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A common theme that has emerged in the **Education and Training** column has been strategies and techniques that allow students to take a more active role in the learning process. In these columns, the traditional lecture is eschewed in favor of increased student participation and experiential learning. This past spring I attended a seminar on improving undergraduate teaching where I was exposed to similar ideas. I was struck by the fact that the presenters in the seminar only used lectures, treating the faculty participants as passive instead of active learners. When I pointed this out to the presenters, they responded that they lectured because they needed to cover so much material in a short time. What I took away most from the seminar is that it is indeed difficult to give up our lectures!

In this issue **Kerrie Baker**, Kim Spiezio, and Kathleen Boland discuss a large scale intervention known as the “Participating in a Democracy Project” that was designed to increase student engagement in the learning process. What makes their approach unique is that beyond the typical classroom strategies for increasing student engagement, the intervention is based on the assumption that civic responsibility is an avenue through which to counter student passivity and apathy. This service-learning strategy is designed to allow students to consider their responsibilities in society and to acquire skills that serve them throughout their lives.

Student Engagement: Transference of Attitudes and Skills to the Workplace, Profession, and Community

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Virtually anyone who has taught at the college level has encountered the frustrating passivity of many students. If students approach their education so passively, it is no wonder that passivity would extend to the workplace and public life. If we, as educators, want to produce students who intervene in the world to transform it, we must first transform ourselves and the classroom. Such transformation has been proposed in higher education settings via active learning, that is, educating students to be more fully engaged in the classroom. Engagement may be manifested in many ways, including the empowerment realized through minimal power differentials between students and faculty, and the realization on the part of students that they are equal contributors in their education. To promote student engagement, a team of educators designed

a research program to examine whether engagement in the classroom, where-in students take active responsibility for their own learning, would be followed by more active engagement in civil and political issues in the community.

As I-O psychologists, we purport that what we teach and execute in our profession will make a significant difference in the workplace and community. In order to be successful, we tell new I-O psychologists to immerse themselves in the workplace, get to really know the client, and understand their values and needs before recommending and implementing a solution. This type of engagement in our profession does not come easily to some individuals. It seems particularly difficult to become actively involved with a client when making the transition from graduate school to the workplace. For example, designing a selection tool from archival job analysis data (presented on paper as a case study during class) does not require the execution of competencies in real time such as the creative solicitation of complete information from a diverse set of incumbents, the persistence to merge manager and incumbent comments in a politically correct format, and the patience and sensitivity to handle anxious incumbents who are fearful of losing their jobs during the data collection process. These competencies and skills can only be acquired through active engagement and experience. Although one could argue that engagement and hands-on experience will foster better performance in almost all occupations, it seems particularly important for those who are preparing and training for an I-O psychology career.

The following is a summary of a project designed to promote greater engagement among college students. The results will enforce the importance of active learning and accompanying pedagogical techniques for developing engaged individuals. The results demonstrate that if we want to educate and train individuals to effectively practice I-O psychology, we should examine the manner of instruction in addition to the curriculum at the undergraduate and graduate level. If they are trained in a passive manner, we cannot expect them to be vocal champions and successful practitioners of the field. However, if we educate and train new I-O psychologists to become actively engaged in the workplace and the profession at an early point in their career, the visibility and benefits of I-O psychology may be realized.

Background

Over the last 3 years, Cedar Crest College in Allentown, Pennsylvania has played the lead role in a nationwide initiative called the Participating in Democracy Project. The centerpiece of this project has been the development of an educational framework (herein referred to as the Democratic Academy) that will serve to engage students in the classroom, their local communities, and the political process itself.

In 2002–2003, the instructional techniques comprising the Democratic Academy were field tested at four colleges and universities in the United States.

Altogether, faculty members, representing 15 academic disciplines, incorporated pedagogies of engagement into 39 courses as part of an evaluation study involving over 1,200 students. The results of the study provide compelling empirical evidence in support of the key theoretical claims underlying the Democratic Academy. That is, when the faculty employs pedagogical strategies and instructional techniques expressly dedicated to the promotion of civic engagement, they can have a significant effect on the value that students attach to the concept of engaged citizenship. The evidence suggests that educators can make a decisive contribution to the fight against student apathy and cynicism if they are willing to embrace curricular and institutional approaches that routinely and regularly emphasize the significance of civic engagement.

The Democratic Academy

The Participating in Democracy Project has approached the problem of student disengagement from an institutional perspective, which has broad implications for the workplace. Hence, we argue that an individual's beliefs, perceptions, and actions are deeply affected by the institutional environments within which that individual lives, works, and learns. This further suggests that if educational institutions are to promote greater civic engagement among students they must consciously and actively embrace the principles and practices of engaged citizenship. To that end, appropriate pedagogical strategies were identified in the literature. To promote community and political engagement, the project drew heavily on the well-established pedagogy of service learning. This technique emphasizes the value of off-campus placements, coupled with class-based opportunities for reflection and discussion, as a tool for nurturing a sense of engaged citizenship among students. Within the context of the Democratic Academy, service learning was used to promote two distinct types of engagement.

For faculty emphasizing community engagement, service learning was used to place students in the voluntary (i.e., nonprofit) sector of local communities wherein they have an opportunity to develop their moral voice and a sense of community. From the standpoint of engaged citizenship, such placements are designed to help students acquire a sense of personal responsibility for the well-being of their local communities and to affirm the importance of public service as a basic responsibility of citizens.

For faculty emphasizing political engagement, service learning is used to place students with politically active groups, organizations, and institutions wherein they have an opportunity to learn about the techniques that citizens can use to reconcile contending normative values and diverse interests within the context of a democratic process operating under the constraints of limited public resources. From the standpoint of engaged citizenship, such placements are designed to help students appreciate the intrinsic importance of

political engagement and to promote the acquisition of skills that are essential to the art of political participation.

In addition, the Democratic Academy incorporated instructional techniques designed to promote student engagement in the classroom by redefining the relations of power and authority that have traditionally characterized the classroom as a social and political system, much like a corporate structure. Students are provided with opportunities to participate collectively in decision-making processes relating to course administration, including syllabi construction, assessment procedures, and the specification of classroom protocols. Classroom engagement techniques are designed to help students take personal responsibility for their learning, appreciate the value of participating in the life of a community, and develop a sense of confidence, efficacy, and empowerment. In short, classroom engagement serves as a type of apprenticeship for student engagement in other venues, including their local communities and the political process itself.

Despite differences in application, the pedagogies of engagement comprising the Democratic Academy are designed to produce a common set of student learning outcomes. These objectives have been derived from the literature on civic education that suggests that engaged citizenship is a function of a mutually reinforcing set of attitudes and skills. The discrete elements comprising the categories can be summarized as follows:

Civic Attitudes

Critical Self-Reflection
Open-Mindedness
Honesty and Integrity
Respect and Tolerance
Empathy and Compassion
Personal Responsibility
Commitment to Act

Civic Skills

Problem Recognition
Analysis and Assessment
Communication
Leadership
Conflict Management
Consensus Building
Goal Achievement

Research Methodology

Overall, 1,243 undergraduates participated in the study. Of these, 524 students were enrolled in Democratic Academy courses. A quasi-experimental research design was employed to contrast the civic attitudes and skills of Democratic Academy students with the attitudes and skills of undergraduates who were not enrolled in such classes. Comparisons were drawn on the basis of student responses to a Civic Aptitudes Survey that consisted of closed-ended questions designed to measure student attitudes about (a) the value they attach to civic engagement and (b) the confidence they have in regard to the social and analytical skills that facilitate engaged citizenship. More specifically, the survey posed several questions designed to capture the degree of connectedness that students felt toward their community as reflect-

ed in their attitudes toward other members of the community and the sense of personal responsibility they felt for the well-being of the community. In regard to civic skills, the survey was designed to measure the sense of efficacy that students had in regard to their ability to serve effectively as agents of social and political change. Surveys were administered during the first and last weeks of classes in both Democratic Academy courses and in those courses that served as the control group for the study.

Civic Attitudes

Students in a Democratic Academy course were expected to express a greater appreciation for the value and significance of engaged citizenship than students who were not enrolled in such courses. The findings indicated statistically significant differences between the civic attitudes of Democratic Academy students and their peers from the very outset of the semester. In essence, students enrolled in Democratic Academy courses appeared to have already drawn a tentative connection among the existence of social problems, the welfare of their community, and the importance of keeping abreast of public affairs. Hence, prior to taking the class, Democratic Academy students tended to attach more significance to civic engagement than their counterparts in the control group courses.

This finding is surprising because numerous researchers have reported that today's 18- to 24-year olds are perhaps the most disengaged generation in American history. Hence, it is not intuitively obvious as to why significant differences were found between Democratic Academy and control group courses. This outcome cannot be attributed to self-selection on the part of students. Students were not informed that they had enrolled in a Democratic Academy course until the first day of classes. Although it is possible that some students may have opted not to participate in Democratic Academy courses upon learning of their distinctive nature, faculty participating in the evaluation study did not mention this as an issue during focus group interviews conducted at the conclusion of both semesters. It also is possible that the substantive nature and content of the Democratic Academy courses themselves tended to attract students who were already favorably predisposed to engaged citizenship. Given the diverse assortment of courses featured in the study, however, it is not clear what underlying thematic connection might have been responsible for this outcome.

In any event, differences in civic attitudes between Democratic Academy and control group students did become somewhat more pronounced by the end of a semester. It is particularly interesting to note the difference between the groups in regard to the question of whether students, as individuals, can have an impact on the problems confronting their community. Whereas there was no change in the response of control group students to this question, Democratic Academy students expressed a modest increase in the value they attached to civic engagement. In principle, this outcome is consistent with the

claim that pedagogies of engagement can help to nurture a sense of personal responsibility on the part of students that may serve as a prelude to action.

The Civic Aptitudes Survey also attempted to assess civic attitudes by asking students to rate themselves in terms of their ability to relate to and interact with other members of the community. At the beginning of the semester, there were few significant differences between Democratic Academy and control group courses. By the end of the semester, however, students enrolled in Democratic Academy courses were exhibiting statistically significant differences in each of the items comprising this portion of the survey. The most conspicuous and noteworthy differences occurred in regard to a student's ability to empathize and work with others. Over the course of the semester, Democratic Academy students appear to have moved beyond simply "tolerating" differences and into the realm of a more authentic form of civic engagement.

Civic Skills

It was also hypothesized that students who complete a Democratic Academy course would express a greater sense of efficacy in regard to civic skills than students who did not complete such a course. In assessing this outcome, the Civic Aptitudes Survey asked students to rate themselves in terms of two distinct skill sets emphasized in the literature on civic education: critical thinking and leadership.

At the beginning of the semester there was only one statistically significant difference between the two groups of students. By the end of the semester, however, students enrolled in Democratic Academy courses were exhibiting statistically significant differences in regard to each of the six items comprising this portion of the survey. In short, the pedagogies of engagement utilized in Democratic Academy courses appeared to have both an immediate and a significant effect on these student learning outcomes.

Summary and Conclusion

The assessment results presented in this study provide empirical evidence in support of the key theoretical claim underlying the Participating in Democracy Project. When faculty employ pedagogical strategies expressly dedicated to the promotion of civic engagement, they can have a significant effect on the value that students attach to the concept of engaged citizenship. Put differently, the analysis suggests that educators can make a decisive contribution to the fight against student apathy if they are willing to embrace curricular and institutional approaches that routinely and regularly emphasize the significance of civic engagement.

The study has demonstrated that the pedagogies of engagement comprising the Democratic Academy are associated with measurable and statistically significant changes in student learning outcomes relevant to the practice of

engaged citizenship. Taken as a whole, the major findings of the study suggest that pedagogies of engagement can:

- Increase the value and significance that students attach to the principle of civic engagement.
- Enhance the sense of confidence that students express in regard to their ability to serve as agents of social and political change.
- Change the way that students relate to, and interact with, other members of the community.
- Increase the degree of confidence that students express in regard to their critical thinking skills.
- Enhance the sense of efficacy that students express in regard to their ability to serve as leaders.

These findings have critical importance to the I-O psychologist as the foundations laid in the undergraduate, as well as graduate, experience will have ramifications for the I-O professional. More specifically, the partnership between educators and I-O psychologists may be an area for future research to understand which pedagogical techniques are most effective for transition outside of the classroom to the workplace. If new I-O psychologists are engaged throughout their training, then we can expect they will become more engaged in civic and political issues in their own workplaces, in professional organizations like SIOP, and in their communities and, in turn, serve as models for others to do the same.

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