placed here on individual level learning.

Definitions

*Social Movements*
Over the past few decades there have been many attempts to define social movements (Cressley, 2002). Some of them focus on distinguishing social movements from other collective forms...
(Swanson, 1992), others focus on their role in society (e.g., as social conflicts, cp., Touraine, 1985, still others are based on one or more theories of social movements (cp., Oliver, 1993), and at least one definition distinguished social movements from counter movements, while another focuses on classifying types of social movements (e.g., Old and New Social Movements, cp., Klandermans, 1991). For our purposes, we will borrow the fairly all-purpose definition of Doug McAdam and David A. Snow: “…we can define social movement as a collectivity acting with some degree of organization and continuity outside of institutional channels for the purpose of promoting or resisting change in the group, society, or world order of which it is a part.” (1997, p. xviii)

**Deliberative Democracy**

Deliberative democracy also has been defined variously, often focusing on the necessary components or in contrast with other traditions of democracy. According to Pellizzoni (2001, p. 60), “the basic principle [of deliberative democracy] is that the decision-making process must involve discussion of all the viewpoints, with none of them excluded *a priori*.” Antje Gimmler (2001, p. 23) elaborates on this bare-bone definition, in stating that all of the various theories of deliberative democracy “highlight the role of open discussion, the importance of citizen participation, and the existence of a well-functioning public sphere.”

**Citizenship**

In the context of citizenship learning, citizenship takes on a meaning involving some sort of rights and responsibilities of persons as citizens or members of some kind of geographical entity, whether it be a local town or as a citizen of the world. Citizens learn their rights and responsibilities, and are equipped to effectively participate in public life. Thus, citizenship learning in this perspective is a movement from a simple state of being a citizen to more fully acting as a citizen, including the prerequisite capacity to act as a citizen. (cp., Jones, E., & Gaventa, J. 2002, Tobias, 2000). I refrain from specifying a political orientation, although I recognize that whether one maintains a liberal, communitarian, or civic republican view of citizenship will affect the nature one’s approach to deliberative democracy (cp. Cooke, 2000).

**Citizenship Learning**

**In Social Movements**

As such, social movements provide many opportunities for citizenship learning. To give a few examples, they generally provide public education opportunities, either directly or indirectly (via the media) regarding the issues they are concerned about. For those who actually get involved in social movements, they learn about the issues more in depth and learn citizenship skills through active involvement and doing. In addition, social movement groups often provide nonformal training opportunities, such as in workshops and through training materials. Relevant skills that one might gain through social movement involvement include lobbying, working with the media to get your message out, organizing events of various kinds, and communication skills. In addition, involvement in social movements might increase one’s sense of efficacy in the public realm.¹ (e.g., Foley, 1991)

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¹ This discussion of social movement learning is mainly based on the presenters as yet unpublished research on social movement learning. For questions please contact her at Margo.Menconi@verizon.net.
In my current study on social movement learning, I have tracked several types of individual learning. One type of learning that takes place in social movements is activist skill acquisition. I have found two primary routes for such learning: learning through doing (active involvement in movement activities), and from workshops and trainings provided by activists and organizers. Examples of such learning include, how to make giant puppets for parades, how to work with the media, lobbying, and peacekeeping at protests. Many of these skills are transferable to other public settings (cp., Rodriguez, 2001, Holderness-Roddam, 1997).

Another form of individual learning that is connected with social movements, concerns their efforts to “educate the public”, which when it comes down to it consists of individuals. This is often a significant area of operation for social movements, and my data shows that it includes media coverage, working with mainstream media through letters to the editor, press conferences and the like, and through activist media. Recent examples of successfully educating the public in the United States include making the public aware of the injustices connected with the World Trade Organization, International Monetary Fund, and the World Bank, or presenting arguments against the recent war against Iraq. In my data, informal post-event evaluation of a major protest resulted in positive comments in this sphere, which comments also pointed out the importance of educating the public (cp. Dines, 1995).

Another type of individual learning that takes place in social movements, as in other social settings, is socialization into the movement. One person, for example, in my data did not understand the proper procedures for how to introduce an idea into the agenda and was bluntly reprimanded, and responded with an apologetic explanation that he didn’t know the rules. Other activists were sanctioned for not maintaining the values and practices that the group had agreed to, such as regarding tactics or informal power structures in the group. One can learn these through involvement, sometimes through reading group documents (such as regarding formal decision-making processes or tactical decisions), and occasionally through relevant workshops (cp. Arrow, McGrath & Berdahl, 2000).

While I have only begun to carry out interviews, it appears that there is also a correlation between length and intensity of social movement involvement and knowledge of the issues. Activists who are more involved and / or have been involved for a longer time tend to have a greater knowledge of the issues, and can often make clear connections between issues, possibly indicating that their worldview has come to coincide with that of the movement, although it is perhaps too early in my study to make clear cause and effect connections in this regard (cp. Clover, 2000)

It would seem, then, that social movement learning is relevant to citizenship education. Social movements have the potential of drawing people into the public world in explicitly political activities, educating both the public and activists about the issues, and developing skills that can be useful for citizenship purposes.

In Deliberative Democracy
Deliberative democracy similarly provides significant opportunities for citizenship learning (Cooke, 2000). Often in deliberative democracy efforts there is a great focus on providing materials and other opportunities to learn about the issues even quite in-depth and spread widely
throughout a population. In addition, deliberative democracy provides opportunities to learn and practice skills in discussion, argumentation and listening. In many deliberative democracy situations, one has the opportunity to experience attitudinal changes through interaction with individuals and groups different from those one normally might connect with.

Edward Weeks (2000) carried out a study of four deliberative democracy projects, analyzing the results and processes. While his focus was not on learning per se, we can still pick up some tidbits from his report. One of the criticisms of deliberative democracy is that the public do not know enough about the issues to have meaningful and quality input. However, Weeks found that “[t]he form and amount of information provided to the citizen participant compares favorably to that which is ordinarily available to the city council.” (p. 369). Although approaches to deliberative democracy vary widely, this shows at least that deliberative democracy can lead to significant learning about political issues from participating in a deliberative democracy effort.

Weeks (2000) also demonstrates how attitudes can change about the issues. In the Eugene Decisions project, in which city taxes were discussed, residents were mailed a questionnaire. On the first page participants selected their broad preferences, one of which was a preference for “no new taxes.” However, of those that selected this response, the budget they created on later pages of the questionnaire showed an average of $3.3 million in new taxes, demonstrating an evident change of preference. As they learned more specifically about the tax problems, they changed their minds.

Attitudes towards other groups and individual can also change during participation in deliberative democracy efforts that bring together diverse groups (in contrast to self-selection, which tends to be result in more homogenous discussion groups (Ryfe, 2002)). In a study of women’s experiences of deliberative democracy in Northern Ireland, Elisabeth Porter notes that “[a] major reason for the scarcity of the goodwill in conflict societies is the limited space to share life-stories with those who are differently situated.” (p. 173). Deliberative democracy efforts can provide such an opportunity, providing the space to share their stories and learn from one another.

Similarly, Jorge Valadez suggests that “[p]ublic deliberation should not be confined to purely cerebral, disputative discourse aimed at convincing others of one’s point of view, it should also enhance mutual sympathy and emotive understanding.” (p. 7). Thus, learning in deliberative democracy can be emotional as well as cognitive in its impact on interpersonal and intergroup relationships.

Further learning benefits from deliberative democracy participation that benefit both the individual and society at large are the development of civic virtues. Valadez elaborates on this by saying that “[c]haracter traits associated with democratic citizenship, such as mutual understanding among the members of the political community, are cultivated when pride of place is granted to public deliberation, which promotes political discourse in which people learn to see the world from the perspective of others.” (p. 35)

The implications for citizenship education in deliberative democracy, then, are the development of individual character traits valued in citizens of a democracy, the development of
communication skills, making citizens more knowledgeable about the issues, and learning to appreciate and work with others different from oneself.

Deliberative democracy and social movement involvement also both address the apparent trend towards decreasing social capital in the United States. Similarly, one’s sense of collective identity, either with the social movement or community, might increase. This, in turn, has the potential of increasing individual’s involvement in political and public affairs.

Discussion

Summary
When we think of citizenship learning, we often think of programs in formal school and university settings. However, much learning happens in other situations, especially where there is citizen participation in politics. Different types of political involvement provide different opportunities for citizenship learning. Such learning can have a significant effect on an individual in their future involvement in public life, as well as in other spheres of living. Their identity as a citizen can be transformed through involvement in social movements and deliberative democracy.

The opportunities briefly described in this paper rely heavily on group interaction, because they are collective phenomena. As such, much of the involvement in either social movement or deliberative democracy activities, counter the trends described by Robert Putman in *Bowling Alone*. They involve efforts that bring people together and might also increase the likelihood of other such future collective activities and the formation of new relationships.

Suggestions for Further Study
While this paper serves only as a very brief overview of lifelong citizenship learning in social movements and deliberative democracy, there is much more that could be said and so much more that needs to be learned about these phenomena.

I have undertaken an extensive research project on social movement learning that I hope will lead to further exploration and discussion on this subject. Much of social movement learning is citizenship learning, although it does include other types of learning as well. Much of the literature on social movement learning focuses on specific aspects of it, rather than taking a more panoramic or comprehensive view. Likewise, the literature on deliberative democracy is mostly theoretical, political and philosophical. Where studies of deliberative democracy efforts has been carried out, they do not focus on learning as a part of the process. Thus, these two avenues for political involvement should be studied further to better understand their contribution to citizenship learning. In addition, perhaps there are other such types of political participation that should also be included, such as participatory action research, community organizing or volunteering.

One suggestion is to carry out biographical studies on a few carefully select individuals to understand the forces involved in one’s learning to be a citizen. Another possibility would be to
do a case study of a deliberative democracy project to better understand citizenship learning in that context. Making the connections between citizenship learning and learning, social capital development, and such means of citizen involvement as social movements and deliberative democracy might also make for an informative and helpful study.

**Implications for Practice**

For practitioners concerned about fostering active citizen participation in public life, attention should be given to citizenship learning that takes place both in deliberative democracy efforts and in social movement functioning. This could be something that is intentionally planned for and monitored. Fostering such learning could also be a good way to contribute to the formation of upcoming potential leaders and to and increase recruitment and retention of active citizen involvement. While learning may not be the end all, it may prove to be a crucial factor to effectiveness for those working towards social change and social justice. Learning that is collective in nature may also have the added benefit of creating a sense of commitment to the group and to the concerns of the group.

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Participative Democracy – an old tradition in Norwegian Schools

The first experimentation with pupil participation in schools as places for democratic learning started in 1920’s when (Hareide 1972) made the first council for pupils. This idea spread to many other upper secondary schools in Norway and after the second world war most schools for this age group had such councils. In the war years there had been cooperation more than class struggle between the different political fractions in the resistance movement. It can be said that the cooperation in those years gave the Norwegians a lesson in democratic cooperation. These sentiments made a great impression on the first years after the war. All political parties then saw the importance of using the schools as places for democratic learning. The school council, therefore, became a part of the new rules for upper secondary education and for all the years to come. Even if those councils in some schools became what they were set up for, a place for debates and decision-making, in most schools they had a rather modest place in the life of most pupils.

But things were changing with a new generation of young people demanding more influence and power in their life situation in homes, schools and in higher learning. In Norway as in the rest of the western world we had all those protest movements in the late 60’s, starting with the anti-nuclear movement, continuing with the anti-Vietnam war protests to the student movement.

During the late 60’s the whole educational system in Norway was overhauled and one of the new ideas coming through this process were new organizational forms were pupils and students could have more influence and even more important, the curriculum guidelines following up these reforms had many statements about the importance of new teacher- and pupil roles with a more democratic relationship in the classroom. When all this turmoil settled down in the later 70’s, the important question must be: Did all this make a change to more democratic classrooms and lecture halls? The big curriculum reform for primary and lower secondary schools in 1974 was evaluated. The change to more democratic relationship was not evaluated; possibly because it would be very difficult to establish a baseline for comparing before and after the reform. The teacher-centered classroom continued as before, as Cuban (1990) has shown for comparable reforms in Unites States.
Reform `94 – a call for changing roles and relationships in the classroom?

As I explained in the introduction, we have had major educational reforms in the 90’s including the whole educational system from primary education to doctorates at the university level. I have done an evaluation study of the upper secondary education reform of 1994, called Reform `94. This reform had ambitions to change both the structure and curriculum of this part of the system. I had the responsibility to evaluate the curriculum part of this reform in the years between 1994 and 1998. In the following part of my paper I will go thorough some results from this evaluation to see if one of the main goals of the new curriculum, the active pupil role, taking responsibility for their own learning, succeeded in changing the roles of teachers and pupils to a more participative and democratic relationship.

Let us take a glance at the Core Curriculum to se how those goals are formulated (The Royal Ministry of Church, Education and Research 1993, English version):

> Education must be dedicated to the personal qualities we wish to develop and not solely to subject matter. The key is to create an environment that provides ample opportunities for children and young people to evolve social responsibility and practical capability for their future roles as adults. (p.32)

This is followed up in a handbook all pupils get at the beginning of their upper secondary education, called “The Guide”:

> But a good learning environment is also much more. Another essential for good and efficient learning is a schedule of classroom and workshop work which enables you and your classmates to participate in planning and setting yourselves learning targets for some time ahead. The working pace and methods can also be discussed with the teacher. It is also important for the class and the teacher to take time to assess wheter the targets for the period have been reached, and if not, why not. This is a way of learning to work systematically towards goals. (The National Centre for Educational Resources 1994, p.12)

These and many other formulations from the curriculum documents have great expectations for a role change. How did teachers and pupils try to implement those goals in the classroom, knowing how difficult it can be to change this relationship established and institutionalized in generations? (Monsen 1997)

What does my data indicate of possible changes in the pupil and teacher role?

I will take as my starting point a comparison of the two questionnaires completed by the teachers in 1995 and 1998, where some of the same questions were asked. The samples in the two cases were not totally comparable. In 1995, 440 mathematics and English teachers replied, while in 1998 the number of teachers from most subjects and types of course was 790. But, as was revealed in the analysis of the data, the most important variations in both questionnaires weren’t between the subjects, but the difference between general courses and vocational courses and between the sexes. In relation to
variables the two questionnaires are comparable. Besides, there was such a large agreement in the answers in the two questionnaires there is reason to believe that the most important variations in the teachers are revealed in both cases. In the following I will look at some examples of both stability and change in replies to identical or comparable questions from the two different points separated in time. The examples are chosen because they can in my opinion aid in the analysis of the influence of the content of the reform upon the teacher’s role.

1) The teacher’s view of the curriculum has changed little.
We asked teachers in both questionnaires what they thought of the general curriculum, about the methodological guide in the particular subject, about some of the central principles contained in the curriculum reform, the replies were almost identical. It was somewhat surprising to find such a high degree of agreement between the replies across the different answer alternatives. This supported my assertion above that both the surveys were representative for all the teachers in the schools of upper secondary education. It can appear as if the teachers in schools of upper secondary education changed only slightly their opinion and evaluation of the content in the reform from 1995 to 1998. The group who supported the central principles in the curriculum reform were then as now between 2/3 and 3/4. The evaluation of the general curriculum was generally the same. The same applies to the methodological guide.

2) The teachers have changed their way of working.
A greater number of teachers in 1998 than in 1995 said that they used the curriculum, both in relation to planning, implementation and evaluation of their teaching. It has become more usual to do planning together with colleagues and teachers also say that to a greater extent they include pupils in this planning. Even though the pupils reported that they participated less in curriculum planning, the differences don’t undermine the teacher’s assertions. If these figures are correct and teachers do what they assert, the curriculum has had an effect. The changes are not dramatic and there are still a large group of teachers who continue to work in a manner more or less uninfluenced by the new curriculum. How can this change be explained? It must be seen against the teacher’s background perception that the curriculum doesn’t appear to have changed over this period of time. It can appear that some of the teachers who in 1995 supported the principles, but couldn’t or wouldn’t realise them in practice, now three years on were planning with their colleagues. They also involved their pupils in this planning and had introduced project work. As a figure this change is in the order of 10-20% of the whole sample. Even though there was some variation from statement to statement, the pattern was nonetheless consistent enough to allow the assertion that there has been a real change. We were faced with an example of a number of teachers who had changed their behaviour while their attitudes had remained the same. In the course of the three years it appears that there was a significant increase in the number of teachers in schools of upper secondary education who followed up the expectations contained in the curriculum reform.

“To change in order to preserve”?
How can the percentage increase in the number of teachers who follow up the expectations expressed in the curriculum reform be explained? The most fundamental explanation appears to be that it is the teachers who are to begin with more or less in agreement about the principles upon which the new practice rests. In the course of these three years, through courses and different forms of stronger directive, they have arrived at some new ways of working. When it comes to co-operation with
colleagues, this has occurred under the direction of the school heads, and in many cases it is the new departmental heads who have had this as one of their most important tasks. In the interviews we see that teachers are somewhat ambiguous about this development. They see the need for more co-operation, but at the same time they are more sceptical to the way it is introduced. They want more time for informal co-operation in small groups of colleagues. It is now the case that a lot of time is consumed in relatively large groups, such as departmental meetings. Co-operation with pupils about planning and teaching appears to be the result of the development of planning models where the pupils can be included through standardised procedures which culminate in reports, either to the departmental or school heads.

These models (which to an ever increasing extent can be found in electronic computer versions) make it easier for teachers to follow up the expectation of planning together with pupils. The standardised procedures weaken the arguments made by teachers early in the period of reform that it was all too time consuming. Some individual teachers express the view that such an arrangement is unproblematic because it allows them to meet the imposed directives without it having too much of an effect upon what they see to be their main obligations: to ensure that teaching covers the “curriculum”, textbooks or other basic expressions for the contract teachers think they have with their subject and society. Other teachers express the view that they have little time for such formal exercises. Even though they also follow up, they don’t have much belief in their educational value. There is also a group of teachers, between one quarter and one fifth, who are hardly influenced by these expectations; following up only those things which are clearly and definitely imposed, while at the same time regarding much of this as an bureaucratic exercise. It also appears that in the growing group of teachers who follow up the expectations in the curriculum reform there is a lot of doubt and scepticism as to the value of the form of planning together with colleagues and pupils, questioning if it results in an increase in the pupil’s responsibility for their own learning. It therefore supports the pattern which can here be detected, that there has been a weak fall in the support of the teachers. Can we interpret this difference between attitudes and behaviour as a surface adjustment to the new demands, but without teachers regarding this as a change in roles with which they can or will identify?

The dominant teacher culture at the majority of the schools, both in the 1998 survey and the interviews in the schools, regards the increased co-operation with scepticism. In other words, they have only to a small extent changed their attitudes over the four year period. They admit the necessity of certain forms of co-operation with pupils, but are of the opinion that earlier experiences and experiences in the period of reform have shown that it should be given a reduced place, both with respect to the standards of teaching and because they hold the view that pupils are little interested in greater co-operation (a view which many pupils also support). The demands made by leaders at the county level and by heads in individual schools for reports to document planning with pupils are met with deep scepticism. To a varying degree attempts are made to avoid the new demands, by completing the necessary forms, but with a shrug of the shoulders.

These conclusions give rise to the questions, Are witnessing an increasing difference between schools in their ability (or opportunity?) to follow up the content in the curriculum reform? Has the reform in many schools resulted in an increasing awareness of the value of traditional teacher and pupil roles? Will the teacher culture in its meeting with the new curriculum after a time with defensive reactions more actively support a more “polished”, somewhat modernized, but still traditional teacher role?
(Cuban 1998). It is too early to arrive at unambiguous answers to these questions, but the changes we have been able to register and the patterns we can see in these changes can be interpreted as an indication of this. The modernisation will depend on how the teachers accept and adopt some of the new terminology associated with curriculum reform. They will with caution adopt some of the new working methods such as project work and the direct consultation with the pupil. They will accordingly follow the old conservative slogan “to change in order to preserve”. The point for this group of teachers who identify with the teacher’s role as they know it from their own schooling and as teachers for new pupil generations, is the nucleus in the traditional teacher’s role cannot be interfered with. The central values in the teacher’s role are connected with the teacher’s authority with respect to knowledge and the understanding of this knowledge, which is a necessary part of this authority of knowledge (Apple 1992). Their purpose is to be caretakers of their subjects, to defend its knowledge and transmit it’s values to the next generation.

New hopes and new challenges
This conclusion might be questioned in two ways: First it might be that the reform efforts between 1994 and 1998 didn’t find the proper ways to challenge the teachers and pupils willingness to change, as we know they have. Second, the traditional teacher role has to be challenged from the fact that Norway as all over Europe is changing to a multi-cultural society. In most Norwegian classrooms we have pupils from cultures very different from our own. Then teachers have to think otherwise about their roles as teachers. After 1998 I have been involved in a project in Oppland County where my college is placed dealing with cooperative learning. This project was initiated by the education officer and has been working since autumn 2000 with the intention to do something about this finding of rather small changes in adoption of the curriculum goals of pupils’ participation in planning, implementing and evaluating the curriculum (Monsen & Hansen 2002). One of our conclusions so far is that giving pupils and teachers a structure to work within and practical and easily understandable methods to work with, we have seen more changes in the last two years than in the four years before. So, if this conclusion will stand up to more thorough investigation, we might have to take a more theoretical discussion with the tradition in curriculum research I started with. Role changes might be more of a possibility than the research community has said so far. This might be a hope for a century of progressive education working for more democratic classrooms (Rust 1985). But as we now have to learn more about, the new challenge of the multi-cultural classroom might be as difficult as the democratization of the traditional classroom.

The new challenge of the multi-cultural classroom
I will finish this paper with a discussion of a few results from R94 evaluation dealing with implementing the curriculum for pupils from developing countries. In the bigger cities in Norway we now have a great influx of refugees from different parts of the world as far away as Iraq, Iran, Somalia, Kosovo and many other countries. The Norwegian policy of inclusion must also find methods to integrate those pupils into the Norwegian society. In the press and other media we can read and see nearly daily the many problems our new citizens create for doing this successfully. In a very famous song for children in Norway we have a line saying this “... some children are brown, some children are black, but inside we are the same,”. This way of thinking has in essence been the official way of thinking about integration of children from cultures different from our own. In the later years we have had a hard lesson in re-learning; children are also different inside, and this difference have to be taken seriously and taken into our curriculum planning. In some schools with
more than 50% pupils from other countries they have had to think about this for years, but if we look at the whole picture, we get the impression that for most schools this is a new challenge they have more recently found themselves confronted with.

Let us first take a look at the figures for how well children with Norwegian as their second language succeed in upper secondary schools before and after Reform 94. In her study, Berit Loedding (1999), have compared boys and girls from Pakistan beginning in –89, -91 and –95. She has chosen this ethic group because it is the biggest of all in Norway and because many of them are children of parents coming to Norway in the 70’s many years before the great influx of refugees. This ethnic group should therefore have had the possibility to adapt to Norwegian society.

In 89 64% of the girls began at the first year course in upper secondary education, either on an academic track or a vocational track. This percent had increased to 83% in 95. This is not a big difference compared to girls from non-immigrant homes where about 94% began on the same level in 95. For boys there was a somewhat lower percentage in both groups. These and may other figures of how children from other ethnic groups succeed in the Norwegian educational system indicates that after some years of adaptation and, as all research have shown, have a mastery of the Norwegian language, seem to catch up with the native speaking Norwegians. But still this is not a success-story. Following these students from school to work, Loedding (1998) have shown that especially boys in traditional trades have problems with getting a job as trainee. There is still much skepticism in those trades to take in trainees looking a little different and probably speaking Norwegian with a twist. Therefore, the unemployment rate among young people from ethnic minorities is nearly the double compared to non-immigrant youth.

This high unemployment rate can also be explained by the new influx of refugees in the 90’s, many of them are children and young people, most of them with problems learning Norwegian because they stick together in larger cities where they can find people from their own countries and therefore are less exposed to the Norwegian language. These problems of integration are looked upon as something the schools should do something about. In the short run expectations and ambitions are higher than possibilities to instant success. Several studies have tried to understand this process of inclusion and integration in classrooms with several ethnic groups (Kaya 2000). One main finding is that both the pupils themselves and their parents have difficulties in understanding a democratic teacher role. For them it is natural for a teacher to be rather authoritarian to get respect from pupils. Therefore, it seems that teachers keeping to a more traditional teacher role have less discipline problems and are better liked in multi-ethnic classrooms (Hoegmo 2001). To change attitudes and teaching practice in these learning environments seems to be a greater challenge than in the traditional Norwegian classrooms where as I have argued above, we are now seeing some encouraging changes in this traditional role pattern. So, in the short run I think we have to find a balance between expectations in the curriculum concerning a democratic relationship and the possibilities teachers have in multi-ethnic classrooms to change culturally based attitudes. But these problems and challenges should not deter us from loosing the goals from our sight. As we saw from the example above with pupils from Pakistan, living in Norway from birth is an important source for adapting to the Norwegian society and catch up with their contemporaries. So, in the long run it should be possible to see more democratic relationship in all Norwegian classrooms (Osler 2000). I finish this paper with some rather optimistic ideas and hopes for children’s participation, not just in schools, but in society as a whole:
The discourses on ‘children and participation’ in Norway as well as internationally – point to new visions of childhood, intending to empower a disenfranchised group in society, replacing the notion of ‘the vulnerable and dependent child’ with ‘the competent child’, who is given the right to participate in society to a certain degree. This change in the construction of childhood is also described as recognition of children as ‘human beings’, rather than ‘human becomings’ (Qvortrup, 1994). The emphasis on children’s rights to have influence in society, and to be active participants in public arenas, is presented firmly as a further and inevitable step of progress in late modernity towards a more humane and child friendly society (Kjørholt, 2002, p.64).

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The Abhittipura Project: SERVICE PROVIDED = NO BORDER

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Pura (Sanskrit) = City. Abhitti (Sanskrit) = No walls, having no walls (1).

“Globally, people are moving to the cities. Cities are growing and undergoing far-reaching identity changes’...[...]...Migration is not simply about the wandering of people. People are increasingly crossing borders to find work. This mobility is bringing far-reaching changes to habitable space” Roemer van Toorn, Second Modernity Mutations within Urban culture (2).

Present market, labor and economy worldwide conditions are subject to constant change and evolution, sometimes in rather unpredictable manners. The global exchange of information & knowledge, added to the facilitation of supra-national movement, have opened to cities the possibility of functioning independently from traditional National States ties and act more like independent entities, in regards to financial markets, trade and business. Parallel to the emergency of the so-called “Global Cities” (Saskia Sassen) (4), a great number of cities around the world have redefined their mode of functioning/producing, from industrial to post-industrial, positioning themselves as well in the new modes of production within hyper-capitalism. This might call for a future re-emergency of the ‘City-State’, as it existed in ancient times, but locking into the realities of the today’s networked market.

At the same time, migration and mobility have become an important part of the demographic and sociological world landscape. As much of much of the world economy is impacted globally, local economies still differs from each other, in a way that attracts and activates new incoming human flows in search of better labor & living conditions. As still National States’ immigration policies restrict this type of movement and specific markets do face the future prospect of shortage of productive population/labor, there is a call for the flexibilization of the traditional concept of citizenship, in regards to global movement.

My intention here is to explore the nature & feasibility of a proposal, for the implementation of a “Free zone of movement” within a network of cities, which specialize in providing selected knowledge services across the World. The Abhittipura project proposes the networking of ‘second-tier cities’ (cities that exist below the definition of ‘Global Cities’), which for the purpose of this working paper, I will call ‘SPC’ (Service Provider Cities). I sustain the basis of this geo-political proposal on the following foundation concepts:

- The concept of Knowledge Workers & their patterns of mobility.
- The notion of the “GOUP” (“Global Operating Urban Person”).
- The idea of “Flexible Citizenship”
- The existence of Global [financial] Cities <versus> Service Providers Cities [globally]
- The concept of the new technologically-allowed “City-State” and the networking of cities.
- The notion of ‘Service demands equals mobility’
"An increasingly reflexive mode of consumption demands a more self-conscious mode of production" (5). The demands of today’s service-based economy have given origin to a new kind of laborer: The ‘Creative Knowledge Worker’ most corresponds to the model explained by Maurizio Lazzarato’s theories on *Immaterial Labor* (6). Lazzarato explains the new modes of production as non-product specific and non-lieu restricted. Immaterial labor occurs in the territory of cities, on a supra-national level. Same technologies allowing for the ‘de-territorialization’ of labor produce a contemporary urban/human condition, described with varied terms, but essentially untied to National territoriality and the existence of a ‘fixed’ home. This status was once only related to a rather ‘elite’ group, but is becoming more a non-elitist and mainstream phenomena. Parting from the denomination of ‘GOUP’ (Global-operating Urban Professional) (7), I extend this term to ‘Global-operating Urban person’, to better cover the spectrum of people who, mostly for work and creative-oriented goals, have gone beyond the ties of traditional ‘permanent’ homes, locking into a nomad way of life.

This brings us to re-discuss the traditional concept of *citizenship*. Being originally a concept tied up to the idea of *cityscape* and to the urban way of life (8), now this nineteenth century concept becomes weak vis-à-vis the forces of post-capitalist markets of labor. “*Global citizenship has a place in modern Global Politics – The decline of the objectivity theory of Citizenship leads to subjectivity being transported to the traditional notion of Citizenship as we know it*” (9). Bypassing the concept of traditional citizenship to facilitating the knowledge worker’s movement is imperative for the goal of this proposal, which targets cities previously denominated as ‘SPC’, gathering the following criteria:

- They operate rather on the provision of Knowledge Services, High-tech & Media.
- Demographically, belong to a ‘second level’ circuit of cities.
- Are exempted from heavy political & national-related burdens (i.e. they might not be a National Capital).
- Provide conditions of ‘safe heaven’ to knowledge workers and knowledge providers (i.e. inhabiting accessibility, active artistic & media milieus).
- Some examples are: Oslo, Amsterdam, Munich, Barcelona, Montréal, Vancouver, Seattle, Perth, Kuala Lumpur, Bangalore, etc.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>World city type</th>
<th>Score</th>
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</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>London, Paris, New York, Tokyo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Chicago, Frankfurt, Hong Kong, Los Angeles, Milan, Singapore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>San Francisco, Sydney, Toronto, Zurich</td>
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<tr>
<td>Beta</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Brussels, Madrid, Mexico City, São Paulo</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Moscow, Seoul</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gamma</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Amsterdam, Boston, Caracas, Dallas, Düsseldorf, Geneva, Jakarta, Johannesburg, Melbourne, Osaka, Prague, Santiago, Taipei</td>
</tr>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Bangkok, Montreal, Rome, Stockholm, Warsaw</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Atlanta, Barcelona, Berlin, Buenos Aires, Budapest, Copenhagen, Hamburg, Istanbul, Kuala Lumpur, Manila, Miami, Munich</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Beaverstock** Inventory of World cities based on total amount of Global service industry presence, 1999
Manuel de Landa, on his scientific account of cities as ‘exoskeletons’ of humanity, emphasizes the idea of networking between cities, both from the historical point of view and projecting into the realities of today: “The degree of homogeneity in the world has greatly increased, while heterogeneity has come to be seen as almost pathological, or at least as a problem that must be eliminated. Under the circumstances, a call for a more decentralized way of organizing human societies seems to recommend itself” (10). The main purpose of this network relies on the notion of ‘Service demands equals mobility’, leading to a hypothetical goal:

The networking and association of SPC, plus the free exchange and facilitation of productive/knowledge labor movement among them, will most likely relieve the already pressing concerns in regards to markets, employment and the threat of economic recession in certain parts of the world. By not competing, but instead associating among them, allowing the flow of people within their system, urban labor markets can be balanced and distributed according to demand, lifting restrictions for human movement.

To finish, my interest is to look at how this kind of supra-national mobility allows for a new trans-national ‘home shifting’ condition, providing a new kind of ‘trans-inhabiting’ way. This leads to different ways of defining 'home' as regards to one’s life/work activity. The question is: How can this new idea of ‘Trans-home’ be facilitated? When framing the concept of ‘Trans-home’ within current technologies, the creation of a design-based interface facilitating the conditions of ‘home shifting’ for the SPC Zone inhabitant, from one city to another (making this movement as flexible as possible) is called for. Mauro Cavalletti, a Senior Interaction Designer based in New York, has worked on a proposal which most reflects the dynamics of the ‘home shifting’ condition, and which can well be utilized within the SPC free-zone of movement (11). His concept of establishing a ‘Creative Network’ community of highly mobile creative workers, artists and knowledge providers, facilitates the process of living in different cities by dividing the idea of ‘home’ in three basic elements:

- A database-interface, containing all information/data conforming all material, which by surrounding us ‘makes us feel home’: Mementos, pictures, music, books, movies, images, etc. all transformable into intangible and downloadable data upon request.
- A basic shell, space, to be re-configured, at every time a new user of the ‘community’ arrives and ‘colonizes’ the space to make it ‘home’. Such space can function as a retro-fit configuration of an existing building or space, prepared for that particular purpose.
- A set of ambiance characteristics and preferences (light, sounds, smells, area requirements), which can be pre-set upon arrival of each new inhabitant according to his/her preferences, already archived in the database-interface.

On “Designing Flows: a Creative Network”, Cavalletti proposes a system that effectively creates ‘places out of the flows’ (12), by using data components in order to configure the idea of ‘home’ at any given place. This kind of ‘community’ living (in the virtual sense) allows for creative knowledge workers to adopt the database/interface as the place of their real ‘home’, while the other two components physically complete dwelling requirements. This represents an ideal design-based interface application that, added to the ‘free zone of movement’ would complete the desired scenario of the Abhittipura Project proposal.

Notes:

(1) I chose and made the denomination of “Abhittipura” as a title for this particular project/working paper, after researching terminology in several ancient languages, such as Sanskrit and Latin, and Esperanto, looking for a word that could express the particular concept of ‘open city’. From that I obtained the following denominations:
Urbe absque limbus (Latin) = City with no borders. Civitosenbordo (Esperanto) = ‘City-State’ with no borders. I created the base for the word combination ‘Abhittipura’ upon finding the Sanskrit words durgapura (safe city) and abhitti (no walls). I consulted different sources to retain this word combination, but wish to apologize in advance to all experts on Sanskrit, who might find this could be an incorrect denomination (Note of the author).


(6) Maurizio Lazzarato, an Italian political theorist, has defined ‘Immaterial Labor’ as the new modes of production replacing former industrial economies in the new service and information-based societies: “Immaterial labour refers to actions which precedes the production of goods and which allow for the evolvement of social relations, forms of life and modes of subjectivation. It is not a category determined by ‘work’, but an autonomous and independent field of agency which anticipates contractual and paid labour and which overrules their conception.” (“Lavoro immateriale: Constructing Public Spheres” http://www.krf.org/krfhome/11oencies5a.htm).

(7) This term was used by author and journalist Dr. Thomas Barlow: “Among no social group is this more true than the modern, international, professional elite: that tribe of young bankers, lawyers, consultants, and managers for whom financial, familial, personal, corporate, and (increasingly) national ties have become irrelevant.” (“Tribal Workers”. Financial Times, 24 July 1999).


(10) Manuel de Landa: “A thousand years of non-linear history”, New York: Swerve, 1997. “Geological history 1000-1700”: ‘Sandstone and granite’, p 69. De Landa also highlights the dynamics of ‘city networking’ on citing Hohenberg and Lees: “The Network system, with quite different properties, complements the Central Place System. Instead of a hierarchical nesting of similar centers, distinguished mainly by the number and rarity of service offered, it presents an ordering of functionality complementary cities and urban settlements. The key systemic property of a city is nodality rather than centrality... Since network cities easily exercise control at a distance, the influence of a town has little to do with propinquity and even less with formal command over territory. The spatial features of the Network System are largely invisible on a conventional map: trade routes, junctions, gateways, outposts...” (Ibid: ‘Lavas and Magmas’, p 39).

(11) “Designing Flows: A Creative Network”, project developed by Mauro Cavalletti, during the ‘Serve City’ Bauhaus Kolleg Program, at the Bauhaus Dessau Foundation, May 2002. I strongly felt that including Designing Flows on this paper would best serve to show an ideal practical design/interface application to the Abhittipura Project.

(12) Manuel Castells describes the co-existence of a ‘space of places’ with a ‘space of flows’. Here, the ‘places’ are created out of the flows of information.
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Developing Active Citizenship through International Youth Exchanges

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Introduction

This paper is based on the “data” chapter of my MA thesis in the Adult Education and Community Development program at OISE/UT.¹ In my thesis, I examined the nature of student participation in an international university exchange between rural Canada and rural Mexico.² The key question that informed this study was: What is the impact of international student exchange programs that are informed by the notion of praxical participation on the development of active citizenship? More specifically, to what extent did student participation in the Rural Development Exchange encourage and enable students to move beyond passivity and fatalistic acceptance of political, economic, ecological, and cultural structures, and to articulate and realize alternatives? I explored whether through deliberate reflection on the micro-context of participation in the personal relationships of the various program components of the Rural Development Exchange of 2001-2002, students would be better equipped to participate in their own learning and in the transformation of their communities.

The Rural Development Exchange was informed by the principle of praxical participation. By this, I mean participation informed by cycles of action and reflection that pay attention to power relations in both structural and individual locations. Praxical participation programs differ from technical participation programs in the extent of their awareness of power. Technical participation is a necessary but not sufficient condition for the promotion of informed, critical, and engaged citizens. For instance, community mapping is an important technique to assess community needs, but if it is not linked to an analysis of structures of power in the community and ways to reform them, it is less likely to lead to meaningful community transformation. That is, simply getting community input through a community mapping exercise is technical participation; praxical participation would be gathering the input, and having a process in place that addressed relations of power was able to articulate and realize alternatives in a collective manner.

The Rural Development Exchange is a partnership between Canada World Youth, a Canadian nongovernmental organization specializing in international youth exchanges, the Universidad Autonoma del Estado de Morelos (UAEM), the state university of Morelos, Mexico, and Augustana University College, as small liberal arts university in rural Alberta. The 10 Canadian and 10 Mexican program participants are all students in various faculties of their home universities and receive academic credit for their participation in this 8 month exchange. The first 4 months were spent in the rural central Albertan community of Ponoka; the second phase took place in Santo Domingo Ocotitlan (referred to as Ocotitlan by its residents), Morelos State, Mexico. The program is made up of both “action” and “reflection” components. The action components include counterpart pairs, the pairing of a Canadian and Mexican participant for the

¹ The complete thesis is available at the Rural Development Exchange website at www.augustana.ca/rdx.
² I will be using the term student to refer to the participants of the Rural Development Exchange. During the Exchange and in the context of other Canada World Youth exchanges, they are referred to as participants. I use the term student because all of the participants are university students and receive academic credit for their participation. The main reason to use the term student is to avoid the awkward sounding phrase “participants participated” since a central focus of this piece is participation. I do not mean to imply the traditional hierarchy often associated with a student-teacher relationship. (I saw my role as “facilitator” or “educator” rather than teacher.) Some of the quotations in this piece use participant rather than student.
duration of the exchange; host families, the students hosts in the community; volunteer work placements, the local places where students volunteered for 3 days a week; and research groups, the combination of two counterpart pairs responsible for facilitating a total of 4 weeks of educational activities throughout the exchange. The reflection components included Weekly Educational Activity Days (WEADs), the twice-weekly meeting of the whole group to reflect on both the experiences of the past week and to deepen understanding of a specific topic related to the host communities; bi-weekly reflections, a written assignment in which students did a focused reflection on a specific experience; final papers, the assignment due at the end of each phase which combined an extended reflection with theory; and a portfolio, a piece of work through which students documented progress made in attaining their learning objectives.

I was the Canadian project supervisor of the Rural Development Exchange hired by Canada World Youth to supervise the exchange. I was joined on the leadership team by Lorena from the UAEM, Dittmar, the Academic Liaison from Augustana (and also my father), and Arturo Ornelas, the Academic Liaison for the UAEM. The finding presented in this paper are based on students’ assignments, interviews, discussions with the leadership team, and general observations during the exchange. The focus of this paper is on my research findings. The theoretical framework of Critical Pedagogy (Freire, 1970/2000, 1973, 1998; Giroux, 1992; hooks, 1994; Luke & Gore, 1992), Participatory Action Research (Fals-Borda & Rahman, 1991; Hall, 1981; Maguire, 1987; Smith, Willms, & Johnson, 1997) and Participation (Arnstein, 1971; Pateman, 1970) will not be discussed here.

In order to understand the way in which the Rural Development Exchange has the potential to change attitudes, knowledge, and skills related to praxical participation, I will explore student participation in the Exchange by program component. Because one of the factors that facilitate praxical participation is the enabling structures of the Exchange, I will explore student participation through their learning from, and their modification of, the program components. This exploration through program components is somewhat arbitrary because much of the learning comes precisely because of the connections between the various components. For example, students’ learning about cultural values of family are achieved through participation in a host family but also through the counterpart relationship. While students participated, technically and praxically, in all of the program components—be they more active or reflective in nature—it is beyond the scope of this piece to explore student participation in all program components. Therefore, I will explore only the components that are most useful to my discussion of showing how certain component encouraged students to participate praxically. Students were encouraged to participate by revisioning especially the relational elements of program components in light of challenges identified through reflections.

Counterpart Relationship

One of the Exchange’s foundations is the counterpart relationship. It is through this relationship that the students have their most immediate contact with another culture. Within this relationship, students experience many of the other program components such as host families and volunteer work placements. On the one hand, as Dittmar points out, students “are participating 24 hours a day because they never get away from being with a Mexican or a Canadian [counterpart] or of being in a host family, or in somebody else’s [a community member’s] work placement.” In the technical sense of participation, students are not able to escape participating in their counterpart relationship because so much of the students’ lives during the exchange are built around a counterpart relationship. On the other hand, the structures
cannot guarantee practical participation. A stark example would be a counterpart pair I had in another exchange that refused to speak to each other for a three-week period. They participated in their relationship enough to eat, sleep, and live, but there was not attempt during that period to work out any of their issues—any of the power imbalances that existed in their relationship. Talking about her experience of living and working with a Mexican counterpart and the challenges of teaching each other English and Spanish, a Lana[^3] stated,

> Working with my counterpart was like being shaken awake, seeing how I convey my thoughts and how much I listen to others. I did not expect to learn these skills, they were not promised to me at the beginning of the program and I actually didn’t really know they existed. I have worked with learning a language before, but to help someone learn mine was a totally different experience.

A major learning from the counterpart relationship was about interpersonal relationships. Lana’s quotation shows her learning regarding communication and teaching her own language. While the mutual language teaching and learning portion of the students’ relationship is more applicable to an experience like the Rural Development Exchange, the general communication skills learned are relevant to any relationship. The counterpart relationship provided students with the opportunity to reflect on the way in which they potentially embodied systemic oppression right in their own relationships.[^4] Making changes to the problems in their own relationship mirrors ways in which systemic change can be made.

Lana also commented, “It was frustrating for me to watch people give up trying to understand my counterpart at our work placement and just ask me questions because it was easier and faster to do so.” In one-on-one conversations with Lana, she made links between the experience of her counterpart and the experience of many newcomers to Canada. She was also aware of not wanting to perpetuate the injustice she saw in her work placement in her counterpart relationship; she actively worked towards her counterpart’s inclusion in her host family and research group. This example shows the way in which students were able to make the link between systemic oppression, the way in which it played itself out in their Exchange experience, and then struggle to overcome it.

Counterpart pairs also interacted in their volunteer work placements. One of the challenges in the structure of work placements is that by Canada World Youth policy, the students’ work is not allowed to take the place of a paid position in the community. This policy is crucial to group acceptance in the host community; the students did not arrive in the community to take work away from community members. That means that the work is as a volunteer yet many of the work placements do not have a structure for incorporating volunteers effectively. As Elsa commented in her written evaluation of the Canadian phase, “At times I got the impression that there wasn’t enough work for the Exchange students in the work placements.” The students ended up having to define their own positions at their work placements which was a challenge.

Earl asked about the situation in his work placement,

[^3]: I have assigned pseudonyms.
[^4]: It is important to note that the language of systemic oppression is predominantly mine. Students would not immediately say that they have struggled with impact of systemic oppression in their counterpart relationships. That does not mean that they did not have this struggle, but that they would use different words to describe the struggle.
Why couldn’t I pull up my socks and motivate myself (and my counterpart) to do something? Of course I could tell you that I learned a lot from our “lack of success”, which I did, but think there is more to it than that.

As this quotation shows, students’ participation in the component of work placement was not always praxical participation. In this case, the students had a very tough time having anything happen with their work placement, awareness-raising around issues related to composting toilets, for a variety of reasons. What is important here is that even though the participation in the actual structure, the work placement, was not ideal, the students still were very active participants in the learning from this experience. Jacinta, the other student at this volunteer work placement, writes:

It is like having gotten to know a new Mexico within my own country; to have been a foreigner. It has been a fabulous experience to get to know other things that I did not know existed.

She is now applying her learning from her challenging work placement and other program experiences to work in different communities in another Mexican state. Some of the learnings that these two participants mentioned to me were the importance of getting to know the community first. It was very difficult, initially, to talk about composting toilets with the community members. After being in the community for a while and chatting with different community members, the students found it easier to talk about composting toilets and to try to work out together why the various previous programs had failed to get significant use of composting toilets. As Earl pointed out, “the people of Santo Domingo didn’t [care about the composting] toilets. Their biggest concern was with water…."

In spite of “accomplishing” very little and thereby participating very little in this component of the program in the Mexican phase, both participants came away with changes in attitudes such as humility and the importance of acknowledging ones errors, knowledge about the challenges to community organization and awareness-raising, and skills in popular theatre and establishing confidence in a community. These changes are all integral to the vision of praxical participation that I am arguing for in this piece. The flexibility of the structure of volunteer work placements gave students the opportunity to not “do” much and yet take away a great deal of learning that is being applied to the benefit of other communities.

One last example from the component of counterpart relationships is the counterpart selection process at the opening retreat. As I was planning for the opening retreat, I sought a way to make the counterpart selection process as participatory as possible. The process used for counterpart selection was prior to the retreat, the facilitators made up a series of advertisements modelled on personals which listed the different host families and work placements (in some cases the host families themselves wrote the personals). The bilingual advertisements were posted in the dining hall where all of the students could read them. We also told the group on several occasions that it was important to get to know the other students as potential counterparts. When the time came to make the final decision, the facilitators completely stepped out of the decision making process leaving it entirely up to the group. As facilitators we stayed in the room to make sure that one group of students didn’t dominate and to avoid students being overly hurtful towards each other. After three hours of deliberations, the decisions were made as to who would be counterparts and where they would live and work. After a break for a meal the

5 In this particular case, the work placement consisted of following up on past composting toilet projects in Ocotitlan. The students were supposed to be working in conjunction with a nongovernmental organization working in the area. Unfortunately the nongovernmental organization was overextended and therefore was not able to render much support to the students or the community.
selection process was debriefed, which gave students a chance to talk about how they felt about the process and what lessons they had learned about working together as a group that would be applicable to the subsequent eight months of living, working and studying together.

At numerous times during the rest of the program, students commented back on that session and their feelings about it. Some really appreciated the autonomy they were given in the decision making process, while others felt very abandoned by the facilitators. My idea had been that this session would give students the opportunity at the ultimate in participation; we would not even impose the process by which they would make their decision. I also saw this as a good way to launch a discussion of group norms; rather than talk about what we saw as necessary elements of a successful group—one person speaking at a time, everyone having the right to be heard—we would have a very concrete experience from which to draw on in our discussion. Unfortunately, but understandably, so much emotional energy was invested in the decision making process that there was not much energy left to draw out the “lessons” of the session for the future application to other group decisions.

While there is no argument that the students participated in the process—in the ways that their personalities and past experiences led them—I am not sure that the participation was the praxical participation that we were attempting to foster. Through the process, one of the students ended up feeling unwanted by the rest of the group and other students basically opted out of the process all together. For many students, this simply reinforced the negative experiences that many students had with groups and participation. It did not give them the practice in participation that Pateman (1970) sees as so important for successful participation. Again, I think that subsequent individual and collective reflections allowed the experience to be a learning one, but I do not think that it achieved all that I thought it would as I planned the session.6

Research Group

Beyond the counterpart relationship, student participation in the Research Groups was one of the most intense collective experiences of the Exchange. In terms of learning about participatory action research, the Research Group gave the students a first-hand experience working in small groups and facilitating sessions for peers. Through participation in this process, students gained a whole series of skills useful for working in small (research) groups as well as facilitation skills. Students were also able to identify attitudes that made their participation possible and productive. The Research Groups were also an opportunity for students to build on their knowledge or theory of small groups: what factors contribute to their success and which factors constrain their efficacy.

One of the challenges to small group work is students’ past, often negative, experience. As an example, one of the common initial ways of working in small groups for some students involved the attitude of “my way or the highway.” Initially, the discussions in Research Groups with students with such an attitude, ended up in loud and very frustrating discussions. In one-on-one chats with both Mexican and Canadian students, they commented to me about the difficulty they had in the initial time in their small groups. It seemed that their meetings would go on and on and yet they would accomplish “nothing.” By the end of the Canadian phase, most Groups had found an effective way to work together. This way of working together was interrupted by the relocation to Mexico and the chance for other skills to come to the fore. The different cultural

6 In hindsight, it might have been better to lead some kind of session to develop group norms, and then follow that session with the group decisions around counterparts, host families, and work placements. This would give students the opportunity to try out the theory they would have generated and get immediate feedback as to its efficacy.
and linguistic context changed the ways that groups worked and made more visible both the healthy and unhealthy patterns of the Canadian phase.

By the end of the program, Susana noted,

I think that we, as a group, realized the good of working in the research groups without the control of only one member but with the equal participation of all who prepared the WEAD of the week.

This comment shows a student attitude of valuing equality but also hints at the acquisition of skills that made the small group work possible. I would say that all of the Research Groups, partially due to their deepening friendships, were much better able to work together by the end of the Exchange than they did at the beginning. Those that had negative or destructive experiences with small groups in the past, now have a more positive experience to work from; in the case of the students noted above, alternatives to just speaking about their ideas hoping to wear the rest of the group’s resistance down came to light.

Marta noted that through her participation in her Research Group the importance of “having become aware that I could make a decision for the well-being of my group and of my knowledge of my experience.” This quotation shows an attitudinal change; Martha valued learning that she is able to make decisions based on her knowledge and experience. This is an attitude that sees participation in the exchange as something other than passive acceptance of what is happening; it is not a fatalistic attitude that the status quo, in this case within the Research Group, cannot be changed but rather a view that action, based on collective and individual knowledge and experience, can be taken to effect change. It also highlights the importance of confidence in oneself and ones group.

One of the major learnings that students identified, often within the area of self-awareness, was an increased confidence in themselves and their abilities in front of a group, in working with others, or in their own thinking. As Walter stated:

If I were, however, to hypothesise [about the change in my leadership abilities]… I would say that the most noticeable difference would be improved confidence and patience. As well as, of course, my deeper understanding of why I behave in the way that I do.

While this learning about self-confidence may seem disconnected from student participation in the Exchange, I think that it was an integral part in movement away from fatalistic acceptance of the status quo. I am not saying that at the end of the Exchange that all students left with an unassailable self-confidence but that the Exchange was able to in most cases increase students’ self-confidence, which in turn increased their ability to participate praxically in the activities of the exchange. In the words of Anne, “the Research Groups helps [my participation] and so it’s not just a one person show even though it might sometimes look like it. But the whole process [of planning and implementing activities]… It can make people feel more confident.” Work in Research Groups strengthened confidence because there was a group of peers working together to facilitate sessions. The students were not in front of the whole group on their own. For this student, the Research Group was an enabler of her participation in the Exchange and in her learning.

The reason for the name Research Group was that students in these groups were to become “experts” in their topic in preparation for presenting it to the rest of the group. As Ella mentioned in her evaluation at the end of the Canadian phase, “I didn’t fully understand the role of the Research Group until mid-project camp. It should be really clear at the beginning that Research Groups are expected to know more information than they present in WEADs [Weekly
Educational Activity Days].” The process of research that the Groups eventually engaged in was a time for learning about some of the challenges of research in a community context. As Anne commented,

…remembering what Karsten and Darryl said [in a popular theatre/participatory action research session], we could have gotten better results. We need to be a part of a community before we can really question people. We went around with our pens, a paper, and camera on a mission to find the burning issue in Ponoka.

This realization is one of the central elements of participatory action research; the need to become part of the community—to establish trust through relationships—before doing research with community members. This student realization is based on her Research Group’s experience of community reticence in responding to their questions about issues facing the community of Ponoka; many community members were not comfortable speaking, much less on video or audio tape, to complete strangers about their community. Through this experience, the students were able to make concrete what they had heard in an earlier session; students were able to name from their personal experience some of the elements necessary to facilitate community participation. The Research Group was able to put some of their reflections about trust and comfort levels into action in the sessions that they facilitated with the group. Using popular theatre techniques, they made sure that the group was comfortable and that they trusted each other at each stage of their activities.

Weekly Educational Activity Days

Weekly Educational Activity Days—WEADs in Rural Development Exchange parlance—were the students’ weekly opportunity to reflect on their learning as well as co-create knowledge with their peers, community members, and other guests.7 The diversity of student backgrounds was at times enriching in that it facilitated different entry points into a common issue but also at times frustrating in that this same diversity left some people out of certain discussions. Participation in this component of the Exchange was as both learners and facilitators. The way in which students participated in session planning in their Research Groups was problematized above, but the way in which they participated in the Weekly Educational Activity Days as facilitators was not. As Edna stated, “WEADs are very big in making people participate; the fact that we each have to do one means that we are participating.” While this is true, I want to explore the nuance of participation in this component; students had little choice but to participate, technically, but I want to explore the potential for praxical participation.

One of the first difficulties for me in this exchange was dealing with the fact that I was in charge. I was responsible for my own learning. It wasn’t like in school where you are told what you need to know and then you go and learn that, it was looking in to yourself, and the opportunities around you, finding out what was important to you and what could be taken. (Josephine)

Josephine’s comments highlight a major difference between this program and formal educational programs. In relation to Weekly Educational Activity Days, the way in which the students’

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7 During the Exchange, a short form for referring to the Weekly Educational Activity Days was the acronym WEADs (and its obvious tie-in to a rural context). Therefore in the quotations from students, they generally refer to WEADs. In this section I will not add clarification to the acronym, though throughout the rest of the text, to avoid jargonistic language, I have always clarified what students meant by WEADs.
responsibility for their own learning shows itself through their own facilitation of the Days. As Susana summarized the role of facilitators,

In WEADs we faced, in Canada as in Mexico, our mission to be facilitators; this is a bit like a leader but we were more like guides and within guiding, one only gives directions, not orders.

Susana is clearly aware of the difference between traditional leaders in an educational setting and the students’ (and by extension the leaders’) role in facilitating the education of peers. In the student’s comments, it is clear that there was an attempt to redress the power imbalance that exists in the traditional classroom through the activities that they led in the Weekly Educational Activity Days.

Another student grappled with her role as a facilitator in her portfolios. In her objective of developing the ability to become a better leader, she wrote about her experience facilitating her Group’s first Weekly Educational Activity Days. Jacinta noted, “The first WEAD that I had to facilitate was very difficult for me for various reasons and one of them was my nervousness in speaking in front of other people.” At the end of the program, her portfolio shows some of the changes in her attitudes, skills, and knowledge related to facilitation. As a proof for the same objective, she comments

But as good facilitators, one should not see the superficial reflection of the work. Perhaps there are many who are not participating, but it is there where the essence is found: in those who leave behind being a leader at the front to transform themselves into a leader from behind and into a facilitator who is seeing the needs of the group and keeps adapting even if it means changing the schedule.

There are many echoes to the quotation above about the difference between being a leader and a facilitator. The progress that I see between the earlier writing about the first big facilitation experience in the Canadian phase and the end of the program is a maturing of the facilitation. There is a greater understanding of the role and an increased confidence in her skills. This transformation permits a much more nuanced participation by students; being a leader from behind is a much harder task to accomplish as it works with a different concept of power than a leader from the front. Students’ increased skills make it easier to delve deeper and more effectively into the topics of the Weekly Educational Activity Days. An example of the skills acquired that show practical participation is noted by Ella’s comment in her portfolio about her Research Group’s modifications to the schedule of their Weekly Educational Activity Days:

During our second WEAD, as a group we judged that [our guest speaker’s] talk was going well so we let it go much longer than originally planned and cut the time for planning the presentation. I think that it was worth it because a lot of insight was gained during [our guest’s] talk.

In their role as facilitators, the students became comfortable with adjusting the schedule of their activities as they unfolded. While the Research Group handed in a schedule to the leadership team prior to their Days, they felt able to—in fact were encouraged to—adjust the schedule of activities to meet the present needs of the group. As this quotation shows, as the Groups became more comfortable with their role as facilitators, their confidence in adjusting the schedule became greater.

This may not seem to be a significant act of participation, but to me it is a clear example of students exercising power. Even though we, the leadership team, were always there and giving students feedback on what we saw as potential modifications to the schedule, the students in the
end made the final decisions. There were numerous instances where the leadership team would make a suggestion for cutting a certain activity or lengthening another one which was heard by the Research Group, but then disregarded—sometimes to good effect and other times not. As there was always a chance for reflection on the Weekly Educational Activity Days’ process through the evaluation, it was less relevant whether the activities were completely successful or not, but that students collectively learned from the process. The point is that students exercising power in regards to the planning and implementation of the Weekly Education Activity Days had the potential for praxical participation; it had the potential to redress the power imbalance that often exist in the traditional teacher-student or researcher-community relationships.

I note that this program component had the potential for praxical participation because there were also instances, especially in the Mexican phase, of Research Groups apparently just going through the motions rather than actually making a great effort. In those instances, the Groups were often all too happy to have the leadership team make suggestions or to take over certain activities. Some students felt that they were left to fight things out amongst themselves until someone from the leadership team came to give them the right answers; in the words of Pateman (1970), their participation at times was more pseudo-participation until the “right” answers or ways of participating were “pronounced” by the leaders. I would argue that the discussion of the students and their process was not simply a “make-work” activity until we had the time to give the solution; that this process was an important part of learning how to work in small groups and a potential for students to practise different types of participation. Even though student perception may be different, my intent was never that my ideas were the “right” ones. Nonetheless, there were times when the participation in this program component was more technical than political in nature.

So far, I have talked more about student learnings related to participation in the process of facilitating Weekly Educational Activity Days. Another area of learning from this component was from the actual content of the Days whose topics are listed in Chapter 4. One of the elements of praxical participation is the movement away from fatalism to seeing alternatives and courses of action that can reform and change (neo-liberal influence on) the status quo. The topics covered by this component, in concert with the planning process, played a part in this movement. Orlando noted some of the transformations that took place for him as a result of both the process of planning the Weekly Educational Activity Days, but also the content of those sessions.

Those disagreements about the organization of the educational days, discussions, misunderstandings, and little details that caused a negative atmosphere and started evaporating from my unreal world, and I began to live the real existence that many who live in alienation do not know of their existence. Now for me … the consciousness that in the world every day more than 2.5 million people die because of hunger; that if you buy Nike, you are becoming complicit in the exploitation of human beings; that surely of your Mexican brothers who have had to emigrate to the United States because of the large problem of unemployment that our country suffers; that the Foxismo [the neo-liberal policies of Mexican president Vicente Fox] triumphs while Chiapas and equally other states of the republic continue to be violated by the oppression of our government of the boots, while the house of deputies becomes a dormitory; but above all, that I will not be one more professional of those that belong to the middle class who do not appreciate the basics of food for the family and who ignore that there are families that do not have milk on their tables but enjoy an “ice-cold Coke” [Mexican advertising slogan].

These reflections show a transformation in attitudes towards the rest of the world; there is an increased awareness of each person’s impacts on others. This reflection also shows the student’s commitment to living his life based on those observations. The awareness of the effects of neo-
liberal globalization on Mexico and the world resulted from Weekly Educational Activity Days integration of students’ learning with the other Exchange components. The learnings through this quotation are the result of the various program component and the way that they are brought together in the reflective elements of the Weekly Educational Activity Days.

James, reflecting on the role of the Weekly Educational Activity Days in his overall learning from the Exchange, asked, “How will these changes in me benefit sustainable community? If I don’t understand and change my own problems and hang-ups, how can I expect to understand and help others understand problems they face in search for change?” For James, one of the connections between learning from the reflective element of the Weekly Educational Activity Days is that by helping him become aware of his own process in the Exchange, he became more able to work towards change in his own community. Awareness of his own challenges gave him a better understanding of what other communities face as challenges to and enablers of their sustainability. Josephine makes these observations:

It makes sense to me now that sustainability doesn’t always mean sustainable with respect to the environment, economics or some other single aspect of life. It seems that through creating/fortifying relationships, understandings and respect for one another and our selves, that with time all of those single aspects we wish to “sustain” will be addressed and become a sustainable reality for the benefit of everyone present today and in the days to come.

This reflection shows a more holistic vision of sustainability and how the processes of the exchange were part of the students’ overall learning about sustainability even if they did not directly deal with an economic facet. A tendency in the formal education system is to have students specialize, in for example economics, often no longer being able to see the whole picture. Extreme specialization can have the side effect of no longer providing an opportunity for action to redress oppressive structures because there are too many parts of the picture missing. Josephine’s reflection shows an awareness of a holistic approach to sustainability that makes redressing systemic injustice possible. She is also aware of the centrality of strengthening relationships to this change.

The Weekly Educational Activity Days, rather than the traditional lecture mode of the classroom, used popular and adult educational techniques as their pedagogical method. That is not to say that there were not guest speakers who came and gave talks—there were many guests—but that students were in dialogue either directly with the guest speaker or with each other about the topics raised by the speaker. Using popular and adult education methods helped overcome some of the challenges posed by the different linguistic and cultural backgrounds of the group. These approaches also attempted to minimize the traditional mode of teacher as expert and learner as unknowing subject as mentioned above in the theoretical framework.

Beyond being facilitators of the Weekly Educational Activity Days, the students also modified this structure to meet their needs. That is, in spite of starting out with a planning guide with compulsory and non-compulsory components, the students planned their activities in accordance with what they perceived to be the needs of the group. One example is that even though the planning guide suggested one hour for academic liaison input, the students generally did not make time for this in their schedules: at least part of the reason being the difficulty of fitting everything in to their schedule. By the end of the Canadian phase, students started asking for more input from Dittmar and welcomed input from Arturo in Mexico. At both mid-project retreats, the students discussed the Weekly Educational Activity days and the changes that they wanted to make. At the Mexican retreat, the group identified the need for more variety in techniques especially for reflections. In response to this need, the facilitators of the retreat made
space for a group brain-storming session on different techniques which the Research Groups could then use for their activities.

The basic structure of meeting twice a week was presented to the students at the beginning but as the Exchange progressed, the students modified the structure to fit their learning needs. Part of the modification was simply moving around the different elements of the weekly activities, but there was also adoption of new elements and rejection of other ones as the students saw fit. For example, in the Mexican phase, some students, on their own initiative began a reading circle to read and discuss some of the anthology provided to them. To me, this is participation not only in a predefined structure, which can become technical participation quite easily, but praxical participation because of students’ awareness of the structures and willingness to modify them. Rather than simply accepting the structures of the program, the students engaged with them and changed them to maximize their learning opportunity. While this may seem minor, it is definitely part of a larger awareness that all structures in an educational setting or beyond are capable of being changed if they no longer adequately meet needs.

I have often brought other AUC faculty members down to Mexico once the program is already established and they have all said that it is amazing how student-directed or self-directed the program is. They have generally observed the participants leading the sessions having done their own research and the session and that they are totally involved in the session including their own evaluation and can see the difference in between this and the regular classroom (Dittmar).

Student participation in the Weekly Educational Activity Days was as both facilitators and learners. In both of these ways of participating, students participated technically and praxically—at times participating to get the task done, and at other times participating in creative ways seeking alternatives to the traditional classroom. These various participations were due to the tension between individual interest and motivation in a given topic or process and some of the structural realities imposed through the university context of the exchange.

Written Work
The written work of the Exchange, the bi-weekly reflections, the final papers, and the portfolios, are yet another way in which students participated in the program. On the one hand, it is absurd to think of a student not participating in the written work they produce because without their work, the paper is not written. Yet the paper writing experience many students face in the formal school system is less than satisfying and does not lead to a movement away from fatalism. As Danielle wrote about paper writing and the formal education system in general,

I was good at mainstream education. I was able to spit out fluff that my teachers and professors would eat up like candy. Once in awhile I would be adventurous enough to hide a little kernel of truth inside of something that I had written, a signature to show that this was my creation, unique and unlike anyone else’s. But generally, that type of freedom is not encouraged.

If the formal educational system makes it difficult for students to speak their truth in their work, then it is unlikely that it will support a radical critique of the status quo. If students feel that they need to hide their “kernels of truth” in their academic work, then it is difficult to see how the work is part of an awareness of oppression as the result of human-created systems and thus equally changeable by humans. Danielle continued her reflection about the alternative educational opportunity provided by the Rural Development Exchange noting,
This [educational freedom] was a great discovery for me, a reawakening to the knowledge that wisdom cannot be confined by the covers of a textbook. Outside of the realm of academia, greater depth can often be found in the stories of the people, the tears of mothers and the calloused hands of hard-working men.

The written work that students completed as part of the Exchange are a part of this educational freedom; students were able to participate much more practically in their writing than they were generally able or encouraged to in the formal school system.

One of the big differences between the written work of the Exchange and written work in the formal educational system is that in the Exchange, students used their lived experience as one of their texts. Their interactions with the people of the host communities, their host families, their work placement colleagues, and the rest of the group were the major source on which they drew to compose their pieces. Because the reflections were on real experience rather than the pseudo experience of textbooks or other educational techniques (as noted by Dewey), they facilitate students proposing alternatives and solutions to some of the challenges they identified; they facilitated an awareness of the role that individuals and groups can play in making change to oppressive structures. Josephine reflected:

Through this exchange, living in two different rural communities, reflecting back to my own home community and actively participating in the community that is our group, I have learned that if a community can work through differences, focus on commonalities and see the power, passion and beauty it has as a whole – mountains can be moved.

Using the communities of the exchange as her text, this student realized some of the challenges to community but also some ways to overcome them. There was an increased knowledge about the importance of communities and her role within her various communities. Marta similarly saw the importance of community and the potential for collective action:

I never thought that one could get so much from a village. That is why I now want to go back to my community to interact with people that know a lot; people who have lived a lot and therefore have lots of experience.

This quotation shows the new vision of what participation means in a community context; it does not mean that there are experts with expert knowledge, but rather that everyone has something to contribute. She referred in her piece especially to the women who resist and who fight for their communities; it is from them that she wants to learn about life and about resistance and who she wants to work with.

The paper writing experience was also open to modification by students. One example is the case of one Canadian student who chose to use a community anthology approach to his papers. He went about the host communities and talked with people about their community. He collected these stories and then included himself as another one of the characters of the community. He added his own views on the community that he had achieved as an exchange student there. The format this student chose is an indication of the openness of the structure to modification by the students and the variety of approaches that the students took in this assignment.

Student participation in the portfolio process was different from much of the participation that takes place in normal post-secondary assignments. In the bi-weekly reflections and final papers even though reflection on lived experience was the expectation, some students at times tended to abstract generalizations. In contrast, the portfolios asked students to name their own
learning objectives and their progression in attaining them—processes that generally resulted in less abstraction. Dittmar describes the portfolio process:

The idea this year of the portfolio resulted in way higher participation than in other years, by having to name their own learning objectives in five areas of learning and then having to show how they have learned or not learned, shows that this is self-directed learning; we provide you with the context and the expectations, so the invisible structure is that you reflect, you can’t force people to reflect but we can say this is what we are valuing, but the evaluation finally, does make clear that you will be evaluated on showing involvement, genuineness, and by reflecting and depth of analysis. The portfolio is then proof that they have made the most of the external opportunities that were given. So in that sense it maximized participation.

Even though students had a structure of five areas in which they were to show learning using proofs for two objectives per phase, students were able to *not* meet their objectives and fulfil other ones. This is participation that is much more than simply participation by completing the assignment; rather this type of participation asked students to evaluate the nature of their learning, what they saw as valuable, and how they wanted to report back on their learning. All of the students used a combination of media for their portfolio including poetry, drawing, collages, prose, photography, and writing that was more academic.

An integral part of the portfolio process was the fifteen objectives that students had to write and assemble by the end of the Exchange. In a group discussion about whether there should have been more or less structure given to the objective writing or if it should have been abandoned completely, Earl commented,

> at the beginning of the exchange I didn’t know how to make a bloody objective, I was completely lost; I was like what do you mean you want me to set an objective but they haven’t even given me an outline for the course; so, if you would have given a person like me complete poetic license, I would have just said fuck it, and went down to the pub to drink beer. But for some people it’s great giving them all this creative freedom, but that wouldn’t have worked at all for me. I think 5 is a human number 10 would be too many. It’s a tidy package; it works.

Anne mentioned,

> At first, I cringed at the thought of writing objectives, and many other participants disliked the idea also. But now I am thankful that we had to write them. It helped define my learning and always brought me back to why I was on the exchange.

And Marta noted,

> Regarding the WEADs and the objectives and the portfolio, I think they are great because they are a space to participate, create, learn, suffer-grow, and above all is a way to look at ourselves without fear and with creativity.

The general feeling, as expressed above, was that this structure gave students the opportunity to be reflective about their learning in ways that they might not have otherwise been. The structure, though imposed, facilitated student participation in defining the direction of their learning but kept it manageable—within the banks of the metaphoric river of learning. The students appreciated the chance to be deliberate about their learning from the experience. I think that these quotations highlight a central element of the non-formal rather than informal or incidental nature of the program; the learning from the lived experience of the exchange is intentional rather than accidental or incidental. The challenges of living in a host family and the self-awareness that arises from facing those challenges, for example, is something that students
reflected on through their written and other work rather than being an added bonus to their learning.

Earl reflected on the changes to his learning objective in the area of leadership after he noticed a distinct lack of participation in the activities he was planning and implementing at his work placement in a secondary school. His revised objective is to be able to sit down with a group of students that a lot of people would write off as being beyond help, to let them know that I respect them as people, and to show that that they can go places because the really are worth something.

This shows an attitude change about participation from an initial expectation of students being keen and eager to do whatever was set out in the lesson plan, to seeing interaction on a human level, as important participation. It also shows that the structures of writing objectives and then giving proofs in the portfolios did not result in only technical participation. Earl reflected on his action and then came up with a different way of working. He also reflected on his initial objective and modified it not simply accepting that he had to achieve the initial one. In general, it was more difficult not to participate practically in the portfolios than in the other written work, but it was still possible. A suggestion made by Elsa at the end of the Canadian phase is that,

“That the portfolios be reviewed once a month to know how we are progressing and so that you [the leadership team] would know if we were really completing them as is required. It seems to me that the content of the portfolios are topics that are very interesting that would be worthwhile exploring more in our sessions with the group.

Overall, Elsa enjoyed the portfolio creation process, but at least in this comment, sees them needing to be completed as required. I could interpret that as a student’s desire to have her portfolio creation process to be as conducive as possible to her learning and feeling the more frequent leadership team input would accomplish that goal, or I could interpret it as a student trying to complete the portfolio in the way that the leadership teams wants. While as a leadership team we did have an idea of way the portfolios could be completed, our idea was not that they be completed to satisfy our needs, but that they be a useful process for deliberate student reflection on their learning. In spite of our intentions to have students do their work for their own learning benefit, there may have been some students who were completing work to meet perceived leadership team requirements.

In my conversations with students at the final retreat, many of the students noted that they really appreciated the learning from the bi-weekly reflections and the other written work and also appreciated the pressure of having to produce. Many students were aware that it is easier not to reflect: that reflection takes energy and work. Given the option of not reflecting, many students felt that they would have reflected less often, deliberately, or deeply than they did. This discussion of whether students did the work because they felt coerced by the program structures, in this case the final evaluation, or if they did so because of their own desire highlights a major tension for participatory non-formal post-secondary education. At some point, there is an implicit pressure to complete things or to follow through because of the evaluation at the end of the program. Does this subtle pressure in the end negate all of the learning potential? I do not think so. I think that used correctly, it can be part of the enabling structure of the exchange. Students, many quite consciously, agree to participate in the Rural Development Exchange because they know that they will be encouraged in ways that they want to be encouraged and so they enter willingly into the slightly “coercive” nature of the experience.
My own discussions with professors at Augustana from a variety of faculties show that for many students, the other ways of valuing knowledge and participation that are present in the Exchange transfer to the students’ subsequent approach to academia. Students, the professors note, are much more driven to make links between what they are studying in a given course, its concrete application, and a course of action. These changes show themselves in the students’ writing, questions, and general participation in class. While the classroom context of the university has difficulty providing the different participatory avenues of programs such as the Rural Development Exchange, the students try hard to incorporate them as much as possible.

Conclusion

My central argument is that the Rural Development Exchange had the potential to facilitate student praxical participation. By my definition, in order to participate praxically, students needed an awareness of global (and local) systems and the realities they construct as the creation of humans. If humans created systems that presently perpetuate human oppression and environmental degradation, then humans can also re-create the systems into more just ones. So, how did this happen in the Exchange? I have shown above that one of the major ways in which students participated in the Exchange was in the relationships: the counterpart pairs, Research Groups, large group, and relationships between students and host family members, work place colleagues, and other community members. It was in these relationships that student participated with an awareness of their realities—their relationships—are their own creation and therefore something that they could change. They were also able to reflect on the way in which systemic patterns were reproduced in their own relationships.

I found that complementing technical with praxical participation, the potential for the Rural Development Exchange to promote active citizenship increases. Not all student participation was praxical at all times. Much of the time, due to both student choice and (unwitting) program design, students participated technically in their experience. There were times when students were simply involved in the relationships of the exchange, not actively challenging unhealthy patterns and not necessarily engaged in cycles of action and reflection. Sometimes, the reason for more technical participation was the need to acquire a particular skill (e.g. small group decision-making or data-collection techniques) before praxical participation could take place. Praxical participation, however, is not a magical recipe that can be used at all times and in all situations.

In sum, the Rural Development Exchange provided students with an opportunity to participate praxically in their learning and their experience; they had the potential to gain skills, knowledge, and attitudes that fostered a generation and implementation of alternatives to the present-day systems that facilitate human oppression and environmental devastation. This educational program that rejects a fatalistic acceptance of neo-liberal ideology is an important alternative itself to a post-secondary education in North America that generally does not speak out against this fatalism. If the University is going to be the locus of “liberating education” that can speak truth to injustice or power, then it is programs such as the Rural Development Exchange that can provide the inspiration for other such liberatory projects.

References


A Participatory Budgeting Model For Canadian Cities: Improving Representation Through Increased Citizen Participation In The Municipal Budgeting Process

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I. Introduction

The most important means through which citizens of a modern representative democracy influence their government are by voting and lobbying. Deficiencies in these two activities would therefore pose a threat to the quality of ‘citizen representation’ (hereinafter ‘representation’) in a democracy. In this chapter, it will be argued that both voting and lobbying currently suffer from serious deficiencies and, as a consequence, both have had a negative effect on the quality of representation in Canadian democracy. The practice of “participatory budgeting” (PB), a Brazilian innovation, and its utility as a means of improving representation at the municipal level in Canada will be investigated. It will be shown that PB displays real promise for improving the quality of representation in Canadian cities if it can be adapted to meet the specific needs of the municipal political environment. The chapter ends with the description of a theoretical PB model designed specifically for Canadian cities.

II. The Quality of Representation in Canadian Democracy

In his book, The Voice of the People, James Fishkin asks the following: “How can we achieve a democracy of engaged citizens, a democracy of face-to-face discussion, in states that contain many thousands or even many millions of people?”³ (emphasis included) The answer to this question, according to Robert Dahl, is simple – we cannot.

The essential point is that nothing can overcome the dismal fact that as the number of citizens increases the proportion who can participate directly in discussions with their top leaders must necessarily grow smaller and smaller. The inherent constraint is neither evil men nor evil institutions, nor any other eradicable aspect of human life, but rather a dimension of all existence that is morally neutral, because it is implacable, unswerving, and inescapable – time.⁴ (emphasis added)

Western democracies have addressed Dahl’s “time-problem” by utilizing representation in their governing institutions. The engagement of citizens in the democratic process in representative systems is limited to the selection of competing elites by voting, and through participation in interest group lobbying of elected officials – what is called pluralism.⁵ Citizens, it is argued,

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² I would like to thank Professor George Perlin, Helen Cooper, Ryan Hoskins, and particularly Olivia Cymbalista-Clapp, for their valuable editorial help.
⁵ George Perlin, The Democratic Citizen: Canadian Democracy in Critical Perspective (Toronto and Kingston: CBC Newsworld and Queen’s University, 2002).
therefore exercise indirect control of their government since, at least in theory, “elected officials keep the real or imagined preferences of constituents constantly in mind in deciding what policies to accept or reject.”

There have, however, been numerous criticisms of modern representative institutions and the pluralist system that supports it. These include general claims of corruption against representatives, their inability to adequately respond to citizen demands, and the concentration of political power to various elites leading to the general disempowerment and apathy of citizens. As already mentioned, voting and pluralism are the primary mechanisms of citizen engagement, as well as the principal means of citizen influence and control over their governments. We can therefore gauge the quality of citizen representation in Canadian democracy by assessing the health of these activities.

Unhealthy Voting

The results of studies of Canadian voting patterns is not encouraging. Voter turnout for federal elections has dropped steadily from a high of 77 percent in 1972 to a low of 61 percent in the most recent election of 2000 (the lowest turnout of any election in 73 years). Turnout in provincial elections vary from province to province, but have ranged from 47 to 88 percent over the last 20 years. Turnout for municipal elections is generally worse at less than 50 percent. It is therefore difficult to justify labeling an election victory as a ‘mandate’ endorsing the winners’ policy objectives as representing the ‘will of the people.’

There are numerous theories that try to explain this drop in voter participation. Some argue that it is a product of Canada’s ‘first-past-the-post’ electoral system which, since it requires a candidate only receive a plurality to win, has led to distortions in election outcomes that discourage citizens from voting. Another explanation is the observed correlation between low levels of political knowledge, or ‘civic literacy’, and low voter turnout in Canada. Others, like American author Ruy Teixeira, argue that there is a correlation between a lack of ‘social connectedness’ and non-voting. In addition, there appears to be a correlation between non-voting and low socio-economic status (SES), such as lower levels of education and income. Finally, Anthony Downs’ theory of “rational ignorance” may also explain the observed decrease in voter turnout. Downs argues that since each individual voter has little influence on the

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7 “Representatives of the people are hard to deceive, but easy to corrupt; and it rarely happens that they are not so corrupted.” Jean-Jacques Rousseau, “The Social Contract (III, XV) and Poland (VII)” in Terrence E. Cook and Patrick M. Morgan, eds., *Participatory Democracy* (San Francisco: Canfield Press, 1971) at 118 ¶ 3.
9 *Supra* note 5.
11 For examples of recent distortions caused by the “first past the post” system, see Judy Rebick, “PR Can Help Solve Canada’s Democracy Deficit” (July-August 2001) Policy Options 15; and Perlin, *supra* note 5.
outcome of an election, citizens have little incentive to take the time to determine how to best cast that vote.\textsuperscript{15} Terrence Cook and Patrick Morgan, in their book \textit{Participatory Democracy}, appear to concur: “For some, the ideal of universal suffrage loses its luster when suffrage means no more than the right periodically to cast one vote among thousands or even millions.”\textsuperscript{16} This search for explanations and possible cures makes it clear that ‘unhealthy voting’ is a critical problem for modern democracy.

“Slanted” Pluralism

“(C)ontemporary theories of democracy focus on the activity of organized interest groups, competing to persuade government to respond to their claims, as the principal means through which the interests of individuals are \textit{represented} in the policy-making process.”\textsuperscript{17} (emphasis added) It could therefore be argued that pluralism may mitigate some of the deficiencies caused by non-voting in the quality of representation in Canadian democracy. To vindicate this argument it is necessary, according to Perlin, “that all interests with a stake in an issue must have an equal opportunity to influence government decisions about that issue.”\textsuperscript{18} For this to occur, three conditions must be met. First, all interests must be able to freely organize and lobby the government. Second, there must be fair competition between interest groups to influence the government; implicit with this condition is that all interest groups have “equal access to the political resources necessary for success.”\textsuperscript{19} Finally, the government, when making decisions, will consider the views of each group solely on the merit of their claims.\textsuperscript{20}

The strongest criticisms of pluralism are directed toward the second and third conditions, namely the assumption that there is fair competition between groups and that governments assess the views of each group solely on merit. These conditions, it is argued, are simply not being met. A study by Robert Presthus found that groups representing major economic or industrial interests (like the auto and tobacco industries\textsuperscript{21}) had a lobbying advantage over other groups.\textsuperscript{22} Presthus’ study was corroborated by Fred Thompson and William Stanbury\textsuperscript{23}, who concluded their report by quoting Elmer Schattschneider: “The flaw of the pluralist heaven is that the heavenly chorus sings with a strong upper-class accent.”\textsuperscript{24} Government assistance directed at ameliorating inequality between lobby groups has helped some organizations, such as women’s and aboriginal groups, but others, like anti-poverty organizations, still suffer from a lack of political influence.\textsuperscript{25} It can therefore be concluded that Canadian representative democracy is supported by a “slanted pluralism”\textsuperscript{26} in that it has predominantly given voice to powerful economic interests.

\textsuperscript{17} \textit{Supra} note 5.
\textsuperscript{18} \textit{Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{20} \textit{Supra} note 5.
\textsuperscript{21} \textit{Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{24} Elmer E. Schattschneider, \textit{The Semisovereign People} (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1960) at 35.
\textsuperscript{25} \textit{Supra} note 5.
Consequences for Canadian Representative Democracy

Before we can determine the impact of the aforementioned deficiencies in voting and pluralism on the quality of representation in Canadian democracy, we must first attempt to define what we mean by ‘democracy’. Fishkin identifies a modern democracy as a system which balances four conditions:

1. **Political equality**: citizens’ preferences count equally in a process that can plausibly be viewed as representative of everyone.
2. **Deliberation**: a wide range of competing arguments is given careful consideration in small-group, face-to-face discussion.
3. **Participation**: a significant proportion of the citizenry is engaged in the process.
4. **Non-tyranny**: the political process avoids, whenever possible, depriving any portion of the citizenry of rights or essential interests. Even when the process is democratic in all other senses just defined, it must avoid the ‘tyranny of the majority’.

It is immediately clear that there is some flexibility in the conditions. For example, the number and type of “competing arguments” heard, and the time given to their “consideration” during deliberations is not specified. A system which hears *every possible argument* but is forced by constraints to limit the time spent considering them would be very different from a system which hears *some arguments* and spends more time considering their quality; however both systems, all other conditions being equal, could be considered democracies. Likewise, one could also envision two democracies which vary in the degree of citizen participation. Additionally, it is important to realize that these four conditions are interdependent; changes in one condition influence and infringe on other conditions. For example, it is easy to imagine the quality of federal deliberation diminishing in Canada if all thirty-one million citizens attempted to participate in every decision.

Armed with this framework, we may now assess how the shortcomings of voting and pluralism have affected the quality of representation in Canada. As voting and pluralism are the primary means of citizen engagement in modern representative democracy, the chief consequence of their deficiencies is insufficient participation. With voter turnout currently at 61 percent federally (and much lower at the provincial and municipal levels), and with only 33 percent of Canadians being involved in voluntary or non-governmental organizations (hereinafter ‘third sector organizations’) pursuing public or social issues, it is difficult to argue that “a significant proportion of the citizenry” are participating in these essential democratic activities. As a result, there is a direct and harmful effect on the democratic condition of political equality. Low voter turnouts, particularly among the young and those of low-SES status, do not create a “process that can plausibly be viewed as representative of everyone”; the political advantage achieved by the upper-classes and powerful economic interests in the pluralist system similarly fails to create a process that is representative. The condition of deliberation is also expected to be adversely effected by low participation. Since citizens elect representatives to deliberate on issues of importance on their behalf, if a certain sector of society is not voting, like youth and low-SES groups, or if a certain sector exercises greater political influence, like big industry, there is no guarantee that representatives will deliberate on issues that are of concern to those.

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27 *Supra* note 3 at 34 ¶ 3.
28 *Supra* note 5.
non-voting and/or politically weak citizens. Finally, the condition of non-tyranny may also suffer. One could imagine a situation where an “essential interest” of a group that typically does not vote and which lacks political ‘currency’ is reduced or removed by a government (e.g. social assistance for low-income persons).

Considering the evidence presented, it can be concluded that “unhealthy voting” and “slanted pluralism” have adversely affected the democratic condition of participation, which subsequently has had a negative impact on the three remaining conditions of political equality, deliberation and non-tyranny. Accordingly, the quality of representation in Canadian democracy has suffered. How, then, do we improve the quality of representation in Canada? One promising remedy comes from the work and practice of advocates of participatory democracy.

**Participatory Reforms – A Means to Improve Representation?**

Terrence Cook and Patrick Morgan define a participatory democracy as a system which meets the following two conditions: (1) decentralization or dispersion of authoritative decision-making and (2) direct involvement of amateurs (laymen) in the making of decisions. Representation can exist in a participatory democracy, but it is “kept close” to the people. There are two forms of participatory democracy, termed co-determination and self-determination. Co-determination involves joint decision-making by laymen and experts (or elected officials), usually by creating new structures for amateur participation within the existing structure which previously excluded participation (e.g. a municipal government). The experts’ main role in co-determination is to help facilitate the decision-making process. In contrast, self-determination involves decision-making by laymen alone. Examples include New England town governments, Israeli kibbutzim, ancient city-states of Rome and Greece and the anarchist ideal of the fragmentation of nation-states into community control units.29

Two types of arguments are put forward in support of participatory democracy: (1) those that contend the process leads to beneficial learning, or the development of citizenship values; (2) those that stress that better decisions are made.30 Consequently, one would predict an improvement in the quality of representation in a democracy that increases the capacity of citizens to participate. Nonetheless, numerous criticisms have been launched against theories of participatory democracy. It is argued that participatory theorists have not adequately dealt with Dahl’s “time-problem” – between work, family life and recreation, many citizens may not have the time to engage in a lengthy participatory process.31 Some feel that participatory theorists over-estimate the capabilities of citizens to engage in the process and point to surveys of Western nations that show widespread apathy and illiberal attitudes throughout the population.32 Still others contend that “(generally) a truly decentralized participatory system...will tend to neglect inter-local, inter-regional and national needs, both of the allocative (e.g., social justice) type and those which are best served collectively (e.g., a priming of the economy).”33 Nevertheless, both advocates and critics of participatory democracy concede that there is one area where a participatory system could be most feasible and beneficial – cities.

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29 Supra note 16 at 4-5.
31 Supra note 5.
33 Supra note 26 at 64 ¶ 2.
Cities: The Ideal Venue for Experiments in Participatory Democracy

For John Stuart Mill, the ideal venue to create the polis as a “living presence” for citizens was the city: “(I)t is only by practicing popular government on a limited scale, that the people will ever learn how to exercise it on a larger.” This sentiment is echoed by Dahl: “(A)s the optimum unit for democracy in the twenty-first century, the city has a greater claim, I think, than any other alternative.” He cites four main reasons to support this declaration. First, cities are generally small enough to allow citizen participation. Second, cities do not make trivial political and economic decisions. Third, cities are an opportune unit for civic education. Finally, the problems dealt with by municipal governments are within reach of the average citizen since these problems affect many aspects of the community where people live, work and play. Peter Bachrach concurs, saying that “political education is most effective on a level which challenges the individual to engage cooperatively in the solution of concrete problems affecting himself and his immediate community.”

For participatory democracy at the municipal level to be successful and meaningful, says John Goodman, the system must move beyond mere consultation and delegate real decision-making power to citizens. Archon Fung and Erik Olin Wright call such a system an Empowered Deliberative Democracy (EDD). These authors outline three fundamental principals of EDD: “(1) a focus on specific, tangible problems, (2) involvement of ordinary people affected by these problems and officials close to them, and (3) the deliberative development of solutions to these problems.” These principles are stabilized by three institutional design features:

(1) the devolution of public decision authority to empowered local units;
(2) the creation of formal linkages of responsibility, resource distributions, and communication that connect these units to each other and to superordinate, more centralized authorities; and (3) the use and generation of new state institutions to support and guide these decentered problem solving efforts rather than leaving them as informal or voluntary affairs.

Fung and Wright point out that a city-level EDD system (i.e. a co-determinative participatory system) already exists, but to find it we must look to the South American state of Brazil, where municipal governments have implemented a system of participatory decision-making which they call “participatory budgeting.” We will see that it provides a compelling precedent for the possible development of this process in cities outside Latin America as a means of improving representative democracy.

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36 Supra note 4 at 104 ¶ 2.
37 Ibid. at 105-8.
38 Bachrach, supra note 8 at 103 ¶ 3.
III. Participatory Budgeting in Porto Alegre, Brazil

Participatory budgeting (PB) is a unique democratic innovation that was first implemented in 1989 by the governing Worker’s Party (Partido dos Trabalhadores – PT) in the city of Porto Alegre, Brazil. The system strives to involve the general populace in the prioritization and allocation of municipal resources outlined in the yearly city budget, with the primary goal of redistributing these resources from the advantaged to the disadvantaged.41,42 Since 1989, PB has been implemented in over 140 Brazilian cities (90% of which are run by the PT43) and 6 states44, however the system in Porto Alegre stands as the most sophisticated and successful to date.

The PB process is rooted in three principles: (1) All citizen’s can participate; community organizations have no special status; (2) Participation is governed by direct and representative rules decided by the participants; (3) Investment resources are allocated based on (a) general criteria established by citizens engaged in the PB process, and (b) technical criteria (viability of projects) established by the executive. Three kinds of institutions have been set up to govern the PB process. The first are numerous administrative units of the executive who manage the budget deliberation among citizens. The two most important of these are the Planning Office (Gabinete de Planejamento – GAPLAN) and the Coordination of Relations with the Communities (Coordenacao de Relacoes com as Comunidades – CRC). The CRC helps gather the demands of citizens while the GAPLAN translates those demands into technically and economically viable policy. Second are the community organizations (neighbourhood associations, popular councils, unions) who organize and mobilize the populace to engage in the PB process. These organizations are autonomous of government. The final kind of institution are those which mediate between the first two, the most important being the Participatory Budgeting Council (Conselho do Orçamento Participativo – COP).

PB is an ongoing, year-long process.45 The city is divided into 16 regions and 5 thematic (city-wide) areas. These areas are (1) transportation, (2) education/leisure/culture, (3) health and social welfare, (4) economic development and taxation, and (5) city organization and urban development.46 The process officially begins in early March with preparatory meetings of community organizations and popular councils in the regions; here, citizens prepare to select delegates and collect demands on regional/thematic issues. In late March/early April the first Plenary Assembly (Rodada) of all 16 regions and 5 thematic areas is held, organized by the GAPLAN and CRC along with citizen delegates and councillors from the previous year’s PB process. Numerous tasks are undertaken at this Rodada. There is a rendering of accounts of the previous year’s PB Investment Plan by the Executive.47 Citizens begin to discuss their regional and thematic priorities, and the general budgeting criteria and methodology agreed upon by the

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43 Supra note 41 at 505.
44 Aaron Schneider and Ben Goldfrank, “Budgets and ballots in Brazil: participatory budgeting from the city to the state” Institute of Development Studies (January 2002), online: IDS <http://www.ids.ac.uk/ids/bookship/wp/wp149.pdf> at 1.
45 Supra note 41 at 469-74.
47 Ibid. ¶ 137-38.
previous year’s COP council is presented. Finally, citizens begin electing regional and thematic delegates. Elected delegates become members of the Fora of Delegates, who meet once per month\textsuperscript{[48]} and are responsible for acting as intermediaries between elected COP councillors and citizens.\textsuperscript{[49]} Delegates can also form oversight committees, with direct access to the Mayor’s office, to supervise the implementation of public works.\textsuperscript{[50],[51]}

Concurrent with and following the first Rodada are a series of ‘intermediate meetings’ held between March and June. Delegates, along with community and thematic associations in each region, organize these meetings with help provided by members of the Executive (CRC and GAPLAN). Here, the last of the delegates are selected and the final collection of citizen demands is made, including proposals for public works given by the Executive.\textsuperscript{[52]} Each region must then rank 5 priorities from 12 different sectors (sewage, housing, pavement, education, social assistance, health, transportation, city organization, leisure areas, sports and leisure, economic development, culture). Each priority is given points based on its rank. Sometime in June or July, the second Rodada is coordinated and chaired by the Executive in conjunction with the popular organizations in the region. Here, the 16 regions and 5 thematic areas hand in priorities and demands for specific public works.\textsuperscript{[53]} In addition, the Executive outlines expenses and anticipated income, and the councillors for the COP are elected.

Between July and September, the COP council is inaugurated. The COP meets at least once per week. Councillors first learn about public budgeting (similar seminars are available to citizens in the regions). In August and September, GAPLAN drafts a budget proposal based on the viable demands and priorities of the 16 regions and 5 thematic areas (generally only 30 percent of demands can be undertaken\textsuperscript{[54]}), which it submits to the COP, the financial board of the Mayor, and the government departmental secretariats. At this time the COP does two things: it discusses (1) the budget proposal and (2) revenue and expenditure items and the criteria for resource allocation.

Recall that the distribution of investment resources is based on a general set of criteria established by the COP.\textsuperscript{[55]} These general criteria are (1) ‘Population’: the total population of the region; (2) ‘Need’: the need for urban infrastructure/services in the region; and (3) ‘Priority’: the priority assigned to the sector or theme by the region. Each region receives a criteria grade for each sector (see Table 1). For example, under the sector ‘Pavement’, a region which requires 20 percent of its roads to be paved is given a grade of 1 under the ‘Need’ criteria, while a region which requires 80 percent is given a grade of 4. Each criterion is also given a general weight, between 1 and 3, based on the importance attributed to it by COP (in 1998, ‘Need’ and ‘Priority’ were each given a general weight of 3, while ‘Population’ was given a general weight of 2). Each region receives points for each sector (e.g. Pavement) by multiplying the criteria grade by the weight and summing the products. Through the use of this “Budget Matrix”\textsuperscript{[56]}, investment

\textsuperscript{[48]} Ibid. ¶ 157.
\textsuperscript{[49]} Ibid. ¶ 95.
\textsuperscript{[51]} Supra note 46 ¶ 89.
\textsuperscript{[52]} Supra note 46 ¶ 140, 142.
\textsuperscript{[53]} Ibid. ¶ 147-50.
\textsuperscript{[54]} Supra note 41 at 493.
\textsuperscript{[55]} Ibid. at 474-75; note 46 ¶ 180-82.
\textsuperscript{[56]} See infra note 82.
resources are allocated to the regions according to the proportion of total points each region receives in each sector.

Table 1: Grading of General Criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General Criteria</th>
<th>0-25%</th>
<th>26-50%</th>
<th>51-75%</th>
<th>76-100%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Need Population</td>
<td>Grade</td>
<td>Grade</td>
<td>Grade</td>
<td>Grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-49,999</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>50,000-99,999</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>100,000-199,999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Priority</td>
<td>Fourth or lower</td>
<td>Third</td>
<td>Second</td>
<td>First</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Prior to discussions on the budget proposal, COP councillors take part in a ‘PB caravan’. They travel to all regions of the city to see for themselves what each region requires. After discussions, COP councillors vote on the budget proposal by simple majority, and submit it to the Mayor (who has the power to veto the proposal) in late August/early September. Once approved by the Mayor, the budget proposal must be submitted to the Chamber of Deputies no later than September 30. After submitting the budget proposal, the COP prepares its Investment Plan (generally the COP has discretion over 20 percent of the entire city budget when developing this plan). The Investment Plan outlines the allocation of resources to each region (based on the criteria described above) as well as providing a detailed list of prioritized works (utilizing the assigned resources) to be completed in each region. Upon receipt of the budget proposal, the Chamber is empowered to make changes to the document, and must vote on the budget by November 30 under the supervision of the COP. Prior to the Chamber vote, COP councillors actively lobby Chamber deputies and department secretariats to support their Investment Plan, and the budget is often passed with few modifications.

The Results of Participatory Budgeting in Porto Alegre

Various reports have shown that citizen participation in the PB process has steadily increased since its inception in 1989. During its first two years, less than 1,000 people participated. In 1998, participation was estimated to surpass 300,000 people. This impressive rise in political participation is credited with spurring a dramatic increase in neighbourhood activism. Gianpaolo Baiocchi reports that after a decade of PB, the number of neighbourhood associations in the city had doubled. Those involved report that citizens have gained valuable

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57 Supra note 46 ¶ 111-14.
58 Supra note 41 at 491.
60 Supra note 41 at 473.
61 Supra note 46 ¶ 82, 125. Note, however, a study of PB in the Brazilian cities of Belo Horizonte and Betim which suggests that while PB does provide an excellent opportunity for meaningful non-elite political participation, those who predominantly participate are citizens already active in civil society. Disengaged or alienated citizens were not found to be “empowered” to participate once PB was implemented. William R. Nylen, “Testing the Empowerment Thesis: The Participatory Budget in Belo Horizonte and Betim, Brazil” (2002) 34 Comparative Politics 127.
62 Supra note 57 at 55.
educational opportunities regarding municipal governance by participating in the PB process\textsuperscript{63}, with many developing the citizenship values predicted by advocates of participatory democracy.\textsuperscript{64} Most importantly, citizens gained access to both information and the local decision-making apparatus, which empowered them to make real decisions concerning the development of their neighbourhoods.\textsuperscript{65} This has culminated in significant improvements in city services and infrastructure that are essential for improving the quality of life of citizens. Some examples include a 49 percent increase in water and sanitation services over 12 years, a 50 percent decrease in the total street pavement deficit in the city and the doubling of enrolment in elementary and secondary school over 7 years.\textsuperscript{66}

Rampant corruption and clientelism (defined as a system where “those in power use their access to state resources to provide personal favors to a broad-based clientele who, in turn, mobilize votes for their patrons”) has been drastically curtailed under the PB process.\textsuperscript{67} This change has promoted the more efficient use of city tax dollars, a development that has served the interests of both citizens and the business community.\textsuperscript{68} Overall, the majority of citizens in Porto Alegre feel they have benefited from the PB process\textsuperscript{69} (which, in turn, has increased their trust and confidence in government decisions\textsuperscript{70,71}), and this has translated into political success for the PT, who in 2001 were rewarded with their fourth straight mayoral victory.\textsuperscript{72}

**Criticisms of the Participatory Budgeting Process in Porto Alegre**

The PB process in Porto Alegre has not been without its critics. A survey of the literature identifies four *bona fide* criticisms. The first involve accusations of patronage in PB decision-making. Some authors report that certain decisions, such as who serves on the COP and which local projects are considered, are not made by the general citizenry who participate but by community leaders.\textsuperscript{73} Second, it is claimed that the PB wrongfully appropriates the power of the Chamber of Deputies.\textsuperscript{74} Critics say that the constitutionally entrenched Chamber is politically unable to modify the budget (as is in their power) because it would be seen as going against “the
will of the people.”\textsuperscript{75} The Deputies argue that this consequence is not justified, since no matter how many people participate in the PB process the Chamber is more representative than the COP council because more voters elect the Deputies. Supporters counter that PB councillors are more closely linked to the popular masses, therefore the quality of their representation is higher.\textsuperscript{76} Nevertheless, in light of the claims of patronage in PB decision-making cited above, this criticism deserves consideration. Third, there have been criticisms of the PB city-wide (thematic) meetings. Brian Wampler points out that participants in these meetings do not propose and deliberate on policies of their own design, but instead debate those proposed by the city administration. He argues that this occurs because most participants lack the requisite knowledge and experience to engage in city-wide policy development. Instead, participants often follow the lead of head civil servants or policy advocates; participant decisions in this case are often merely rubber-stamps.\textsuperscript{77} Fourth, there are complaints that the PB process involves too many meetings. Most research on this topic has focused on COP councillors. The COP council meets once per week, occasionally two to three times per week, for several months.\textsuperscript{78} This is difficult for some COP councillors to do, particularly given that they receive limited travel expenses (some are given bus fare) and no remuneration for their involvement. This makes it challenging to participate unless one is retired, self-employed, and financially stable.\textsuperscript{79}

While the preceding criticisms raise valid concerns that should be addressed in Brazilian cities utilizing PB (and should be considered in the development of a Canadian PB model), one can maintain the position that the unique experiment of PB in Porto Alegre has been successful both at improving the material situation of Brazilians within the city, as well as advancing the conditions required for democratic institutions (recall Fishkin’s four democratic conditions are participation, deliberation, political equality and no tyranny of the majority). Under PB, clientelism and corruption within the Porto Alegre administration have been significantly reduced, both enhancing the political equality of citizens and promoting non-tyranny. This has translated into improved government efficiency, enhanced public investment and an increase in the standard of living. PB has significantly increased citizen participation (both poor and middle class), not only in the governing process, but also in civil society organizations. Also, PB deliberations have made the budget more responsive to the needs of citizens, especially those in poorer areas of the city. Given these beneficial results, the export of PB to cities in Canada becomes an appealing enterprise for those interested in developing the four conditions of democracy and improving representation in local governing institutions. The opportunities and challenges of implementing PB in Canada will now be examined, followed by the presentation of a theoretical PB model for Canadian cities.

IV. Participatory Budgeting in Canadian Cities

It has been remarked that budgets are “policy without rhetoric”, in that definitive policy decisions are generally only made during the actual budgeting process. Yet typical consultative processes are not intimately linked to the city budget and are unlikely to have any impact on final funding decisions. Indeed, to engage citizens for the purpose of building municipal policies

\textsuperscript{75} Supra note 41 at 467.
\textsuperscript{76} Supra note 41 at 503; note 42 at 13.
\textsuperscript{77} Supra note 50 at 16.
\textsuperscript{78} Supra note 41 at 490, 494.
\textsuperscript{79} Supra note 44 at 4; note 46 ¶ 295-303; note 57 at 52.
without committing resources to address them reduces such participation to mere tokenism. However, institutionalizing citizen participation in the municipal budgeting process provides some security that their input will be acted upon. This therefore makes the budgeting process the principal instrument for meaningful citizen participation, because it brings citizens closer to the locus of decision-making power within a municipality.

A very limited number of Canadian municipalities have attempted to increase citizen participation in the city budgeting process. In these cases, public input was generally obtained through consultative mechanisms such as public forums, citizen advisory committees and community surveys. To date, no Canadian municipality has attempted to delegate budgetary decision-making authority to citizens through a PB process. In fact, at the time of writing only one city in all of Canada, the U.S.A. and Europe had developed a theoretical PB model to be applied to the municipal budgeting process (City of Salford, England).

If PB is to be implemented in Canadian municipalities, all involved must be prepared for a slow and chaotic start, with initial low levels of participation, similar to what was reported by Iria Sharon, coordinator of Community Relations in the first PT government in Porto Alegre: “We idealized popular recommendations a lot. We thought that by taking over the leftist government in Porto Alegre, all the people would be interested in participating in administering the city. But, in reality, this did not occur.”

PB has been implemented successfully in Brazilian cities that range in size from 100,000 to nearly 2 million people. Therefore PB could, in theory, be introduced to both small Canadian cities, such as Kingston, Ontario, and large urban centres like Toronto, Montreal or Vancouver. Daniel Schugurensky has commented on the applicability of the Brazilian PB model to Canadian municipalities. He argues that any PB model must “take into account context, the democratic traditions and the political culture of Canadian cities.” Studies of PB projects have identified a series of basic conditions that appear to be required for the successful implementation of PB. Those conditions that are relevant to the Canadian municipal context will now be considered.

**Conditions Required to Successfully Implement Participatory Budgeting in Canada**

It is argued that an essential factor required for the success of a PB project is that the relevant government must be committed to its implementation. The government must also have the organizational capacity (e.g. personnel, resources, analytic and political management skills) to implement the PB program, and its implementation should not alienate key political

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81 Bridget O’Rourke, Jez Hall and Ed Cox, *Building A People’s Budget: Report of the Salford Budget Matrix Study* (7 May 2003) [unpublished] available from Community Pride Initiative – Venture Centre, 491 Mill St., Openshaw, Manchester, M112AD, UK. (Email: mail@communitypride.org.uk, Tel: 0161-2314111, Fax: 0161-2314555).
82 Angie Gallop, “Porto Alegre, Canada?” (7 January 2003), online: Rabble <http://www.rabble.ca/rabble_interview.shtml?sh_itm=e48dde15c2a9b91de0db4cf72adb1fc7&r=>.
83 *Supra* note 46 ¶ 41.
84 *Supra* note 50 at 28.
85 *Supra* note 83.
86 *Supra* note 42 at 11.
87 *Supra* note 50 at 23.
88 *Supra* note 42 at 19-20.
constituencies (e.g. the middle class). It is also critically important that the government cede some decision-making power to citizens. Limiting citizen involvement to a consultative role does not provide an incentive for participation; citizens must feel that the priorities they establish will be acted upon. Without delegating some decision-making power, citizen priorities can fall prey to political or technocratic manipulation, which often leads to the failure of the participatory model.

Another key requirement for PB success is the timely delivery of projects selected by the participants. Wampler reports that “(w)hen the government successfully implements selected projects, it reinforces the notion that participation in PB is a valuable tool for promoting change…there is a general consensus that PB stimulates participation because decisions made by participants result in actual policy changes.” He warns, however, that once involved, participants must be mindful not to allow the PB process to inhibit long-term planning for the city by focusing primarily on district-level public works.

The pre-existence of organized networks of social movements and third sector organizations, which would provide support for the PB system, is also deemed to be required. It is beneficial if these organizations are already involved in budget consultations or budget monitoring. Finally, discretionary funding must be available (12 to 15% of total budget expenditures), such that citizens can participate in meaningful deliberations about new public works. If PB is to be imported into the governance of Canadian cities, it must be determined if the contemporary political culture satisfies or can satisfy these basic requirements.

**Canadian Cities Meet Several Conditions But Face a Number of Challenges**

Whether or not a municipal government will fully support the implementation of PB can only be assessed on a case-by-case basis. Organized municipal political parties are not widespread in Canada. One notable exception is the Coalition of Progressive Electors (COPE), which swept the November 2002 Vancouver elections, winning the mayoralty and eight of ten council seats in Canada’s third largest city. It is therefore possible that organizations such as COPE could promote the implementation of PB in a Canadian city. Also, given that Canadian municipalities are generally sophisticated organizations, they likely carry the capacity to implement a PB system if the political will exists.

The two prerequisites that present a challenge for the successful implementation of PB in Canadian cities are the availability of adequate discretionary funds, and the presence of an organized civil society willing to engage in the PB process. Municipalities generally establish an annual discretionary capital budget for public works valued at 10 percent of the operating budget. Other sources of discretionary funding may well be found in the operating budget (such as department community grant funds), the control of which could be transferred to citizens.

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89 Ibid. at 12.
90 Supra note 50 at 24.
91 Supra note 42 at 22.
92 Supra note 50 at 15 ¶ 3.
93 Ibid. at 23.
94 Supra note 42 at 12, 21; note 50 at 6.
95 Supra note 50 at 7.
96 Supra note 42 at 12.
through a PB Investment Fund, however a word of caution must be made. Municipalities, under the Canadian Constitution, are ‘creatures of the province’. The fiscal health of a municipality, and hence its ability to generate the discretionary funds required for PB, is therefore remarkably dependant on the actions of its provincial masters. Transfer cuts or downloading of service responsibilities from the province to municipalities would compel cities to make fiscal adjustments, which may have negative effects on any PB process, to ensure that they balance their budgets (it is illegal for municipalities to run operating deficits). Such provincial practices have become commonplace in Ontario and elsewhere over the past two decades. The resulting strain placed on municipalities could make an attempt to implement PB difficult.

Fiscal constraints notwithstanding, Schuguresky has speculated that the relative affluence of Canadian cities may soften citizens’ motivation to participate.\textsuperscript{98} Such a theory is not without basis. Aaron Schneider and Ben Goldfrank conducted a study of municipal participation in the PB process for the Brazilian state of Rio Grande do Sul. They found that as industry and population in a municipality rise, participation in the PB falls. The drop in participation is not directly proportional – for every 1 percent increase in industry there is a 0.12 percent drop in participation, while for every 10,000 person increase there is a decrease of 0.17 percent. However they also discovered that the PB process does have a built-in positive feedback mechanism. In Rio Grande do Sul it was found that municipalities that had higher proportional participation also received more public investment – 0.71 reais (Brazilian currency) per capita more in investments for each percentage increase in participation.\textsuperscript{99} Clearly this study is not conclusive regarding Canadian municipalities, and the possible effects of Canadian affluence on PB participation remain speculative. Nevertheless, this issue merits consideration in the development of a Canadian PB model.

As mentioned previously, Porto Alegre already had a strong and highly organized civil society prior to the implementation of PB.\textsuperscript{100} Decima research polls indicate that 65 percent of Canadians are involved in third sector organizations. Only one-third of Canadians belong to organizations pursuing social or public issues. Most importantly, members of these organizations tend to have higher levels of education and income.\textsuperscript{101} This raises two concerns. First, the capacity of the third sector to support a PB system, which is reported to be essential for the successful implementation of PB, becomes debatable. Finally, the class bias of Canadian organizations calls into question the ability of the third sector to adequately represent the interests of lower-income citizens in PB deliberations. A Canadian PB model must be adapted to address these problems.

Jeremy Heimans suggests that phasing in PB over time, as is being done in Bangladesh at the national level, may increase the chances of successful implementation. Beginning in 1995, Phase 1 of the Bangladeshi project involved a systematic review of the current budget process, including levels of participation and the allocation of resources. Phase 2 involved a participatory appraisal study, that determined citizens’ understanding of the budget process and its impact on their lives. Currently in Phase 3, the group is advocating for a PB process that utilizes a variety of instruments, including decentralization of budget resources to local governments, formal consultations, citizen juries, opinion polls and social attitude surveys.\textsuperscript{102} The gradual ‘phasing-in’

\textsuperscript{98} Supra note 57.
\textsuperscript{99} Supra note 44 at 17-8.
\textsuperscript{100} Supra note 46 ¶ 38.
\textsuperscript{101} Supra note 5.
\textsuperscript{102} Supra note 42 at 26.
of PB is a tactical issue, the analysis of which is beyond the scope of this chapter. In any case, no city will proceed to ‘phase-in’ PB unless a model is available. It is to the description of this new model that we now turn.

V. A Canadian Participatory Budgeting Model

At the beginning of this chapter I argued that the quality of representation in Canadian democracy is currently inadequate, largely due to a deficiency in the condition of participation, which subsequently has negative effects on the conditions of deliberation, political equality, and non-tyranny. I contend that a Canadian PB system, built on the Porto Alegre and Salford models, would help to ameliorate these deficiencies. Both the Porto Alegre and Salford models contain unique and innovative structures that are essential for a successful Canadian PB model. Nevertheless, both contain components that should not, at least in the beginning, be utilized in a Canadian PB system.

First, the COP council from the Porto Alegre model, being a group of elected representatives of civil society, would likely be no more representative than city councillors in a Canadian PB model. Therefore such a council should not be imported into a Canadian model. Second, unlike the Porto Alegre and Salford models, a clear role for city councillors (as a means to bolster government support for the process) must be found in a Canadian PB model. Such a role is intimately linked to the choice of geographical boundaries (like the 16 regions of Porto Alegre) therefore a Canadian model should utilize boundaries with this role in mind. Third, a Canadian model must, at least at the outset, integrate PB into the already existing bureaucratic structures as a means to avoid chaos in the civil service and ensure their support for the program. Therefore, bureaucratic structures like the Brazilian GAPLAN and CRC should not be initially imported into Canadian PB. Finally, the themes or areas that citizens prioritize during the PB process must reflect the concerns of Canadian citizens; this means they will likely differ from those outlined in the Brazilian and English systems.

Figure 1 presents an overview of the proposed Canadian PB model. Budget information from the city of Kingston, Ontario, will be used to elaborate on the proposed model – it is important that readers keep in mind that the PB model presented below is not meant to be definitive; rather it is simply intended to lay a foundation for the innovative and adaptive development of PB in Canadian cities.

The PB process is divided into six phases: (1) Preparation and Mobilization; (2) District and City-Wide PB Meetings; (3) Budget Matrix and Project Development; (4) Debriefing and Community Committee Establishment; (5) Deliberative Budget Council (DBC) Proceedings and (6) Implementation and Oversight.

Phase 1 – Preparation and Mobilization (January–April)

City-wide and neighbourhood meetings (for each electoral district) will be organized. The Mayor is responsible for organizing and chairing at least three city-wide meetings, while city councillors representing each district are responsible for organizing and chairing three district meetings. The first is the Preparatory Meeting. At this meeting the PB process will be introduced and explained to citizens. The chair (along with support staff and citizen partners) must outline the themes to be prioritized (themes will vary for city-wide and district meetings), the Budget
Phase 1: Preparation and Mobilization
(January to April)
- Mayor and city councillor chairs preparatory meeting
- PB process explained - themes
  - deliberation rules
  - priority setting
  - ideas for projects
  - role of DBC
- Mobilize citizens to prepare for City-Wide and District PB Meetings

Phase 2: City-Wide/District PB Meetings
(May/June)
- Mayor chairs city-wide meeting
- City-wide themes are discussed
- Begin formulation of long-term city plan or strategy
- Gather ideas for city-wide projects
- City councillor chairs meeting in his/her district
- Citizens deliberate on priority of themes
- Citizens rank themes in order of priority
- Gather ideas for projects

Phase 3: Budget Matrix and Project Development
(May to September)
- District priorities entered into Budget Matrix
  - adjustments made for population, low-income and participation (if necessary)
- Project ideas sent to civil service departments
  - assess feasibility of project ideas
  - cost-assessment for feasible projects
  - develop implementation strategies
  - develop long-term city plan
- Selection of DBC

Phase 4: Debriefing and Community Committee Establishment
(October/November)
- Publication of PB document
- Debriefing meetings in city districts
  Report on:
  (1) Long-term City Plan
  (2) Budget Matrix allocations
  (3) Implementation strategies for feasible projects
- Establish volunteer Community Committee responsible for oversight of selected projects

Phase 5: Deliberative Budget Council (DBC) Proceedings
(November/December)
- DBC addressed by various stakeholders (citizens, third sector, city staff)
- DBC deliberates on proposed projects
- Projects are ranked by each DBC member
- Projects are prioritized according to rank
- Highest priority projects are commissioned until funding is extinguished

Phase 6: Implementation and Oversight
(Next Fiscal Year)
- Community Committee oversee project implementation
- Access to city councillor if problems arise

Figure 1. Overview of Proposed Canadian PB Model
Matrix system that will distribute funds to districts based on those themes, and the rules for deliberation (e.g. speaking time limits) and priority setting (which could be simple majority voting, consensus, or a combination of both). Citizens must also be informed that ideas for large capital projects (funded by the capital budget) or smaller local projects (if an Investment Fund is generated) will be collected at the district and city-wide meetings. The DBC (see Phase 5 below) and its function in selecting capital and local projects will also be explained. Citizens must be encouraged to mobilize others to participate in the upcoming meetings.

**Phase 2 – City-Wide and District PB Meetings (May/June)**

The city-wide meeting(s) provides an opportunity for any citizen to participate in a debate on the long-term issues concerning the city as a whole. To focus the discussions, the issues could be broken down into a wide variety of themes. Examples include long-term economic development, community health, recreation, and municipal infrastructure. Depending on the number and complexity of the themes, there may be a need for numerous city-wide meetings. Such meetings could serve multiple purposes – they could be used to help generate a long-term city plan or strategy, to propose city-wide projects for consideration in current and future budgets, or both.

In contrast, district meetings will only be open to citizens who live within the district, and will focus primarily on more short-term and local themes. At the meeting citizens will debate the value of each theme within their community and rank them in order of importance. District themes will likely vary from city to city, however there are two general properties that themes should meet. Each theme should be (1) a service that has historically been allotted funds in the city budget and (2) a service that generally is of importance to all districts. As an example, the following themes are suggested for the city of Kingston: Roads, Social Housing, Street Safety, and Waste. Table 2 outlines in detail what services are involved in each theme and the funds allocated to them in 2002 (totaling 9.5 percent of the operating budget). Citizens would rank these themes in order of importance, 4 being the highest priority and 1 being the lowest. In addition, ideas for capital or small local projects (if applicable) will be collected at this meeting.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
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<th>2002 Budget Allocation</th>
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<tr>
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<td>$6,587,375</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Road Maintenance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sidewalk Maintenance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Winter Control</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Housing</td>
<td>Programs</td>
<td>$6,537,682</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Street Safety</td>
<td>Street Light Maintenance</td>
<td>$1,154,329</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Traffic Light Maintenance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waste</td>
<td>Garbage Collection &amp; Disposal</td>
<td>$6,866,970</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Recycling Collection &amp; Processing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Leaf Collection</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Household Hazardous Waste</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$21,146,356</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Proposed Themes for the City of Kingston

Phase 3 – Budget Matrix and Project Development (May-September)

The Budget Matrix (May/June)

Funds from each district-level theme will be allocated to each district using a Budget Matrix system similar to that employed in the Salford model. Other criteria, together with the district priority criterion established in Phase 2, can be utilized to adjust the proportion of funds to be distributed to each district for each theme (see Table 3). Like the Porto Alegre and Salford models, districts that contain a higher proportion of the total population could be given a higher score than those with fewer citizens. Table 3 offers the same population scoring system found in the Salford model. It is used as an example only – these numbers can and should be adjusted to meet the needs of each individual city.

Table 3: Examples of Budget Matrix Criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage of Population</th>
<th>Low-Income (MBM 2000)</th>
<th># Participants</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-5</td>
<td>$24,540 or greater</td>
<td>0-25</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10</td>
<td>$22,298-$24,539</td>
<td>26-50</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-15</td>
<td>$20,057-$22,297</td>
<td>51-75</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-20</td>
<td>$17,816-$20,056</td>
<td>76-100</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21+</td>
<td>$17,815 or below</td>
<td>100+</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Since Canada does not currently have a ‘Needs’ or ‘Deprivation’ measure (like Brazil and England, respectively), it is recommended that, should a city so choose, adjustments be made for low-income using the new Market Basket Measure of Low Income (MBM) developed by Human Resources Development Canada.104 Three factors make the MBM a more useful measure of low-income in Canada than the traditionally used Low-Income Cut-Offs (LICOs) and Low-Income Measure (LIM). First, MBM utilizes a more stringent definition of disposable income – that being moneys available for the purchase of goods and services after taxes and after adjusting for essential costs.105 Second, MBM is a “goods and services” indicator of low-income, linking disposable income and the ability to meet needs through the purchase of a set ‘basket’ of goods and services, and is therefore not as relative a measure as LICOs and LIM (which look solely at income). Finally, MBM measures are adjusted to reflect differences in incomes and the cost of goods and services across various geographical locations and various community sizes.107

Kingston is a city of over 100,000 people. The MBM for an Ontario city between 100,000 and 500,000 people is $24,539108; therefore those reference families that have

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105 “Goods and services” include food, clothing, shelter, transportation, personal/household needs, furniture, telephone, reading, recreation and entertainment. Ibid. at 4.

106 “Essential costs” include non-insured health spending, alimony or other support payments, mandatory payroll deductions, and Employment Insurance/Canada Pension Plan deductions. Ibid. at 36.

107 Ibid. at 35-37.

108 Ibid. at 59 [values are for the year 2000].
disposable incomes below $24,539 are considered low-income. In Ontario, 9.2 percent of reference families are considered low-income by the MBM measure. On average, those considered low-income have a yearly disposable income that is 27.4 percent lower than the MBM (or $17,815). It is therefore suggested that districts with an aggregate MBM of $17,815 or below receive a score of 5, while those with an aggregate MBM higher than the threshold of $24,539 (and therefore not considered low-income) be given a score of 1. Districts with aggregate MBMs in between will receive a score of 2, 3, or 4 (see Table 3). Of course, the use of the MBM as a criterion relies on the ability to generate district-level aggregate MBM data. Since this is a new measure such data may not yet be readily available. Therefore, in the interim, cities may have to use either LICOs or LIM to adjust for low-income in electoral districts.

Another criterion that could be used is an adjustment for citizen participation in the PB district meeting (Phase 2). Such a ‘participation criterion’ would reward districts having higher participation rates with a greater probability of receiving more funds from the Budget Matrix (see Table 3). This would create an incentive for citizens to participate in and support the PB process, and thus add to the legitimacy of PB budget allocations. It is recognized that such a criterion is subject to obvious criticism. A participation criterion would create an incentive for ‘meeting stacking’ – a situation where individuals are recruited to attend the meeting and ensure a high participation score, but either have no intention to meaningfully participate or will be actively excluded from deliberations. Likewise, some districts may have greater intrinsic organizing capacity than others – some may have greater access to resources (relative affluence), a larger number of third sector organizations, and have a higher concentration of people within a smaller land base (e.g. downtown as opposed to rural districts). The use of this criterion is therefore best left to the discretion of PB organizers.

Finally, as in the Porto Alegre and Salford models, each criterion can be weighted to emphasize certain criterion over others in the Budget Matrix. How a city chooses to weight criteria is entirely discretionary (criteria are generally given a weight between 2 and 4). This decision could be made by City Council, PB participants or the DBC. The DBC would likely be best suited to weight each criterion, given that it is a representative sample of the city population (see Phase 5 below). For every theme, each districts’ criterion score (priority, population, low-income, participation) is multiplied by the criterion weight (between 2 and 4) to give an ‘adjusted score’ for each criterion. These adjusted scores are then fed into the Budget Matrix. For each theme, the adjusted scores for every district are summed (to give Total Points) and the proportion of thematic funds allocated to each district by the Budget Matrix is equivalent to the district’s proportion of Total Points.

As an example, assume that Phase 2 district meetings of the PB process have been completed in Kingston’s 12 electoral districts. The results of this hypothetical are presented in Table 4 for the “Roads” theme only. Now assume that a hypothetical Kingston DBC has chosen to give the population criterion a weight of 4, the priority and low-income criterion each a weight of 3 and the participation criterion a weight of 2. After weighting criteria scores, the adjusted scores are fed into the Budget Matrix. The results are presented in Table 5. Each district receives

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109 A ‘reference family’ is defined as a two-parent family with two dependent children. The MBM can be adjusted to reflect different ‘family units’, however the ‘reference family’ is used here since the two-child household is still representative of the largest share of Canada’s population. Ibid. at 35.

110 Ibid. at 17.

111 Ibid. at 28.
a proportion of the total “Roads” budget which will be used for street cleaning, road and sidewalk maintenance, and winter control (recall Table 2).

Project Development (July-September)

The ideas for small and large-scale projects gathered at the city-wide and district PB meetings will be gathered and sent to the appropriate civil service department for feasibility assessments. These assessments must be completed in time for the debriefing meeting in Phase 4. The civil service can also develop ideas for large and small-scale projects at this time.

Table 4: Hypothetical Table Outlining Kingston District Criteria Scores For “Roads” Theme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THEME: ROADS</th>
<th>Criteria Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>District</td>
<td>Priority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5: Hypothetical Budget Matrix District Allocations For “Roads” Theme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THEME: ROADS</th>
<th>Adjusted Criteria Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>District</td>
<td>Priority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>12</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Points 375 Total $6,587,375

112 These scores are all hypothetical and do not reflect the priorities, population, low-income or participation of Kingston citizens.
Phase 4 – Debriefing and Community Committee Establishment (October/November)

The civil service will develop a document outlining (1) the long-term city plan or strategy, (2) implementation strategies (including a cost-assessment) for project ideas that were found to be practicable, and (3) why certain projects were determined to be unfeasible. This document will be sent to all members of city council, and should be made available online and in print form for interested citizens. It is then recommended that a series of “debriefing meetings” are held by city council in each district to explain the long-term strategy, outline proposed projects and give the reasons for not moving forward with those projects deemed non-viable. The results of the Budget Matrix will also be presented at the meeting. In addition, citizen volunteers will form a Community Committee in each district to monitor the implementation of any local projects that are chosen to be put into action in Phase 6. Finally, citizens should be notified of their opportunity to address the DBC to present their support or opposition to projects put before them in the next stage of the PB process.

Phase 5 – Deliberative Budget Council (DBC) Proceedings (November/December)

The DBC is a unique innovation in the proposed Canadian PB model. It is an adaptation of James Fishkin’s work on “deliberative polling.” Fishkin developed the deliberative poll in response to his and others’ criticisms of modern day polls, namely that information derived from polls is largely inaccurate because these polls “fail to distinguish between people’s top-of-the-mind, offhand, views [mass opinion] and their thoughtful considered judgment [public judgment].”113 Here is how Fishkin describes a deliberative poll:

The idea is simple. Take a national random sample of the electorate and transport those people from all over the country to a single place. Immerse the sample in the issues, with carefully balanced briefing materials, with intensive discussions in small groups, and with the chance to question competing experts and politicians. At the end of several days of working through the issues face to face, poll the participants in detail. The resulting survey offers a representation of the considered judgments of the public – the views the entire country would come to if it had the same experience of behaving more like ideal citizens immersed in the issues for an extended period.114

Replace the words ‘national’ and ‘country’ with ‘municipal’ and ‘city’ and Fishkin’s quote essentially describes the DBC. The distinguishing feature of the DBC, however, is its overall purpose – instead of offering an opinion on an issue, the DBC’s purpose is to deliberate on the merits of proposed city projects (those brought forward from Phase 4) and decide which projects are to be funded.

Analogizing Fishkin’s description of the deliberative poll, the DBC idea is also simple. Sometime after Phase 2 a municipal random sample of the electorate is taken (this will likely have to be contracted out to a private polling company - the size of the sample will vary with city

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Immerse this sample with balanced information on proposed projects, allow concerned citizens and third sector organization to offer arguments in support or opposition of proposed projects, allocate time for intensive discussions in small groups on the merits of the projects, and provide the sample access to politicians and civil servants for questioning. At the end of a weekend of deliberation, have the participants individually and anonymously rank the priority of projects using a numerical scale (e.g. 1 to 10 points, with 10 being highest priority). Projects are then ordered from highest priority to lowest based on the total points received (if deemed appropriate, adjustments could be made for criteria like population or low-income as is done in the Budget Matrix). Projects are commissioned in order of priority until available funding is extinguished (as mentioned earlier, large capital projects could be funded from the capital budget, while smaller projects could be funded through an Investment Fund). The resulting prioritized list of projects is representative of the considered judgments of the public – the views the entire city would come to if it had the same experience of behaving more like ideal citizens immersed in the issues, like those participating in the DBC.

Certain conditions must be met to ensure the DBC functions as described. First, the DBC must be representative of the city population. Second, citizens selected to serve on the DBC must have adequate incentive to do so. Finally, the process must create an environment which increases the likelihood that deliberations will influence the participants’ final decisions – if the process has no impact on decision-making, there is little use in holding DBC proceedings. To date, there have been 19 deliberative polls (nine national, nine regional) in three separate countries (U.S.A., England, Australia). Of these, only two polls (the 1994 national deliberative poll on crime in England and the 1996 National Issues Convention deliberative poll in the U.S.A.) have been extensively analyzed. These analyses can shed light on the ability of the DBC to meet the three conditions outlined above.

**The DBC Must Be Representative of the Population**

The 301 participants in the 1994 deliberative poll in England were found to be completely representative of the English voting age population. The 459 participants in the NIC deliberative poll in the U.S.A., however, were not perfectly representative. Those 70 years or older, those with less than a high-school education, and those less interested in politics were underrepresented by 6, 8 and 6 percent respectively. Those with a college education and those with a high interest in politics were overrepresented by 7 and 8 percent respectively. This led Daniel Merkle to raise the concern that at the NIC deliberative poll, certain points of view were underrepresented.

This is an important concern for the DBC in the proposed Canadian PB model. While city-wide and district meetings create an opportunity for broad participation in the budgeting process that can enrich the pool of proposals for city projects, there is little guarantee that the composition of participants will be representative of the city population as a whole. Were final decisions for spending priorities made at these meetings, it is likely that the priorities would reflect the bias of the participants and not necessarily the interests of the city’s population, were

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116 Ibid. at 466.
118 It is anticipated that these meetings would be dominated by those citizens who are already politically engaged. This group of citizens could hardly be called a representative same of the city population. See Nylen, supra note 62.
all citizens given a say in the outcome. It is therefore essential that DBC members carry as wide a range of views as possible about what they feel is vital for the health of their city. Diversity will enrich deliberations and help prevent the ‘hijacking’ of the budgeting process by a specific group or ideology and help ensure that the final funding decisions they make will be representative of priorities of the city population at large.

Merkle speculates that the large size of the U.S.A. (participants from across the country had to fly to Austin, Texas for the deliberations) may have contributed to the bias in the NIC sample. Therefore, assuming that a credible and professional polling company is employed to generate a random sample of a city electorate for the DBC, local DBC proceedings may not suffer the same problems as the NIC deliberative poll, given the smaller size of cities and hence shorter distances participants must travel.

There Must Be an Incentive to Participate in the DBC

Citizens selected to serve on the DBC need incentives to both show up for the proceedings as well as participate in the deliberations. The NIC deliberative poll has taught that offering participants a small honorarium (those selected were offered $325 for showing up) and paying for travel and accommodation costs (flight to Austin and hotel costs) greatly increases the probability that selected citizens will agree to participate. DBC participants should therefore be offered a small honorarium and have their travel costs (or other costs like childcare) covered. Another consideration is time. DBC proceedings must not create a barrier to participation by requiring a large time commitment – people should not have to miss work or spend a long period away from their friends and families (as can happen with jury duty). The suggested time of a single weekend for the DBC proceedings meets this requirement – participants do not need to miss work and are able to return home in the evenings to be with their families. Some may argue that a single weekend is not a long enough time to allow the DBC to deliberate and come to considered decisions, however the time allotted is no shorter than what city councillors currently dedicate to deliberation on budget issues involving much more money than is considered here.

There must also be an incentive to actively participate in the DBC proceedings. The problem of “rational ignorance”, introduced at the beginning of the chapter, is overcome since “(i)nstead of one vote in millions, a participant in the deliberative poll [or DBC] has one vote in several hundred [or much less for the DBC].” Since the vote of each DBC participant does influence the outcome, there is an incentive to actively take part in the deliberations. A second problem is related to small group dynamics. Observers of the small groups taking part in the NIC deliberative poll found that some group discussions were dominated by vocal members. Not only does this harm the quality of debate (and infringe the democratic condition of political equality), but it can also contribute to small group conformism; research on small groups has demonstrated that individual opinions can be shaped by “normative factors unrelated to the

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119 Merkle, supra note 118 at 602.
120 Ibid. at 595.
121 As an example, Kingston City Council deliberated for one day each on the budgets for the Departments of Community Services ($108 million) and Operations ($39 million). City of Kingston, Report No. CW016, Report To Committee Of The Whole (22 February 2002) p 7.
123 Supra note 118 at 607.
124 Ibid. at 608.
strength of the arguments.”¹²⁵ This appears to have occurred in the 1994 deliberative poll in England. Fishkin found that “there was some modest tendency for people to change [their opinions] in the direction of their small groups (perhaps as a function of simple conformism, but perhaps also as a function of legitimate persuasion).”¹²⁶ To help avoid these pitfalls, the DBC proceedings should utilize small group moderators.¹²⁷ Finally, conformist tendencies caused by group social pressure to prioritize projects in a certain way (outside legitimate persuasion) could be minimized by having DBC members rank projects privately and anonymously.

**DBC Deliberations Must Influence Participants’ Decisions**

Researchers have made conflicting claims about the effects of deliberation on individual opinions. Some have reported that providing information to citizens, and increasing deliberation, has an influence on policy preferences and votes.¹²⁸ Others say that opinion switching can occur without large exposure to treatments like deliberation.¹²⁹ The results from the various deliberative polls suggest that individual attitudes and opinions are changed by the deliberative process.¹³⁰ The most detailed analysis has been done on the 1994 deliberative poll in England. There, researchers found a statistically significant change in opinion, unrelated to socio-economic status (like education or income), on two-thirds of the policy items discussed. Participants were also shown to have learned more about the issues under discussion, with those who learned more demonstrating the largest shift in opinion.¹³¹ These results therefore support the holding of DBC proceedings as a useful deliberative mechanism, allowing citizens to learn about local issues and come to considered judgments on the utility of proposed city projects.

**Phase 6: Implementation and Oversight (Next Fiscal Year)**

As projects are implemented over the next fiscal year, the Community Committees will be responsible for monitoring the implementation process. If problems are observed, Community Committee members should have direct access to city councillors who must then take the necessary steps to remedy the situation.

**VI. Conclusion**

In this chapter I demonstrated that “unhealthy voting” and “slanted pluralism” have adversely affected the four conditions of democracy – political equality, participation, deliberation and non-tyranny – and have therefore seriously diminished the quality of representation in Canadian governing institutions. There is now a unique opportunity to utilize cities as a catalyst for reinvigorating Canadian representative democracy through the implementation of participatory budgeting (PB), a process first developed in Porto Alegre.

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¹²⁶ *Supra* note 116 at 485 ¶ 2.
¹³⁰ *Supra* note 116 at 485; note 118 at 612; note 128 at 663-4.
¹³¹ *Supra* note 116 at 466-85.
Brazil. PB institutionalizes participation in the budgeting process, allowing meaningful citizen engagement in issues of local importance because it brings citizens closer to the locus of decision-making power within a municipality. Through this innovative process, it was argued that increasing citizen participation would have a salutary effect on the three other democratic conditions, thereby improving the quality of representative democracy in Canadian cities.

For this reason, a theoretical PB model designed to suit the needs of Canadian cities was presented. In the model, the Mayor and city councillors organize venues where citizens can participate in deliberations on issues of importance both to their communities and to the city as a whole. Participants are empowered to rank a series of service-based, district-level themes; these rankings, combined with other considerations (population, low-income, participation), determine the allocation of budgetary resources to the themes. At the same time, participants tender proposals for city-wide and local projects to the government. Feasible projects are then submitted to the Deliberative Budgeting Council, a representative sample of citizens who, after hearing from citizens, third sector organizations, the civil service, and after deliberating amongst themselves, decide which projects will receiving funding.

While the proposed model is a useful and practical contribution to the development of PB in Canada, numerous challenges await resolution. The capacity of third sector organizations to support a PB process remains weak and must be advanced; similarly the PB process would benefit from a strategy to develop the budget-analysis capacity of citizens and third sector organizations. Finally, organized political parties with the political will to implement and sustain PB must be identified and rigorously supported.
Pedagogical Dimensions of Lifelong Learning: Dominant and Counter-hegemonic Discourses, Policies and Practices

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Adjunct Professor, Psychology, John Jay College of Criminal Justice

Introduction
This paper will address some of the pedagogical issues and dimensions of lifelong learning: specifically it will look at the implications of not only dominant classroom discourses, practices and policies extant in the United States but it will also examine some counter-hegemonic discourses, practices and policies notably those developed by Paulo Freire (1993) as well as some issues and values as they relate to ecological systems of our planet (Weart, 2003) and the probability of international conflicts. Particular practices and assumptions associated with classroom process and grading systems will be examined, as well as some changes being introduced through concepts like Core Competencies. The latter are being encouraged by accreditation institutions such as Middle States and will be examined to see if they are moving dominant classroom policies and practices closer to some counter-hegemonic structures, or if despite apparent similarities they are actually moving further away. Issues such as the difference between grades and competencies will be examined and the extent to which they can be accommodated in the same classrooms. Competencies are perceived to be lifelong skills and perspectives that students do take away with their education. Limited exploratory data will be examined for the empirical light they can shed on this area. The roles and relationships that develop in teaching and learning as manifested in dominant and counter-hegemonic practices and policies will also be examined and compared.

Conceptual development of the problem:
This paper examines pedagogy in American higher education in the light of Paulo Freire’s concepts propounded thirty years ago in the Pedagogy of the Oppressed (1993) as well as in relation to the current ecological state of and international tensions on the planet. This investigation of learning looks at some of our fundamental discourses, practices and policies and evaluates their effectiveness with regard to meaningful learning. The conceptual development includes consideration of whether we can truly talk about ‘lifelong’ learning. Do we have a pedagogy of lifelong learning if we in fact have created a pedagogy that is ignorant or impotent in the face of serious threats to human life on this planet? If the dominant discourses and practices insist on teaching obsolete paradigms and assumptions, paradigms which though relatively harmless in the past, are actively contributing to unstable human relations, unhealthy lifestyles and destruction of the planet’s infrastructure, ‘lifelong’ learning may contain an irony that is almost too grim to face.

The intellectual legacy of Paulo Freire raises some fundamental issues with regard to pedagogy that are worthy of attention in 2003. The application of Freire’s concepts will be shown to transcend the problems of the Brazilian people that gave them birth and provide a gift from these oppressed people to American education as it is currently constituted. What is this gift? The ability to examine educational discourses and practices with an honesty that is rarely achieved and to investigate this institution with not only a depth of understanding that many have come to
appreciate, but also with a love for all humanity, regardless of whether they can be or are categorized as oppressed or oppressors. In doing this, Freire (1993) in writing the *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, also wrote a *Pedagogy of the Depressed*: notes for American education in the 21st century.

Some of the observations underscored by Freire’s (1993) conceptual legacy include: (i) The epistemological and mutually edifying nature of real dialogue. Education ceases to be education and becomes alienation when this principle is abrogated. This is seen in what he identified as ‘banking education’ where students are seen as receptacles in which teachers deposit knowledge, little is elicited from the students, they merely need to be filled with the correct information. According to Freire (1993), whenever, wherever, the banking education is instituted and promoted, it robs individuals of their ontological and historical rights to become more fully human.

1. The frustration and the fruitlessness that results from structuring discourse into polarized binarisms: the millions of opportunities each day to engage dialectics and learn and grow, that go unused, and create instead latent hostilities and breeding grounds for later conflicts.
2. The ‘confusion’ of ideology and intelligence: the practice of denigrating another’s intelligence when the real issue is difference in ideology.
3. The dominant discourse will allow no other. The substitution of singular and supposedly compelling logic for the complexity of contextual and deeper realities.

These conceptual observations by Freire (1993) will be used to select specific dominant discourses, practices and policies that are part of the foundation of current American higher education. They will be examine to see if indeed they contribute to the malaise in American education that is being masked by the hype created around the need for and the impact of technology on education. The selection of dominant discourses and practices are also guided by sensitivity or insensitivity to ecological issues facing the planet. Six discourses or practices are identified.

**Six Dominant Discourses, Practices and Policies**

**Emphasis and superior status of the scientific method:**
What is the dominant discourse and practice taught to adults in the American classroom? Much of discourse and practice centers on the scientific method and its mathematical handmaiden, statistics. The twentieth century witnessed an explosion of knowledge using the scientific method that surpassed any before it. The creation of various technologies undoubtedly helped to fuel this unparalleled expansion of knowledge, but it’s the application of the principles of the scientific method that has led to so much new knowledge. It is hardly surprising that such a successful methodology and its applications became the dominant discourse and practice. Across varying disciplines and domains of endeavor the scientific method is embraced and serves to provide status, authority and authenticity to any discipline that adopts it.
Culture of materialistic paradise:
With the unprecedented success of the scientific research buttressed by new technology, with the enormous range of options and products that this has generated, the thousands of hypotheses that are spawned every hour, a student’s interest can be easily satisfied, if not exhausted, by the many tangible problems that can be explored. And as the marketing industry has created new appetites for new products, the world of the senses can and does look very exciting and complete to students.

Culture of unrestrained economic growth:
Economists define the financial world for us. The Gross National Product (GNP) is largely accepted as the final measure of most things in a nation. Ecological conditions are deemed largely irrelevant. Progress as we calculate it, is economic growth and it defines our future. Unrestrained and increased consumption of any and all products produced, in the twentieth century is very good. Economists as scholars make assumptions (as all scholars do) and these are standard components of students textbooks. Economists in their calculations of doing business on this planet have set up a relatively abstract, isolated and closed system: thus while jobs, products and dollars are tracked, the costs to environment with regard to depletion of non-renewable resources and pollution is not factored into the equations. The earth is assumed to be always infinitely resourceful, always able to recover from the rapid and unparalleled increases in pollution and waste that have been created since the second half of the twentieth century. The current study of economics can be likened to a doctor who studies, monitors and forecast the functioning of the heart but knows little and cares little about the circulatory system and its functioning.

Culture of alienation:
Consistent with our educational emphasis on instrumental learning, students are encouraged and rewarded for gaining as much scientific knowledge as they can and as fast as they can. They are rewarded for individual effort and productivity only, rarely does group work with the complex skills and emotional challenges it encompasses get rewarded in the classroom. Much of the prescribed format for delivering American higher education fits into what Freire (1993) calls ‘banking education’, where “knowledge is a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those who consider themselves to know nothing. Projecting an absolute ignorance onto others, a characteristic of oppression, negates education and knowledge as processes of inquiry…The students, alienated like the slave in the Hegelian dialectic accept their ignorance…but unlike the slave, they never discover that they educate the teacher.” (1993, p.72).

The seating structures in most class rooms, some now with dazzling technology, facilitate communiqués from the instructor and minimize student interaction. Grading systems are for the most part hierarchical or on the curve, with just the special few excelling, and endowed with the right to feel superior to all the others. Students from non-dominant groups, often have to passively accept the stereotypes written in the text, that supposedly defines them, while students from the dominant group are not subjected to this type of cultural embarrassment and harassment. The end result is that after spending hundreds of hours with instructors and other students, many students are left with feelings of isolation and alienation, and more recently hostility and motivation to violence.
Psychology: the discipline that helps us understand ourselves
Just as economics is the discipline that serves to provide the barometers by which we measure our financial state, in like manner, psychology is the discipline where we learn about ourselves. Psychology perceives itself to be a science and remaining faithful to this calling is the discipline’s first priority. As a result, psychology limits its study of the individual to aspects accessible to scientific method. With respect to education, psychology privileges cognition: it studies it, measures it and accords high status to people who function well in this area. It however, has ignored an equally critical area of human functioning, the emotions, notably the positive ones, and the complex relationship of emotions to cognition. Psychologists have just begun to explore emotions in any depth. (Goleman, 1995, Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000 ) This has left emotional education largely ignored. And too often students have to turn to alcohol and other drugs to help them manage this complex and difficult area of human functioning.

Dichotomization and simplification:
Freire (1993) identifies the ‘word’, language as a precious human resource. He notes that it has two natural dimensions: reflection and action. These two dimensions inform and energize each other and lead to potency and agency. American education has created a dichotomy between these intimately related dimensions and for the most part is focused on verbalization. When reflections are not connected to actions, the word loses much of its potency and fails to provide meaning and power to students.

Ambiguity and contradictions appear frequently in daily activities. But they can be discerned, and through clarification and understanding of paradox, lead to exciting and meaningful resolutions. Problems such as these, tend to be avoided in the classroom where students are provided with exercises and situations that do no require very much emotionally and intellectually to resolve.

The relative failure of American higher education is being acknowledged in nationwide institution of outcomes assessment. It will be discussed in this paper under the rubric of core competencies. There is wide recognition that grades, when adequate, are not yielding the skills and competencies that employers anticipate graduates should have. Resultantly, there is an initiative by accreditation bodies, such as Middle States to institute outcome assessments that measure some basic or core competencies in students before graduation, e.g. Communication skills, critical thinking and problem solving skills, historical perspective, mathematical skills, scientific perspective, societal perspective, information and technological literacy, personal wellness, aesthetic perspective, and diversity and global perspective.

Counter-hegemonic discourses, practices and policies

1. Emphasis on communicative and transformational learning:
Freire (1993) notes: “Knowledge emerges only through invention and reinvention, through the restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiry human beings pursue in the world, with the world and with each other.” Twentieth century industry has operationalized this definition to unparalleled degrees except in the last two areas. Counter-hegemonic discourse and practice emphasize our relations with the world and with each other. Bateson’s(1972) definition of learning articulates the nature of knowledge in these last two areas: learning is making meaning...
and making changes in how we make meaning. Instead of regarding knowledge as only objective, measurable, scientific facts, knowledge in a communicative and transformational format recognizes that individuals of necessity construct their own world of meaning, through which they see reality. Blind spots, limited possibilities, ignorance of areas of knowledge, blocked functions, etc. are natural parts of these meaning schemes and perspectives. Communicative and transformational learning involves the relentless development of awareness and subsequent working with any or all of these areas. This type of learning involves four subtypes of learning: (i) Applying pre-existing habitual intellectual and emotional responses to all areas of interpretation of reality. (ii) Examining intellectual and emotional habitual responses and identifying qualities like rigidity, judgmental tendencies, dogmatic principles, egotistical perspectives, etc. (iii) Learning and discovering the process and context of learning, the historical, cultural, institutional, natural, political, etc. (iv) Transformations based on reflection on any or all of the above: realization and identification of blind spots, limited horizons, obsolete and false assumptions, etc. followed by appropriate shifts and changes. This should result in growth, expanded visions and new energies for living, as well as responding to and loving more people and the world.

2. Culture of appreciation and humility
The 20th century has with the successful application of the scientific method shifted the educated polity from a position of awe and wonder with regard to nature to an attitude of domination and control. Those outside of its pale, counter-hegemonic discourses, however, are more acutely aware than ever before of human beings dependence on the natural world. They recognize that without teaching a new attitude of appreciation, the greed and aggression of industry could go unchecked and result in irreparable damage to the planet as well as to life as we know it. Pedagogical responsibility for teaching and modeling satisfaction in life from other than an excess of products seductively marketed for the titillation of the senses and as a distraction from the real issues of the century, also is an also important issue for counter-hegemonic discourses and practices.

3. Culture of finite resources
Economists in their leadership role of defining the progress of nations are being challenged. Counter-hegemonic discourses are giving more prominence to researchers who are willing to look at all of the facts: the heart and the circulatory system, to employ a metaphor used heretofore. While the optimists in dominant discourses are willing to rely on faith and hope that assumptions and principles of infinite growth and recovery that worked in the past, will protect us in the future, it is time to explore more of the facts surrounding 20th century expansion. Counter-hegemonic discourses are using some of the opportunities provided by modern technology to calculate the risks to future life on this planet and identify strategies that will allow more people to enjoy life more while consuming less.

4. Culture of cooperation with those who are different
Cooperative learning based on the communicative and transformational model outlined earlier is an essential element of counter-hegemonic pedagogies. Having been and continue to be marginalized does not encourage the perception that you can manage life successfully in isolation. However, the human tendency to identify with the aggressor, introduces caution here. The power of the electronic media of dominant discourses to not only disseminate seductive
images of freedom and independence but to classically condition millions to believe in their own rights without due consideration of the rights of others, especially those designated as different or less than, is a considerable force. Pedagogy that celebrates the enriching and growthful elements of diversity is still in its early stages.

**A new psychology**
The major concern of a counter-hegemonic pedagogy with respect to psychology is the definition and role of human subjectivity. In dominant discourses, this has been pathologized not only by Freud’s conceptualization of intrapsychic conflicts and the structure of the id, but by the many thousands of studies each year that focus only on the manifestation or treatment of negative emotions. The creation of social realities do not happen by chance. As Freire (1993, p.51) points out, “If humankind produce social reality, then transforming that reality is an historical task, a task for humanity.” A counter-hegemonic psychology provides positive models instead of pathological ones. It chooses to grapple with issues of what it is to be truly human. It is committed to, not scornful of, research that focuses on the conditions that stimulate growth and transcendence in human beings despite adversity. It recognizes that this approach is better able to handle the psychological problems that do manifest themselves: Not only will there be more resourceful individuals working in the field, there will be fewer people with psychological disorders, since as many people will not be persuaded to become to be dysfunctional, addicted or neurotic.

6. **Complexity, dialectic and emotional dynamics as prevailing models of learning**
Academia has enjoyed the power and privilege of assisting individual in their attempts to define reality. In helping individuals with this task pedagogy has found it effective to simplify and order knowledge to match particular stages of cognitive development. As we move into the 21st century the cognitive levels of citizens have improved, both as a function of education and the media. Counter-hegemonic discourses recognize their responsibility to challenge students and help them connect to their era and their cultural and global realities. The challenges and contradictions of the 21st century require the counter-hegemonic emphasis on engagement of the dialectics that emerge from complexity, as well as a pedagogy that acknowledges the emotional dynamics that characterize human exchange. To the extent that dominant discourses ignore these cognitive and emotional factors, American students are very much submerged in a debilitating “culture of silence.”

**Implications and consequences of dominant discourses, practices and policies**

**Emphasis on the scientific method**
Emphasis on instrumental learning that reifies the scientific method has turned and continue to turn thousands of students in to professional who have lost their purpose regarding service, and for whom products, not people are the priority. Many professionals have turned in the Hippocrates oath for the Hypocritical oath. Any casual examination of the scandals of Wall Street, the tobacco companies and the alliances between the American Pharmaceutical and the American Medical Associations, will support this. The acts that are causing harm to millions are not acts of God, they are the calculated actions of educated professionals.

**Emphasis on a materialistic culture**
A runaway materialistic culture, not only goes unaddressed in dominant discourses but is actively taught in, for example, disciplines related to sales and marketing. The relentless and seductive emphasis on the possession of material goods has restructured the American psyche. The 20th century has created millions who are tone deaf to their own spirit and their own spiritual needs and completely oblivious to the possibility that other might have these. Religion is intellectualized in academia and recent religious scandals and behaviors can only serve to reinforce the marginalization of institutions related to concerns of the human spirit.

**Emphasis on economic growth**

A pedagogy of economics that perceives economic growth and progress as the holy grail, that sees economic growth as the cure for poverty, unemployment, debt repayment, inflation, for all national ills, creates students who work and act on these ingrained principles. However, some basic variables and calculations need to be entered into equations, if the grade for economics is not going to be an F. Fundamental laws of science are ones of limitation, e.g. it is not possible to travel faster than the speed of light. With regard to economics, it would seem self-evident that the planet is finite. Rapid and unrestrained pollution and waste, results of economic growth that was initiated in the 20th century, requires revision of formulas to recognize basic relationships. However, if economists continue to see the human brain as the ultimate resource, able to use science and technology to fix anything as it seems to have done in the past, there will be no shift in strategy in the immediate future, but irreparable harm to life on the planet might be already occurring.

**Emphasis on isolation and protection**

A dominant pedagogy assumes a degree of isolation and protection that has ceased to be valid. Dominant discourses also assume the existence of another on whom they can project negative attributes, on whom they can dump waste, to whom they can sell outdated ideas and products and who they can exploit without risk of retaliation. These ideas are part and parcel of dominant discourses and practices and are enacted with satisfaction by graduates and professionals. Before the global village emerged, these were somewhat viable assumptions to adopt. As we moved into the 21st century, conditions have changed. The spread of technology and instrumental learning have made intimidation and destruction no longer the monopoly of dominant discourses. Some counter-hegemonic discourses do not have Friere’s (1993) vision. They have faced not the probability but the certainty of death. Fear of death or suffering, which dominant discourses use to control those it chooses to separate itself from, loses its power. The tables are turned. It’s the dominant discourses that have the burden, and becomes obsessed with self-preservation. Enormous financial and emotional resources are absorbed by issues of security. This counter-hegemonic discourse and practice is satisfied to sacrifice their own lives in order to achieve particular goals. Thus counter-hegemonic philosophies are pluralistic. They are not all caught up in Friere’s (1993) commitment to preserve and prolong life. This presents a new challenge, one with very high stakes, to dominant discourses and practices.

**Emphasis on a psychology focused on pathology**

Psychology: the dominant discourses and practices in psychology are leading to greater use of the scientific method. This has led to the blossoming of the exciting sub-specialty, neuroscience: biology has joined statistics as the twin handmaidens of psychology. Thus psychology eschews
studying values, ethics, morals because these cannot be studied using the scientific method (Zimbardo 2003). The outgrowth of increased scientific research is matched by the decision to allow clinical psychologists to prescribe psychotropic drugs. Fortune 500 has pharmaceutical companies pegged for the best growth curves in the near future. Through its scientific emphasis, psychology is now better aligned with the medical establishment to treat with medication many people who thirty years ago would have fallen in a ‘normal’ range and who with some serious attention to attitudes, thoughts, feelings and behavior, could and would gain control over their problems. Prescriptions for psychotropic drugs have increased by the millions not only for adults, but for children in the last few years. A suspiciously rapid and large increase or it can also be seen as good economic growth potential. Dominant pedagogy in this area creates a “culture of silence” around these issues and the focus remains on training students to diagnose pathological attitudes and behaviors in more and more individuals with problems in living.

**Emphasis on dichotomization and simplification**

The current cognitive structure used by dominant discourse and practices, limits the response of individuals to their personal and contextual realities. They are not able to use these cognitive tools to discern the breadth and depth of dynamics in which they are situated. Instead of being able to grasp the opportunities, options and resources they have open to them, students are locked into paradigms of isolation and limitation, fear and control. The result is increasing interpersonal conflicts, in many areas: gender conflicts, generational conflicts, managerial conflicts. These are reflected in the divorce rates, the parent child battles, sabotage in the workplace, which have become so much a part of 20th century life. There is a focus however, in American dominant educational policy to engage in outcomes assessment of basic or core competencies, e.g. communication skills, critical thinking and problem solving skills, etc., identified earlier. What is remarkable about this effort is the immediate focus on testing without any significant changes in curricula. One of the challenges is managing the differences between competencies and grades:: With grades tests are administered to assess and rank students whereas with competencies, the goal is to engage the students themselves, in repeated self-assessments that provide feedback regarding their uniqueness and their issues related to cognitive and emotional growth. With grades, emotional responses, e.g. frustration and anxiety are ignored, with competencies, positive affect has to elicited and encouraged as well as the reduction of frustration and anxiety. With grades, there is isolation and separation of ideas and concepts as a function of courses and disciplines, with competencies one to call on a range of ideas and concepts to complete a task or in response to a real life problem. The characteristics of competencies introduce some counter-hegemonic factors into dominant discourse if they are embraced fully. However, minimal implementation leads to no meaningful change. This pattern tends to be typical and contribute to the general ineffectiveness of the educational system despite much research and recommendations.

**Implications of Counter-hegemonic discourses, practices and policies**

In examining the implications and consequences of some of the counter-hegemonic discourses and practices, teaching methods consistent with these principles will be examined for the empirical light they can shed on this area. Specifically exploratory data from introductory psychology classes will be presented. While pedagogy in psychology is but a small part of American higher education, it is a good discipline to focus on because (i) Its one of the larger and better enrolled disciplines in American universities. (ii) Its subject matter humans, is very
complex and lends itself to the application of a variety of methods. And as indicated earlier, psychology is in need of a new paradigm to help the discipline grasp the dynamics of subjective and positive aspects of human functioning, not just negative and observable behaviors.

**Emphasis on communicative and transformational learning**
A pedagogy in psychology focused on communicative and transformational learning differentiates learning into the four subtypes identified by Bateson (1972) earlier and provides specific opportunities to engage them.

**Description of task**
Introductory psychology students were given an essay assignment that invited a response that could include all four of Bateson’s (1972) levels of learning. The assignment focused on attribution theory (Zucker & Weiner, 1993). The counter-hegemonic aspects of the assignment were (i) The written guidelines given in the first day of class about the use of the four types of learning in the course and that they would be graded. (ii) To facilitate the opportunity to experience all four types of learning, *To Look at Anyone* (Olaoye, 2002) a poem related to attribution theory was also assigned (See Appendix I). The poem was chosen because of its brevity, beauty and the breadth and depth of its focus on attribution theory. To quote a student, “The poem *To Look at Anyone* (p.25) is an ingenious literary device that conveys the psychological theory of attribution through meticulously construed language and structure.” The two readings were designed to give students contrasting experiences. The reading from the text was designed to be the familiar cognitive experience and the reading from the poem a cognitive/emotional experience. The differences in the two genres were calculated to give students a unique and distinctive exercise, involving the juxtaposition of right brain and left brain processing.

**Participants**
The students were from a four year college in New York and a community college in New Jersey. They included students from evening classes and day classes, ranging in age from 18 years to 43 years and both genders. Females outnumbered males in both institutions. The New York sample was urban and the New Jersey sample suburban.

**Hypotheses**
The assignment of a relevant poem in addition to a traditional text will elicit in students, responses at Bateson’s (1972) third and fourth levels.

Students will experience and report cognitive and emotional distinctions in reading the two assignments.

Students will report positive affect with regard to the assignments of the two genres.

**Results**
The majority of students, 81%, in both colleges and across all classes were able to experience the third and fourth types of learning in Bateson’s model. Because the sample (n=57) was predominantly female (70%) it was expected that more females would experience these higher levels of learning. However, males were almost evenly distributed across the types of learning.
Males reporting the first two types of learning and males reporting all four types of learning were equal, with males reporting the first three types of learning slightly higher. More of the evening students at the community college reported all four levels of learning than the day students. For the day students there was an almost even split between two, three and four types of learning. There were no evening students reporting only two types of learning, most evening students reporting the four types of learning (See graphs in Appendix II). For all students this was a new and unique assignment. Initially some were uncomfortable, (more work?) Others confused, (what could poetry have to do with psychology?). All however, ultimately got the cognitive connections and many were able to make higher level connections including satisfaction, insights and inspiration.

Tests of Hypotheses
Quantitative and qualitative responses will be presented: descriptive statistics of the data and excerpts from students’ essays which reflect each level of learning.

Hypothesis I:
This hypothesis received support: a substantial majority of students, 81%, wrote essays displaying Type III and Type IV levels of learning. Of these students, 44% displayed all four levels of learning, while 37% displayed three levels. A significantly smaller number of students of students, 19% wrote essays at the Type I and Type II levels. Below are excerpts from essays at the Type II, Type III, and Type IV levels. These essays did not include rewrites, because students had weekly assignments, and improvements were made in subsequent essays. The excerpts come from the first essay submitted for the semester. All students, were able to grasp the concept and see the human proclivity to make premature judgments of others. While the first two types of learning are readily achieved with the text and lecture, the poem provided opportunities to experience related emotional and cultural dynamics and engage the other two types of learning. Excerpts from two students essays are given below:

Type II learning:
Type II learning identifies natural tendencies like rigidity, judgmental attitudes or egotistical perspectives. “To Look at Anyone, a poem...questions how well do we understand someone when we make quick assumptions about that person. If I try to size up someone, I might assume that what I see the person do is caused by something inside that person, a personality trait. According to Zimbardo, (2003)… this is a fundamental attribution error if I overlook legitimate, situational explanations of another’s action.”

“According to Zimbardo (2003) inferences that are created based on superficial aspects are unreliable means for assessing an individual disposition. It is impossible for a spectator to grasp the thousands of experiences and specific moments of influence, “the millions of minute silences” that have “patterned” or contributed to the character of the individual. Even more difficult to grasp are the motives and factors that encompasses a person’s “words, acts, moods, seasons, and cycles” Perhaps the best that one can hope for “is a glimpse of personal knowledge, a “soft silence” that will betray the individual’s ontology.”

The students addressed judgmental attitudes set into motion by the poem and by the theory and which reinforce each other and enrich the learning experience.
Type III learning:
Explore and discover the process and contexts of learning, cultural, historical, political, etc.

With regard to the discovery of the context of learning, cultural, historical, etc., the students wrote:

“To Look at Anyone has a beneficial effect as an art form that cannot be created in a factual textbook. The poem treats different groups as being within the entirety of “anyone”. Any ethnic group in the United States belong to the group “Americans” and Americans belong to “people”. The poem help teach that prejudice is magnified when we look at differences, but is reduced when we look at similarities.”

“The second stanza develops what it means to fully understand the workings of a culture. Here one must attempt to comprehend the contextual creation of a culture’s epistemology. What “coded silences”, beliefs or teachings are passed on through generations to firmly establish a culture’s “language, actions, trends, periods and cycles?” The onlooker must understand the blatant, historical experiences that are wound about every member, the “incandescent silences” that tie together each individual of a culture, and apprehend the former injustices that are consistently disregarded.”

Type IV learning:
Experience and report on transformations that occurred while reflecting or any or all of these processes. With regard to transformational learning the students wrote:

“The repetition of similar words, a style of poetry, urges us to linger for a while on the perspectives of the author. By the end of To Look at Anyone, my mind was open trying to picture the millions and trillions of silences.”

“In the final and climatic stanza, To Look at Anyone focuses on understanding African-Americans. One must be capable of comprehending all the moments of oppression that have befallen this race, every “silenced silence” that contributes to their behaviors. Every painful injustice that has been experienced runs parallel to the “pained silences” which influence their “speech, movements, moods, era, and cycles.”…To Look at Anyone provides a very realistic and heartfelt glimpse of just how improbable it is to expect to accurately judge anyone on superficial aspects. The means that are necessary to truly know an individual, people, race or culture are beyond the grasp of human ability.”

The depth of thought and feeling expressed so articulately by these two students point to stimulation of curiosity and realization of a humility as their experiences of transformation. Many students at Level IV resonated with the former student. The combinations of texts were powerful enough to grab students attention and start them wondering about, reflecting on and transforming their own behavior.

Students who are encouraged and rewarded for articulating deeper understandings are assisted in realization of the powerful underlying dynamics that give rise to some of the puzzling patterns of
life. This often leads to a curiosity and humility that can start a lifelong engagement and reduce greatly the need for excessive material products.

**Hypothesis II**
All of the students were able to report a distinction between the two genres that included cognitive versus emotional processing. Some expressed preferences for one over the other, but the majority 85% acknowledged a complementary relationship between the two genres. Students wrote: “I found both texts to complement each other. Attribution theory and To Look at Anyone… “The tendency to emphasize internal causes and ignore external pressures” (Philip Zimbardo, et. al…) will result in an error called Fundamental Attribution Error. To Look at Anyone, however, because of its serene tone, emotion and neatness invites everyone to meticulously examine and consider every aspect of the “silences” in order to paint a more precise picture of “anyone”.

“While the textbook lists the principles of psychology that have been tested…the poem delivers principles of social psychology to be felt with the heart and mind. The poem works as a vehicle to overcome social distance and seek understanding.”

**Hypothesis III**
The majority of students 80% reported positive affect with regard to the assignment of two genres. Their experience of a differential response to the printed word was a unique experience after they got over the thought that they might not be able to do it. As one student put it, “More than before, I agree that…poems are an appropriate learning tool for a social psychology class. This is especially so because the text emphasizes behavioral definitions while…the poetry concentrates on what’s missing, the mood, affect and free flowing expression.”

**Discussion**
Freire’s (1993) pedagogy, a counter-hegemonic discourse developed in this paper perceives humans to be subjects, who are capable and whose ontological vocation is to act upon and transform the world, moving it to ever new possibilities of fuller and richer lives individually and collectively. The world, reality, for humans, is a problem to be worked on and solved, material use by man to be creators of history.

The brief report on the operationalization and application of some of Freire’s concepts demonstrated the use of some counter-hegemonic discourses and practices within a dominant discourse and practices framework. It demonstrates how American students were able and happy to break a “culture of silence” around emotional learning in psychology. The same students were required to write two similar essays on prejudice and discrimination and on friendship. The responses, not reported in this paper, were quite similar. Over and over students were able to identify text juxtapositions that have very different emotional tones. In addressing the subject of prejudice, a student wrote regarding the poem assigned, “I was moved by the flow of words, accompanied by the urgings to “break free and chart unknown territory”…Prejudice according to the text of psychology (Zimbardo 2003) is a negative attitude toward an individual based solely on his or her membership in a particular group…(In the poem) prejudice is experienced in the first person and the reader is challenged to be involved.” When writing on friendship, students were able to find even sharper contrasts. A student wrote: “The facts in friendship in Zimbardo’s
textbook includes “reward theory where both must, over the long run, feel they are getting something out of the relationship, not just giving.” Writing about the relevant poem the student continues, “behavior is combined with imagination and feelings. It uses colorful and rich language to intensify moments of life shared between friends…In the poem nature in all its glory is shared between friends. Nature is a metaphor for beautiful enduring feelings, as the sun and night sky endure.”

What does this limited demonstration of a counter-hegemonic approach to teaching a module in psychology indicate? Does it raise any more issues about dominant discourses and practices? Despite its scientific limitations it does. The convenience and size of the sample lead to very limited extrapolations. However, some findings seem fairly robust: (i) Most students given adequate stimuli and opportunities are likely to get to Level III learning. (ii) A substantial number will get to Level IV. (iii) Although more males will express skepticism initially, male students are likely to respond adequately and experience all levels of learning. (iv) Many students are likely to welcome the cognitive/emotional challenge. On a much broader level, engaging in this counter-hegemonic practice highlighted some practices that have been part of the pedagogy of dominant discourses. Three of these practices will be discussed briefly:

1. The culture of scientific paternalism.
2. The culture of student bashing.
3. The culture of research first, students last.

**Culture of scientific paternalism in dominant discourses and practices:**
What was surprising to this instructor trained in a dominant discourse methodology, was the enthusiastic response of students to explore emotional realms in relation to psychology. Psychology is taught to tens of thousands of students each year, and introductory texts are all very well written with very similar content and format. Yet again and again, students find the text wanting when allowed to take advantage of available and relevant literary resources. When standard psychology texts are repeatedly identified as “missing” needed variables in the human equation by discerning students, it is the result of scientific paternalism: a culture in psychology and other disciplines, that insist on teaching students that only what is scientifically verifiable is worthwhile. Meanwhile, students feel and know that something vital in life is passing them by. However, since ‘science knows best’, they are forced into “a culture of silence.”

**Culture of student bashing:**
In dominant discourses in too many faculty rooms all over the country, one of the easiest discussions to engage is about poor student performance. Counter-hegemonic discourses raise the question as to whether this might not be a projection that has been passed on from one generation of faculty to another. Students burdened with many problems they inherited from their parents’ generation, unstable families, bankrupt systems, troubled ecological systems have lost the trust and innocence that provided students with a mental clarity that contributes to academic excellence. Burdened further by the pressures of competition and uncertain futures students are often in overload. Yet faculty, many of whom are part of the parental generation, are too often satisfied to acknowledge that they fail to educate students. They give up on students, who are our most critical link to the future. But maybe that is the point, someone knows there is no future.
Culture of research first, students last:
In dominant discourses, communication is a lost art. Friere’s (1993) ‘banking education’ is closer to the norm. Students are not part of I – Thou relationship that he suggested they should be. Research brings greater acknowledgement and acclaim than teaching does. The result of all this is that research comes first and teaching last in universities. Multiple choice tests are the preferred mode of testing and essay writing a critical form of learning is relegated to English and writing classes. While research papers are generally assigned, frequent reflective writing, despite all the new technology is still one of the most effective methods of learning and developing critical thinking in various subject areas. They also provide critical bonds between students and teachers who read them and enhance learning in powerful ways. Unless students are provided with stimuli that motivate and inspire them to write and engage a transformation process, critical learning opportunities are lost, and important abilities run the risk of atrophy. If the pedagogical culture does not provide a nurturing and stimulating environment for students, dominant discourse can only fail.

Reflections on the future of pedagogical discourses, practices and policies
This paper has highlighted dominant discourses and practices that at one time arguably harmless enough are now contributing to a “culture of silence” regarding some of the most important issues on postmodern America: the future of our planet, the future of our children, the future of this nation. From the topics and patterns of discourse to the denial of the mindless materialism that threatens to suffocate us, dominant pedagogy actively contributes to the emotional and psychological demise of its students by privileging the intellect and degrading the other human faculties, so clearly needed to live a healthy and satisfying life. Obsessed with much abstract and sterile research on the one hand and market oriented or manipulated research on the other, dominant pedagogy seems dedicated to limit students’ awareness with regard to the many contradictions of postmodern social reality and just how high the current stakes are. Freire (1993) saw history as possibility and education as transformative. Indeed, the human brain can be and is an ultimate resource. But where there is no vision but only special interest goals and objectives, the planet can perish. Dominant pedagogy has been very effective in helping humans engage in denial about the very real fact that the planet and the ecological system did and can survive without man. Human’s sacred truths and myths that socially construct an anthropocentric universe could be the biggest joke of the millennia: Humans, for all our intelligence, may not last as long as the dinosaurs did!

References:


Levels of Learning - Male & Female Students

Learning Levels

Day Students
Evening Students