

Civic engagement in the public speaking classroom

by

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## Introduction

Every once in a while a speech comes along that makes me proud to be a teacher. These are the speeches that heighten awareness about social or community issues and inspire students perhaps to think, believe, and act more responsibly as members of the community. As a speech instructor, I may ask myself if it happened by accident or if it was some great inspiration on my part as the instructor. It happened in my first few semesters as a graduate teaching assistant by accident—I certainly did not know how to foster this spontaneous invention—but a few students created speeches that alerted their audience to important issues that they, as members of the community, should know about.

During my first semester teaching Speech Communication 212: Fundamentals of Public Speaking a student gave her informative speech on the ACCESS crisis hotline on the Iowa State University campus where she volunteered. She explained the need for the hotline and the services it provided to victims of sexual violence on campus. She told us about her firsthand experiences answering those calls and helping the callers find the resources they needed. Students in the class were drawn in by her sincere and caring *ethos* and I found them all listening closely to her speech. When she was finished, it was clear that the class was better off for having heard about this important service and about serious issues on our campus that create the need for the crisis hotline. This speech, amid other informative topics such as why different cuts of beef are better than others and how wolves are being reintroduced to the wild, really stood out to me. The others were

fine speeches, but hers was meaningful in a different way. I left her visual aid, a small poster with the hotline number, up in a corner of the room for a few weeks because I thought the topic had been important. That speech was the seed that soaked in my mind over the next few semesters.

A year later, in the Fall semester of 2010, I was again teaching three lab sections of speech and I was also taking a course on the history of rhetoric from Plato to Bacon. I learned about ancient rhetorical pedagogy in exhilarating detail. I learned that during the times of Aristotle, Cicero, and Quintilian, teaching students to be good speakers and teaching students to be good citizens were one and the same. The purpose of rhetorical training was to develop skills that would be used responsibly in civic activity. That seed was sprouting now and I wanted to cultivate it in my classroom. I began researching the idea of intentionally incorporating a civic education into my own speech classroom and found a literature filled with motivational calls for civic engagement in higher education.

There is much current interest in the topic of civic engagement in higher education. This growing interest indicates the level of importance assigned civic engagement by many scholars in the field. The repeated calls to action have led to an increasing number of articles, books, and initiatives which demonstrate that the need is ever greater for civically-engaged education. Yet a careful examination shows that actionable solutions are not so easy to define and implement. This examination of the research suggests that study of this topic is timely, and accessible actionable strategies are wanted. The current fields of higher education,

political science, communication, and rhetoric are putting emphasis on the need for civic engagement and looking for ways to make it work in the classroom.

To begin, civic engagement is difficult to clearly define. Students may think it means volunteerism or simply voting in an election. Ernest Boyer, a major figure in education from the 1970s –1990s, offered a vision of engagement that connects the rich resources of higher education institutions to our most pressing social, civic, and ethical problems (Boyer, *Scholarship 77*). He called for colleges and universities to “create a special climate in which academic and civic cultures communicate more continuously and more creatively with each other” (Bringle, *Civic-Minded Graduates*). Boyer felt this connection needed to be made at all stages of learning, particularly higher education.

Civic education then, as Boyer described it means, “helping students develop responsible ways of thinking, believing, and acting” (Boyer, *Civic Education 7*). Robert Bringle elaborates on Boyer with a call to “not just serve to learn, but also learn to serve” (Bringle, *Civic-Minded Graduates*). This is at the heart of recent calls in the field. Students want to be a part of something bigger than themselves, and universities want to produce citizens who can contribute positively to society.

In the past twelve years there have been many articles and books written on civic engagement in higher education (Bringle, 1999; Eberly, 2002; Colby, 2003; Jacoby, 2009; Lawry, 2009). The call to renew the spark of civic engagement is present on college and university campuses across the country. The first section of this paper will explore this call to action and find where the sense of civic responsibility has become tied to the notion of higher education.

Much of the call for civic engagement traces back to the western expansion of the US and the introduction of land-grant universities. John Dewey and Ernest Boyer championed the cause, bringing us to the modern day. The second chapter will identify current trends that have been making headway toward civically-engaged education. Ideas such as service learning and deliberative democracy will be examined in detail to find best practices that can be repurposed and brought into the basic speech course. Various classroom pedagogies will be examined to find elements that can be brought into a speech course to foster civically-engaged education while not jeopardizing the necessary standardized course content.

The connection between education and civic engagement originates even further back in our history. Ancient rhetorical tradition offers valuable insight to the civically-engaged rhetorical training practiced in ancient Greece and Rome. The concept of *phronesis* coupled with the scaffolded learning curriculum of the *progymnasmata* provides a rich warehouse of exercises that blend the study of the art of speaking with the civic purpose of speaking. The purpose of education in ancient Rome was to prepare students for civic participation. Chapter three will explore some of those elements of the *progymnasmata* to identify the current relevance of the exercises and connect them to today's classroom (Bonner, 1977; Mendelson, 2007). Specific concepts from classical rhetorical theory and from the exercises of the *progymnasmata* can be resurrected to restore the original rhetorical practice of intertwining speech instruction with public issues and civic responsibilities.

Civic engagement in the basic speech course can appear in the form of students making civically relevant topic choices, connecting coursework to the community, participating in deliberation of civic issues, and critically examining their own work and the work of their peers from a citizen's perspective. These are the goals I hope to achieve through the implementation of civically-engaged educational strategies.

By drawing from both current and ancient practices, this paper will construct a series of actionable strategies to foster civically-engaged education in the basic speech course. Chapter four will be a collection of those best practices designed specifically to meet the needs of, and function within the limitations of, the basic speech course. Student testimony is used in this paper to support recommended educational strategies. Institutional Review Board approval has been obtained for all such data included in this paper.



## Chapter One: The Call for Civic Education in the United States

Civic engagement in higher education has been a clear objective in the educational institutions of the United States since the very first public universities were opened by our founding fathers. Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson consciously included practical subjects for study amongst the traditional European higher education model popularly used at the time. Jefferson founded the University of Virginia with the goal of educating leaders in practical affairs and public service rather than educating the elite for the advancement of education itself as described in his 1818 *Report of the Commissioners for the University of Virginia*:

To harmonize and promote the interests of agriculture, manufactures and commerce...to develop the reasoning faculties of our youth, enlarge their minds, cultivate their morals, and instill into them the precepts of virtue and order; and, generally, to form them to habits of reflection and correct action, rendering them examples of virtue to others, and of happiness within themselves.

(Jefferson 1818).

Steven Lawry, Senior Research Fellow at the Hauser Center for Nonprofit Organizations at Harvard University, wrote that Jefferson and Franklin had a goal to have “informed and responsible participation” of educated men (Lawry 17). Certainly the founding fathers intended for educated individuals to use their knowledge and skills for the betterment of the democracy. But education was not for common people at the birth of our nation. It was not until more than a century later,

with the introduction of land-grant universities, that the common citizen gained the opportunity to get an education.

The Morrill Act of 1862 put the concept of the land-grant university into practice, including Iowa State University, and led the way for other similar institutions like it to open and flourish in America. Barbara Jacoby, chair of the University of Maryland's College Park Coalition for Civic Engagement and Leadership, asserts that the Morrill Act "inextricably linked public higher education and the concepts of civic engagement" (Jacoby 11). In the formation of the land-grant universities, a commitment was made to connect the learning at universities to the application of that learning in the communities they serve:

...by each State which may take and claim the benefit of this act, to the endowment, support, and maintenance of at least one college where the leading object shall be, without excluding other scientific and classical studies, and including military tactics, to teach such branches of learning as are related to agriculture and the mechanic arts, in such manner as the legislatures of the States may respectively prescribe, in order to promote the liberal and practical education of the industrial classes in the several pursuits and professions in life (Morrill Act 1862).

But this was a new model at the time and the ways in which each university connected with their outlying community varied greatly. Even so, at the time of the expansion of the land-grant universities, the kind of higher education needed was explicitly centered on civic engagement and responsibility as passionately

demonstrated in an 1883 speech by Adonijah Welch, Iowa State University's first president:

If the youth has decided to become an architect, for instance, does he need to be told that he will not hereby escape being a citizen as well? And just as knowledge of the various architectural orders and styles, a mastery of the principles of descriptive geometry and practice in architectural drafting is essential to the successful architect, so the mastery of mental and moral philosophy of social science, of political economy and constitutional law, are essential to becoming actively and passively a model citizen (Welch 1883).

The use of extension services to help communities with agricultural and industrial needs was a way to clearly connect the universities with their surrounding communities. The study of agriculture and industry benefitted both the university and the community. As time passed, the needs of the communities and universities grew, and often grew apart (Jacoby 11). Eugene Lang, chairman emeritus of many foundations, including the "I Have a Dream" Foundation, asserts that in the twentieth century, higher education has become more focused on field-specific scholarship and less attached to the community (Lang 135). This growing chasm has resulted in an eroded sense of civic engagement.

In the early twentieth century, John Dewey emerged as a leader of educational reform and offered a vision of education that included three essential elements of the liberal arts experience: "it should engage students in the surrounding community, it should be focused on problems to be solved rather than academic

discipline; and it should collaboratively involve students and faculty” (Lawry 17; Lang 145). Dewey felt that education should be for anyone who sought it, not just for the elite. Access should be available to everyone, and learning should connect in practical ways to the real world. Dewey’s call was heard, but it was difficult terrain to navigate and although some steps were taken, institutions have not managed to put his vision into lasting practice.

Ernest Boyer resurrected Dewey’s call for engagement in 1990. He criticized the textbooks at that time for what James Carroll of the Brookings Institution deemed “disembodied expositions of principles and facts” (Boyer, *Civic Education* 5). What was lacking, in Boyer’s opinion, was the connection between course content and the community. He called for a new education, ripe with practical purpose. Included in his plan for civic education was a focus on communication in order to “teach students to think critically, listen with discernment, and communicate with power and precision” (5). The practice of critical thinking emerges time and again in Boyer’s writing as an important tool (as well as an outcome) of civic education.

Robert Bringle picked up Boyer’s trumpet to promote civic education as the century turned, and he actively continues Boyer’s work to move universities toward civic engagement initiatives. Through the American Democracy Project (ADP), he has helped put Boyer’s vision into service learning programs nationwide and continues to keep the cause in the academic spotlight.

Such calls to action have been replete not only in higher education literature but also in the literatures of political science and communication. In response to the erosion of civic engagement in the speech curriculum, Rosa Eberly made an appeal

for “teachers of communication to reconsider abandoning rhetoric as the core of your curriculum. It is a plea to take more seriously what you call ‘the basic course’...by returning to rhetoric’s origins in democratic praxis” (Eberly, *Rhetoric* 290). Her appeal was to strengthen the basic course with deliberative democracy practice in order to foster concern for the greater good of the community.

Each of these calls, from Jefferson’s vision for the University of Virginia, to the Morrill Act of 1862, to Dewey’s practical education, Boyer’s civic engagement, Bringle’s service learning, and Eberly’s call for deliberative democracy have encouraged universities to educate students to think, believe, and act with more than themselves in mind.

## Chapter Two: Current Approaches to Civic Education

We have seen the persistent call to action for higher education to embrace responsible citizenship as an active ingredient in the liberal arts mission.

Universities have responded in a variety of ways ranging from requiring volunteer hours for graduation, to offering learning communities, to supporting service learning programs. Three of the most researched approaches to civic engagement at the institutional level fall under the headings of institutional citizenship, service learning, and deliberative democracy.

***Institutional Citizenship*** is a concept designed to promote civic engagement at the university level. Current scholarship focuses on the need for institutions to take responsibility for civic engagement to successfully see it occur on their campuses (Bingle, Erlich, Jacoby, Lawry, Liss). Many university mission statements focus on the trifecta of institutional purposes of research, teaching, and service. From the service aspect of the trilogy comes the concept of institutional citizenship. Robert Bringle et al., in their book *Colleges and Universities as Citizens*, assert that the actions of the university must be consistent with the descriptions of a good citizen. Bringle classifies institutional citizenship as approaching the purpose of the institution from three perspectives: 1) how the university relates to the local community where it is located, 2) how it relates to the larger community of higher education institutions, 3) and how it connects to the larger society in general (Bringle, *Colleges* 32). Bringle emphasizes the notion that higher administration must set the example, through their actions, for how they would like their faculty and

students to act. This top-down approach reinforces the mission and gives support to departments and faculty to explore practices toward that end.

Bringle argues for this kind of administration-supported approach to put practices in place that support a citizenship mission. He claims that just as vices can cause individuals to behave selfishly and not as good citizens, so vices of the institutions can cause institutions to behave badly and not as good citizens (37). When institutions engage in practices of good citizenship, such as expanding their outreach, recruitment, and admissions of disadvantaged populations, they stay congruent with their mission. In these ways, they are “practicing the kind of civic values and beliefs they are promoting” (40). Any behavior done on behalf of the university can be scrutinized as either promoting or devaluing the civic values they claim. The concept of institutional citizenship makes the university administration accountable to their own rhetoric.

The university can achieve a moral *ethos* by demonstrating those ideals. Anne Colby, of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, examined the values of institutions that participate in civic engagement programs. She found that the shared values among diverse institutions include the commitment to intellectual integrity, concern for the truth, mutual respect, open-mindedness, a willingness to listen, seriously considering the ideas of others, and public discussion of contested issues (Colby, *Educating Undergraduates* 43). In order to successfully implement a civic engagement initiative, whether at the university or course level, demonstrating these values of an institutional citizenship helps to frame the environment of civic learning.

Institutions can reinforce these values in many ways, including curriculum offerings, extracurricular programs, honor codes, and through faculty development (44). Faculty development is especially important if instructors are expected to take action and weave civic education into their curriculum. Colby, et al. found in their research that weaving moral and civic goals into a course curriculum did not jeopardize the specific academic goals of the course. In contrast, they found that the academic material, when combined with moral and civic teaching, strengthened both (45). The creative combination of coursework and civic goals can show students the potential importance of their studies. It can show them that what they learn in college can have real impact to their community.

Institutional citizenship is an ideal that has been met with occasional criticism. Although high ideals are wonderful for mission and vision statements, universities are subject to external pressures and high academic expectations. Simply put, administrations that support a mission of community engagement could be criticized because applied work is often undervalued (Bringle 196). This stems from a common (mis)belief that focusing on the practical needs of the community lessens the theoretical work of the university. Bringle suggests directly involving the administration in both conducting and evaluating community projects in order to validate the rigor and value of the programs.

Another concern for institutional citizenship is funding. No university is immune to economic conditions. Public institutions are vulnerable to outside pressures and decisions that affect the way they can operate. Even with policies in place to live up to shared civic values, available funds may not always allow for



universities to act in all the ways they would like. Interdisciplinary work is often less recognized, and in return less funded, in institutions that traditionally reward field-specific research (201). Challenges such as these can make it difficult to maintain congruency with mission statements that include community connections, but make it even more important when institutions do so.

Strategies from institutional citizenship to develop a moral *ethos* and achieve congruency of mission and action in the institution can be adapted to reinforce civic engagement in the speech classroom. Instead of institutional citizenship, framing a *classroom citizenship* concept can do for the class what institutional citizenship can do for the university, which is align the actions of those in positions of authority with the mission of civic engagement. This can be done through the way the instructor frames the course material and the way the instructor deals with issues that arise in the classroom. The instructor needs to practice congruency by remaining consistent with civic values in the way he conducts the classroom business. Instructors can also achieve a moral *ethos* by demonstrating ideals of fairness, equality, and respect. Consistently tying course material to real issues in the community and making sure alternative perspectives on issues are given a voice in classroom discussions reinforces the moral *ethos*.

***Service Learning***, as a result of Ernest Boyer's vision of civic education, is the most common prescription selected by colleges and universities as their method of civic engagement. Service learning offers particular strength in the way it connects the community to the coursework and in the valuable use of student reflection. Service learning is different from volunteerism in that it is:

*a course-based, credit-bearing educational experience in which students a) actively participate in an organized service activity that meets identified community needs and b) reflect on the service activity in such a way as to gain further understanding of course content, a broader appreciation of the discipline, and an enhanced sense of personal values and civic responsibility (Bringle & Hatcher 180).*

Incorporating course material into the work being done in the community is essential to service learning. It balances the benefits between the organization receiving the help and the students doing the service.

In service learning literature, community connection stands as the key to civic engagement. This means balancing the focus between benefits for the individual and benefits for the community. The value of the service learning is balanced when the student does not view the experience simply as an internship, but rather an opportunity to use course concepts to better her community. The focus of the benefit should not be solely on the student. For example, an accounting student may enter a service learning project to work on the accounting needs of a non-profit organization that provides after-school activities to at-risk students. She could use the opportunity to learn the complicated accounting practices of non-profits, and would realize a personal advantage in the job market as a result of the experience. This internship mentality would be problematic to the model of service learning as it offers no additional benefit to the student beyond what other internships or field learning experiences would offer. The service learning project should involve a level

of examination of the need for these after-school programs. According to best practices in the service learning literature, the student should be compelled to make connections between the work and the course (Elder, *Part II* 35). If the service learning is organized through her accounting class, she could examine financial causes and effects of the problem. The objective of civic education is that the student will gain more from service learning than merely applied skills.

Conversely, a student may select a service learning opportunity to volunteer in the community and focus solely on the benefit to the community. The student may not examine the volunteer work to dig deeper into social issues or the impact of the coursework on the volunteer work. For example, a student can volunteer at a homeless shelter as a janitor or food server. The benefits are clear to the shelter in that they receive help with cleaning or serving. But in this case, the student is not learning, he is merely serving. This is also problematic in that volunteerism, while a benefit to the community, may not necessarily connect the student's coursework and academic development to the community service work he is doing. He may miss the opportunity to develop as a citizen and a scholar as a result of this narrow focus. The student should be compelled to learn more about the root causes of homelessness and the issues involved in his local community. Bringle argues the structured approach to service learning connects the benefits of the recipient and the benefits of the individual student.

This need for balance in successful service learning programs underscores an important principle for successful development in a civically-engaged speech classroom. Students sometimes choose a speech topic that will lend itself well to

the format of a persuasive speech and yet fail to make a clear connection to themselves, the audience, or the community. For example, a student in the Fall semester of 2010 gave an informative speech on the Skunk River Navy, a service learning project at Iowa State University in which students work to improve the ecology of the Skunk River as it flows through Ames, IA. He was a student in the Biology department and a participant in the Skunk River Navy service learning project. His speech showed how he successfully connected his coursework with his work on the issue of water pollution in the Skunk River. The speech was exceptional in the way it connected to the speaker, the audience, and the community. By reinforcing the community connection within the class and tying it directly to the coursework, instructors can work to strengthen that connection. As with service learning, students need to understand how the needs of the community are served through their coursework. Just as the accounting student should learn how financial needs affect the community center, so the speech student should learn about where and how public discourse affects community issues as well.

Reflection is also key to a successful service learning project. Bringle and Colby both include reflection as necessary for students to fully realize the civic engagement outcomes of a service learning experience. Articulated learning models, such as Patti Clayton's DEAL (Describe, Examine, and Articulate Learning) guide to reflections are frequently used to help students realize their learning. A study conducted by Doris Lee and Karen Sabatino of the Pennsylvania State University Great Valley Graduate Center found that reflection can increase understanding of content, help link new knowledge with experience, and make

students more aware of their learning (Lee 169). However, students do not often possess the maturity and insight to arrive at these realizations on their own. To support successful reflection, instructors should provide structure and repeated opportunity for students to reflect (Colby, *Strengthening the Foundations* 252).

Reflection is a helpful way for students to connect their experiences to their course material. They are rich sources for documenting what they are learning in a course, the depth of their learning, and how critically they are thinking about it (Molee 241). By using reflections in the speech course, students can examine and consider how the topics are best served through public discourse. Tying the material (topics) of their speeches to the need for public discussion of the topics (why we need to hear about it) allows students to better see the value of public speaking through the usefulness of a specific topic.

In Clayton's articulated learning model, students describe the experience in detail. Writing a description helps recollection of details and solidifies memory of the events. They are required to examine the experience as it relates to their learning objectives. They examine the experience from a personal perspective, a civic perspective, and an academic perspective. Thinking critically about the experience from those angles prompts the student to participate in our definition of the civically-engaged education by connecting their course material to social, civic, and ethical problems in order to develop responsible ways of thinking, believing, and acting. Requiring students to make these connections consciously increases their awareness of the benefits to all parties involved (Colby, *Democracy* 256). It connects the accounting to the at-risk students in the community center; it connects

the volunteer janitor to the social issues of homelessness. Lastly, they must articulate their learning. Articulated learning involves the structured evaluation process of asking: “What did I learn?” “How did I learn it?” “Why does it matter/why is it important?” “In what ways will I use this learning/what goals will I set to improve my learning/my service?” (Bringle, *Civic-Minded Graduates*). These structured evaluations help students extract meaning from the service learning experience. The same reflection technique can be very effective for the speech student to be guided to reflect on how their speech topic relates to themselves, the community, and the coursework.

While it is easy to become passionate about the ideals embedded in service learning initiatives, such goals have not been pursued without challenges and controversy. Challenges for service learning include funding, willingness of teachers to participate, and fear of partisan bias in teaching. Lawry reported that among campuses with BA programs in the US, the level of financial commitment to civic engagement initiatives varied greatly. Public universities generally have less funding to dedicate to any program that does not generate revenue enough to sustain itself (Lawry 27). This revenue discrepancy only furthers the gap between the civic engagement rally cry and the practices available to the instructors. Instructors of the basic speech course are often the new hire, the adjunct, or the graduate teaching assistant, none of whom may be in a place to implement ambitious initiatives, and certainly not costly ones. This is all the more reason why in-class strategies are needed to promote civic engagement.

This reluctance to implement initiatives is further confirmed by Lawry's findings that non-tenured professors and instructors are actually hesitant to participate in civic engagement initiatives (Lawry 34). Lack of job security can lead to instructors not taking risks to implement civic education initiatives out of fear that their academic reputations could be lessened by the practical application of their work rather than the pure intellectual pursuits of their field. And this fear is not unwarranted. Noted rhetorician Stanley Fish fueled that fire with his 2003 comments on civic education, specifically in response to Anne Colby et al's book *Educating Citizens*. "Mine is the opposite fear, that the emphasis on broader goals and especially on the therapeutic goal of 'personal development' can make it difficult to interest students in the disciplinary training it is our job to provide" (Fish 3). Fish articulates the concern that focusing students on the broader purpose of their coursework will take emphasis away from the content. However, studies have shown that by making a connection between coursework and community, students better understand how their discipline functions (Colby, *Strengthening the Foundations* 25). Fish makes other observations about the institutions selected for Colby's study in civic engagement which have merit. The institutions included in the Colby study were participants in Project Pericles. This is a non-profit organization that works to develop civic engagement programs at participating institutions. These institutions have made a high level commitment to civic engagement and social responsibility. Most are private colleges and universities and many have religious ties that self-select their students already. Using students from these institutions as study data may not be representative of the students throughout the country

attending other types of colleges and universities. Students are usually enrolling in (or their parents are enrolling them in) those particular institutions with the clear objective of attaining an education that includes more than just learning their academic discipline. The moral responsibility of the institutions to these students may be different than for public institutions. It may be easier for those institutions to gain consensus and approval for civic engagement initiatives, but public institutions have a connection to civic education dating back to their charter.

Another concern occasionally impeding civic engagement initiatives are accusations of politically-biased teaching. Ironically, accusations are made from supporters of both major political parties. However, participants in Colby's Political Engagement Project (PEP) surveyed prior to, and subsequent to, a civic engagement program were found not to have changed their political party affiliation as a result of the civically-engaged education (Colby, *Democracy* 81). The goal behind any of these civic engagement initiatives is for students to learn the critical thinking skills to decide for themselves. Fish argues, "You can't make them into good people, and you shouldn't try" (Fish 3). However, as instructors we can help them develop critical thinking skills that will both prevent them from blindly following any ideal as well as be able to critically examine ideas, evidence, and claims to arrive at their own conclusions. And we should try.

Sifting through the most popular civic engagement scholarship leads a reader to surmise that service learning may be the final answer to civic engagement in higher education. But true service learning can be difficult to implement in large lecture-style speech courses due to the number of students and the constraints of



the course. These courses are often highly standardized courses in which a large group of instructors need to teach consistently according to pre-established norms. This is not necessarily a criticism of the method, but a fact that universities educate hundreds of students in speech each semester and the courses must be standardized. As a result of that standardization, universities are able to, within a certain degree of variation, deliver the same course consistently to numerous students semester after semester.

Nevertheless, some of the central concepts of service learning, such as establishing a community connection and facilitating guided reflection, can be adapted to serve the speech classroom. Chapter four will introduce some specific ways in which these concepts can be adapted for said purpose. Approaches and activities designed to enhance civic engagement in the speech classroom find important concepts and practices not only in the service learning literature, but also in deliberative democracy literatures that demonstrate how to incorporate civic and social issues and connect them to the course material. Deliberative democracy concepts can be used as a means of engaging students and making them think a little harder about course concepts and how they affect the student, the class, the university, the community, and so on until students are considering global effects.

***Deliberative Democracy*** scholarship also offers procedural strategies that promote civically-engaged education. Political scientist Martha McCoy, executive director of Everyday Democracy and frequent lecturer on deliberative democracy, describes it as a forum that “brings communities together to learn and deliberate about issues that citizens identify as important to them” (McCoy, *Another Picture*).

Participation and critical thinking are essential components of deliberative democracy that lend themselves well to the classroom. Deliberative models promote the idea of structure and process to enable productive participation. In such models, participants serve as representatives of the public in discussing issues that affect the community. The sessions are conducted with care to ensure all parties have an opportunity to contribute. Speech communication, according to Rosa Eberly, is an ideal forum for such practices.

Participation, in a deliberative sense, focuses on matters of mutual concern and requires students to think beyond themselves and their interests in pursuit of the common good (Eberly, *Rhetoric* 264). Models of deliberative democracy rely on structure to help achieve the goal of fairness. Each person is allowed an opportunity to speak and share opinions and facts supporting their perspective on the issue being discussed. Issues forums that are facilitated using a set process ensure the voice of one is not lost amid the voices of the others. Participation in such a structured deliberation of issues allows students to put forth their own ideas and consider the ideas and perspectives of others. In a commonly used structure called participatory deliberation, students are asked to use their course concepts to adapt their arguments to appeal to the group. Everyone in the group is given an equal chance to speak and make their claims, and the group works to find consensus. The group provides the mechanism by which individuals can set self-interest aside as they work to determine what is best for the community. Gerard Hauser, professor of Communication at the University of Colorado at Boulder, contends that through deliberative participation, people are able to think beyond their own self-interests to

realize areas of mutual concern (Hauser 264). The fairness of the process of deliberation is tied directly to the legitimacy of the results. The process of deliberation needs to go further than exchanging epistemological information between two knowledgeable people (265). It needs to create meaning and understanding of perspectives and different points of view.

Participation in deliberative bodies should guide people through a process in which different perspectives are voiced and heard by all members of the group. Listening should be as important as speaking in these sessions as the goal is to learn from as well as inform others. David Matthews, president of the Kettering Foundation, asserts that “the very act of participation *teaches*, as citizens learn what it means to be part of a public. In that sense, deliberation is ‘public making’” (qtd in McMillan 241). The act of participation is, in fact, one form of civic engagement.

Critical thinking in speech communication pedagogy is not anything new. It is a standard in any college education, civically-engaged or not. But critical thinking can be applied to foster civic engagement in the basic speech course. Students are encouraged in all of their classes to elevate their critical thinking; having specific exercises for students to work through can show them how to exercise critical thinking. McCoy finds the value of critical thinking in civic engagement to use reasoned arguments to help make real decisions of public policy (McCoy, *Deliberative Dialogue* 117). This value emphasizes, again, the need for outcomes to be a goal which differentiates deliberation from conversation.

Critical thinking does not itself foster civic engagement. Civic engagement through critical thinking means carefully examining elements of issues ranging from

epistemological to social implications. Critical thinking needs to go beyond critical examination of facts to thoughtfully consider how the facts impact the members of the community. Social, economic, cultural, and other factors matter to a community and should therefore be given consideration. This is why each member is given a voice in the deliberation, to ensure that facts alone do not drive the outcome but that community interests are heard as well.

Work in the field of critical thinking is filled with contributions from psychologist Linda Elder and Richard Paul, both from the Center for Critical Thinking. Together they have developed numerous tools for facilitating students' critical thinking with a variety of foci. Each of their tools uses a set structure to initiate critical thinking. Elder and Paul have found that following a structure helps students work through their ideas and conclusions to develop thorough analysis and fair-minded thinking (Elder, *Part I* 32). Customizing and utilizing their guides in classrooms can be specified to work toward civic engagement.

Critics of deliberative democracy theories argue that it is either too narrow or too broad in structure. Some contend that the use of deliberation is too broad and that the term is being used to simply mean to "talk about" (Bachtiger 34). This charge can be addressed by the facilitator actively working to keep groups on task. Providing an opportunity for discussion is different than guiding structured deliberation. Therefore, the adherence to structure is what allows for deliberation to work at an elevated level above conversation.

The deliberative structure itself is the origin of another criticism suggesting that deliberation can be too structured to foster meaningful outcomes. The benefit of

the structured model is that all who are able are given a chance to be heard. However, this model lends itself to the risk of applying constraints too strictly and inhibiting true consensus (39). Allowing for a variety of communication practices such as testimony and storytelling can increase the effectiveness and widen the scope in the deliberation. The facilitator needs to take an active role in making sure the structure of the deliberation is appropriate to the needs of both the issue and the group.

The commitment to civically-engaged education can come from anywhere. University presidents commit to national initiatives; department chairs and faculty can implement localized programs; and yet there is still an absence of scholarship about individual instructors in standardized courses. How can a single instructor who teaches a few (of many) sections of a required university course make an impact toward civically-engaged education? The most important answer to that question is that the instructor needs to take the responsibility on herself. The instructor must be engaged and committed to the outcome of civic engagement. She can adapt existing strategies of institutional citizenship by exercising congruency between her civic objectives and her classroom conduct and cultivating a moral *ethos*; she can use service learning strategies such as creating connections between the course content and the community as well as facilitating guided reflection; and she can integrate deliberative democracy practices that require participation and critical thinking. These strategies can be adapted to fit the specific needs of the speech classroom for the purpose of promoting civically-engaged education.

## Chapter Three: Traditional Approaches to Civic Education

The rhetorical tradition is a potentially rich area to mine for resources to enhance civic engagement in the contemporary speech classroom and has historically been tied to training in civic responsibility. From the classical rhetorical tradition to some current classroom practices, a thoughtful researcher can find a long history of interconnection between the two. According to Stanley Bonner, students of the classical period were educated with the goal of preparing them to participate in public life. Today, education in speech communication has begun to honor that historical interconnection and several scholars are introducing ways to bring the civic responsibility of the speaker back into the curriculum.

***The rhetorical tradition*** is the foundation upon which much of current speech communication pedagogy is built, but few current texts commit even a chapter to exploring this tradition. By looking more closely at this tradition we can reinvigorate the vision and the practices of the contemporary speech classroom with an eye to meeting the call for preparing civically-engaged students.

The classical rhetorical tradition includes the concept of the ideal orator. In that period it was thought, among the prominent scholars, that a good speaker should be a good person as well. This concept is illustrated in examples from Plato, Cicero, and Quintilian, among others. These scholars worried about deceitful speakers misleading people with their crafty dialogues and wanted students of rhetoric to understand they had a moral responsibility to their audience. Plato had taken care to demonstrate the importance of content over style in *The Phaedrus*. In

that dialogue, Socrates finds himself time and again trying to show the ignorant Phaedrus that mere style is of no consequence if it does not convey something of deeper meaning.

Cicero believed in the idea of teaching civic virtue in conjunction with teaching rhetoric. He underscored this when he pointed out that Socrates "separated the science of wise thinking from that of elegant speaking, though in reality, they are closely linked together" (Cicero 335). This notion illustrates how the struggle to include civic engagement in teaching has been a long-fought battle. The same holds true today in that we continue to teach students that communication combines what they are saying with how they are saying it. Cicero contended that rhetoric (discourse) was the way to elevate society, that discourse could function to "gather scattered humanity into one place, or to lead it out of its brutish existence in the wilderness up to our present condition of civilization as men and as citizens, or, after the establishment of social communities, to give shape to laws, tribunals, and civic rights" (Cicero 294).

Quintilian later articulated the moral responsibility of a speaker, "The definition that oratory is the science of speaking well agrees excellently, for it embraces all the virtues of oratory at once and includes also the character of the true orator, as he cannot speak well unless he be a good man" (Quintilian, II.XV.34) Each of these examples from the classical rhetorical tradition demonstrates the same exigency found in the civic engagement call to action today, that in education, speech (rhetoric, oratory, discourse) should be intertwined with civic responsibility.

But students do not now, nor did they then, come by those skills naturally, they have always needed instruction. Getting students to the point where their discourse could elevate society was, and is, a disciplined art (Bonner, 1977). Teaching students to make practical considerations when deliberating arguments meant teaching and practicing the wisdom of *phronesis*. The methods of teaching in ancient Greece were handed down, with each generation enriching the practices. Quintilian took great care to document this traditional pedagogy that is known as the *progymnasmata*, or the preliminary exercises. Both *phronesis* and the *progymnasmata* provide valuable insight into the ancient orator as well as lead us to useful concepts to apply to today's classroom.

***Phronesis*** is an ancient concept of practical wisdom. This concept originated even before Plato's time and has been translated many times to have meanings ranging from "thoughtfulness" to "prudence," making a consistent definition problematic. For the purposes of this paper, *phronesis* will be considered by its more common definition as "the art of *practical wisdom*." Communication scholar Lois Self examined Aristotle's concepts of *phronesis* found in the *Nicomachean Ethics*. She found Aristotle's model of human virtue to be the *phronimos*, a "man of practical wisdom" (Self 131). Practical wisdom is exercised, according to Self, as a social utility and responsibility that treats matters of the public good (135). According to Aristotle, *phronesis* involves "the capacity to act with regard to human goods" (quoted in Self, *NE* 1141b 16). This concept is useful in civically-engaged education in that the matters of the community need to be taken into consideration along with the matters of the individual.



*Phronesis* is more than simply the ancient idea of practicality; it is an applicable concept for civic discussions and deliberations today. By employing practical wisdom, we attend to arguments and facts while considering actual issues affecting our community. In this way, deliberation can progress beyond entrenched inflexible positions of individual ideals to, as Michael Mendelson articulated in his book *Many Sides: A Protagorean Approach to the Theory, Practice and Pedagogy of Argument*, make the “transition from individual perception to social judgments” (Mendelson 51). The inclusion of *phronesis* allows the deliberation to consider the practicality of possible solutions to issues. Mendelson also discusses deliberation as it relates to *phronesis* in that reasoned choices cannot be made until opposing views have been discussed. *Phronesis* is concerned with what can actually be done rather than with the ideal of what *should be done* or what is *best* for either side. It champions the position of the best practical decision, what can be done (Self 133). As we have seen, this ancient concept is echoed in the current practices of deliberative democracy when participants listen to alternative positions of an issue before coming to a reasoned decision that grounds itself in the practicality of the particular situation.

*Phronesis* is often connected to the concept of decorum, which I will not delve into at great length, but nonetheless mention here as it relates to *phronesis* and the necessity of considering what action is called for by a particular occasion. This concept is illustrated in the rhetorical teaching of Cicero when he wrote in *de Oratore*, “For, after all, the foundation of eloquence, as of everything else, is wisdom. In an oration, as in life, nothing is harder than to determine what is appropriate”

(Cicero 339). We can look for *phronesis* and decorum to present themselves in our speech classrooms when students are able to make respectful choices and inclusive remarks. This could be as simple as a student responding to a diverse demographic and being mindful of their word choices. A student who, in my Summer 2010 class, changed words in her speech from, “since way before we were born” to “during the decades of the 60s and 70s” made a decorous choice and showed respect to a few older students in the class as well as this instructor.

***The progymnasmata*** is another element of classical tradition that blended teaching civic virtue and rhetoric. This formal education process began by teaching children simple exercises designed to teach fundamental skills while reinforcing values and traditions. The exercises grew in complexity and difficulty to eventually prepare students for public life. These preliminary exercises, commonplace in the Roman education system, typically consisted of twelve to fourteen exercises designed to teach rhetorical skills. Roman education emphasized the responsibility of students to become good citizens and participate in public life. Instruction, therefore, wove speaking skills and civic content together so students learned them seamlessly. The lessons were learned in succession to build students into responsible and skilled speakers. Not all exercises remain relevant to a modern college speech course, but many reveal useful tools for advanced critical thinking.

Beginning exercises in rhetorical training included simple exercises, such as storytelling. Lessons were designed to reinforce moral values while teaching invention and style. Students practiced telling Aesop’s Fables or myths of the Roman gods. Later, as the students passed from their grammar teachers to the

rhetoric teachers, the content of their work became more focused on real issues and situations occurring in the community. These later exercises developed the students' understanding of different roles in society while developing their skills in argumentation, reasoning, and critical thinking. The *progymnasmata* exercises were scaffolded in such a way that each exercise built upon the previous one. Instructors challenged students to combine their skills as the exercises grew more complex. The instructors' involvement was paramount to the success of the training. They were responsible for deciding the order of the exercises as well as deciding the content for each student (Bonner 254). They evaluated whether or not students were ready to move from one exercise to another. The *progymnasmata* exercises grew in difficulty as the students advanced their way through the rhetorical education. Scaffolding practices provide a structure that is as useful today as it was in ancient Rome. Instruction in many fields is built in the same manner by teaching the basic functions of the discipline and then building new skills upon the previous layer.

Students were expected to contribute much original thought to their exercises even though they were familiar with the stories (Bonner 260). Rehearsing strategies of summary and embellishment helped students learn to explain and expand upon material, while developing storytelling skills helped bring meaning and understanding to the audience. These elementary exercises were needed in a speech to make better connection between the speaker and the audience by tying them together with a story. Today's speech students also need to learn to develop their ideas beyond reporting facts. Skills developed in these exercises are relevant for today's

classrooms because students must take the research of others and present it within their speech in their own words while giving credit to the originator of the facts or ideas.

The *progymnasmata* exercises of *refutation* and *confirmation* are among the most basic, and important, exercises for students to use to develop their arguments. In Roman education, students learned *refutation*, how to address an opposing argument, before learning how to support their own position on an argument (Burton, *Silva Rhetorica*). These exercises are essential to today's classroom as students are often concerned that showing an opposing view will diminish rather than support their argument; ergo, they often omit this essential step for fear of weakening their speech. By requiring students to fully understand the arguments against their position, instructors better prepare them to fully develop their arguments.

*Confirmation* provides the counterpoint to refutation. Here the Roman students learned to confirm, or support, a story using a set formula. For confirmation, the student began by praising the teller of the story. He then summarized the story using the skills of summary and embellishment. His final task in this exercise was to confirm the correctness of the story as being: manifest, probable, possible, logical, fitting, and profitable (Burton). Favorite topics for refutation and confirmation came from poetry and mythology like Apollo's love for Daphne, Medea's murder of her children, or Homeric themes such as the story of Chryses and his daughter from the *Iliad* (Bonner 263). The merits of these exercises for today's classroom again lie in the provided structure. The opening statements of

the exercises set up the tale to come just as we strive to have students give thesis statements or central ideas to set up the speech to come.

It is clear that by the time students advanced to the middle exercises of the *progymnasmata*, they were required to have built upon their analytical skills to be able to argue many sides of an issue. A common example of the comparison exercise was for students to dispute a father's will between three brothers, an orator, a doctor, and a philosopher. The father, in the exercise, had left the estate to whoever could prove his art most serviceable to the community (Bonner 267). In this example, the students had to be able to analyze the value of each profession on multiple criteria in comparison to one another. A modern adaptation of the middle exercises would provide value for today's students to analyze social, civic, or ethical issues from points of view that differ from their own.

The exercise of *comparison* is still a particularly useful exercise. It provided useful tools for speakers to show a clear and complete understanding of their subject by comparing it thoroughly to something similar. In the modern public speaking classroom, *comparison* is most often taught as analogical reasoning. This is often the type of reasoning that most students grasp first in the study of reasoning. It is an effective form of reasoning because it ties the new knowledge to something already known to the students. Often in their informative and persuasive speeches students will make a comparison using analogical reasoning that will help clarify concepts for their audience. For instance, a student used analogical reasoning to explain the impact of ocean noise pollution on marine habitats. Since her audience lived in Iowa she decided to use a comparison between ocean habitats (new

knowledge) and the lake habitats in Iowa (something known to her audience). She described the negative impact of fishing boats stirring up water and driving fish away from their natural homes. She then compared the effects to those that were being felt in the oceans from larger vessels. If the exercise were modified to frame a comparison in terms of civic relevance, it would be useful for fostering civic engagement.

In other exercises, Roman students were required to vary their lines of argument. For example they may have been asked to prepare emotional arguments invoking *pathos* for claims that had already been supported through *logos*. Students were also asked to draw out emotional appeals, sometimes positive and sometimes negative. In today's classroom, students can benefit from adaptations of these exercises to realize the importance of the emotional appeal *pathos* to solidifying the logical appeal. Aristotle included all three appeals, *ethos*, *logos*, and *pathos*, as necessary for appealing successfully to an audience. Students often focus on one without including the trifecta of all three appeals to make the argument most effective.

The penultimate exercise of the *progymnasmata* is *thesis*. This is perhaps the most comprehensive as it draws from the skills built in all previous exercises. Students were required to argue both sides of an argument of a general and wide nature. The themes were not specific issues but rather sweeping general questions that have no clear right or wrong answer such as 'Should one marry or not?', or 'Should one take to seafaring or not?', or 'Does the soldier deserve more credit than the lawyer?' (Bonner 271). By having to consider the complete argument (both pros

and cons of many sides), the student stretched his critical thinking and used *phronesis* to arrive at an acceptable and well-supported decision. For today's classroom, this exercise is important for that very reason, to consider other sides to an argument. Hence, within this exercise we find a rich concept to support development of activities for the current classroom that will help build better citizens who can think critically and develop arguments with the considerations of others in mind. Scaffolding a series of exercises can help today's students achieve success in the same way—by building the skills in succession.

The last exercise, *defending or attacking a law*, is much like the *thesis* activity in that it incorporates many of the previous skills in order to successfully complete the exercise. To the ancient pedagogues, arguing legal questions was the pinnacle of the rhetorical training. The detailed formulas demonstrated the critical thinking ability of the student. Students needed to draw upon the skills learned in the earlier exercises to consider “the person, the act, the place, the time, the manner, and the motive” (Bonner 263). There would be no way to complete this exercise as a mere performance. Also, the subject matter showed what the teachers valued as the highest responsibility of rhetoric: the law. We know this final exercise used the following formula during the time of Theon and Quintilian. The law was first examined for problems with the wording. Was the law unclear? Did it contradict itself within the wording of the law? Then the law was examined to see if it was honorable and just, expedient, practical, and necessary (Bonner 272). This set formula prepared the students for application of their rhetorical training in the public forum. Since the necessity to contribute to the *polis* was the ultimate goal clearly

supported by the position of this exercise as the “final” so to speak. For today’s classroom, this exercise is similar to the persuasive speech. The students, having built their skills during a semester of learning, combine them for a successful persuasive speech. Ultimately, this speech requires analytical and critical thinking skills combined with storytelling skills to relate to the audience. Using this formula, students can do as the Romans did, defend or attack a policy.

The exercises of the *progymnasmata* provided a strong foundation for rhetorical education. They were known as the preliminary exercises because once mastered, the student then continued to learn rhetoric through practical application in real life. Elements of these exercises were used to argue, defend, praise, criticize, and yes, to entertain from the time of the ancient Romans to modern day. All *progymnasmata* exercises were conducted in front of the other students so the lessons learned were public. The arguments, whether well or poorly supported, were public. The successes or failures of the students were public. Today the importance of the audience continues to be reinforced each and every day in the speech classroom. Doing the exercises with groups of peers develops critical thinking not only about questions of structure and argument, but also about the ways speakers consider their audience.

Arriving once again in our modern classroom, we can take from the rhetorical tradition the concepts of *phronesis* and the scaffolded structure of the *progymnasmata* as tools to better weave civic responsibility back into the speech curriculum. Instructors can include thought-provoking questions and structures in deliberative sessions to invoke the use of practical wisdom. Workshops can be



structured in such a way as to scaffold learning from one task into the next in order to build the knowledge of the students through exercises like those included in the *progymnasmata*. These important concepts should not be left in our history, but rather brought to life with the renewed purpose of civically-engaged education.

## Chapter Four: Civic Engagement in the Basic Speech Course

As we have seen, we can immerse ourselves in the current discourse of civic engagement in the fields of higher education, communication, and political science only to find that everywhere the call is the same for higher education to promote civic engagement. We have seen possible strategies for action from institutional citizenship, service learning, deliberative democracy, and the educational processes of the classical rhetorical tradition. This brings us to the original question motivating this thesis: What is to be done at the course level? What can I do for my classes to connect course material to social, civic, and ethical issues and help students develop responsible ways of thinking, believing, and acting?

Civically-engaged education can be fostered in the basic speech course by taking successful elements from institutional citizenship, service learning, deliberative democracy, and the rhetorical tradition to build a variety of workshops and activities designed to connect course material to current issues. From institutional citizenship we can create a classroom citizenship that builds a moral *ethos* and shows congruency between the mission of the class and the actions of the class and instructor. Instructors can fully embrace the responsibility of fostering a civically-engaged classroom. From service learning we can glean the benefits of a community connection and guided reflection. Students can use exercises to identify relevant issues in their community to use as speech topics. They can be instructed in guided reflection to become aware of personal growth, learning outcomes, and civic connections in their work. Based on insights from the deliberative democracy

literature, instructors can design workshops to promote participation and critical thinking. From the classical rhetorical tradition, we can use the concept of *phronesis* as well as the structure of the *progymnasmata* to connect the art of speaking to the civic responsibility of the speaker. Creating peer workshops to carry out these tasks can help connect the student speaker with her audience. Peer involvement is vital to the success of civic engagement in the speech classroom as classmates provide the connection with others in the community. It restores the public in public speaking even within the confines of the classroom. Students are able to grow their skills over the course of the semester and build upon skills developed in previous exercises.

There are certainly many activities and strategies for implementing civically-engaged education into a curriculum. Individual instructors can set the tone by establishing a classroom citizenship that builds a moral *ethos* and shows congruency between the civic mission of the class and the actions of the instructor. Civic engagement can be fostered through a series of large group, small group, and individual activities. Specific lesson plans to guide instructors through possible activities designed to enhance these outcomes are included in the Appendices. These activities work to establish a civic focus in the classroom environment in two ways: first, by facilitating discussion of real issues that affect the classroom public as well as the community outside the classroom; and second, by guiding students to use deliberative processes and critical reflection to reinforce civic engagement in the classroom. Each of these activities is important and could be a helpful to the instructor in class, but it is the combination of these strategies that will realize the ultimate benefit to the students and the community.

The contextual constraints faced by each instructor, each group of students, each public speaking course, and each institution mean that the specific details of the classroom activities in the Appendices will require adjustment and revision to be useful. What is more widely applicable are those general processes supported by the literature that public speaking instructors can deploy to accomplish the goal of civic engagement through a variety of classroom activities. Research and my own classroom experience demonstrate that, by establishing an expectation of classroom citizenship, connecting coursework to the community, requiring participation, facilitating deliberation, and adding new elements to traditional public speaking tools such as peer critique and reflection—whether through activities such as those included in the Appendices or through other means—public speaking instructors can contribute to the civically-engaged education of their students. In the pages that follow, I will explore the specifics of each of these pedagogical strategies while weaving in comments from my own students' reflections as incremental evidence for their effectiveness.

### ***Classroom Citizenship***

Establishing classroom citizenship is a way of framing the course and establishing expectations at the beginning of the semester. By getting students engaged on day one, the instructor can set the expectation for a high level of rigor in the course. Such framing also allows instructors to show their commitment to connecting course material to civic engagement. Many students come into the basic speech course believing that they are going to learn how to gesture and use their voice and breathing to improve their speech delivery. These students are not

necessarily expecting a course focused on critical thinking and civic engagement. We who have studied rhetoric can fondly recall the frustrated Socrates under the plane tree trying to get Phaedrus to understand that content is more important than style (Plato 158). Similarly, students in basic speech courses often feel they, or a classmate, have delivered a “better” speech than another student based solely on physical performance. Those students have a difficult time understanding that their content and critical thinking are of more value than the pitch of voice and eye contact. It is the responsibility of instructors to establish those expectations right away and to contextualize deliberation of actual issues within a broader understanding of rhetorical principles (Murphy 82).

Congruency in mission and action can be demonstrated by the instructor by letting the mission of civic values be known and by living by those values. It is important if an instructor’s goal is to establish a classroom citizenship like Bringle’s institutional citizenship that expectations be made clear to the students about what that means and what that will look like in practice. Each semester I include a statement on my syllabus that reads: “Mutual Respect is required. Class would be very boring if we were all the same and had the same ideas and opinions. We are a diverse people and I require respect for each of us.” I always have the class read the syllabus out loud, with individuals reading different components of my class policies. When we get to this policy, I share part of my own story about growing up on military bases around the world and living in cultures where I have been a minority. It often surprises students who expect a middle-aged Caucasian woman

from Des Moines to be originally from Des Moines. I find that by sharing this information students may become a little more interested in me but more importantly, students who may feel atypical for a variety of reasons (culture, age, gender orientation, special learning needs, etc.) might feel a bit more comfortable. I aim to show congruency between that course policy and the way I conduct my class and my life. Any student who runs into me outside of the classroom will find that mutual respect intact.

The instructor must be committed to classroom citizenship in practice as well as on paper in order to get students to engage. Establishing that congruency is important to gain the trust of the students. Anne Colby reinforces the benefit of that strong connection, “Weaving moral and civic issues into the heart of the curriculum offers the best hope of connecting with the hard-to-reach students and making sure that students already on an inspired path will not lose their way” (Colby, *Educating Undergraduates* 5). In addition to overtly stating civic engagement as an objective for the course (or even an option at various stages of the course) the instructor can facilitate activities to identify some social, community, or civic issues that affect the class population. In establishing classroom citizenship, the instructor may find that framing the class members as *a public* may be more effective for fostering critical thinking than framing them merely as an audience (Eberly, *From Writers* 166). In this way, students must consider the content and value of the speeches rather than simply the performance.

The instructor can build a moral *ethos* by practicing the values of good citizenship outlined earlier. For example, if in her life outside of the classroom, the

instructor is advocating that the local city council should use multi-media to allow citizens a variety of ways to access to their resources, she should practice equality and accessibility by using multi-media to make class materials available to her public, the students in the class. She could also practice inclusion by making an effort to find resources for students in the class who have learning needs that are not accommodated by the standard materials. Another example would be if the instructor negotiates with a student to make up an absence by attending another section to observe a day of speeches, she should practice fairness and equality by offering the same opportunity to make up an absence to other students. She can reinforce classroom citizenship by making expectations clear and communicating clearly when or if those expectations change. She can then expect the same considerations from the students in the class. I found one student's reflection very insightful on this matter:

*Something I have realized in this class is, how can I make people value and understand my opinions if I don't do the same for them? Especially with the persuasive speech, it was fun trying to think about all the ways someone could oppose my topic and be able to argue my point and back it up with evidence. Also, hearing others' ideas and opinions has opened my eyes to things I might not have thought about beforehand and has helped solidify my own thoughts.*

### **Connecting Coursework with the Community**

Another essential element of civic engagement that can easily find its way into the public speaking classroom is having activities that connect coursework with

the campus or broader community. Workshops offer an excellent opportunity to help students to accomplish that task. Social and civic issues from the local community can be used in class much like the *progymnasmata* exercises drew upon the civic issues of their time. Students were expected, beginning with the confirmation and refutation exercises, to focus on useful civic issues (Dubinsky 2). Today, the National Issues Forum (NIF) uses a variety of strategies in their forums to facilitate discussion of current issues. One format, *Naming and Framing Issues for Public Deliberation* can easily transfer to the public speaking classroom to help instructors facilitate deliberation. By implementing discussion of current issues into a class activity, students become engaged and can take on a sense of responsibility over the issues as well. Selecting a speech topic can be socially stressful for students. One student articulated that stress in his reflection, “*I didn’t want to stand up there and just give a boring speech and have everyone listening just hate me.*” It is important for students to feel their choices of topic are interesting to the other students in the class. Naming issues helps trigger ideas for speech topics and at the same time gives confidence to students that their ideas are interesting and worthy to be heard by the other students in the class.

It matters little whether an instructor uses the specific structure of the NIF, what is essential to the process of connecting the classwork to the community is that he devotes time for in-class discussion of issues that are important to students as individuals, as members of a group, or as members of the community. Having students generate a list of issues and facilitating brief discussion of each can help the class understand different perspectives on the various issues and who they



affect. These topic workshops might draw from the students' volunteer experiences since research by the Higher Education Research Institute at UCLA show that record numbers of incoming college freshman have already engaged in these kinds of activities (HERI 3). For example, if a student has volunteered in a senior home, the instructor can guide the discussion to identify issues that affect senior citizens such as fall prevention, medication costs, or even loneliness.

A pre-veterinary student in my class during the Spring semester of 2011 actively volunteered at the local animal shelter. She shared that experience with the class during informal conversations as well as during class participation opportunities such as answering a daily attendance question. She developed a caring *ethos* among her classmates. During a topic workshop she brought up the issue of spaying and neutering cats. Although it may have seemed unimportant to many members of the class, she was able to talk about her experience as a volunteer and how the problem of stray cats was costly, unhealthy, and how euthanizing them was sad. She combined her *ethos* with the *logos* of cost and the *pathos* of how many cats are euthanized in Story County each month. The class was better able to feel the impact of the problem based on stories from her volunteer work. Her informative speech, later in the semester, elaborated on this problem and creatively demonstrated (through the use of crafts of cardboard, straws, balloons, rubber bands, and a scissors) how to neuter a cat. The class was engaged and informed while also being absorbed in an issue important to the local community.

Identifying volunteer experiences has an added benefit of supporting student confidence since sharing their altruistic side helps them appear generous and

honorable to the class. Identifying community issues through the lens of volunteer experience is one way to reinforce classroom citizenship as well as recognize the efforts of individual students.

The students may come up with a wide variety of topics during these workshops ranging from sexual violence, to suicide, and from environmental issues such as flooding or pollution to the needs of the deaf and blind. All of these topics have come up in my own classroom discussions and, if discussion among course instructors at communication conferences is any indication, come up in most public speaking classrooms. But it is not enough for students to simply generate issues of interest or importance to them or that they believe the instructor will agree are important. The objective of this activity is for the class to discover and talk about issues in ways that invite them to see and consider the impact in the community. The rationale for this activity is supported by the findings that students welcome a classroom environment where they can discuss important issues (Colby, *Strengthening the Foundations* 24). By conducting an exercise like this, the instructor helps students to connect the coursework with the real issues in the community within the framework of what is important to the actual students in the class.

The informative speech about the ACCESS hotline that triggered my interest in the possibilities of civic engagement had a great impact on the class because it addressed an issue that affected their campus, their classmates, and their friends. It is likely they know someone who has needed the services provided by the hotline. Providing that information to the class may have proven useful to one of the listeners

in the audience. In contrast, during a different semester, a student gave a speech on noise pollution in the ocean. She was extremely knowledgeable and passionate about the topic. She had *ethos* as an animal ecology major and she made a connection between the noise pollution in local lakes affecting fish habitats and the large scale effects of noise pollution in the ocean affecting ocean habitats. It was a very good speech, but the connection to the community did not prove to be as impactful as the former. Perhaps if her speech had been given in a fishing seaport, it would have had more impact as the topic would have been more relevant to the audience. It should be noted that a public speaking class audience is able to connect to and care about issues that occur outside of their immediate geography, it just might be a more difficult talk for the speaker when the topic does not connect as clearly with the community.

One way to build upon the work of the topics workshop and to help students develop topics that connect their coursework to the community is to conduct a workshop to develop issue relevance. Instructors could use issues identified in the early topics workshops to facilitate discussions in which students identify which issues affect them or people they know in a representative way. Instructors can develop and conduct these workshops in a variety of ways depending on their individual objectives (see Appendix B for one specific approach). The class could revisit how the issues affect individuals, groups, and the community. Again, these exercises are to ensure students are learning to think, believe, and act responsibly.

Working through this type of issue relevance activity offers many benefits to the students, including having their voice heard, hearing others, and actively thinking

about multiple issues. Audience relation is important for effective public speaking. If topics are written on the board or posted around the room, students can show they have a connection to the issue using stickers or sticky notes. A student would then be able to see what issues affect his classmates and in return, they can see what issues affect him. This can build common ground as well as introduce students to issues they did not think could affect their contemporaries. Another benefit of this classroom activity is the discussion that can ensue. One student from Spring semester 2011 commented about participating in this type of workshop, *"I learned that everyone doesn't care about the same things that I care about."* It may have been a simple realization on her part, but the learning principle recalls Rosa Eberly's vision of the benefits of participation in that it, "requires students to think beyond themselves and their interests" (Eberly, *Rhetoric* 264).

The classroom audience is comprised of students enrolled in the speech class. These collections of students from different backgrounds and different majors serve as the standard surrogate "public" utilized by almost all basic speech courses. Our classrooms are not true public spaces; they are protopublic spaces (Eberly, *From Writers* 166). However, this is where students engage each other as representatives of the public. Here, in our protopublic bubble, we ask our students to consider the needs of others in the community. Students cannot do this individually; they must interact to understand others' needs and perspectives (Mathews 42). By having the class interact with one another in order to identify the community connections to the issues that become their speech topics, we re-insert the public into public speaking.

## ***Participation***

Another key concept in civic engagement literature is active participation. There are many ways to facilitate participation in the speech class like speaking up during activities, sharing experiences and opinions, providing feedback to peers, and of course, giving speeches. What is important for our purposes is to channel that participation intentionally for civic engagement. Instructors can get participation in a variety of ways that generate thinking about issues from a specifically civic perspective. Yes, giving a speech is clearly one way to participate, and all students must do so. However, the majority of a student's time is spent as audience members—in the civically-engaged classroom, that means the majority of their time is spent acting as a *public*. Students need to actively participate in class activities, discussions, and as listeners in order to truly be engaged. While establishing classroom citizenship and connecting coursework to the community, the students should be expected to participate by offering their experiences, their knowledge, and their opinions.

Instructors can establish an expectation of participation by having a simple participation element built into each class period. One idea for daily participation could be to use a daily question rather than a roll call to take attendance. I have used this strategy and found it to be a fun ice-breaker at the opening of a class; it relaxes speakers and gives the class a chance to get to know one another. There is a clear expectation for students to participate: it is unavoidable. The questions are non-threatening and no students can opt out of answering the daily question. Early in the semester the questions can be fun and designed to build a sense of shared

experiences in the class. These early questions might be something like, “What did you have for breakfast?”, or “What was your favorite cartoon growing up?” Later in the semester, the daily question can be used differently to connect the class to the content of each others’ speeches, “What did you learn during the informative round that you did not know before hearing the speech?”, or “What was one example of a persuasive argument that you found particularly compelling?” One class I recall was profoundly moved by learning the relatively slow speed a person could be traveling and still incur a concussion from a fall without a protective helmet. I did ask each student to find a unique answer to the attendance question, but many felt it necessary to echo that as a powerful persuasive moment. Instructors can adapt this kind of participation element for civic engagement by asking the class about local issues or even asking about the issues from classmates’ speeches. One student commented at the end of the semester about how the attendance question helped her relate to her classmates, *“Attendance questions help me to understand others’ points a lot. It seems silly question sometimes...In fact, these questions let me know others’ habits, favors. These factors may be more relatable than the words they said.”* By taking these steps we have the potential to create civic mindedness in our students, to change not only the way they interact in our classroom, but also the habits of mind, the ways they think, believe, and act when faced with discussions of social issues beyond the classroom.

Students can participate in a variety of other ways in class discussions. Jill McMillan proposes having participants represent missing voices in discussions (249). This could be a creative way to foster inclusion. They can also participate by

identifying who holds power over others within the context of the issues being discussed. Although identifying stakeholders and examining interests of those involved can be difficult, it is relevant to civic engagement by pressing students to think outside of their own perspective and interests. When students decide on a speech topic, they often work to build only their side of the case unless prompted to dig a little deeper. Concerns of others who are impacted by community issues are often overlooked simply because the student was not prompted to examine the issue in enough detail. Encouraging students to look for missing voices can help them to identify with minorities and understand their perspectives better (McMillan 249). This will be addressed further in the discussion on deliberation. Instructors can use a variety of strategies to ensure all students are heard and that no strong personalities drown out the quieter ones.

It is distressing to hear a speech about the problem of homelessness from a student who has never interacted with a homeless person or visited a shelter, or even talked with a volunteer. There are shelters in the community surrounding the university campus (even local teen shelters) where students could volunteer or simply talk to people to gain a better understanding of who they are and how they are impacted by such an issue. That is one example of an issue where discussion often occurs without stakeholders' voices being represented.

A further example of an issue that is most often given passive consideration as a speech topic is senior citizens driving. College students enjoy this topic and have amusing personal experiences and insurance data backing up their solution to restrict the driving privileges of senior citizens. But how many of these students

have spent time talking with an elderly person to understand their needs and the perspectives of someone who may be losing mobility and therefore some access to society? The issue is far more complex than I have heard covered in an eight minute persuasive speech. Students who actively seek out alternative perspectives to their own can enhance the quality of their speeches and more fully engage in the civic issues at hand. Students engage the community by participating as investigators of the issue. The more they look to the community for information and perspective, the more civically-engaged their work on the speech becomes.

### ***Deliberation***

Deliberation is a useful tool for fostering civic engagement. It differs from active participation in that deliberation uses structured formats to gather input from participants. Essentially, deliberation requires participation, but the reverse is not true. Deliberation is most effective when done in small groups using a structured guide. What this means is that students are given tools and guidelines for their deliberation rather than being expected to know how to deliberate simply by being put into groups. To ensure the deliberation has a civic focus, the instructions should be explicit to initiate consideration of questions such as: who is affected by the issue? What approaches to address the issue are being considered? What conflicts grow from this issue? The exercise in Appendix C is one example of a guided deliberation for the speech workshop, however instructors are encouraged to use and adapt resources to best meet the needs of their particular classroom.

The best time of the semester for issue deliberation would be after students have identified their topics and considered issues of relevance but before they have



completed research for their speeches. One student commented on the value of helping others in addition to receiving help in a small group exercise, *“The workshops were extremely helpful. I honestly learned a lot from those and from helping other people with their speeches.”* Small group deliberation forums can be utilized to promote practical and critical thinking. One such activity that has been used in classes by Michael Mendelson is in the form of a “midrash” exercise in which a student must examine an issue or statement from three or more perspectives (see Appendix D). To facilitate such deliberation, instructors can use whichever format they find most useful including those fashioned from the National Issues Forum, a traditional midrash, or formats available from other sources. What is essential to the process is determining what needs to be taken into consideration regarding the issues, ensuring all students are participating, and keeping the deliberation on track. Without those three elements, this purposeful exchange falls prey to the danger mentioned in chapter two and becomes unproductive conversation.

In order to gain the most from exercises such as these, students should take turns leading deliberation activities. The discussions should include issues that have been identified as speech topics. Set criteria should be established prior to the workshop to meet the civic engagement objectives of the class. Suggestions for criteria include identifying stakeholders, possible solutions, persons impacted by the issue, who has power over the issue, what are the constraints involved, etc. The end result of an activity like this would be to identify three or four choices of action for the issue resolution. Students have found this type of activity helpful in developing their speeches more completely. *“I think that I have thought more about*

*how my ideas might seem complete to me and in my head but to the audience there are missing points where they don't understand. I have learned to fix that by really developing my ideas and trying to think them all the way through and from a different perspective.”*

When conducted as a small group activity, the benefits are shared by all participants in the group. Each group member will be able to get ideas and feedback from other group members to improve the quality of his or her analysis of the issue while also considering the civic implications of the issue and its potential courses of action. However, benefits are also realized by the other group members sharing their ideas and opinions. *“The main thing I thought that helped me get someone else’s perspective on the topics were the workshops. This was great for us because we could bounce ideas off of one another if we wanted to and get a reaction from our group, who by this time weren’t afraid to tell me if I had a bad idea.”*

Students can be guided in small group exercises to explore who is affected by a certain issue on an individual, group, community, and global scale. From there, students can expand discussion of varying perspectives to the issue in question. One goal of workshops is to realize that the solution for one group affects members of other groups in different ways—nothing is as simple as it seems at first glance. The role of the instructor is important in any deliberation activity because students may have strong feelings and personal connections to discussion issues. Instructors, as facilitators, must stress the importance of “maintaining mutual respect and careful listening” (Murphy 79). *“I also thought about making sure I didn't offend*

*anyone with what I said and thought carefully about the word usage.”* By facilitating this kind of guided activity, students practice how the skills they learn in speech communication are used outside of the classroom in true public discourse (89). Participation in an activity like this allows students to better understand how their communication skills are put to work outside of the classroom in actual public deliberation. For example, two students in the Spring 2011 semester decided to speak on a revitalization project that has been proposed for the Campustown community that borders Iowa State University. Workshop deliberation opened their eyes to different people affected by the project and gave them the opportunity to consider different perspectives on the issue. After the workshop, the students continued the conversation (informally) as they left class. Other students joined in the conversation to offer their thoughts and opinions about the project and how it would affect the university, the students, and the community. This example demonstrates how participating in the workshops can initiate discussion of public issues and give students an idea of what deliberation would look like in a true public setting. Students in these workshops showed that they came to value and understand opposing opinions. Developing this type of thought process, to consider different perspectives and opinions, is a step forward toward becoming civically-minded.

Deliberation requires working through issues, not just discussing them. In addition to looking at questions of stakeholders and questions of impact on various communities, deliberation workshops are also useful for guiding students to consider the practicality of proposed solutions. Students have strong motivation to consider

issues of practicality, as it is usually a component of the grading criteria for the persuasive speech. Questions of practicality ask students who propose solutions to ask, is it feasible in this place and time? That question prompts consideration of *phronesis*. *Phronesis*, in a civic sense, incorporates the practicality of the solution not only in the sense of “can it be done,” but also “is it the best solution for the community.” When students lack a sense of *phronesis* the impact of their speech is weakened. In the Spring semester of 2010, a student had been impressed with an innovative bicycle storage mechanism he had seen featured on Chinese television. He insisted on proposing the same mechanism as a solution to the bicycle crowding on campus at Iowa State University. Two of the problems that emerged in this speech were first, that ISU does not have an issue with bicycle overcrowding, and second that the solution was not feasible for our campus. Both problems showed a lack of practical wisdom in the examination of his speech.

A more positive example of *phronesis* can be found in a speech from the Fall semester that same year. A student wanted to give his persuasive speech to convince the class members to adopt his physical fitness practice, *parkour* as a solution for students to have a regular physical fitness routine. He had determined his recommended outcome before he began the research on the topic. Once he began deliberating in workshops with his classmates and conducting his own research, he was compelled to change his recommendation. He still found his method to be the best for him, but through the exercise of practical reasoning he employed during deliberation with others, he found that recommending the same fitness routine for his classmates would not reflect a legitimate solution—it would be

closed-minded of him. This example shows *phronesis* not only in his speech, but also in the public speaking class. It would be ideal if speech topics all aimed to address grand issues of civic concern; however, the practical truth is that speech topics and solutions in the basic speech course can be successful even if they are addressing smaller scale issues that affect the lives of the students. Sometimes they just need to show the class that other voices are being heard when classmates are reasoning through a problem to arrive at a fair solution. A different student commented, *“Before this class, I had simply written my beliefs and figured that I didn’t need to back them up. Now I realize that when presenting, I need to try to connect with the audience if I want to get my point across.”*

### **Peer Critique**

Peer critique is a popular pedagogical practice used in many disciplines and in many different ways. Linda Nilson, director of the Office of Teaching Effectiveness and Innovation at Clemson University, summarized that based on a wide collection of research into peer critique, many positive outcomes including “developing critical thinking, communication, lifelong learning, and collaborative skills” have been realized (Nilson 34). These objectives are certainly consistent with speech communication objectives where peer critique is a thriving practice. As a peer in the class community, there is opportunity for students to evaluate not only each others’ work, but the civic considerations given within the work as well.

We have seen through much of this discussion the important role that peers play in student development of civically-engaged speeches. Peers must offer ideas and opinions in workshops about issues and their relevance, they must offer

knowledge, experience, and opinion during deliberation sessions, and they are considered by the speaker when selecting material and arrangement for speeches. Without peers, the concepts put forth here would not be possible. Without peers, the public in public speaking is absent. The influence peers have on one another is apparent, and I know from experience that peer opinion is highly valued by classmates. As observed by a student, *“The things that helped me came from the feedback after speaking. If they really gave you some good feedback it meant they were really paying attention and had some thoughts on it. If they just sort of said yeah sure it was good, then you knew they weren’t really into it from the start and you didn’t do a good enough job as a speaking to reach out to everyone.”* It is clear here that the level of interest shown by the critic was given value from the recipient. The speaker preferred detailed feedback. If feedback was robust, it validated the speaker that he had done a good job. Simply saying he had done a good job was perceived as indifference. That valued peer opinion could be channeled into a civically focused critique tool to encourage civic engagement. Peer critique guides could be enhanced with questions to evaluate civic elements of a peer’s speech such as: What the speaker’s topic an issue that is social, civic, or ethical? How did the speaker address the ways in which the issue affects members of the community? How did the speaker include information on the issue from different perspectives other than her/his own? Did the speaker allude to future considerations of this issue? Questions like these help the speaker as well as the critic better evaluate the content of the speech from a civic perspective.

The standard enrollment for a speech lab class at Iowa State University is twenty-two students. This means that each student has to not only prepare and deliver their own three major speeches, but they also listen to sixty-three speeches from their classmates. Students usually realize that they are learning as they prepare and deliver their own speeches. However, without guided critique, the learning that occurs during that valuable time as a listener can be lost on the student. Even the simplest activities can draw their attention to the connections they can make as citizens and classmates. *“In terms of understanding others view of my topic after I spoke, I think the thing that helped the most were the peer critiques.”* This simple reflection succinctly summarizes the value of peer critique in the speech classroom.

Speech courses already use the practice of peer critiques; in fact they are recognized as a valuable learning tool for the students. Students value the social acceptance and criticisms of their peers. “Although peer critiques improve students' critical-thinking ability and provide them with a broader spectrum of evaluation, the less obvious benefit is motivational. Students love to offer their opinions. As they share what they think, they take genuine pleasure in seeing — and contributing to — the work their peers have created” (Reynolds 5). In this way, peer critiques are an opportunity to take criticism that could be potentially a source of friction and turn it into momentum.

The ideal of the citizen critic, an important component of all of the above concepts, was put forth by Rosa Eberly as “a person who produces discourses about issues of common concern from an *ethos* of citizen first and foremost—not as

expert or spokesperson for a workplace or as a member of a club or organization. Citizen critic is thus as much normative as it is empirical: it is as much hope as it is reality” (Eberly, *Citizen Critics* 1). Critical thinking is often tied to the practices of a good citizen as well as practices of personal, civic, and social responsibility. Our ability to discern good information from bad and to critically examine claims and evidence is important to our ability to think, believe, and act with a greater good in mind. Development of this ability is a major component of civically-engaged education. One way the peer critique tool can be adjusted to incorporate civic education is to take Eberly’s lead and include a question (or questions) on the critique form to spark the peer critic to evaluate the speech from the perspective of a citizen—to evaluate how the speech addresses the concerns of the community.

### ***Reflection***

Reflection is another key requirement found in much of the civic engagement literature. We can find praise for reflection in pedagogy dating back to John Dewey who claimed reflection was “active, persistent and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it, and the further conclusions to which it tends” (qtd in Ash 137). Guided reflection is a popular way to enable students to take their experiences and turn them into “conscious learning” (Bringle, *Colleges* 107). Reflection is already a common practice in the public speaking classroom, but by approaching it more intentionally, instructors can enhance the impact of their course on civic engagement outcomes for students.

Many instructors find that students struggle with time management to complete assignments in several classes and often finish in a hurried fashion. The



quality of the work may be acceptable, but the assignments, once complete, are often forgotten by the student. “Structured reflection requires students to step back from their immediate experience to make sense of it in new ways” (Colby, *Democracy* 250). Reflection is a way to move beyond the assignment mill to pause and have the students create meaning from the work they have done. As they take time to create that meaning, they can be prompted to consider their learning as citizens along with their learning as students. Valuable reflection questions can include asking: What did I learn about myself as a speaker or civically-engaged student? What did I learn about other members of the class or community?

An opportune time for reflection can come after research has been gathered and the speech has been written, but before the speech has been delivered to the class, students can use a guided reflection exercise to step back and settle their learning (see Appendix E). This kind of activity is often used as a chance for the student to examine and reflect on their experience researching and writing the speech. The reflection can be expanded to include questions that initiate examination of the work and the speech from a civic perspective. Additional questions can be used to spark consideration of future civically-minded thinking such as: In what ways would a person discuss this issue using concepts from the public speaking course? Where would such a discussion take place? Through reflection, a student who chose to speak on the issue of pollution in the local river may identify an opportunity to speak in public about his ideas for improving water quality. By initiating such reflection, a student could see where the skills learned in speech class can be applied at a city council meeting to have her ideas heard by elected officials

with the power to implement solutions. Asking civically-focused questions allows the student to consider the value of civic engagement beyond the confines of the classroom.

Sarah Ash and Patti Clayton developed the popular articulated learning model DEAL (Describe, Examine, and Articulate Learning, described in chapter two). They have found that reflection pushes students to have a better awareness of the civic issues they were focused on. “We wanted them to be able to articulate, for example, why the issues are so complex, what factors contribute to or detract from the situation they are experiencing, and the roles that they themselves play as agents of change.” Specific objectives for the reflection are helpful for any instructor developing a guided reflection tool for his class. Although their work was in conjunction with service learning projects, Ash expresses that individual reflection tools are also important tools for students in the speech classroom (Ash 141). Reinforcing course objectives through the reflection tool also demonstrates the instructor’s commitment to the course objectives. Students can see the consistency between the coursework and their own learning articulated in the reflection.

In my first year as a speech instructor, I took time at the end of each semester to write to each student about how he or she had achieved the goals set at the beginning of the semester in a background survey. After I had begun to research reflection as a tool for learning, I decided to offer this exercise as a reflection my students could complete for a few extra credit points. What I found was that students welcomed a chance to look back over the semester and really consider their learning outcomes. I saw first-hand how reflection reinforced their learning.

Students who had set goals to “not get as nervous” provided reflection on more than just their physical delivery. They commented on audience relation and understanding others’ points of view. By allowing the students to evaluate their learning based on their own goals, they were able to examine their accomplishments on criteria that they defined themselves. This is a practice I plan to continue and include additional questions about civic engagement.

Strategies outlined in this chapter such as classroom citizenship, connecting coursework with the community, participation, deliberation, peer critique, and reflection can be used to foster civic engagement in the speech classroom. I have experienced incremental success in my own classes by implementing a few of these strategies as options for my students. A robust series of scaffolded workshops that blend all of these strategies may prove to be even more effective. The workshops and activities included in Appendix A-E are one example of such a series. Individual instructors could modify this model to meet the needs of their particular goals. The series begins with a large group activity (Appendix A) designed to name and frame social, ethical, and civic issues that touch the lives of the students in the class. The second large group activity (Appendix B) aims to identify issue relevance. It expands on the issues identified in the first activity by having students identify which issues have touched their lives personally or peripherally. These first two activities can help students make topic choices for their speeches based on the issues identified by the class. Once speech topics have been chosen, it is time for the third component of the series (Appendix C) which is a small group issues deliberation workshop. In this workshop, students use guidelines to closely examine the issues

to find other perspectives and potential solutions. The next activity in the workshop series is a midrash (Appendix D). The midrash exercise could be used as an additional small group workshop or can be done by the student as an individual activity. Individual guided reflection is an individual activity (Appendix E) and should be completed by students preferably before they deliver their speech. However, if completed after the speech has been given to the class the instructor may want to include additional questions for the student to reflect about delivering speech. This activity uses a modified version of Clayton's DEAL reflection tool (Appendix F). It prompts the student to reflect on their speech as well as the civic impact of the content. Critical thinking has been stressed as an important component of learning that is woven throughout the course. Appendix E offers two versions of critical thinking guidelines that have been slightly modified to meet the needs of the speech student. Students can use these guides individually to better develop their speeches. I believe that working these strategies intentionally into the framework of the course helps strengthen classroom citizenship and can ultimately help foster civic engagement in the speech classroom.

## Chapter Five: Conclusions and Looking Forward

Listening to the voices from our distant and recent past has brought the call for civic engagement into contemporary educational discourse. Our civic engagement literature today is filled with the ideas brought forth from our educational forefathers to prepare students to be good citizens. Morris J. Riggs, an 1883 graduate of Iowa State University echoed Adonijah Welch's sentiment that college should connect practical studies with academic pursuits. The ISU Memorial Union is engraved with Riggs' words, "We come to college not alone to prepare to make a living, but to learn to live a life."

Instructors who hear the civic engagement call to action have a wealth of resources from both modern educational literature and the rhetorical tradition from which to draw strategies and activities to work toward this goal. The public speaking course, in particular, has ample opportunity to weave civic engagement into the course curriculum. This can be done by establishing classroom citizenship, making connections between the community and the coursework, practicing guided deliberation, peer critique and reflection while scaffolding activities to build learning in succession.

Classroom citizenship can be established to frame the speech course for students in order to make civic engagement a known priority. This requires the instructor to be fully committed to living in congruency with the civic mission she defines for her class. Conducting the class with the values of a responsible citizen such as fairness, equality, and respect can build a moral *ethos* and demonstrate the

qualities she expects from her students. Framing the course within these expectations lays the foundation for the scaffolding to come.

From the practices of service learning we draw the value of making a connection between the coursework and the community. This concept can be reinforced with student participation in the class. Students can draw from experiences in their own communities to identify relevant issues to use as speech topics. This can inextricably connect the students' community with the coursework. Practices like this can build the civic engagement structure to prepare students for deliberation of these real issues in their communities.

Peer involvement throughout the course continues to reinforce the public in public speaking. Active participation is essential to achieving this civic engagement. By participating with their peers in a variety of ways from speaking up in class discussions to leading deliberation, or from doing a peer critique to exploring their own experience in a guided reflection, active participation engages the students with one another as representatives of the community. Adapting materials to include questions of a civic nature can help students make connections with others' work that may be otherwise missed. The desire both to understand and to be understood is a powerful tool for building civic engagement.

Students will act together in class, workshops, and activities to strengthen civic engagement, but ultimately each student must reflect individually in order to realize civic engagement on a personal level. The practice of guided reflection has been successfully used in the field of service learning. Using guided reflection and articulated learning techniques enable students to realize the ways in which their

work may have civic implications. The practice of guided reflection brings the outcomes of multiple civic engagement efforts together under one roof. Reflection is the final step to making it all come together and showing the student the impact of their learning.

All of these strategies for civic engagement can be developed while balancing the traditional concepts of the ideal orator and *phronesis*. Staying true to the vision of the ideal orator can help elevate responsibility of the speaker to see what is ideal. The wisdom of *phronesis* should also be woven throughout a civically-engaged education. It is the inclusion of practical wisdom that keeps us tethered to this world and balances the perfection of the ideal with the practicality of what is possible in our own communities. These efforts can be executed with a scaffolded approach to civically-engaged education much the same way that the *progymnasmata* built up the exercises of rhetorical training.

Outcomes of civically-engaged education have, and will, vary greatly. I believe outcomes will depend upon individual instructor's goals. My goal has been to find out what things I can draw upon from current civic engagement literature as well as the classical rhetorical tradition to foster civic engagement in my public speaking classroom. In the preceding pages I have identified actionable strategies that can be modified to meet the needs of many classrooms including my own. It has been my experience that impactful speeches, such as the ACCESS hotline speech, are rare and wonderful gems. To encourage more of these kinds of speeches, students can be prompted in some way to consider speech topics that have civic implications. During the Spring semester of 2011, I did initiate a few of

the strategies included in this paper and found a small, but noticeable increase in the number of speeches students gave on social or civic issues.

I found students willing to reveal their personal connections with social issues such as depression, domestic violence, and immigration. I found students reaching out into the community to make connections to research firsthand about their topics like the use of technology in wildlife management and ethical practices in chicken farming. Both of these students had preconceived ideas about their topics that were changed by reaching out to people in the community who work in those fields. The student who gave her speech on the ethical treatment of chickens on egg farms was able to actually change my purchasing behavior based on her speech. In turn, I have spoken with the grocer at my market and let him know I would be buying free-range eggs because of this issue. He, in turn, can make purchasing decisions based on my behavior. So the speaker's actions influenced me, my actions may influence the grocer, and eventually the pattern could influence more chicken farmers. I consider this to be a positive outcome in civic engagement.

Measuring the impact of civic-minded classroom activities is difficult, but essential for future work in this area. While I have seen students expand their thinking and take a more civic approach to their individual classroom work, I continue to wonder whether their engagement in the course has led to changes in the way they would approach deliberation and problem-solving beyond this space. Could assessment tools be designed to track how students think, believe, and intend to act regarding a particular social, civic, or ethical issue that might give us a way of seeing whether civically-engaged education in the speech classroom makes a



difference in way students approach such issues? Perhaps pre- and post-test data could be collected to evaluate how students approach a controversial issue. Questions might probe how open students are to alternative perspectives to the issue, whether they invite open disagreement to understand how it affects different people in the community, and how students arrive at a proposed solution to the issue. Would they seek out information criticizing their own position in an effort to better understand the concerns of others? Comparing the beginning and concluding assessments could reveal if students have learned to address such issues from a more civic-minded approach. Their willingness to consider different perspectives, impacts on others, and alternative solutions can reveal changes in their habits of mind. It can reveal whether a difference can be made in a students' civic mindedness from activities in just one class.

My interest in the topic of civic engagement has grown through my research for this thesis. I would like to continue to explore this field. I have questions now that I am currently unable to answer such as: What tools can be developed to measure civic engagement outcomes? How do we know the strategies outlined in this work are effective? How can we measure our success? What else can be done to connect these efforts in other courses at the university? Expanding the scope of these initiatives into other courses could create a cumulative effort to help students experience civically-engaged education. The work on civic engagement is growing at the university, department, course, and classroom levels. These questions can be explored on a grand scale or a quite narrow scale. The important goal is to

continue asking the questions and implementing the programs, courses, and strategies to encourage civically-engaged education. Much of the literature on civic engagement expresses the difficulty of measuring outcomes. I would like to have the opportunity to measure the effectiveness of the strategies included here in an effort to refine and revise. If these strategies can be made more effective, then the students can be more civically-engaged, and in a moment of *kairos*, we can achieve the ancient idea of *politeuesthai* and *all be citizens together*.

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## **Appendix A: Large Group Workshop: Naming and Framing Issues**

The Naming and Framing Activity is best done in the first week of class. Ideally, it is a first day activity to set the tone and frame the course for the rest of the semester.

**Purpose:** The purpose of this activity is to set expectations for the class in terms of participation, rigor, and course content. It requires participation from all students, critical thinking about social, civic, and ethical issues that affect the community.

**Variations:** This activity can be done on a white board, chalk board, or electronically. Preference is given to the white board to make the activity physically interactive and facilitate live discussion. However, the electronic version can take place in a class discussion forum and offers the benefits of privacy and anonymity. The choice is up to the instructor.

**Materials Needed:** White board, dry erase markers, participation props (popsicle sticks, paint stir sticks, note cards with students names, etc), energy.

For electronic version, a discussion forum should be set up before the first day of class and instructions given out during the first day.

**Time Needed:** At least thirty minutes should be set aside for this activity to allow time for students to warm up and also allow for discussion.

**Facilitating the Activity:**

- 1) When students arrive in the classroom ask them each to pick up their attendance/participation prop with their name on it (whether it is the popsicle stick, paint stir stick, note card, or other prop).
- 2) You should conduct first day tasks such as confirming the course and handing out the syllabus before the activity begins.
- 3) As the purpose of this activity is to set a tone of civic engagement, be clear about that purpose before starting. The outcome of civically-engaged education should be listed and defined on the syllabus: Connecting course material to social, civic, and ethical problems in order to help students develop responsible ways of thinking, believing, and acting.
- 4) To begin the activity, ask questions of the class that can include: Where have you done volunteer work? What social, civic, or ethical issues create the need for volunteers in those places? What is bothering us in our community? What social, civic, or ethical problems are happening in our community that affects us or those we know? The challenge here is to make certain you are allowing everyone to participate without creating a “group think” and inadvertently alienating anyone. The instructor should help facilitate by asking follow up questions to properly name the issues. If the students are having a difficult time getting started, the instructor should contribute an idea to serve as an example. Domestic violence, flood control, business

sponsorship of collegiate athletics are examples of each that can be used to get the room talking.

- 5) The participation props are used here to ensure everyone has the opportunity (and is required) to participate. They also work well for taking attendance.
- 6) As each student identifies an issue, they turn in their prop. The students must not interrupt others by speaking again until all props have been collected.

This process attempts to protect against strong personalities drowning out the voices of others in the class who may be content to listen rather than speak up. Students should be encouraged to identify unique issues, but the instructor may allow repeats if the student demonstrates a personal connection to a particular issue and cannot come up with another.

- ❖ At this point, the instructor can choose to move on to framing, or have a general wrap up discussion of the activity.

To continue with framing the issues:

- 7) After each student has identified an issue, the class moves on to framing one or two of the issues to serve as an example.
- 8) To frame the issue, the class needs to identify people who are affected by the issue as well as identify alternate solutions that could be considered. It is important for the class to identify at least three different solutions to illustrate that no single issue has polarized sides; there are always more positions to consider.

- 9) One strategy is to ask the class if there is anyone's interest *missing*. Whose voice or interest is not being represented? This strategy puts the student in the role of advocating for another which broadens their critical thinking and attempts to bring them out of the individualist bubble and into a more community centered thought process.
- 10) Advantages and disadvantages of each solution should be discussed to show how no solution is perfect for everyone and that value must be placed on different costs and benefits in order to come up with a resolution in the end.
- 11) As the class discusses the issues, it is important for the instructor to make sure everyone is heard, not just a vocal few. It is also important to reiterate to the class that these are real issues, and real people are affected by them. They should be made overtly aware that their participation in the deliberation is civic engagement.
- 12) No issue will be completely resolved in one class activity. The important outcomes of this activity include understanding that what is in the individual's best interest may not be in the best collective interest; establishing the classroom as a participatory environment; and framing the course as civically engaged.
- 13) Results should be posted electronically to the class website to serve as a resource for students during the semester.

## **Appendix B: Large Group Workshop: Issue Relevance**

The Issue Relevance activity revisits the list of issues identified in Activity #1: Issue Naming and Framing.

**Purpose:** The purpose of this activity is to identify which issues affect members of the class or their community. The results from this can lead to topic selection and improved audience relation for the informative and persuasive speeches.

**Variations:** Again, this activity can be done in the classroom or electronically in a discussion forum set up by the instructor. Preference is given to the classroom to make the activity physically interactive and facilitate live discussion. However, the electronic version can take place in a discussion forum and offers the benefits of privacy and anonymity. The choice is up to the instructor.

### **Materials Needed:**

- 1) Printed pages with one issue identified on each page.
- 2) Tape to hang them up in the classroom. (Of course you could just use some of the stickers.)
- 3) Many sheets of stickers. You can buy 1,000 stickers at any discount store for around \$6. Each student should get about 5 stickers (you could give them more if you like) this allows for about 100 stickers to be used in a class.
- 4) For the electronic version, an opinion poll or questionnaire should be set up for the class to use for this activity. The results should show representation of class members, not necessarily show a rank order for the issues in terms of

winners and losers or show “votes”. The activity is designed to show representation of class population in these issues, not to undervalue issues that may only affect a few students.

**Time Needed:** At least thirty minutes should be set aside for this activity to allow time for students to contemplate issues, interact, and also allow for discussion.

**Facilitating the Activity:**

- 1) To begin the activity, tape the paper with the issues printed around the classroom. You could group them as social, civic, and ethical issues; or, just randomly disperse the issues so students will need to walk around and consider each before deciding where to put their stickers.
- 2) Have a student pass out a set of stickers to each class member.
- 3) Take a few minutes to remind the class about the issues. A good way to do this is to have each student read aloud one issue. This reinforces the participation requirement and reminds the class these are the the issues *they* identified during the first activity.
- 4) Have the class walk the room and put a sticker on issues that affects them or someone they know. You can choose to have two themes of stickers (or two colors) to differentiate issues that affect students personally, or affect someone they know in the community.
- 5) When everyone has used up their stickers, you can lead the class in a discussion of the issues. Why might some issues have more stickers? Does that make them more relevant or overexposed? There is no right or wrong

- answer, just discussion. Rising tuition costs may affect everyone, but perhaps no one has thought very constructively about what can be done about it, and who should take action. That could make for a good topic. Perhaps drunk driving is largely represented because almost every student has known someone affected by this. However, will that topic need further discussion for the class? Perhaps that doesn't make the best topic.
- 6) One important thing to pay attention to are the issues with fewer stickers. They warrant equal discussion. Perhaps the issue of resources for the blind only affects one student in the class, that doesn't mean it isn't a relevant topic for the class to hear more about. Perhaps if an issue has very few stickers, it can be an opportunity for a student to give a relevant and novel speech to the class because the class members are less aware of the issue and about the problems it poses for those affected by it. The most important part of this activity is to get the class talking about their community issues and reiterating that these are real issues that really affect people in the room.
- 7) Students may be concerned that the discussion will *give away* information that they might put into their speeches. Instructors should guard against this by focusing the discussion on how people are affected by the issues. Reassure the students that their research and inquiry into the topic will have value during the speech round that surpasses a general classroom discussion.

- 8) When the activity is finished, the results should again be stored and available electronically on the class website for students to consider when working on their own speeches.



## **Appendix C: Small Group Workshop: Topic / Issues Deliberation**

The Small Group Topic Discussion Forum should be done after students have selected their speech topic but before they have completed their research. This forum can be used for informative or persuasive but is recommended for the persuasive speech.

**Purpose:** The purpose of this activity is to duplicate a civic discussion of the students' speech topics. Students will need to consider multiple approaches to their issue and consider the needs of others in comparison to their personal needs. The activity is not designed to change the minds or positions of the students, but it designed to make them consider further implications in order to back up their position/solution with consideration toward other points of view.

**Materials Needed:** Blank deliberation guides printed out for each student.

**Time Needed:** A full class period should be used for this activity to allow each student's topic to be discussed.

### **Facilitating the Activity:**

1. Students should be separated into groups of four or five—the number will determine how long each topic will be discussed.
2. Students should determine which order they will go before the first student begins. This saves time and ambiguity. One recommendation is to have them go in order of their month and day of their birthday. Another strategy is

to have them go alphabetically by the last letter of their first or last name.

Either method of determining order breaks the ice in an interactive way and warms the group up for discussion. It also prevents any group member from just *going along*, each person has to participate just to determine discussion order.

3. Have a student hand out discussion guides to each student to lead discussion of his or her topic.
4. Explain the procedure to the class and then start a timer for 7-10 minutes depending on the sizes of the groups. Smaller groups are best to allow more discussion time.
5. The discussion should involve the entire group in determining other approaches to and solutions for the issue.
6. Ending questions are designed to help the students to wrap up discussion and to think about the issue beyond the scope of their speech. An instructor may choose one or more of these questions depending upon time constraints. Asking students to consider what elements of the issue weren't worked through, or what tradeoffs they are willing to make in their recommendations helps them hone in on the content of their speech while inviting them to think more broadly about the issue. Often students are afraid of identifying parts of the issue that are beyond the scope of the speech because they feel if they know those elements, they need to be included in the speech itself. Framing the questions to identify elements that haven't been addressed can relieve

some of the stress students may feel to answer everything within the content of the speech.

## Deliberation Guide

### Speech Topic / Issue:

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What's the problem behind the issue?

Who is affected by the issue?

Personal stake questions:

Has this issue affected you personally?

Do you know anyone who has been affected by it?

Is anyone's voice *missing* from this discussion?

Three basic types of questions to provoke deliberation:

What makes this approach a good idea?

What things are most valuable to people who support this approach?

What would result from doing what this approach proposes?

What could be the costs and consequences of doing what this approach says?

What makes this issue difficult to decide?

Where are the conflicts that grow out of what we've said about this issue?

What remains unresolved for us?

Three basic types of ending questions to wrap up each issue:

How has your thinking about the issue changed?

What conflicts weren't worked through?

Do you have any clearer sense of purpose or direction?

Are there some tradeoffs you're willing (not willing) to make in your recommended solution to move in a shared direction?

## Appendix D: Small Group or Individual Activity: Midrash Guide

<b>Name the issue</b>		
<b>Perspective 1:</b>	<b>Briefly describe the issue:</b>  [Your chosen text would go here.]	<b>Perspective 2:</b>
<b>Perspective 3:</b>		

Midrash template modified for speech communication by Julia Wieggers, Iowa State University, 2011. Original midrash example created by Michael Mendelson, 2007.

## **Appendix E: Individual Activity: Guided Reflection**

The articulated learning activity should be done after the topic selection, discussion forum, and research for the speech are complete, but before the speech is delivered.

**Purpose:** The purpose of this activity is to have the students recognize connections between the work they have done for their speech and the issue in the community. It requires the student to reflect on the issue and tie it directly to course work they are doing in the class.

**Variations:** As this activity is independent, it can be done outside of class and turned in as an assignment either prior to or on the same day as the speech.

**Materials Needed:** DEAL guidelines

**Time Needed:** This activity can be done at the student's own pace. It may spark additional research and work on the speech, so it is best done at least a few days prior to the speech itself.

## Appendix F: DEAL: A 3-Step Model for Reflection

Developed by Patti Clayton, Ph.D., North Carolina State University

NOTE: Don't begin a reflection activity by asking "What did you learn?"

The purpose of reflection is to GENERATE learning.

"What did you learn?" is a good FINAL step for reflection, but not the first step!

NOTE: Reflection is NOT the same as DESCRIPTION although description is a good FIRST step in reflection.

**1: DESCRIBE** (in fair detail and as objectively as possible) ... The issue. Is it social, civic, ethical? How does the issue affect you or people you know?

**2: EXAMINE** the issue discussed above in light of the content studied in this course. Choose a particular element of the course to examine in more detail in light of your inquiry into this issue. In what ways would a person discuss this issue using concepts from public speaking? Where would this discussion take place?

**3: ARTICULATE LEARNING** from the two steps above. Answer the four questions below:

*What did I learn about myself as a speaker or civically-engaged student?*

*What did I learn about other members of the class or community?*

*How did I learn it?*

*Why is this learning important for me as a civically-engaged student?*

*What will I do in my future practice, in light of this learning?*

Make sure that you use your best critical thinking skills considering issues like relevance, accuracy, clarity, depth, breadth, logic and significance.



## Appendix G: Critical Thinking Guides

### Detailed Guide

Critical Thinking Standard	Description	Questions to check your critical thinking skills
Relevance	Are my statements relevant to the issue at hand? Does what I'm saying connect to my central idea? <b>(Focus of speech)</b>	How does this relate to the issue being discussed? How does this help me deal with the issue being discussed?
Accuracy	Are my statements and my information factually correct and/or supported with evidence? <b>(Quality of sources)</b>	How do I know this? Is this true? How could I check on this to validate?
Clarity	Do I expand on ideas, express ideas in another way, and provide examples or illustrations where appropriate? <b>(Support claims &amp; evidence)</b>	Did I give an example Is it clear what I mean by this? Could I elaborate further? Do my claims have support?
Depth	Do I explain the reasons behind my conclusions, anticipate and answer the questions that my reasoning raises, and/or acknowledge the complexity of the issue? <b>(Internal dialogue with audience)</b>	Why is this so? What are some of the complexities here? What would it take for this to happen?
Breadth	Am I considering alternative points of view? Have I thought about how others might interpret the situation? <b>(Address the opposition)</b>	Would this look the same from other perspectives? What opposition to my solution am I acknowledging?
Logic	Does my line of reasoning make sense? Do my conclusions follow from the facts and/or my earlier statements? <b>(Aristotle's appeal of logoi)</b> <b>(Not using fallacies)</b>	Does what I said in my introduction mirror what I have in my conclusion? Do my conclusions logically follow the evidence I have presented?
Significance	Do my conclusions or goals represent a major issues? <b>(Relevant / novel topic)</b>	Is this the most important issue to focus on? Is this the most significant problem to consider?

Model modified for speech communication by Julia Wieggers, Iowa State University, 2011 from a model modified for social work by Lisa E. McGuire, PhD., IU School of Social Work, 2006. Original framework by Paul, R. & Elder, L. (2001). *The Miniature Guide to Critical Thinking*. The Foundation for Critical Thinking, Santa Rosa, CA.

## Critical Thinking Guide – Simplified

Purpose: What is my specific purpose statement?

What is my central idea?

Questions: What questions am I raising?

What issue am I addressing?

Am I considering the complexities of the issue?

Information: What information am I using in coming to my solution?

What experience have I had to support this claim?

What information do I need to provide to support my claim?

Conclusion: How did I reach this conclusion?

Is there another way I could have approached it?

Concepts: What is the main idea here?

Have I explained it adequately?

Assumptions: What am I taking for granted?

What assumption has led me to my conclusion?

Consequences:

If someone accepts my conclusion, what are the consequences?

What am I asking the audience to do?

Points of View:

From what point of view am I approaching this issue?

Is there a different point of view that should be considered?