

DISTANCE EDUCATION FACULTY REFLECTIONS:
A LOOK AT CIVIC RESPONSIBILITY AND
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

by

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ABSTRACT

Civic responsibility and moral character are at the heart of many higher learning institutions' mission statements (Boyte & Kari, 2000; Thomson, Smith-Tolken, Naidoo, & Bringle, 2011; Urban & Wagoner, 2000). However, little research exists that examines how civic education should be incorporated into online education, what civic education looks like in an online environment, or if traditional methods of delivering civic education are appropriate for distance learning. This study was qualitative in nature and uses grounded theory methods to allow the opportunity for the participants to construct what it means to produce a citizen by using distance education as the local discourse. Faculty were interviewed to allow for their perceptions and reflections of online civic education to uncover a clearer understanding of what civic education, civic responsibility, and community engagement means in a distance education environment.

Through data collection and analysis several interesting findings emerged. Time played a key factor in the delivery and ultimately the success of an online course with civic engagement components. Data suggests that development could take several semesters when taking into account factors such as accurate assessment of students, collaboration with community partners, communication, and general coordination of the course. Perhaps the most interesting finding focused on how the definition of citizenship and ultimately how faculty presented civic education was changing. Much of the research suggests that civic education is evolving to include a more global definition. This dynamic and changing understanding of civic education

exemplified in the data is in concert with the current literature on civic education and engagement ((Bartik, 2004; Becker, 1993; Brandl & Weber, 1995; Caputo, 2005; Enrlich, 1997; Furo, 2010; Giles & Eysler, 1994;Kerrigan, 2005; Kuh, 2011; Malin, 2011; Markus, Howard, &King, 1993; Perry & Katula, 2001; Weiss, 2004; Wesch, 2009; Wilhite & Silver, 2005). These changes and variations in definition of citizenship and civic education are all effecting how civic education should be incorporated in the 21st century learning.

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my dear husband who has been my foundation, my colleague, and my shoulder to cry on. Without him, the work that I do cannot be possible. Bobby, anima gemella, this is as much your accomplishment as it is mine.

Also, for my daughter, my sweet Chloe, I hope all that I have accomplished will instill in you a passion for knowledge and a need for change. One day you will change the world sweet girl.

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CHAPTER I:
INTRODUCTION

Introduction

As long as there have been colleges and universities in this country, there has been a commitment at the heart of the curriculum to preparation for what we might call civic engagement. (Lawry, Laurison, & VanAntwerpen, 2006, p. 17)

Civic responsibility and moral character are at the heart of many higher education mission statements all across the United States (Urban & Wagoner, 2000; Boyte & Kari, 2000; Thomson, Smith-Tolken, Naidoo, & Bringle, 2011). Dating back to the 1600s, institutions of higher learning have been committed to the promotion of democratic values; thus, a major goal of institutions has been to develop responsible citizens (Apple & Beane, 1995; Dewey 1916; Rudolph, 1962). Thomas Jefferson, one of America's founding fathers, expressed his deep belief that education and citizenship should be connected. He established the University of Virginia under this belief (Peterson, 1977). Later John Dewey revisited higher education and civic responsibility and credits higher institutions of learning as the greatest avenue to teaching citizenship to the youth of this nation (Caspar, 2000; Asmore, 1989; Dzuback, 1991). Dewey believed that education should teach democratic values and citizenship and that students should be educated to meet the greater needs of a community (Lawry et al., 2006).

These beliefs and values continued to evolve throughout the decades giving birth to many movements for civic education reform and inclusion. One such movement can be summarized in the preamble of the World Declaration of Higher Education for the Twenty-First Century (1998).

On the eve of a new century, there is an unprecedented demand for and a great diversification in higher education, as well as an increased awareness of its vital importance for socio-cultural and economic development, and for building the future, for which the younger generations will need to be equipped with new skills, knowledge and ideals.

In Article 1(b) of this document, it stressed the importance of higher education focusing on engaging its students in democratic and community values.

...giving to learners an optimal range of choice and a flexibility of entry and exit points within the system, as well as an opportunity for individual development and social mobility in order to educate for citizenship and for active participation in society, with a worldwide vision, for endogenous capacity-building, and for the consolidation of human rights, sustainable development, democracy and peace, in a context of justice.

As the world of academia moved into the 21st century, the importance of civic education continued to be in the forefront of educational reform. Many agree that education in general has a duty to actively educate its students to become more informed citizens and future leaders of this nation (Association of American Colleges & Universities, 2002, 2005; Caput, 2005; Keat & White, 2002; Wingspread Group, 1993). As higher education moves forward into the age of the internet, more students are beginning to take online courses. In the fall of 2005, the Sloan Consortium reported 3.2 million students were taking online distance education courses, which was an 800,000 student increase from the prior year (Allen & Seaman, 2006). The report predicted that enrollment would continue to increase. As of 2012, six million students have enrolled in at least one online course (Allen & Seaman, 2011). There is no question that online education could be identified as the largest factor to increased enrollment across the nation starting in 2004 (Kurtz, Beaudoin, & Sagee, 2004).

Distance education can be defined as the practice of learning that utilizes technology so students and teachers are not required to meet in a physical classroom at a fixed time (McCrimon & Davis, 2005). Obviously there are many differences between distance education and

traditional education. Traditional classrooms, because of their fixed time and place, allow the transfer of information from faculty to student with the ability for discussion of several topics and lessons in a short amount of time (Killians, 2011). A strength and a weakness of the traditional course is that the faculty have ultimate control over course progression (Carver, King, Hannum & Fowler, 2007; Godwin & Kaplan, 2008; Guthrie & McCracken, 2010; Hill, 2012; Pearce, 2009; Waldner, McGorry, & Widener, 2012). This structured progression provides students with guidance and accountability, but this also means that students are unable to control the speed at which they must learn the material and have limited opportunity for creative thinking (Killians, 2011). Some have argued that traditional courses are harder to mold to meet individual learning styles while distance courses faculty can mold the material to meet many different learning styles and provide a student-centered learning environment (Smart, Witt, & Scott, 2012). In distance education, students have the flexibility to learn at their own pace and have the freedom to choose their own schedule. However, a weakness of distance education is that social cues and auditory communication (cues found in traditional classroom settings) are less frequent and harder to simulate. New technology for voice and video are constantly being adapted for distance education, but this new voice/video technology is not yet a common tool across the board (Carver, King, Hannum & Fowler, 2007; Godwin & Kaplan, 2008; Guthrie & McCracken, 2010; Hill, 2012; Pearce, 2009; Waldner, McGorry, & Widener, 2012), and, for now, written communication is the primary method of transmitting information and thoughts. Distance education thus relies heavily on just one method of communication (Brown, 2012; Lukman & Krajnc, 2012). Without the checks and balances of having several methods of communication, distance education must work harder to convey proper information. This often requires that instructors take more time to develop and manage an online course than a traditional classroom

course (Guthrie & McCracken, 2010). Students tend to prefer the flexibility of distance education (Brown, 2012) with more students choosing to enroll in online courses over their traditional classroom counterparts.

Numerous studies (Bradford & Wyatt, 2010; Jackson & Helms, 2008; Jennings & Bayless, 2003; McFarland & Hamilton, 2006; Mullen & Tallent-Runnels, 2006; Stowell & Bennet, 2010) over the last ten years have examined online learning and its effectiveness and efficiency in comparison to traditional classroom settings. However, little literature exists about how online learning affects a student's sense of community, development of civic responsibility, or ability to become engaged in his or her society.

Statement of the Problem

Little research exists exploring the implementation of civic education into online courses. This is problematic since civic education is central to the original mission of higher education (Association of American Colleges and Universities Report, 2009; Bennett & Green, 2001; Guthrie & McCracken, 2010; Haste, 2010; Hatcher, 2011; Killian, 2011; Lester et al., 2005; Strait & Sauer, 2004; Thomson, Smith-Tolken, Naidoo, & Bringle, 2011; Selwyn, 2007). Time and time again researchers have stated that more research needs to be conducted to help increase the knowledge of how to transition civic education into online courses if civic education is to make the transition from a traditional classroom setting to a distance education format (Waldner, McGorry, & Widener, 2012). While there are significant positives for incorporating civic education to online education, there is a wide range of challenges all of which complicate the ease at which civic education can be incorporated into online course curricula (see Table 1).

Table 1

Challenges of Incorporating Civic Education in Distance Education

Challenge	Description
Virtual Teaching and Learning Environments	Requires numerous hours of preparation to create planned web-based activities and learning experiences within a community context
Communication Limitations	Online courses are limited to written communication. The lack of nonverbal body language and unspoken cues make communication between facilitator and student much more complex
Skill Sets among students	Students are not all at the same level with understanding of technology. Facilitators sometimes are required to bring students up to speed on technology before they can continue in a course.
Course Size	Online courses tend to have larger enrollment numbers creating more students to manage than a traditional classroom setting. This can prove to be challenging when community projects are included in the course.
Technology	Technology is relied on heavily in an online course. Machine malfunction, unreliable software or hardware, and user errors are all too common when dealing with computer based learning.
Security and Privacy	Even when online courses are launched through an Online Course Management System (CMS) many added features such as social media, outside web-pages, and online resources are open to the mainstream internet. These features open students and faculty up to malware, viruses, and privacy concerns
Content Control	Adding outside partnerships to courses can provide a valuable experience for students but it does open the course material up to interpretation by professionals other than the teaching faculty. Additionally added projects that work with outside partners requires a considerable amount of time for the students requiring other assignments take a smaller role in the overall course
Accountability	There are limited options for student accountability when working with outside partners especially if the partners or students are quite some distance away from campus.
Student Expectations	Students registering for an online course might be surprised to learn that they are required to participate in activities beyond course material and internet based assignments. Faculty must take into account the limitations of a student's time and availability when assigning additional community engagement projects.

Developed from Carver, King, Hannum & Fowler, 2007; Godwin & Kaplan, 2008; Guthrie & McCracken, 2010; Hill, 2012; Pearce, 2009; Waldner, McGorry, & Widener, 2012

By taking a deeper look at how faculty members are currently incorporating civic education into their online courses as well as what they believe, it means to produce a citizen through their role as distance education faculty it is hoped that more knowledge will be added to the literature and help build a foundation for incorporating civic education in more online courses.

Purpose of the Study

Theory without practice leads to an empty idealism, and action without philosophical reflection leads to mindless activism. (Elias & Merriam, 1980, p. 4)

The purpose of this study was to gain a clearer understanding of what constitutes civic education, civic responsibility, and community engagement in online education as perceived by faculty teaching online courses. This study queried faculty who have included components of civic education into their online classes. Their understanding of what it means to be a citizen and how they use that interpretation to develop their courses was a focal point of the interviews.

Faculty who work with distance education generally experience how students are responding to the new pedagogies which incorporate civic responsibility into the online learning experience. Faculty members can bring personal experience and cumulative perceptions to how students are being impacted by distance education, specific to their engagement in the community. Further, faculty can routinely examine pedagogical practices for strengths and weaknesses in how their courses incorporate civic education, civic responsibility, and community engagement. The very idea of measuring a sense of community, development of civic responsibility, and engagement in society is not an easy task.

Research Questions

Two specific questions guided this study. They included the following:

1. How do faculty incorporate civic education and community engagement into online education;

2. How do these faculty determine the success of their efforts to encourage civic responsibility and community engagement?

It is my hope that the study added to the body of knowledge of online education by providing a deeper meaning to what civic responsibility and community engagement looks like in online education. This additional knowledge further assists in the development of assessments and new teaching methods. By using faculty experiences, opinions, and reflections, this research may help universities uphold their responsibility of teaching civic education to young adults.

Significance of the Study

In Robert Putnam's seminal work *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (2000), he forewarned of the decline of civic engagement and how it is and will continue to impact American democracy. Carpini (2010) cited several empirical studies that suggest youth are less engaged in civic or political participation, have less trust in fellow citizens, and lack a sense of American identity. Others warn that the lack of interest in one's own community will have negative effects on this nation (Boyte & Hollander, 1999; Harwood, 1991; Kezar, Chambers, & Burkhardt, 2005; Putnam 1995).

One expressed solution is to examine colleges and universities on their efforts at teaching citizenship and creating citizens with more social equity or social capital (Austin, 1997; Barber, 2001; McDonnell, Timpane, & Benjamin, 2000; Saltmarsh, 1996). As Paxton (1999) stated, social capital "is the idea that individuals and groups can gain resources from their connections to one another" (p. 89). After Putnam's call to action in 2000, numerous research studies have addressed the need to focus on civic education in all areas of education (Jones & Abes, 2004; Print & Coleman, 2003; Raill & Hollander, 2006; VanHecke, 2004; Wildman, 2005).

As we move further into the twenty-first century, many universities are required to grow and increase student enrollments, while not depending on government funding or grant funding (Rajasingham, 2011; Sullivan 2010). If online education is to grow, then we must start looking at it as a helping hand in reconnecting students to their community and less as a type of education that promotes isolation (Barbour & Plough, 2009; Bibeau, 2001; Li & Akins 2005). If online learning is expanding to meet increasing needs of the nation, then it seems only logical to use it to help alleviate the disconnect occurring in students related to the community. To do this, we must look at how online learning is currently being used with respect to civic education and community engagement.

Data Collection

Data was collected primarily through interviews with online faculty at colleges and universities across the United States. Faculty was selected based on their experience teaching online courses with components of civic education (service learning, experiential learning, etc.) within a two-semester time frame. The interviews were recorded via telephone or Blackboard Collaborate¹, transcribed, coded, and then analyzed. Additionally follow-up interviews were conducted with several of the participants. The follow-up interview was used to clarify and provide deeper meaning to themes that were uncovered during the coding process. The last data source was the supplemental course material each faculty member created for his or her individual courses (i.e., syllabi, rubrics, etc.) These were also coded and analyzed to support the interviews.

¹ Blackboard Collaborate is an online collaboration platform providing web conferencing, mobile collaboration, instant messaging, and voice authoring. Taken from <http://www.blackboard.com/Platforms/Collaborate/Overview.aspx>

Challenges of the Study

It was anticipated that I would have to compensate or account for faculty burnout, apprehension, and overload, which may have caused potential participants to be weary of volunteering to participate in the interview process for fear of adding yet another item to their agendas. Too often the situation is that the administration has deemed it necessary to create an online program; and, therefore, the faculty will need to begin teaching online (King, 2010). The scenario is happening time and time again all over the United States leaving countless faculty little or no time to prepare, adapt, and accept the change in their environment causing a resistance to online education (Benson, 2003; Dedman & Palmer, 2011; King, 2010; Maguire, 2005; Osborne et al., 2009; Tabata & Johnsrud, 2008). The amount of time needed to research, learn technology, develop a course, and monitor its progression is said to be far more than a traditional course in terms of faculty responsibilities (Dedman & Palmer, 2011; King, 2010; Maguire, 2005; Osborne et al., 2009; Tabata & Johnsrud, 2008). This leaves the faculty little time for outside research, service requirements, or holding positions on committees. This often creates a disconnect between administrators and faculty as the time and effort it takes to conduct an online course is much larger than administrators realize (Koenig, 2010). This disconnect ultimately contributes much of the faculty burnout in today's educational sphere (Koenig, 2010).

Another challenge I anticipated was my method of communication with participants. Participants were faculty teaching online, which required interviews and subsequent follow-ups to be done virtually or via telephone. Many distance education faculty are accustomed and more comfortable with email and online communication tools rather than traditional telephone methods. I adjusted my own preconceived notions of how the interviews took place and how I communicated with participants to allow for flexibility of online or telephone interview methods

with follow-up and email correspondence instead of the traditional face-to-face interview tape/transcription method

Definition of Terms

Civic Responsibility: “The sense of personal responsibility individuals should feel to uphold their obligation as part of any community” (Komives, Lucas, & McMahon, 1998, p. 15).

Service Learning: “...is a course-based, credit bearing educational experience in which students (a) 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, 1995, p. 112).

Experiential Learning: “...the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience. Knowledge results from the combination of grasping and transforming experience” (Kolb, 1984, p. 41).

Community: “ calls forth an awareness of mutual assistance and development in the interrelationship and cohesiveness of its membership that will ensure a harmonious existence” (Galbraith, 1990, p. 3).

Community Engagement as seen in Higher Education: “ the collaboration between higher education institutions and their larger communities (local, regional/state, national, global) or the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity” (Driscoll, 2005, p. 6).

Civic Engagement: Hatcher (2011) said, it “...is working to make a difference in the civic life of our communities and developing the combination of knowledge, skills, values, and

motivation to make the difference. It means promoting the quality of life in a community, through both political and non-political processes” (Ehrlich, 2000, p. vi).

For this study the terms “civic responsibility,” “civic education,” and “community engagement” were used synonymously when referring to the notion of connecting with society, contributing to the betterment of society, and the need to give back to the community. Additionally, civic education is being used synonymously with service learning, experiential learning, citizenship and citizen education. I do acknowledge that there are differences in each pedagogical stance² but for the purpose of this dissertation, civic education will be all encompassing.

Organization of the Study

The study will be divided into five chapters. Chapter I discussed the overview of the problem, the research questions, and challenges and limitations. Chapter II presents relative literature on civic education in higher education, specifically online education, seminal works that have influenced this study’s purpose, and an overview community engagement. Chapter III discusses the research methods for conducting interviews and data analysis procedures and provides a descriptive portrait of the participants. I take care in describing their institutional environment, their own civic engagement, and characteristic of students and courses. Chapter IV consists of a summation of the data collected, along with correlations and discrepancies associated with the methods followed. Finally, Chapter V provides implications and applications of current findings recommendations for further research, and reflections.

² For a complete look at the differences between each civic education pedagogy please see Colby, A. (2003). *Educating citizens: Preparing America’s undergraduates for lives of moral and civic responsibility*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, c2003; 1st Ed.

CHAPTER II:
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

This chapter will review the literature relevant to the study. I will acknowledge the gaps in literature mentioned in Chapter I and look at key components that are interwoven throughout the study. Moving through this chapter, the first component I will look at is the evolution of civic education in higher education, paying close attention to how civic education is seen in the 21st century and how higher education focuses on engaging students in democratic and community values. The second component that I will look at is the concepts that guide this study, what motivates me as a researcher, and from what literature this study finds its foundation. Then, the final component that I will look at is how civic education and community engagement are being implemented currently in today's online courses and the challenges that faculty face in developing and incorporating civic education into their online courses.

Evolution of Civic Education in Higher Education

Civic responsibility is the sense of personal responsibility individuals should feel to uphold their obligations as part of any community. (Komives, Lucas, & McMahon, 1998, p. 15)

As was stated in Chapter I, civic education in higher education has transformed over the decades to fit with current trends and issues in the nation. Looking at civic education and how it can fit within online education is no different; however, before we can begin to do that we must look at what is changing within civic education: what are the current trends in research are in

civic responsibility in higher education and what do we currently know about civic responsibility and online students?

Definitions of civic responsibility are vast and complicated with several parts and contradictions. Enrich (1997) eluded to the fact that higher education institutions will continue to have a difficult time developing civic education because aspects of civic responsibility keep changing. A large body of literature exists that calls for civic engagement to be incorporated into college curriculum and for higher education to make teaching citizenship a priority (Bartik, 2004; Becker, 1993; Brandl & Weber, 1995; Giles & Eysler, 1994; Malin, 2011; Weiss, 2004). Bole and Gordon (2009) and Malin (2011) have specifically called for educational reform in order to cultivate and instill citizenship with meaningful opportunities or public engagement. They specifically stated that civic education must be re-examined for how it is being effectively connected to today's classroom and students. With all these changes and examinations to higher education curriculum, faculty are key in understanding how civic education can transition into the 21st century classroom and the online learning environment. This kind of call to action is exactly why this research study was developed: to re-examine how civic education is being taught in today's online classroom by looking at how faculty develop, use, and assess civic education.

Dimensions of a Citizen

Terms such as “civic engagement,” “social responsibility,” and “citizenship” are being used interchangeably. Degelman (2000), and then Prentice (2007), attempted to define civic responsibility and how it relates to the nation's younger citizens. Throughout these articles, the authors, definitions, and literature examined varying definitions and characteristics of civic responsibility. The only dominating similarity is that both Degelman and Prentice have agreed

that civic responsibility has gone beyond just voting and branches into all faucets of a citizen's life. In an attempt to help summarize many of the definitions available for civic responsibility, I have included Thornton and Jaeger's (2006) *Dimensions of Civic Responsibility* in Table 2. This chart reiterates the current varying definitions of civic responsibility. Faculty in today's higher education classroom are not only challenged with incorporating civic education into online learning but have additional challenges to dissect the many different meanings of what it means to be civically responsible and engaged.

Table 2

Dimensions of Civic Responsibility in Literature

Dimension	Scholarly Contributions
Voluntary service to the community; commitment to serve the community	(Astin & Sax, 1998; Bowen, 1997; Boyte & Hollander, 1999; Patrick, 1991)
Knowledge about civic life; understanding of how a community works; knowledge of government institutions and procedures	(Bowen, 1997; Colby et al., 2003; Patrick, 1991)
Participation in the political system; desire to influence the political structure	(Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2002; Astin & Sax, 1998; Bowen, 1997; Boyte & Hollander, 1999; Colby et al., 2003; Patrick, 1991)
Public commitment to the values of constitutional democracy (liberty, justice and rule of law); work for justice and dignity for all people	(Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2002; Bowen, 1997; Ehrlich, 1999; Patrick, 1991)
Desire to help others in difficulty; compassion and commitment to the welfare of others	(Astin & Sax, 1998; Colby et al., 2003)
Desire to promote racial understanding; appreciation of diversity; understanding of differences in ethnicity, race, sexual orientation and class	(Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2002; Astin & Sax, 1998; Boyte & Hollander, 1999; Colby et al., 2003; Ehrlich, 1999; Guarasci & Cornwell, 1997b)
Ability to solve public problems effectively; use knowledge to benefit society and make decisions	(Boyte & Hollander, 1999; Ehrlich, 1999)
Skills in debate, listening, teamwork, critical evaluation	(Bowen, 1997; Boyte & Hollander, 1999)
Intellectual honesty	(Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2002)
Understanding of self and ethical consequences of one's decisions and actions; accountable individuals	(Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2002; Colby et al., 2003)

Source: Thornton, C., & Jaeger, A. (2006). Institutional Culture and Civic Responsibility: An ethnographic study. *Journal of College Student Development*, 47(1), 52-68. 27. (See Appendix A for permission to reprint)

A current argument is that younger generations are not engaging in “conventional forms of civic activity” (Prentice, 2007, p. 136). In the context of this study, the term younger generation has been referenced throughout the literature to the late Millennial Generation or Generation Y (those born between 1980s-early 2000s) and older Generation Z (Digital Natives, Gen Next, or those born between the early 2000s and present day) (Junco & Mastrodicasa, 2007).

However, as we look at different methods of engagement, we see that younger generations are volunteering but in different ways than their previous generations. Younger generations are coining the phrase “younger cohorts are not disengaged, they are differently engaged” (p. 135). This idea is also discussed in Thomson, Smith-Tolken, Naidoo, and Bringle’s (2011) article that talks about community engagement comparisons across three democratic nations. Prentice defined civic responsibility as “active participation in the public life of a community in an informed, committed, and constructive manner, with a focus on the common good” (p. 136).

Bennett, Wells, and Rank (2009) have connected civic responsibility to today’s digital age. They believe that the definition of civic responsibility should continue to change just as citizens have changed from generation to generation. Embracing this change requires evolution in civic education and how it is delivered to young citizens. Bennet et al. (2009) have focused on the argument that as a society we as individuals have become more concerned with managing our own identity and personal ideologies, thus becoming detached from the organizations and institutions that provided foundation and structure for previous generations. According to Bennet et al. (2009), we have been moving more toward individual rights and less toward public

action. The authors further noted that not recognizing this shift in citizenship is why many civic education programs have not succeeded.

Digital Age Learning

Today's world has evolved with interactive media, online social networking, and distance education, causing our younger citizens to develop different learning styles than their parents and grandparent; yet, the model of civic education appears much like it did a decade ago (Bennet et al., 2009; Prentice, 2007). These different learning styles are creating a new type of student; one that is releasing the need for memorization and recall and moving towards becoming a seeker and a finder of knowledge. These students are able to converse about knowledge in ways that was unheard of by their parents and grandparents. As Wesch (2009) stated,

As we increasingly move toward an environment of instant and infinite information, it becomes less important for students to know, memorize, or recall information, and more important for them to be able to find, sort, analyze, share, discuss, critique, and create information. They need to move from being simply knowledgeable to being *knowledgeable*. (p. 5)

Faculty in higher education must look beyond knowledge as information that is disseminated and begin to look at knowledge as a form of discourse. The potential of using web sharing, user-centered collaboration via the World Wide Web (specifically Web 2.0 technologies) for new civic education is significant but an area that needs more research (Bennet et al., 2009). Wesch summarized this notion with his 2009 comments:

The sheer quantity of information now permeating our environment is astounding, but more importantly, networked digital information is also qualitatively different than information in other forms. It has the potential to be created, managed, read, critiqued, and organized very differently than information on paper and to take forms that we have not yet even imagined. To understand the true potentials of this “information revolution” on higher education, we need to look beyond the framework of “information.” For at the base of this “information revolution” are new ways of relating to one another, new forms of discourse, new ways of interacting, new kinds of groups, and new ways of sharing, trading, and collaborating. Wikis, blogs, tagging, social networking and other developments that fall under the “Web 2.0” buzz are especially promising in this regard

because they are inspired by a spirit of interactivity, participation, and collaboration. It is this “spirit” of Web 2.0, which is important to education. The technology is secondary. This is a social revolution, not a technological one, and its most revolutionary aspect may be the ways in which it empowers us to rethink education and the teacher-student relationship in an almost limitless variety of ways. (p. 5)

Wesch described the challenge of the traditional teacher-student relationship and expanded it into the digital environment.

Production of a Citizen in the 21st Century

As stated many times over, civic responsibility and community engagement have been at the core of higher education since higher education institutions first came into existence in United States (Furco & Goss, 2001), but what does that mean for the 21st century learner and the 21st century classroom? As we move from one century to the next, we can find a pattern in higher education’s goals. For example, during the mid 1850s, higher education was asked to focus more on how to boost economy and produce more productive crops, thus the Morrill Acts of 1862 and 1890 were passed, which produced the land grant institutions across the nation. These land grant institutions were to produce graduates that were expected to be active in government, maintain the free press, be active leaders in their community, fight corruption and reshape the morality of society. They were in a word shaped to be “useful” to society (Wilhite & Silver, 2005). Then as we moved forward to the 1990s, higher education was again called to change its goals to look at social issues (Furco, 2010). “A central feature of this modern period of higher education civic renewal was the development of programmes designed to encourage faculty members and their students to conduct more work with members of the community” (Furco & Gross, 2001, p. 377). As the call for reform has moved out of the 20th century and into the 21st century, more emphasis has been placed on community issues; the academy has been asked to direct its intellectual discoveries towards society’s most pressing issues. This new focus

has restructured what it means to produce a citizen within higher education (Furco, 2010; Wilhite & Silver, 2005).

Global Citizen

The emergence of read-write Web tools has made communication and collaboration easier, therefore faculty are now preparing global citizens in their classrooms (Bole & Gordon, 2009; Guthrie & McCracken, 2011; Simmon & Zoetewey, 2012). These citizens are able to communicate, inform, and take action not only in their own communities but in communities across the globe (Bole & Gordon, 2009; Guthrie & McCracken, 2011; Simmon & Zoetewey, 2012). This idea of global citizenry allows students to connect local issues to a global problem. Simmons and Zoetewey's (2012) article has provided a deeper view at how using online tools such as the websites in a structured goal oriented project can foster civic engagement and community connection. Online learning may change the way civic education is taught and could change the way civic individuals focus on their communities. Citizens are now becoming globally civically minded. Bole and Gordon (2009) view citizens as not only local contributors to their community "but also as *citizens of the world* recognizing common human values that often transcend national governments, and putting this recognition into practice at the local level" (p. 281).

Guthrie and McCracken (2011) suggested that a broad definition of civic responsibility needs to be adopted because we as individuals can be connected to the whole world. When talking about their own study they stated,

It is possible to reach broad participant groups by raising awareness of commonalities as well as differences and by facilitating cognitive and affective connections to local and global issues, people, and contexts through the use of a variety of media-based applications...when combined with pedagogies that foster the development of critical dialogue, personal insight, and active engagement, such technologies can extend learning beyond regional confines and identities to enable individuals' growth and to increase

capacities for understanding and awareness. Moreover, the rich dialogue generated through such courses has the potential for impact far beyond a single classroom and student as ideas and insights gleaned in online classrooms extend to a range of communities with anomalous strengths and needs. (p. 8)

Conceptual Framework

As society changes and evolves its definition of citizenship so too must education. This has been reiterated in the above paragraphs. One thing is clear throughout the literature. There is a call to action for us to understand that students are changing, the world is changing, and so must education. Under those assumptions, I developed my conceptual framework. Three literary references provide a basis for action; each providing a pillar to the overarching theme of civic education and its transition into the 21st century digital classroom, and the online learning environment. Three bodies of literature (*Educating Citizens* (2003) by Anne Colby, Thomas Ehrlich, Elizabeth Beaumont, and Jason Stephens; *Habits of the Heart* (1985) by Robert Bellah; and *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (2000) by Robert Putnam) are the foundation to my conceptual framework.

Citizenship and Academia

Educating Citizens by Anne Colby, Thomas Ehrlich, Elizabeth Beaumont, and Jason Stephens use citizenship and academia to guide and determine their programs' pedagogy and commitments to learning. The authors "present us with a striking array of institutional cases—colleges and universities that creatively provide settings for the moral and civic development of their students... they share a commitment to integrating the highest of academic and civic commitments" (p. viii). *Educating Citizens* is based on a three-year project started in 2000 funded by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, the Surdna Foundation, Inc., the Walter and Elis Hass Fund, the Flora Family Foundation, the James Irvine Foundation, and the John Templeton Foundation. The report not only begins by challenging colleges and

universities to make moral and civic learning a central part of student's undergraduate experiences but provides an in-depth examination of several colleges and universities in the U.S. that already integrate moral and civic learning into the academic and extracurricular activities of the students. The authors offered a step-by-step look at colleges and universities all over the nation that are using commitment to civic discourse, respect, integrity, truth, and community to guide and determine their programs' pedagogy and commitments to learning.

Moving from chapter to chapter the reader can understand the importance civic education plays in developing a student in their undergraduate years. According to Colby et al. (2003),

The undergraduate years are just one part of a lifelong developmental process but especially if efforts are intentionally designed with these developmental outcomes in mind, colleges can establish some groundwork that students can later build on, shape the intellectual frameworks and habits of mind they bring to their adult experiences, change the way they understand the responsibilities that are central to their sense of self, and teach them to offer and demand evidence and justification for their moral and political positions and to develop wiser judgment in approaching situations and questions that represent potential turning points in their lives. (p. 4)

The authors placed emphasis on the need to educate undergraduates not only on knowledge and intellectual capacities but on how they position themselves in the community and as individuals with responsibilities to those communities. The authors, concerned about the individualization of our society, produced a call to action to educators. They made the point that higher education has the potential to be the greatest influence in "reinvigorating" the civic spirit of this nation. In making civic and moral values essential to the higher education curriculum, the authors believe that this will strengthen not only the character of undergraduates but will improve motivation of both faculty and students in reaching educational goals, produce much needed skills to be successful in research and careers, and provide understanding to complex issues needed to make informed decisions with regard to democratic participation.

Further, Colby et al. (2003) explained that traditional lecture and discussion formats are not enough to accomplish deep and lasting effects with regard to moral and civic values. In turn, they examined colleges and universities across the nation on how steps were being taken to develop these meaningful experiences within students. Dozens of colleges and universities were analyzed before the authors narrowed their microscopes to twelve institutions (Duke University; Portland State University; Tusculum College; College at St. Katherine; Spelman College; Alverno College; California State University, Monterey Bay; Kapi'olani Community College; Turtle Mountain Community College; University of Notre Dame; Messiah College; and the United States Air Force Academy). Each institution provided its own unique method for delivering moral and civic components to its students that works in unison with its mission, goals, and culture of each particular college or university. Table 3 provides more in-depth information about each college.

Table 3

In-Depth Description of the Twelve Colleges and Universities

University	Description of Moral and Civic Components
Duke University	Requires all undergraduates to complete two Ethical Inquiry Courses and a first-year writing program that has a strong ethics component
Portland State University	One of the key components of the university is its motto “Let Knowledge Serve the City” this motto is weaved throughout the curriculum by refocusing its general education program to emphasize ethic and social responsibility goals.
Tusculum College	The curriculum requires that nine competencies be met before graduation. These competencies are developed around the idea of building a better citizen. In addition the College has incorporated a required Commons Curriculum that focuses on civic-mindedness, service learning, and community governance
College at St. Katherine	The mission of both campuses is to prepare students for lives of personal and civic responsibility. Its commitment is reflected in its programs for social justices and community activism. Freshman and senior courses have been developed that require students to examine their lives through the values and moral, spiritual, and intellectual traditions of the college.
Spelman College	Institutional goals have been developed to emphasize the mission of the College which is to serve the community. The college accomplishes this by including a yearlong freshman orientation program and a sophomore assembly program.
Alverno College	The college curriculum is built around eight abilities which all students are expected to master before graduating. These eight abilities are divided into these titles: Valuing the Decision Making, Social Interaction, Global Perspective, and Effective Citizenship
California State University, Monterey Bay	University-wide requirements relating to moral and civic learning are structured into majors and departments. The mission of the campus is to “serve the diverse people of California, especially the working class and historically undereducated and low income population”
Kapi’olani Community College	Mission is to connect with the local community. This is reflected in their “across the curriculum emphasis”. This emphasis shapes courses by using service learning and/or Hawaiian and Asian-Pacific values
Turtle Mountain Community College	The college infuses the traditional culture of the Chippewa Indians into every course taught.
University of Notre Dame	The university focuses on social justice within its programs and curriculum. Faculty and staff incorporate the importance of social change throughout a student’s tenure at the University which is reflected in its mission “the university seeks to cultivate in its students not only an appreciation for great achievement of human beings but also a disciplined sensibility to the poverty, injustice, and oppression that burdens the lives of so many.”
Messiah College	Its mission is “to educate men and women toward maturity of intellect, character, and Christian faith in preparation for lives of service, leadership, and reconciliation in church and society”. This mission is incorporated into the curriculum and general education requires an ethics course, several Christian faith courses, and other courses in the area of social responsibility.
United States Air Force Academy	The academy’s Center for Character Development coordinates and promotes programs centered around moral and civic development that reach all courses and cadets on campus.

Source: Colby, A. (2003). *Educating citizens: Preparing America’s undergraduates for lives of moral and civic responsibility*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, c2003; 1st Ed.

The authors also examined both the student and faculty populations who are impacted by civic and moral education in higher education. Students are greatly impacted by experiencing a strong curriculum filled with moral and civic components. The authors explained that, upon entering college, students are still developing their own moral and civic character. By providing a civic foundation to a student's educational experience, students are able to challenge preconceived notions, fill gaps in their moral and civic knowledge, and strengthen their interpretations of society. Additionally, as most students enter college, they are politically inexperienced having just reached the age of maturity. This is a critical time for students to learn what it means to participate in political and community issues. Therefore, faculty and administrators should be charged with prioritizing civic education within their institutions.

Colby et al. (2003) examined pedagogical strategies for educating citizens with respect to student needs and developmental stages. The authors focused on student-centered pedagogies or pedagogies of engagement. These strategies "support deep understanding, usable knowledge and skills, and personal connection and meaning" (Colby et al., 2003, p. 134). The specific strategies examined were service learning, other experiential education, problem-based learning, and collaborative learning. These strategies as defined by Colby et al. (2003) have been adapted and summarized in Table 4.

Table 4

Pedagogical Strategies for Educating Citizens

Strategy	Description
Service Learning	Also referred to as community-based learning. Students “participate in organized, sustained service activity that is related to their classroom learning and meets identified community needs”. Students reflect on their experience through writing or discussion and are asked to connect their experiences with the content of the course.
Other Experiential Education	Experiential education is the broader category that houses service learning. These direct, hands-on activities “are meant to help students connect theory with practice and represent and experience theoretical concepts in practical, behavioral modes and real life settings.
Problem-Based Learning	Student assignments are organized “around studying, evaluating, and often proposing possible solutions for concrete, usually real-world problems”.
Collaborative Learning	Students work in a group or team setting on projects or activities aimed at “teaching a wide range of skills and improving students’ understanding of complex substantive issues”.

Source: Colby, A. (2003). *Educating citizens: Preparing America’s undergraduates for lives of moral and civic responsibility*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, c2003; 1st Ed.

In regard to faculty, the authors examined the motivations and the needs of faculty to buy into a curriculum with heavy civic education pedagogy. Looking at what motivates, is needed for success, and what benefits faculty in adding civic and moral education to their curriculum is key to understanding how civic education will transition into the 21st century education system. In *Educating Citizens*, the authors noted that for a faculty member to buy into a civically rich curriculum, several things need to happen. Faculty need to be provided with incentive, opportunity for development, and be surrounded with a supportive infrastructure.

This book presents the importance of civic education and community engagement within an institution’s mission and how it can be accomplished in many ways. This book not only is a key component in my framework but it also provides a working definition of civic education.

Understanding the findings from this book allows me to paint a clearer picture at what curriculum reform looks like and how new methods of civic education are being incorporated in the classroom.

Decline of the Democratic Community

Additionally, two other works have influenced my framework and positionality. *Habits of the Heart* (1985) by Robert Bellah and *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (2000) by Robert Putnam. *Habits of the Heart* is a classic sociology text that interprets society and its relation to community. Guided by civic and religious traditions, it provides a look at how this country is continuing towards a deteriorating path of becoming solely individualistic. Bellah provided an interpretation of modern (1985) American society and its relation to a democratic community. The book references the French social philosopher Alexis de Tocqueville's *Democracy in America* in which de Tocqueville stated the mores of Americans or the "habits of the heart" that form American character. Bellah began his journey deciphering what de Tocqueville believes Americans find necessary to "create the kind of person who could sustain a connection to a wider political community and thus ultimately support the maintenance of free institutions" (Bellah, preface, p. xviii). He also focused on what de Tocqueville calls "individualism" which is in American's very nature to create. Bellah believes that even though "individualism" is important it can deconstruct the social fabrics of America if not kept in check. Many of the checks and balances of society are discussed in *Habits of the Heart* mainly focusing on the current institutions that are holding these fabrics together.

Bellah has provided several calls to action on how to combat this destiny; one such call is a personal transformation of individuals in consciousness and actions with the help of traditionally moral groups. Bellah made mention of the revitalization of institutions of higher

learning in *Habits of the Heart* when he spoke to the need to revisit traditional missions of Universities and look less and less towards the new industrialized silos. Bellah's call was one of the main reasons I have focused my research on civic education.

Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community (2000) forewarned of the decline of civic engagement and how it is and will continue to impact American democracy. Putnam described the growing disengagement of political involvement and membership among civic organizations. He pointed out that Americans often distrust their government due to the many tragedies and scandals that surround politicians over the last several decades. This distrust combined with the increasing individualization of one's leisure time (hence bowling alone) is accelerating the decline in social capital. To help expand on Putnam's beliefs, I combined his book and his 2005 article with the works of Boyte and Hollander (1999), Carpini (2010), Harwood (1999), and Kezar, Chamber, and Burkhardt (2005), which have suggested that youth are less engaged in civic or political participation, have less trust in fellow citizens, and lack a sense of American identity. Additionally, they warned that the lack of interest in one's own community will have negative effects on this nation. Putnam has suggested researchers take a closer look at how technology and associations can strengthen social capital and provide more social equity in American citizens. This emphasis on how technology and associations can strengthen social capital is why I have chose *Bowling Alone* as an influential work for this study.

Current Online Education and Civic Engagement

As explored in the previous sections, civic education has been a part of higher education sense the beginning. It has evolved as society has evolved. With any change in education, there needs to be an examination of what and how to best pave the way for new pedagogy. The only way to begin that examination is by looking at what is currently being done in higher education

with regards to civic education. This section will look at different strategies currently being implemented as they relate to civic education in online learning.

Civic Engagement and Online Education

The need to educate a generation of politically active and civically engaged citizens has resulted in growing consensus that the character of pedagogy must shift from the student as a passive consumer of political and civic knowledge delivered by a teacher and textbook, to someone who can use a wide range of resources in collaborating with others to solve authentic problems, create and share content, and deliberate on and communicate a range of knowledge and ideas. (Jansen, 2011, p. 31)

Though the literature is limited when looking at how civic engagement has been incorporated into online education, there are a few instances where it has been examined. Most literature concerning online education and civic engagement focuses on the evaluation of service learning components that have been added to an already existing online curriculum (Guthrie & McCracken, 2010; Jansen, 2011; Killian, 2011; Waldner, McGorry, & Widener, 2012).

Service learning/experiential learning in civic education.

As one of the greatest predictors of civic and political engagement (Nie & Hillygus, 2001; Putman 1993), service learning and civic engagement are one of the most successful ways to increase the social responsibility of college graduates. (Reamey, 2011, p. 7)

Service learning has been used predominantly in civic education because of its direct correlation to civic responsibility (Battistoni, 2000; Dey et al., 2009; Eyler & Giles, 1999; Eyler, Giles, Stenson, & Gray, 2000; Hatcher, 2011; Lester et al., 2005; Moley et al., 2002). It can be described as one of the most well known pedagogies associated with civic education (Reamey, 2011). Therefore, the term service learning has been used heavily throughout the research design and implementation of this study.

Service learning emerged in the 1960s to designate a pedagogical method of using civic engagement to thoroughly teach learning objectives in a real world applicable way for students

(Guthrie & McCracken, 2010). Educators Robert Sigmon and Wiliam Ramsey coined the term in 1967 (Stanton, Giles, & Cruz, 1999). Students can take complex processes and see how they affect their community and culture in action (Guthrie & McCracken, 2010). It is a form of experiential education that promotes students' "critical thinking and interpersonal skills" (Strait & Sauer, 2004, p. 62). There are several studies that have focused on the positive effects of service learning on students (Bassi, 2011; Bennett & Green, 2001; Guthrie & McCracken, 2010; Killian, 2011; Lester et al., 2005; Strait & Sauer, 2004). Through service learning, students are said to gain social and personal responsibility that positively affects their academic and personal lives (Guthrie & McCracken, 2010). However, measuring and evaluating service learning is not concrete and no one study has the same method or opinion on how to study and evaluate service learning on course objectives, outcomes, or impact on students. Challenges of service learning are that each student needs individualized teaching objectives as each student's experience is different; additionally, online learning creates larger numbers of communities and larger diversity in student demographics (Strait & Sauer, 2004). Eyler and Giles (1999) warned that even though with the greatest potential of service learning to provide diversity, positive impact to local communities, create social change, and challenge the status quo there is also great potential for power imbalances (economic and status resources) between a university and the community partner leading to never reaching a true partnership (Mott, 2005 & Stoecker, 2005). Other challenges with service learning that can lead faculty and administration to compromise on the true nature of service learning as taken from Marulllo, Moayedi, and Cooke's (2009) article³:

- Academic calendars limit the students' interaction with the community (Honnet & Paulsen, 1989; Howard, 1993);

³ See Appendix B for permission to adapt and reprint

- Potential for inadequate supervision of students while in the community (Abes, Jackson, & Jones 2002; McKay & Rozee, 2004);
- Constraints of time and limited knowledge can produce unreliable labor and thus limit project options (Grossman, 2005; Strand, 2000);
- Often times there is less preparation of faculty to guide students away from previously held stereotypes and misconceptions (Cone & Harris, 1996; Strand 2000);
- Potential for limited knowledge of local political and economic situations at the community site (Maurrasse, 2001; Mott, 2005); and
- Students and faculty could be unaware cultural norms and ideologies leading miscommunication between the community and the university (Eyler & Giles, 1999; Marullo, 1999).

Steinberg, Hatcher, and Bringle from Indiana University-Purdue have developed a measurement technique for evaluating the efficiency of civic engagement programs and teaching strategies. In their article, *Civic-Minded Graduate: A North Star* (2011), they described the current debate surrounding civic responsibility and college students. Steinberg et al. connected the need for more efficient civic engagement programs with the development of service learning. They have singled out service learning because they believe it is the only type “of community-based learning...that service-learning intentionally identifies the civic growth of students fostered through structured reflection and meaningful experiences within community organizations” (p. 19). Steinberg et al. (2011) have provided literature to assert that service-learning could be the most effective way of improving and engaging students in civic learning and ultimately could strengthen their sense of civic responsibility. It should be mentioned that

within many of the studies listed that evaluate and assess service-learning or civic engagement, researchers recommend more exploration into additional ways civic engagement can be enhanced.

Additionally, many of the studies reviewed call researchers to take a step back and gather a more holistic view of what civic responsibility and civic education looks like within this changing educational environment (Bennett & Green, 2001; Guthrie & McCracken, 2010; Killian, 2011; Lester et al., 2005; Strait & Sauer, 2004; Thomson, Smith-Tolken, Naidoo, & Bringle, 2011). Haste (2010) and Selwyn (2007) directly warned that before educators place existing knowledge practices and pedagogies (service-learning) into new media (online learning), more research should be conducted to find fundamental characteristics, assumptions, and problems so that the new media can be used to its full capacity.

Guthrie and McCracken (2010) stated, the “logical progression” for service learning is that it be incorporated into online/distance education. Technology has allowed vast distances to become irrelevant with the ability to connect with faculty and peers in the pursuit of higher education. Today, technology can provide a venue for social engagement and civic responsibility through service learning. “Service learning can be easily incorporated into online learning and even give a detailed summary of how they incorporate service learning into their own distance education course” (Bennett & Green, 2001, p. 22). The Guthrie and McCracken article, *Promoting Service Learning Via Online Instruction*, discussed how combining online learning and service learning strengthens the course and teaching methods. It is hoped that using service learning via an online format gives institutions the opportunity to reach communities far away, thus providing a positive impact in the communities of individual students (Guthrie & McCracken, 2010). Another hope is that students will seek service learning courses because it

will help them build lasting relationships for future employment (Strait & Sauer, 2004). While these researchers have pointed to reasons why service learning should be incorporated into distance education, to date, little research has been done on the actual impact of students' development of civic responsibility and sense of community through service learning activities.

Killian (2011) tied online learning to service learning and ultimately civic responsibility in her article *Pedagogical Experimentation: Combining Traditional, Distance, and Service Learning Techniques*. She gave a strong argument as to why service learning should be incorporated into the curriculum:

...there is agreement in the literature that this pedagogical approach involves instructional methods that promote learning through active participation in organization experiences that meet actual community needs, are integrated into the academic curriculum, provide students with opportunities to use newly acquired skills and knowledge in real-life situation, and help to promote a sense of caring for others. (p. 221)

Killian's study incorporated service learning pedagogy into an online format. She closely examined the design and delivery of service learning in an online environment and gives a brief analysis of its outcomes. In her closing arguments, Killian alluded to the need for more research that "explores additional pedagogical approaches that integrate a variety of instructional techniques to enhance the learning experience while simultaneously contributing to the quality of community life" (Killian, 2011, p. 222).

Creating a New Type of Civic Education

A key component of online education is the use of the internet and web 2.0 technologies (i.e., web sharing, user-centered, collaboration). These components have been examined as having great impact on civic responsibility of America's youth. The internet has been cited as a possible solution to the disengagement of America's youth by enhancing new forms of citizenship (Bachen, Rafael, Lynn, McKee, & Philippi, 2008; Delli & Carpini, 2010; Gennaro &

Dutton, 2006; Livingstone, Bober, & Helsper, 2005; Livingstone, Couldry, & Markham, 2007; Ward, 2008). It has been suggested that the internet, with its flexibility, interactive modes of communication, and ability to sustain multi-geographic dialogue, can help increase youth's interest in civic engagement (Livingstone, Couldry, & Markah, 2007). Livingstone (2009) explained that if younger generations are already enjoying using the internet for networking why not mold it to direct their energy towards networking that has civic components? Watkins (2011) expanded on Livingstone noting that new digital media platforms can be an important component in creating an informed citizen.

Michael Wesch is a cultural anthropologist who has spent the last seven years examining the effects of new media on society, especially that of younger generations. Wesch (2009) believes that social media is key to reengaging younger generations back into civic life. Online education can foster collaboration and open discussion (Guthrie & McCracken, 2010). Bole and Gordon (2009) have connected collaboration and open discussion directly to civic education when they reference Levine (2007). Levine (2007) stated that curriculum, which directly relates history and government with roles and responsibilities of a democratic citizenship while allowing students to interact and collaborate, will connect them to real-world issues that can not only inform them but drive their awareness and excitement to get involved. Putnam (2000) even mentioned that virtual communities are an important "counter-trend to the decline of social connectedness" (p. 148). Bole and Gordon (2009) pointed to the White House, the center of our nation's democracy, as an investor in online technology and communication tools to bring people closer and allow them to feel more connected to its policies and staff. The White House has redesigning its website to include weekly video blogs from the President as well as developed an "Office of Public Liaison" that allows citizens to connect with the White House directly. The

way civic engagement is delivered to intersect with the digital norms of today's culture may lead to positive outcomes in students' retention and motivation among students. This will be discussed in the next section.

Changing Curriculum Leads to Retention and Motivation

Stumpf, McCrimon, and Davis (2005) reported on the popularity of online courses for college students. However popular online education has become, web-based courses are still reported as having the higher numbers of drop-outs than their traditional courses' counterparts (Brown, 2012). Suggested reasons for a high dropout rate are due to student motivation and lack of connection to the course material. Civic education, when examined for its characteristics, provides a picture of collaboration, motivation, and engagement. In Major's (2014) book, *Teaching Online: A Research-based Guide to Instructional Change*, she examined student engagement as a means to increase retention rates. Major has incorporated concepts of motivation, participation, attention, involvement, and intellectual effort to paint a picture of what student engagement needs to be in online education. All of these concepts can be transitioned into civic education and civic engagement. Even Guthrie and McCracken (2010) described online education as providing students with the opportunity to compare and contrast a range of civic experiences both locally and over great distances. This unique experience could provide interest and motivations that were previously lacking in some web-based courses.

Overcoming Challenges

Chapter I addressed the challenges faculty faced when trying to incorporate civic education into their distance education course. Additionally, Chapter I talked about the challenges that I will encounter recruiting participants for this study. However I felt that I should

revisit this subject and divulge further on a few more challenges that surround online education and civic education as a whole.

Incorporation and Effectiveness

Throughout the literature, two key questions kept coming up: how does faculty incorporate civic education components into their online courses and how should they assess its effectiveness? The literature offers few answers.

Furco (2010) offered seven components that can be used to restructure curriculum in any discipline to help focus more on social issues without losing the heart of the discipline itself. In his article *The Engaged Campus: Toward a Comprehensive Approach to Public Engagement*, he lists the seven components, which have been adapted into Table 5⁴.

These seven components can be used individually or together as a reference for incorporating civic education into a course. Each one poses itself well to be added to an online curriculum. Researchers are also examining the purpose of civic engagement and have defined the purpose into two specific categories (Bartik, 2004; Becker, 1993; Brandl & Weber, 1995; Caputo, 2005; Enrich, 1997; Furo, 2010; Giles & Eysler, 1994; Kerringan, 2005; Kuh, 2011; Malin, 2011; Markus, Howard, & King, 1993; Perry & Katula, 2001; Weiss, 2004; Wesch, 2009; Wilhite & Silver, 2005). They are to

1. Produce a citizen who has a better understanding of her or his world so they might have a better knowledge of when and how to become involved; and
2. Produce a citizen who is capable of understanding, analyzing, and influencing public policy decisions.

⁴ See Appendix C for permission to reprint this table.

Table 5

Core Functions of an Engaged Campus

Function	Description
Community-Based Learning	Teaching/learning that is directly connected to or occurs in the community or field EX: Field studies, internships, professional practice, project-based learning
Community-Based Research	Research activities that are focused on community issues; the research activities may or may not be based in the community EX: Community-based research, social research, applied research
Community Service and Outreach	The engagement of students, faculty and staff in community-based activities that are designed intentionally to provide a genuine service to the community EX: Community service, Volunteerism, Outreach programmes, Community and governmental relations
Community-based Capstone Experience	Teaching/learning experiences that include a strong research component and are directly connected to or occur in the community EX: Community-based capstone experiences, Community-based student research projects, Course-based community-based research projects
Service-Learning	Course-based teaching and learning activities that engage students in the community both to provide a service that meets a community need and to enhance students' learning of the course content EX: Academic service-learning, Co-curricular service-learning, Service-based internships
Participatory Action Research	Community-focused or community-based research activities that are designed to directly serve an identified community need EX: Action research, Participatory action research
Community Service-based Capstone Experience	Teaching/learning experiences that include a strong research component and which seek to provide service to the community to address an important, identified community need EX: Community service-based capstone projects

Source: Furco, A. (2010). The Engaged Campus: Toward a Comprehensive Approach to Public Engagement. *British Journal Of Educational Studies*, (4), 375.

Each of these categories is somewhat different from the other and requires unique actions and pedagogical methods for attainment (Caputo, 2005). Depending on the wanted outcome and the faculty understanding of the production of a citizen, several different methods could be seen in

any given department, college, or university (Caputo, 2005; Colby, Ehrlich, Beaumont, & Stephens, 2003). Thus, it should be reiterated that the need for clarity in what role online education plays in civic education and how faculty can incorporate and assess civic education are key to building better pedagogical methods.

Faculty Constraints

Research has shown that the workload for development, maintenance, and facilitation of an online course can be significantly higher than a traditional course (Dedman & Palmer 2011; King, 2010; Maguire, 2005; Osborne et al., 2009; Tabata & Johnsrud, 2008). But, another piece to this challenge is that of resistance by faculty towards online teaching and learning (Dedman & Palmer 2011; King, 2010; Maguire, 2005; Osborne et al., 2009; Tabata & Johnsrud, 2008). Within this resistance lie many reasons for negative or hesitant perceptions and attitudes to online teaching. Faculty often report that they are not confident in their technology skills or have limited access to technology to conduct an effective online course (Dedman & Palmer, 2011; Maguire, 2005). Typically, limited training is offered and there are no real standards for faculty to use when developing a course (Maguire, 2005). Faculty feel they are expected to become experts in their field of study and instructional technology just to teach online. Also, they often believe they are expected to be more creative when teaching online than a traditional classroom (King, 2010; Dedman & Palmer, 2011). Other reasons for resistance include feelings of limited job security, a fear that online intellectual property may be compromised, or that online teaching is not viewed favorably in promotion and tenure (Dedman & Palmer 2011; Maguire, 2005). In fact, a large part of resistance is that faculty believe that teaching online limits their chances for promotion and tenure because policies and procedures do not take into account the time and effort it takes to develop an online course (Dedman & Palmer 2011; Maguire, 2005).

While many believe that distance education is extremely beneficial and its strengths outweigh any negatives (Bradford & Wyatt, 2010; Mullen & Tallent-Runnels, 2006; McFarland & Hamilton, 2006; Stowell & Bennet, 2010; Jackson & Helms, 2008; Jennings & Bayless, 2003), others purport that distance education is hurting the educational system and does not belong in truly academic environments (Pina, 2010; Bejerano, 2008). The majority of faculty fall somewhere in between these two extremes, according to Seaman et al. (2009).

Community

Finally, in this section I summarize the challenges already associated with community and community engagement within higher education. The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching has attempted to develop a classification for institutions that are engaged in the community, but what they found is that even higher education institutions are having trouble classifying and recognizing their own commitments to community engagement (Driscoll, 2009).

Community involvement is seen as an umbrella term that includes a wide range of informal to formal connection with local communities. “Civic engagement” denotes faculty and students working with communities as a form of citizenship; civic directly linked to democratic theory of citizenship. (Thomson, Smith-Tolken, Naidoo, & Bringle, 2011, p. 219)⁵

Student motivation in community involvement. There have been several studies conducted to determine why individuals volunteer to serve their community. These studies were able to uncover several theories that could later be used to help influence pedagogical changes associated with community engagement and civic responsibility. Hoffman, Wallach, and Sanchez (2010) addressed three theories of community engagement. Hoffman et al. explained

⁵ Adapted from “ Service Learning and Community Engagement: A Comparison of Three National Contexts by A. Thomson, A. Smith-Tolken, A. Naidoo, & R. Bringle, 2011, International Journal of Voluntary & Nonprofit Organization, 22(2) p. 214-237.

that the first theory addresses the very basic need to maintain a sense of purpose in our lives and the feeling of giving back to society.

According to this theory, the reason why community service engagement activities are reported as being so rewarding by so many people is that, after the community service activities have been completed, individuals report a sense of fulfillment and completion of their personal lives. (Hoffman, Wallach, & Sanchez, 2010, p. 419)

A second theory addressed was the need for socialization. Volunteers are able to connect with those in need and receive a sense of “empathy” which in turn compels them to engage (Penner, Dovidio, Piliavin, & Schroeder, 2005). Finally, the third theory addressed the norms and social morals that have been passed down for generations that community service is necessary and a part of one’s civic responsibility (Gaulin & McBurney, 2001). Additionally, the need to help others has become a key measurement in one’s own self-worth and dignity (Barnett & Hyde, 2001).

When you tie all of these theories back to higher education curriculum, Hoffman, Wallach, and Sanchez (2010) noted that community service activities that are coordinated in a diverse environment such as a higher education institution allow participants to better understand the population they are serving. All of this provides participants with a better feeling of connection to their institution, helps diversify a student body, and improves communication among groups.

It can be extrapolated that, when communities provide opportunities to work collaboratively with each other, they not only provide environments where individuals discover their strengths and aptitudes, but also provide a better environment for individuals from different ethnic backgrounds to grow in understanding and engage in more dialogue with each other. (Hoffman, Wallach, & Sanchez 2010, p. 426)

Working definition. For the purpose of this literature review, a starting point for the definition of community in online education was developed using Cook’s (2010) article, *Distance Learning for Community Education*. The reason this article was chosen is that distance

learning is used as the discourse to define community in the same way we are using online learning to define civic responsibility and community engagement through faculty perceptions. Cook refocused this need for a definition into how online learning can define a community better. Cook described a community as a local community of individuals who share the same societal interactions. Similarly, distance education focuses education in a way that addresses the unique needs of a given community, providing a customized and shared educational experience within a community. Also, distance education or online learning allows less time for face-to-face interaction and more time on the delivery of information through discussion, interaction, and application (Brown, 2011).

As this study continues, it is hoped that the participants drew a better picture of what community, community engagement, and community service mean in an online environment as they relate to civic responsibility and the macro environment. The term “community” is a complex concept that can be defined and viewed in many dimensions. I had hoped to find a concrete definition that would span all of these dimensions but realized the literature illustrates that community cannot be an absolute and will require the participants to help define these dimensions via online education as it pertains.

Summary

Through closer examination of the literature, I have noted how civic engagement has been incorporated in the higher education curriculum. In a few cases, I have even been able to pinpoint how it has been incorporated in online education. Much of what was discovered pointed to a need for assessments and evaluations of pre-existing civic education pedagogy that is being used in the higher education curriculum and specifically online curriculum. However, as much research has been done on civic education in a traditional education format, about that

much less has been done on civic education in an online education format. Therefore this study is extremely relevant in adding to the body of knowledge needed to effectively transition civic education into distance education and I hope that this literature review has conveyed that need and urgency. In the chapters that follow I will discuss the findings to the study and recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER III:
METHODOLOGY

Introduction

As Pillemer (1984) wrote that each scientist attempts to draw overall conclusions from his/her research, whether by using informal, narrative, or meta-analysis approaches. In the end the real issues is not “whether to use but how best to discover” the data (Pillemer, 1984, p. 28). This study was conceived to uncover knowledge of how civic engagement was being incorporated into online learning. Additionally, I was researching an area of education where little research has been conducted which meant I needed methods of data collection appropriate for an exploratory-type study.

In the end, I chose a qualitative study using grounded theory methodology to develop a descriptive study. In choosing grounded theory methodology, it is important to distinguish the difference between “grounded theory” and grounded theory methodology. In the case of this study the process was used and not the product. I will explain this further in the methodology section.

The purpose of this study was to gain a clearer understanding of what constitutes civic education, civic responsibility, and community engagement in online education as perceived by those faculty teaching online courses. Grounded theory methodology is often used when research is being conducted concerning “areas of education where little research has been conducted” (Merriam, 1998, p. 38).

The reason a qualitative inquiry method was chosen over a quantitative method was the nature of the data needed. A qualitative research method “ builds a complex, holistic picture, analyzes words, reports detailed views of informants, and conducts the study in a natural setting” (Creswell, 1998, p. 15). This study was descriptive in nature, which required a richer deeper collection of data. The method of qualitative inquiry was also chosen for its flexibility and ability to adapt as data is gathered and analyzed. Grounded theory methodology was used to define what is happening in relation to distance education and civic responsibility at the research sites.

Methodology

Qualitative Research

Merriam (2001) defined qualitative research as “an umbrella concept covering several forms of inquiry that help us understand and explain the meaning of social phenomena with as little disruption to the natural setting as possible.” (p. 5). Merriam has provided five characteristics of qualitative studies:

1. Qualitative researchers are interested in understanding the meaning people have constructed;
2. The researcher is the primary instrument for all data collection and analysis;
3. It (qualitative research) usually involves fieldwork;
4. Qualitative research primarily employs an inductive research strategy; and
5. The product of a qualitative research study is richly descriptive. (pp. 7-8)

Those five characteristics were essential to this study because participants shared their own experiences and perceptions of teaching civic engagement in an online course.

It is also important to note the role of the researcher in a qualitative study. In a qualitative study the researcher is the primary mode of data collection and analysis. Merriam (2001) conveyed the importance of the researcher's willingness to accept ambiguity and uncertainty. Merriam compares the qualitative researcher to a detective. A detective gathers all the evidence and meticulously sifts through it analyzing and gathering more data as needed. This method of data collection is time consuming but provides the researcher with a rich supply of information. Merriam also stated that sensitivity is a required trait in a researcher. Researchers must be sensitive to their environment, the data, and the method of analyzing the data. Finally, Merriam shared the importance of communication in a qualitative study. A researcher must be able to listen, establish rapport with participants, and effectively communicate through writing.

Grounded Theory Methodology

In a typical grounded theory study, methods of data collection are used for the sole purpose of uncovering a theory, which is a description of a set of conceptual categories and the relation among those categories. Strictly speaking, theory is grounded in the data because it is generated from that data. To further understand what grounded theory is Creswell (2009) explained it as "a qualitative strategy in inquiry in which the researchers derive a general, abstract theory of process, action, or interaction grounded in the views of the participants in a study" (p. 13 & 229). This definition requires that the theory be conceptual, meaning the data must be a construct of conceptualizations or abstracts and not just detailed descriptions. The current study design differs from a typical grounded theory study. In conforming to traditional methods of grounded theory one is expected to conceptualize all data uncovered, to develop a theory, focusing less on description of the data and more on the correlations between concepts. As mentioned before the area of research for this current study has had so little attention that

description or actual processes of how to incorporate civic engagement into an online course were significant and needed to be explored. I felt that it was more important to uncover descriptive data that could assist in future generation of theory. The goal therefore was to develop a method of exploring how civic engagement was being incorporated into online education, which required that description take precedent over theory generation. By using grounded theory methodology I was able to develop a strong data collection and analysis design that would allow this undiscovered descriptive knowledge to emerge. I was able to rely on one of its strengths, which was the method at which data are analyzed.

Grounded theory methodology analyzes data by using a comparative method, where “units of data deemed meaningful by the researcher are compared with each other in order to generate tentative categories and properties, the basic elements of a grounded theory” (Merriam, 2002, p. 143). To determine what units of data were meaningful I looked back to my conceptual framework. In *Educating Citizens* (2003), the main goal of examination was so that techniques of incorporating civic value into a student’s life through curriculum were uncovered; this was indicated in my collection and analysis by placing emphasis on methods of incorporation used by the participants. Additionally, *Habits of the Heart* (1983) and *Bowling Alone* (2001) both provided awareness to the importance of civic and moral values in the betterment of society and how higher education can play an important role as a vehicle for instilling those values in the youth of America. This provided me with a lens to examine the data for the role higher education played in instilling civic and moral values and how this emphasis on civic and moral values is impacting students’ understanding of civic responsibility.

In-depth interviewing was selected, as it is the main method of collection for a grounded theory methodological study. Through interviews with participants, data can be collected that

provides a holistic picture of the perspectives of the participants (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This process requires multiple stages of collection and analysis that will refine and connect categories of information within the data (Charmaz, 2006; Strauss & Corbin, 1990, 1998). Additionally, as the data collection began, the research questions and/or interview questions continued to evolve to uncover further meanings that may be hidden (Robson, 2002).

Research Questions

The following questions guided this research study:

1. How do faculty incorporate civic education and community engagement into online education; and
2. How do these faculty determine the success of their efforts to encourage civic responsibility and community engagement?

Participant Selection

Without the faculty interest and active support, a successful civic engagement program is next to impossible. (Caputo, 2005, p. 6)

As my sample sites, I originally planned to use institutions that were identified by *Educating Citizens* by Anne Colby, Thomas Ehrlich, Elizabeth Beaumont, and Jason Stephens (2003) as institutions that place moral and civic learning as priority in their mission. *Educating Citizens* (2003) was developed based on The Carnegie Report, which examined over 100 colleges and universities across the nation. By using the institutions from the book and The Carnegie Report, I hoped to expand on the monumental data collection these authors did in finding and highlighting colleges and universities all over the nation that display a large amount of commitment to civic responsibility and community engagement in their students.

However, once the data collection phase began, access to many of the institutions was unavailable and those that were accessible returned limited results on potential participants.

Thus, I had to adapt my methods and seek additional research sites. To find additional sites I reviewed the literature and sought out other colleges and universities who have been mentioned several times in the literature as being civically focused both in terms of mission statements and community involvement. I was able to add two additional universities to my list of recruitment sites. In the end only four of the twelve institutions from The Carnegie Report chosen were included as research sites. Of the eight that were not used, three institutions denied access to the study population, two did not have online courses, and three were unresponsive to solicitations. The additional research sites were chosen because 1) their mission statements reflected on the importance of service to the community; and 2) both had a considerable body of research relating to both (but separate) civic education and online education; and 3) each institution had large online learning divisions. In total, I had six research sites and 15 participants.

Participants

My criteria for selecting research participants did remain the same. To locate the online faculty from each research site I attempted to contact faculty resource centers, teaching and learning centers, or offices of instructional/institutional technology for assistance in identifying online faculty. It was hoped that by soliciting all faculty that those faculty who taught online courses with civic education components would self identify by responding to the call for participation. The call for participation itself was in email form sent out by the contact established at the research site or myself. Each call for participation email was sent between one and three times in a two-month period. Each faculty who responded was given a detailed description of the study and a consent form to send back if they chose to participate. Solicited faculty at these institutions were required to have experience teaching both online and traditional courses and needed to either be currently teaching an online course or have taught an online

course with civic education components in the last two semesters. It was assumed they were already critically examining the terms “civic responsibility” and “community engagement” in how they viewed them in an online environment versus how they viewed them in a traditional classroom setting.

A call for participation was sent out to all faculty via their institutional email address. The call described the study and listed the selection criteria. Interested participants were instructed to contact me directly for additional information.

Participant and Research Sites Descriptions

After solicitations were made to each of the six research sites, I was able to secure 15 faculty from across the nation (n=15). The participants consisted of three males and 12 females. Of the 15 participants, one was outside the continental United States. Two of the 15 participants had recently retired and all but two were tenured or tenure-track professors. One participant had less than five years of college teaching experience, three participants had less than 10 years experience, and the remaining nine participants had 15+ years of college teaching experience. One participant was experiencing teaching online for the first time while another had been teaching online for close to twenty years. The remaining 13 fell in between two and 15 years of teaching experience in an online setting. Twelve of the 15 faculty were teaching online courses to undergraduate students and three taught solely in an online graduate program. Overall this combination of participants provided the rich diversity needed for data collection.

I used Furco’s (2010) model of the seven core functions of an engaged campus, which was described in Chapter II, to help classify each course under examination and paint a descriptive portrait of each participant and institution that includes a description of the institution, a description of the courses taught, the value placed on civic education, the support

offered to faculty, personal training and education with online learning, and how each participant situates himself/herself as civically engaged members of their community. These descriptive portraits were all gleaned from discussions with participants, review of institutional websites, publications, and mission statements. In summary, these seven core functions included the following:

- *Community-Based Learning*, teaching or learning is directly connected or occurring in the community;
- *Community-Based Research*, research focuses on the community issues;
- *Community Service and Outreach*, course activities may or may not be directly engaging students in the community but are designated to provide a genuine service;
- *Community-based Capstone Experience*, teaching or learning experiences that include research and are directly connected to the community;
- *Service-Learning*, course-based teaching or learning activities to engage students in community to provide service and enhance student understanding of curriculum;
- *Participatory Action Research*, community-focused or community-based research activities to serve an identified need; and
- *Community Service-based Capstone Experience*, teaching or learning experience that includes research that provides service to an addressed identified community need.

Additionally many details are generalized, such as affiliated organizations in an attempt to erase identifying markers. A summary of participants is provided in Table 6.

Table 6

Brief Portraits of Participants

Participant	Institution	Brief Portrait
Professor A	Southwestern University	Part-time instructor who has informal training in online teaching methods and tools. Taught online for several semesters but prefers teaching in person. Course focuses around community health and requires students to volunteer with a community agency working on a topic of community health concern.
Professor B	Southwestern University	Assistant professor who has informal training in online teaching methods and tools. Teaching online for the first time during this study. Course focuses on kinesiology and special populations by requiring students to do extensive research on pressing community issues within those topics.
Professor C	Southwestern University	Full-time lecturer who has advanced formal training in online teaching methods and tools. Taught online for several semesters and prefers teaching online due to the flexibility. Course focuses on environmental studies and requires students to complete several assignments based on a community issue focusing on the topic of environmental concerns.
Professor D	Northern Private University	Assistant professor who has had extensive formal and informal training in online teaching methods and tools. Taught online for several years and prefers a mixed method delivery or hybrid course. Course focuses on the area of accounting and requires the students to preform one service project that will be used as a reflective tool throughout the remaining course.
Professor E	Northern Private University	Assistant professor who has had formal training in online teaching methods and tools. Taught online for several semesters and also prefers hybrid courses. Course focuses on social injustice relating to Latin America. Students are required to participate in a one time service project that will be use das a reflective tool throughout the remaining course.

Table 6 continued...

Participant	Institution	Brief Portrait
Professor F	Northern Private University	Associate professor and administrator who has had extensive training in online teaching methods and tools. Taught for over 20 years online and prefers teaching online for its flexibility. Course focuses k-12 education and is designed around a complex project to be developed by students working with a local area classroom.
Professor G	Southeastern University	Part-time Adjunct instructor who has informal training in online teaching methods and tools. Taught online for several years and prefers teaching online for its flexibility. Course focuses on quality management and requires students to work with a community project to build a quality management report based on teachings from the course.
Professor H	Southeastern University	Associate professor with formal training in online teaching and learning. Taught for over 20 years online and prefers online teaching for its flexibility and diverse student enrollment. Courses focus on disability studies within her profession. Students are required to assess community agencies websites for usability and accessibility.
Professor I	Southeastern University	Associate professor with formal training in online teaching methods and tools. Taught online for 10 years and it was undetermined her preference in delivery method. Course focuses on effective management in a health care profession. Students are required to thoroughly research and evaluate an agency within their profession located in their own community. Students are not required to work with the agency but are required to produce a plan of action for effective change.
Professor J	Southeastern University	Recently retired full professor with very little training in online teaching methods and tools. Taught online for the last few years and prefers teaching face-to face when possibility but likes online because of its flexibility. Course focuses on special populations within their discipline. Students are required to volunteer with a local agency serving the population understudy and use this experience to guide their understanding of the course material.

Table 6 continued...

Participant	Institution	Brief Portrait
Professor K	Southeastern University	Assistant professor with formal training in online teaching methods and tools. Taught online for the last 5 years and was undetermined what her preference in delivery method was. Course focuses on community health within their profession. Students are not required to volunteer in the community but are encouraged. The course requires them to focus on a local community health issue and thoroughly research the issue under the guidelines of the course
Professor L	Northern Public University	Full professor and administrator who has no formal training in online teaching methods and tools. Taught online for a few quarters and depending on the course and material would chose online or face-to-face teaching. Course focuses on social work and requires students research a community service with their own community. Students must interact with the community agency and create a blog about the community service for community members to learn about the chosen community service.
Professor M	General Community College	Retired full professor with extensive training in online teaching methods and tools. Taught for over 20 years in distance education and prefers teaching online for its convenience and flexibility. Course requires students to volunteer with a local agency serving low-income children and families. While this does not directly relate to the subject matter of the course it provides for structured service and outreach
Professor N	Northwestern University	Part-time instructor with informal training in online teaching methods and tools. Taught for several years online but it was undetermined what his preferred teaching method was. Course focuses on environmental issues and requires students to build a public website addressing areas of concern related to the issue.
Professor O	Northwestern University	Full-time instructor with some training in online teaching methods and tools. Taught for several years online but was also undetermined what her preferred method of delivery was. Course focused on grant writing and required students to partner with a local agency and develop grant proposals for submission.

Southwestern University. Southwestern University is a public, state university located in a metropolitan city within the southwestern region of the United States. The institution serves over 5,600 students and has been in existence for approximately 20 years. Reflected in its mission statement and core values of the institution is the need to educate its students to be civically engaged within their community. Through the interviews with the faculty from Southwestern University, it was learned that institutional support was provided for every discipline across the campus who wanted to incorporate service learning, community engagement, or other components of civic education within their own curriculum. Students are required to complete a capstone experience before they graduate; this insures that all students have engaged in the community at some point before graduation and all new courses developed are strongly encouraged to add components of civic education. Additionally, the university has taken a proactive stance on distance education providing workshops to its faculty about online teaching methods and tools through a center for academic technology. Three participants are from Southwestern University: Professor A, B, and C. Each participant and his/her course will be discussed in detail in the next few paragraphs.

Professor A is a male lecturer who works part-time with Southwestern University. He teaches in the area of health education and is active as a city employee in that discipline. Professor A has picked up online teaching techniques and skills through his own initiative but does not have any formal training in online teaching methods and tools. He noted that because he splits his time between a full-time job and part-time teaching attending workshops on campus was rather difficult. His course has been taught online for several semesters; however, he prefers teaching face to face when possible because he feels he gets a better connection with students. Professor A describes his undergraduate students as mostly non-traditional students and student

athletes. When asked to elaborate more on why these specific groups, Professor A explains that non-traditional students or “returners” have demands on them from work and family and the online format provides them the flexibility needed to balance all of their responsibilities. With the student athletes, Professor A believes that when the students are in their active sports season the demands of practice and games becomes so great that having to also attend a class each week can become very challenging. He believes having the online format provides them with more time to focus on their schoolwork. Professor A requires all his students to volunteer with “a local nonprofit group” that serves low socioeconomic groups or individuals with special needs whether it be children or seniors. He spends a great deal of time at the beginning of the semester assessing students’ interest and helping to find the appropriate non-profit group with which to work. It came up many times throughout the interview that with his primary career as a city employee the resources and access he has to several non-profit groups has shown to be extremely beneficial to his students, the program, and the university as a whole. Once students are paired with a non-profit they are required to research various topics and issues, in health and wellness, associated with the specific population being served and then go out and work with these individuals through the non-profit. Students reflect through various essays and assignments of their experiences, Professor A requires students to document hours spent at the organization and he communicates with each non-profit used in the course often. It should be noted that even though this course is online all the non-profits used are local to the university and all students appear to be relatively close. Professor A is personally civically involved, volunteering with several city activities as well as participating in his own children’s school events. Using Furco’s seven core functions of an engaged campus, Professor A’s course would fall within the realm of community service-based capstone experience. This course has a strong research component

with the students being required to research the health issues related to the population being served at their non-profit community partner. This research is being done in part to help students understand the course material, which focuses around community health issues, but the research also services the community by allowing the students to introduce new resources and information to a population of underserved individuals.

Professor B is a female assistant professor who, during the span of this data collection, was teaching her first online course. She was unable to give a preference for online or traditional face-to-face teaching because she was not yet through with her first semester teaching online. But she did provide a detailed picture of her background knowledge with teaching online. Through her own personal initiative or by asking her colleagues in her department Professor B has acquired techniques for teaching online. It was not established whether or not she knew about the Center for Academic Teaching at Southwestern University or had ever planned to attend workshops on online teaching methods and tools because further follow-up inquiries were not answered. In her initial interview Professor B shared that she was surprised at the limited interaction her students wanted with her, meaning they rarely asked questions or responded to her feedback, unlike her traditional face-to-face courses. She hypothesized that her online students seemed to be more focused on the work and the point spread than being engaged with the material. Her senior level online course was in the area of kinesiology and focused on special populations. Professor B describes her undergraduate students as mostly traditional on-campus students with the average age being 25. Her students are all local and as she describes it a general mixture of males and females. Through her course students are required to research exercise science issues within a special population under examination within the course. Once students have done a thorough examination of the issues they are asked to critically think about

their option on the issues, solutions to the problem, and methods for delivering education about the issue to the community. Professor B gives several structured assignments that require them to show they have thoroughly researched the topic and critically examined the issues. Students are not specifically required to volunteer in the community but are encouraged to do so.

Professor B shared that she was not currently personally civically active but has participated in the community on numerous occasions over the last several years. According to Furco's chart, this type of engagement can be classified as being a community-based research function of an engaged campus since students focus on the community but do not have to physically be in the community to be considered engaged with the issues.

Professor C is a female lecturer working full-time with the university. She has an advanced degree focusing on online teaching methods and tools from Southwestern University and has taken several workshops from the Center for Academic Technology. Even though her degree focuses on education and online teaching, her area of expertise and the focus of her online course is in environmental studies. Professor C reported that she prefers teaching online because of the flexibility. She describes her students as undergraduate junior and senior, mostly female, and mostly traditional on-campus students. Professor C hypothesizes that the reason she tends to have more females than males is that females do better in an online learning environment. Her course is designated a science course and requires that students collect data from their environment which they then share with the community. It should be noted that Professor C did describe some opposition when developing her course to be delivered solely online because her department in particular does not offer many online courses. She goes on to say that because her course falls under a general requirement for students across campus this was a big reason why she was allowed to develop an online section and that it has been a popular section ever since,

meeting maximum student allowance every semester it is offered. Her course focuses around a specific topic in environmental studies, which requires students to go out into their community and make observations and conduct “labs”. The majority of the students are local to the university so Professor C is able to give a lot of guidance to specific areas in the community to conduct their labs; however, for those who are not local Professor B works with the students to find areas that are similar in characteristics so that their labs and results stay true to the course topic. The students are then required to write up their findings and share it with the community either at a university expo day or through another means of distribution if students are not local or cannot attend the expo. For students who are unable to attend the expo on campus, they must provide proof that they shared their findings with the community, whether it be letters to editors, politicians, or even to the organizations responsible for the environmental issue under examination. Continued conversation with Professor C discovered that she is currently personally civically active with a non-profit organization and volunteers with local events.

According to Furco, I would classify this course as being a community-based learning function of an engaged campus. My reasoning is that the entire course is situated within a specific community issue and students are required to focus their assignments, research, and final project around this issue, which is to be shared with the community.

Northern Private University. Northern Private University is a private university located in a metropolitan city within the northern region of the United State. The institution serves about 5,000 students and was founded in the early 1900s as an all-female school, which holds true today. The mission of this institution is based on social justice and community activism, which prepares its students for lives dedicated to civic responsibility. The majority of freshman and senior courses are required to touch the mission of the university as well as the traditions handed

down for the past 108 years and each student is required to complete a capstone experience before graduation. This capstone experience insures the students are exposed to the values (social justice and community activism) set forth by the university. The university itself is fairly new to online education having just developed several distance education courses and graduate programs within the last 5 years. The university has a technology department that helps maintain its online course management system with a division specifically for providing training for online teaching method and tools. Additionally each participant interviewed at this university described the strong support the University provided to faculty who wanted to put community engagement or civic education into their courses. Faculty were encouraged to work together on collaborated service projects, and several ongoing service projects were open to faculty through a university department designated for community work and learning. Three participants were from Northern Private University, Professors D, E, and F.

Professor D is a female assistant professor with several years of experience teaching online or hybrid courses and has been extensively trained in online teaching methods and tools. She self reported that she has been trained on several different online course management systems and has taken workshops offered by other colleges that are solely online. One unique aspect of Professor D's extensive training is that she took advantage of technology workshops being offered to parents by her children's school; this she said allowed her to see technology as the learner and not as the educator. Professor D prefers a mixed method of delivery (hybrid) because with both one can provide for several different individual learning styles. She has taught her course solely online and traditional face-to-face, but is currently teaching all blended (hybrid) courses. Her course is geared toward undergraduate students and is in the area of accounting. When her course was offered solely online, Professor D described her students as ranging in age

from 19-60 and primarily business degree students from all over the United States. Now that it is blended her students are all local but still range in age from 19-60 and can be considered a mixture of traditional on-campus students and non-traditional “returning” students. Her course requires that students volunteer with a national non-profit organization that packages food for third world countries. The students use the organization as a case study and their one time volunteering experience as reflection while they work through several accounting exercises assigned throughout the course. Professor D works with the students to find a local chapter of the organization within the students own community if they are not local. Professor D is personally civically active with her church, several national nonprofit organizations and her children’s school events.

Looking over Furco’s chart this course would be classified as using a service learning function of an engaged campus. The course falls under that category because it not only provides a service to the community through engaging the students in an activity but it also enhances the student’s understanding of the course material by using the experience as a reflection when later working through the assignments.

Professor E is a female assistant professor who has received formal training through The Sloan Consortium ⁶on online teaching methods and tools but like Professor D also prefers a hybrid course because with both delivery methods one can accommodate several different learning styles. Professor E also attended several workshops through the academic technology staff housed within the information technology department mentioned above. Her course is a required course for all majors at the institution as part of a capstone experience, which was mentioned in the above section. Her course was originally taught in a traditional face-to-face

⁶ The Sloan Consortium (Sloan-C) is a professional online learning society devoted to advancing quality e-Education learning into the mainstream of education through its community. Originally funded by the Alfred P. Taken from <http://sloanconsortium.org/aboutus>

format, then moved to online, and since has moved to hybrid. Professor E believes that the hybrid format is very beneficial for her students and offers students the flexibility and time for reflection in the online component but also the support and belonging that being on campus provides. She also found it very beneficial for the students to interact face-to-face on one large service project together, explaining that it built a connection between students and developed a community within the course that in turn produced a good dynamic during the online sessions. It should be noted that Professor E found her service activity by going through the department for community work and learning mentioned above. In each capstone course professors are allowed to pick the topic as long as it relates to social injustice. Professor E's expertise is Spanish; therefore she has molded her capstone course around Latin America. She describes her students as non-traditional students with ages averaging 40 years old, typically "returner" students or students who work full-time and are attending college on nights and weekends. Her course requires that students participate in a onetime volunteering experience, which was scheduled a few weeks after the course had started. Leading up to the service project the students would research the organization and learn about the population being served. The students would then participate in the onetime volunteer experience and then use that experience as a reflection tool when working through course material and topics. Students volunteer at a local non-profit organization that works with a country in South America. It was not established exactly what the service learning experience entailed. Further into the conversation Professor E noted that she was also personally civically active in the community and abroad as a translator. This type of learning could be categorized as a service learning function because the service is used to help further student's understanding of the course but also because it is providing genuine service to the community.

Professor F is a female associate professor with over 20 years experience with online teaching methods and tools. She has been teaching her current course for over six years online. It is important to note that Professor F is also an administrator in online learning within her department, which requires that she be an expert with online teaching methods and tools. Her course is housed within an all online graduate program that caters to students from across the state in which the institution is housed. Professor F describes her students as already working professional women returning to school to advance their careers and grow in their educational goals. Professor F prefers teaching online for its flexibility and ability to mold the instruction to meet individual needs. Before becoming a faculty member Professor F was a social studies teacher specifically focusing on citizenship. Her course requires students to work with a local k-12 classroom whose students are already developing their own technology instruction for individuals with brain injury. The students at Northern Private University work with the students at the local k-12 classroom throughout the semester helping to provide additional resources and help, while they mutually work together developing this project for brain injury patients. It was undetermined whether or not Professor F was personally civically active however within her interview she stated that she chose her institution because of its commitment to community service. This course's use of engagement would classify it as using community-based learning function of an engaged campus because the entire course is directly connected and occurs in the field or community. Students are required to work with a local school the entire semester building a project. This project incorporates the entirety of the course objectives and student outcomes for Professor F's courses.

Southeastern University. Southeastern University is a public institution in a metropolitan city located in the southeastern region of the United States. The institution services

over 35,000 students and has been in existence for over 150 years. Looking at the mission of the university it reflects that service is one of its top values. It has an extensive online education catalog with a department devoted to the maintenance and expansion of online programs throughout campus. Additionally it has several departments devoted to community service, service learning, and faculty development, all working towards civic education. However, unlike the institutions described above, this university does not have a top down approach to civic education, meaning there is not a system wide expectation that civic engagement be incorporated into all or most departments. Specific departments, programs, or faculty take it upon themselves in being strong advocates for civic engagement and seek out services to help them incorporate more civic education components into their courses. There were five participants from this university. Professors G, H, I, J, and K will be discussed in the next few paragraphs.

Professor G is a male adjunct instructor who works part-time with the university and full-time with another area university within the Southeastern region. He has experience teaching several semesters of online courses and was one of the first instructors in his department to do so, however he has had no formal training in online teaching methods and tools. It is important to note that he did self-report that he stagnated in learning new technology for online teaching methods and is still teaching using the same methods of communication and delivery that he began with almost 10 years ago. His reason for not progressing forward with new technology was due to the demands on his time. Professor G's course is in the area of quality management and is housed in a completely online graduate program. He describes his students as working professionals with many in the health care or business fields. They are from all across the United States. His course requires students to locate a community partner within their own community and use the course materials to produce a project related to quality management. Professor G also

is personally civically active with a national non-profit organization like many of the other participants. His course uses the volunteer opportunity as a means to allow students to apply their knowledge and therefore would be categorized as using the service learning function under Furco's seven functions of an engaged campus.

Professor H is a female associate professor with over 20 years experience in online teaching methods and tools and has an advanced degree in instructional design. Professor H prefers teaching online for its flexibility and the possibility to have so many diverse students in a single class. She is currently teaching in a graduate program that is offered completely online and through traditional face-to-face courses. Something important to note about Professor H's program is that it has a Distance Educator Coordinator. She explains that a faculty member in the program is designated to assist other faculty in the program with their distance education questions and needs. This position is additional to the faculty members teaching responsibilities but it does also provide additional pay. She describes her students as professional students mostly working full-time or having families and from all across the United States. Her course focuses on disability studies within their profession. Professor H has two online courses that have civic education components in them. Her first course requires that students do usability studies on websites for community service agencies. These agencies can either be located in the same community as the institution or any where across the United States. Typically Professor H will already have several community agency lined up for the semester of the course but students can find their own with approval from the professor. Students, in groups, are required to work with their designated agency during the semester to help develop a comprehensive usability report of the agencies website as it relates to persons with disabilities. At the end of the semester the students are to provide the agency with a professional report with recommendations on how

to improve their website. Her second course mirrors the first in students are required to work in groups with a community agency (one of their own choosing) to produce an accessibility report of their website. Students move through the course learning about how to grade websites on their accessibility for persons with disabilities. At the end of the semester, , the students submit a professional report with recommendations on ways to provide a more accessible website. Like many of the other participants Professor H is personally civically active having developed her own local nonprofit organization. Because these courses are molded around the project within the community and encompass the entire course objectives and student outcomes, it too would be classified as using the community-based learning function under Furco's seven core functions of an engaged campus.

Professor I is a female associate professor who has been teaching in a complete online graduate program for over 10 years and has formal training with one of the institutions own departments focused on distance learning. She has also had extensive training in civic education through another of the institutions departments focusing on civic engagement, mentioned briefly in the introduction for the Southeastern University. She described her students as mostly female, professional students who range in age from 25-45 years old. Professor I's courses are in a health related profession and she teaches at both the master's and doctoral level. The course discussed requires students to take course material and apply it to a health organization or program within their own community to come up with a more effective management plan, however it does not require them to engage in the community or share the results of their plan. This project spans the entire course and requires students to research, analyze and critically think about the community needs at a specific health care facility and then come up with effective solutions that are grounded in research and calculated data. During the interview Professor I came to the

conclusion that she could definitely add the engagement piece to the course because it was already there, but was not being utilized. Because the students are researching a specific community need but are not actively participating in the community it would be reasonable to categorize this course as having a community-based research functionality of an engaged campus under Furco's chart. Professor I, like her colleagues, is personally civically active having used her professional skills to work abroad caring for citizens in impoverished countries.

Professor J is a female professor who has recently retired from full-time teaching and now only teaches online through her department. She received very little formal training in online teaching tools and methods through her primary institution; however, she gained some training through a completely online college that she has taught as an adjunct for years (not Southeastern University). Even though she has been teaching online for several years, Professor J still prefers face-to-face teaching when possible, believing that with her profession, face-to-face interaction is key to preparing students for their careers, but she does enjoy the flexibility that online teaching gives her. Professor J teaches two online courses with connection to community. In her upper-level undergraduate course, Professor J describes the students as mostly on campus students finishing up their core requirements. In her lower-level undergraduate course she describes the students as from all disciplines and all over the United States and military stations outside the United States. She requires that students volunteer within a specific organization that serves the special population under study within the course. Students are required to volunteer with the organization as a way to get hands-on experience and one-on-one observation with the specific group under examination in the course. For students who are local to the university Professor J has already made arrangements with several local agencies where students can observe the special population. It is important to note that for those who are not local Professor J

requires them to find an agency and then she will provide whatever documentation or support needed to allow the student access. She does mention how difficult this process can be. With the upper-level course she requires students to seek members of their own family to learn about their heritage and backgrounds with the context at looking at discrimination and prejudice and how that can affect themselves and others in similar situations. Through further conversations with Professor J it was established that she too is personally civically active volunteering in several civic organizations within her own community. As these courses focus on activities in the community and those activities are in place to enhance the students' understanding of the special population under study, the courses would most likely be labeled as having a community-based learning function.

Professor K is a female assistant professor who has been teaching online courses for at least five years in an all online undergraduate health related discipline. She has received formal training through one of the institution's own department's focusing on distance learning, mentioned briefly in the above description on the university. Attempts to follow-up were unsuccessful so it was undetermined whether Professor K preferred teaching online or face-to-face but that she has taught both for a number of years and now exclusively teaches online. Professor K describes her students as undergraduate non-traditional, professional student who come from all over the southeastern region of the United States. They are primarily female and have families which also requires they juggle their time between work, school, and home life. The course requires students to use the course material learned to research and assess their community's health needs. Students through several assignments are to show they have researched, and critically deduced solutions for community health concerns within their own local communities. The course does not require that the students share their findings with the

community but are encouraged to do so by Professor K. Because the course is so heavily laden with research and it does not require physical engagement within the community I would categorize this course in the community-based research function of an engaged campus. Finally like her colleagues Professor K is also personally civically active using her professional skills at a local nonprofit organization.

Northern Public University. Northern Public University is a public state university located in a large metropolitan city in the Northern region of the United States. The institution serves over 30,000 students and has been in existence for about 45 years. In its mission statement it constitutes excellence in teaching and learning; research, scholarship, and creative activity, and civic engagement, locally, nationally, and globally. The institution itself is similar to Southeastern University in that there is no top down approach to incorporating civic education and community engagement into the curriculum. Select faculty are incorporating it and conducting research on citizenship and community engagement. It was mentioned in the interview that Northern Public University has both a department devoted to learning technology and a department devoted to innovations in teaching and learning. Only one participant came from Northern Public University, Professor L, it was not determined whether Professor L knew of these departments or had ever participated in any training that they provide.

Professor L is a female professor and administrator who has only been teaching online for 4 quarters but has over 20 years experience teaching in higher education. She has no formal training in online teaching methods and tools but has picked up several skills either through her own initiative or through consulting with her colleagues. Professor L's preference in delivery method (online or face-to-face) depends on the course, explaining that she feels some courses are better suited for online delivery while others require the face-to-face interaction. She attributes

this preference to the nature of her profession of social work. Professor L teaches in the graduate program within her department, which has only recently been moved to all online, so she describes her students as all graduate students, who are professionals working full-time, from all across the United States. Her course requires that students research a community service within their own community, one that works with their own interest and area of specialty within social work, produce a blog about the community service and then share that blog with the community. Students are required to research the community service by interacting with the community agency. They are also required to provide educated opinions on improvement while working through the course material, which provides guidance on how to research, analyze, and improve service delivery methods. Within the descriptions of Furco's seven functions of an engaged campus this course might fall under the community-based capstone experience function because it has a strong research component and is directly connected to the community. Furthermore, through our conversation I learned that Professor L is personally civically active using her professional skills in the community as a pro bono consultant.

General Community College. General Community College is a public two-year institution located in a large metropolitan city situated outside the continental United States. The institution serves over 9,000 undergraduate students and has been in existence for over 67 years. Only one participant came from General Community College, Professor M. It is important to note that General Community College, unlike many other state community colleges, is associated with the area public four-year institution and therefore has access to the resources that comes with a larger institution. With that said it was not mentioned in the interview whether or not the participant ever used resources outside the community college. The mission and values of the community college indicated a strong commitment to the indigenous people located in the region

and preserving the culture and history of those people. The values of the indigenous people are laced throughout the curriculum and strong emphasis on connecting with the community is supported by the administration.

Professor M is a female professor who had just retired having taught for over 20 years using distance education. She has several formal trainings in online teaching methods and tools and prefers teaching online for its convenience and flexibility. Her course, when she taught, met a core curriculum requirement for English at the institution and is required of all undergraduate students. Professor M describes her students as a mixture of traditional on campus students and nontraditional “returning” professional students from across the state in which the institution is housed. The course required that students volunteer within the community working with an organization or department that served low income children and families. The service activity did not directly work within the course material. This type of civic activity did provide the students with civic and community engagement and therefore would be classified as having a function of an engaged campus; being a community service and outreach function. Professor M volunteers with the same community organization as her students and has developed her own community service center, focusing on providing technology access for this low socioeconomic population.

Northwestern University. Northwestern University is a public state university located in a large metropolitan city in the northwestern region of the United States. The institution services over 29,000 students and has been in existence for over 65 years. One key expectation of the university is that all education focus on ethic and social responsibility especially in regards to the culture and values of the city’s indigenous population. The institution has two offices on campus that focus on technology: office for informational technology and an office for academic innovation that work with faculty who want to incorporate technology or distance education

within their programs. It was not established, due to unsuccessful follow-up attempts, whether or not the participants ever used these two offices on campus. Two participants are from Northwestern University, Professor N and Professor O.

Professor N is a male instructor who teaches part-time with the institution while working full-time as a government employee within the metropolitan city. His course is under a university wide program that is labeled as a general studies major for undergraduates. It is unknown if he prefers teaching online or face-to-face but through conversation it was established that he has been teaching his course for over five years. Professor N describes his students as a mixture of traditional and non-traditional student's undergraduate students. He states that his course is usually one of the last courses students take before graduation therefore he gets several students who have already moved and started working in their chosen field. The course looks at environmental issues that can impact a community. Because the course is completely online and students are from across the globe, they are required to build a website solely based on the environmental issue under study. The website provides the students with a semester long project where they transfer learned course material into written form to be shared with a global community. Through website tools they can monitor the global community feedback (hits per page, location traveled from) that can be used to update and adapt the site to better meet the needs to the community using the website. Because this course has a heavy research component based on a community issue it could be labeled as having a community-based research function but because the course is focused on one specific community-focused research activity it also could be labeled as having a participatory action research function. I should note that this course is very unique in its delivery, having not come across a course like this anywhere else. Professor

N like many of the other participants is personally civically active within his own community volunteering with many local organizations.

Professor O is a female instructor working within the same program as Professor O. It is unknown whether she prefers teaching online or face-to-face but she has been teaching her course online for the past five years as well. She describes her students as a mixture of traditional and non-traditional students who are mostly all located within the same community as the institution, many belonging to the indigenous population mentioned in the above section. The course requires students to develop their grant writing skills by helping find and write grants for local nonprofit organizations. Professor O is very active in helping students find local nonprofit organizations to work with, having already established connections with numerous local non-profit organizations. She focuses her course assignments and material around step-by-step grant writing so that students are able to produce a grant submission for the non-profit they are partnering with. Because this course requires students to use course material on a project that directly impacts a community organization I would classify it as being a community service-based capstone experience. Like Professor N, Professor O is personally civically active with a local non-profit organization.

The purpose of these short yet descriptive summaries of each participant has been to provide the background knowledge needed to understand their responses and the themes that emerged from the data. It is important to note that most all the participants are personally civically active and believed that to motivate and encourage students to be active in the community they too must be active. Their preferences in teaching and delivery methods ranged from online, to face-to-face, to hybrid. This preference later emerged in their reflections and

opinions of success of the course and student growth. Additionally, the institutions in which the participants taught have similarities and major differences.

Data Collection

Data in a qualitative research study takes on a descriptive nature because pictures are formed instead of numbers (as in a quantitative study). Data used to develop deep meaning (Erickson, 1986) can take the form of field notes, transcriptions, audio recordings, documents, or memos. This deeper meaning requires that the researcher is concerned with the process not the outcomes (Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1968).

Qualitative research can be characterized by two major types of data collection: participant observation and/or in-depth interviewing. For the purposes of this study the research design focused on in-depth interviews. Bogdan and Bilken (2003) defined in-depth interviewing as open-ended questions used to gather as many details as possible. An open-ended question allows participants to answer in their own train of thought and limits the use of prescribed answers. This technique allowed me to give the participants flexibility and flow in telling their stories and reflecting on their experiences. By using semi-structured interviews I was not limited to my question order or word choice when conducting the interview. This method allowed me to mold my questions into a format that would be conducive for better clarity and understanding between researcher and participant: As Merriam (2009) wrote,

The semi-structured interview is in the middle, between structured and unstructured. In this type of interview either all of the questions are either flexible wording or the interview is a mix of more and less structured questions...neither the exact wording nor the order of the questions is determined ahead of time. This format allows the researcher to respond to the situation at hand, to the emerging worldview of the respondent, and the new ideas on the topic. (p. 90)

However, even though my questions remained in a semi-structured format, it is important to note that I came to the interviews with five topics to help keep both participant and researcher on task⁷. These five topics were as follows:

- 1.) faculty preparation- to understand training and background knowledge of civic education and online learning pedagogies;
- 2.) faculty motivation- to understand what motivates faculty in incorporating civic engagement components in their online courses;
- 3.) Incorporation- how are they incorporating civic education into their courses;
- 4.) change in students' understanding- can they assess what changes students are having in their understanding of civic responsibility and duty; and
- 5.) determination of success- what methods are they using to determine the success of the civic engagement components in their courses.

Topics one and two speak to the review of the literature in that I hoped they would provide a picture of the challenges faculty face in online teaching and learning; the need for support, and the motivation for faculty to want to change traditional methods of teaching. Topics three through five speak directly to my original three overarching research questions. These questions were developed using my conceptual framework. As Colby et. al. (2003) reported on twelve institutions' steps to incorporate civic responsibility and moral character within their students, I too, wanted to report on how faculty from this study were incorporating civic responsibility in their students using online learning. Additionally, Bellah (1985) and Putnam (2000) stressed the importance of how civic responsibility and duties were changing because society was changing. I wanted to allow my participants a chance to speak to this change and how it was impacting students as seen through online education. Finally, I wanted to understand how or if faculty

⁷A sample of interview protocol is provided in Appendix D

members were assessing these civic engagement components and their success. Little research existed in how to evaluate civic engagement components as they related to impact on students sense of civic responsibility and community engagement in an online class.

Additionally, document analysis took place with the review of the course syllabi and course material. Material included course handouts, separate instructional handouts, and any other material the participant felt was pertinent to my study. The review focused on any similarities between courses and any significant components directly related to civic responsibility or community engagement. Additionally, the material and syllabi were used to clarify and validate course assignments, objectives, and outcomes pertaining to civic education and community engagement.

Research Procedures

To begin my study, I procured institutional review board (IRB) approval from all institutions selected, which was required for my own home institution's IRB process. Once IRB approval was granted, I then followed the solicitation process described in the above sections. After informed consent was received I set up a telephone, face-to-face, or online chat interview with each participant that lasted anywhere between 45 minutes to 90 minutes in length. Of the 15 participants, only one participant chose to do an online chat session, two were face-to-face, and the remaining 12 were conducted via telephone. The faculty members were asked to give their perspective of how online education can represent civic responsibility effectively. Faculty were given the opportunity to reflect on how community engagement has been used in their courses and give their perspective of how it is connected to civic responsibility. Each interview was recorded either using voice recording software, text recording software, or memo saving software depending on the method of delivery determined by the faculty member interviewed.

All recordings were saved to a secure hard drive located in the principle researcher's home office. Once interviews were conducted, recordings were reviewed and transcribed.

Transcriptions and interviews were done simultaneously. The transcriptions were then coded for themes. The thematic coding took approximately ten weeks and required several stages of coding. Once definitive themes emerged, I developed follow-up interview questions.

Originally the study design required that I follow interviews with a onetime focus group of volunteer participants: however, because the recruitment phase and interview stage of the study took significantly longer than expected a focus group was not doable during the timeframe of the study. To compensate for the loss of a third data collection method I conducted follow-up interviews with the participants to help clarify any questions that remained unanswered⁸. These follow-up questions changed significantly from participant to participant based on what data was missing from original interviews or what clarifying information needed to be obtained. Of the 15 participants 11 responded to solicitations for a follow-up interview. Methods of collection for the follow-up interviews ranged from telephone interviews to email responses. All participants were contacted via telephone but when telephone responses were not successful email correspondences were sent. It can be assumed that the four participants who chose not to participate in follow-up interviews were due to the challenges discussed in Chapter I or had other pressing priorities.

Finally an examination of faculty course syllabi and supplemental course material was conducted. Participants were given the option to send syllabi and supplemental material via email to the researcher. Of the 15 participants, 10 chose to submit materials. Of the five who did not submit material, three became unresponsive to email reminders and two stated they did not

⁸ Interviews followed a semi-structured format. A sample of an interview protocol can be found in Appendix D

have materials appropriate to share. This document analysis was used primarily to corroborate the codes and themes that emerged from the interviews.

Table 7

Participant Data Collection Description

Participant	Interview Method	Document Submission	Follow-Up Interview Method
A	Telephone	Declined	Email
B	Telephone	Syllabus and Supplemental Activity Worksheets	Email
C	Blackboard Collaborate	Syllabus and Supplemental Activity Worksheets	Email
D	Telephone	Syllabus	Email
E	Telephone	Unresponsive	Telephone
F	Telephone	Syllabus	Email
G	Telephone	Declined	Email
H	Telephone	Syllabus	Telephone
I	Face-to-Face	Syllabus	Unresponsive
J	Telephone	Syllabus	Unresponsive
K	Face-to-Face	Access to Online Course	Unresponsive
L	Telephone	Unresponsive	Unresponsive
M	Telephone	Syllabus	Email
N	Telephone	Unresponsive	Telephone
O	Telephone	Supplemental Course Activity Instruction Sheets	Email

Analysis of Data

Coding was present in four stages of data analysis. Through my conceptual framework and literature review I determined a set list of priori to identify in the interview transcriptions.

Some of these priority themes included: incorporation of civic engagement/civic education; challenges; course description; course evaluation; applied knowledge; community connections; and defining citizen or citizenship. Even with these predetermined themes the first stage of coding allowed themes or categories to emerge from the transcription, which is called open coding by Strauss and Corbin (1990).

First stage coding produced over 750 codes. Analyzing the transcriptions and pulling out items that seemed meaningful produced these codes. Those items included those that repeated throughout the transcripts and those that seemed to show an outlying description, as well as those that aligned closely to the research questions and the overarching conceptual framework of what civic engagement looked like in online learning, how it was changing, and what impact was it having on students.

The second stage of analysis or axial coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) required that I compare the properties of the categories and identify relationships between the properties, adjusting and defining categories as I went. Through axial coding I was able to narrow to about 75 codes. These codes folded into each other based on similarities and significance within the interviews. During axial coding I introduced the documents to be analyzed. Looking through the documentation I looked for corroborating information about course descriptions, clarifying instructions on course assignments, and if descriptions of civic engagement or community engagement existed within the material.

During the third stage of analysis, I reduced and refined my categories from stage one and two into smaller conceptual categories; this stage is called selective coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). In this stage of analysis it was important to form links between categories.

Through selective coding I was able to further fold in my codes to form six themes. In the final fourth stage of analysis I started to write out my findings based on the coded data.

Reliability and Validity

The study used a qualitative method of analysis, which suggests that validity be examined and assumptions be reviewed. Assumptions of the research include that there will be multiple meanings which constitute no great interpretation of how distance education is impacting students' development of civic responsibility and sense of community, and therefore there can be no concrete truth. The research looked at the subtle, everyday impact of distance education on students' interaction, communication, and engagement in person-to-person contact. It is assumed that tension was present within the context of this study and that it provided a positive, not negative, environment due to the researcher using the tension as a reflexive, self-questioning tool for validity. The realm of distance education allows for differences and accepts alternative methods of producing distance education courses; therefore, it is assumed that all concepts and terms are temporary and are changed with every new technology, pedagogy, and policy produced that indirectly or directly effects distance education. Additionally, I was aware of the need for flexibility in any theories that emerge and that those theories are able to change as the environment changes. Under these assumptions, the use of simulacra/ironic validity is used (Lather, 2007). Validity is to be shown through the notion that distance education is re-presenting education; it is a copy without an original. Distance education is being copied over and over again without an original distance education format. Distance education is developed with a foundation in traditional education, and just in the last decade educators are looking at foundations that are specific to distance education; this study falls in this category of foundation building.

Summary

By using my conceptual framework as a lense at which to examine the data and by using grounded theory techniques collect the data I was given the opportunity to collect a rich sample of data. Charged with a minimum of 10 participants, I was able to exceed my own expectations and gather data from 15 participants from across the United States. Each participant brought his or her own perceptions and knowledge that emerged through in data collection. In this Chapter I presented the methods of data collection and research analysis. Moving forward the next chapter I will provide a detailed cross-data analysis. In Chapter V, I will provide a conclusion to my study along with further recommendations for research.

CHAPTER IV:
CROSS-DATA ANALYSIS

Introduction

In Chapter III, I described my research design, taking considerable care in describing each participant, his/her institution, the courses taught, and the type of civic engagement activities incorporated into their instruction. In this chapter, I present data derived from a cross-case analysis of the study's participants. I organized the data based on themes in response to the two research questions as well as keeping to my goal of providing as much description as possible.

Most of the data collected from the interviews addressed Research Question 1: How do faculty incorporate civic education and community engagement into online education? While the specifics vary among how the various participants go about designing their online courses, all of them in some way consider the following in their course designs: 1) students; 2) academic objectives and outcomes; 3) applied knowledge and reflective thought; 4) evaluation and assessment; and 5) challenges. These five categories developed through the coding process and then emerged while outlining this chapter.

Designing a Course

Students

The main component of an online course with civic engagement components, according to the participants, requires instructors to understand the learner. Understanding the learner means that faculty members should assess their learners and know what types of learners sign up

for their online course. Many of the instructors interviewed believed that it was important to understand if the students were capable of being responsible enough to actively engage with the community without direct supervision. Professor D explained:

[Designers] should have realistic expectations about what students can handle in addition to reading, learning and understanding. Can they apply the material that they are learning in the class to the service? If not then they won't see the value, and you have to make the connections.

Professor F noted the importance of making sure that students understand how the civic engagement component of the class fits with the rest of the class material: "Whether our students are interested in being earth scientists, spiritual mentors, philosophers, or engineers we need to see how all of the pieces fit together and help them succeed." Faculty also talked about the challenges in motivating students in an online class and how important that is in designing a successful course. They knew they had to produce a learning environment that promoted students' motivation and excitement about wanting to complete the course assignments. Professor C spoke to this when describing how her assignments and subsequent student presentations gave her students the opportunity to receive validation and community interest.

One example is a student made a video, and had it all set up at the Earth Day event. He actually had some community members exchange business cards and wanting to contact him about the video to do more environmental work. He [the student] thought that was pretty exciting.

The student motivation component is especially important in the online courses because the students are not face-to-face with the instructor as indicated by Major (2014). Professor C explained as the following:

It [motivating students] may be somewhat more difficult to do because you don't have that face-to-face interaction where they can feel your excitement as much. However, I think it can still work and it [motivating students] is important.

Designing a course based on students' needs meant that instructors had to be aware of students' interests outside of class and how those interests could be included in the classroom. For example in Professor A's course, students are required to work with special populations on an issue of health and wellness. When asked about how he insured that students would experience a meaningful connection to the community and enjoy the course, he said this:

So, a lot of it [meaningful connections] is identifying the interest of the students in a class ...for example identify [students] who are thinking of going into physical therapy, occupational therapy, community wellness, senior based programs, etc. Encourage them to engage in a group that's similar to their interest, in order to gain the experience they want for future opportunities. Then [faculty must] relate those students' interests to what is being taught in the classroom.

Professor H reflected on using the technology that her students were already interested in to keep them engaged. In her course, students learn how to do usability studies on websites. She realized through learning about her students' interests that they all used Facebook and they all were animal lovers. Fortunately for Professor H, she had just established a relationship with a dog rescue agency and, as she described, she was able to incorporate that into her course.

This puppy [at the dog rescue agency], we were talking about it and I learned that they had created a Facebook page, but they [the agency] totally blundered the page. I told them I would get my students involved in assessing their sites. I explained that we would do a usability study for their website and do an analysis of their Facebook page. So I put them [the students] on it and I found that most of our students were animal lovers and they just connected with this [assignment].

According to the participants, faculty need to know their students well if community engagement activities are to be successful. This means that many faculty members spend hours assessing their students' interest and needs to find suitable community partners. Professor K explained,

What I ask them to do is identify [their interest]. I usually give them a list at the beginning of the semester of different things, it can be a list of a lot of agencies in town, agents that are always looking for volunteers and needing volunteers. I also make them

answer several broad questions that ask about their interest, what things they were involved in while in high school to see what kind of areas they have served in before.

Professor M also acknowledged that knowing one's students well also meant that faculty have to get students out of their comfort zone and perhaps work in an area that they usually would not.

Professor M said,

I spend a considerable amount of time talking them [the students] into it [participating in a community engagement activity]. Getting them [the students] to actually participate by persuading them to get out of their comfort zone and try something different.

Knowing students well also means that professors must take into consideration that students have lives outside of the classroom and plan accordingly. Some of the participants indicated that many students have little time to commit to anything other than the coursework and general assignments. Professor L stated, "Students are so busy with their lives right now. They have families, they have work, they have school, they don't always have the luxury to invest a great deal of time..."

Assessing the learner's needs, interests, resources, and accessibility proved to be the largest theme that emerged from the interviews. Participants stressed the importance of gathering information on students' capabilities, time commitments, and level of self-discipline at the beginning of their course to predict the level of success the course would have. Furthermore, participants acknowledged the level of commitment needed to further assess students' interest so as to keep them motivated and excited to learn and participate in civic engagement activities. All the instructors conveyed the importance and necessity of "getting to know" their students as the biggest factor in providing a successful engaging civic engagement course. Ultimately, all of this is to mold the course to provide the optimal level of student engagement in the curriculum, pedagogical methods, and civic engagement experiences (Major, 2014).

Academic Objectives and Outcomes

A second consideration in designing a course is determining the academic objectives and intended outcomes for the course and how the civic engagement activities further the academic component of the course. This means that the engagement components must be matched with the course objectives to enhance learning as explained by the following professors. Professor D stated,

I see the word “volunteer” in the description somewhere and I see it as extra and above, but there is a learning component to me as well. ...That’s why I’m really careful to make sure that I pick something that is truly germane to the topic I’m teaching.

Professor L followed up with

I would actually have to suggest [when designing a course], the first thing to do, is to look at the course objectives and what lends itself to some engagement. Do they [course designers] need to add an objective [to connect the engagement to the curriculum].

And finally, Professor F said,

My advice on developing, I would say, is that the content has to be genuine and the interactions have to be genuine ... if your students are jumping through hoops, if you’re grading every single thing that they do, and you’re spending all your time at the drop box, you’ve missed the point.

One of the primary academic objectives expressed by these faculty members were that of developing critical thinking skills. As Professor B mentioned after giving an example of her course assignment,

I think that’s probably a pretty good example of how I’m trying to get them to be engaged, be involved, and critically think about issues that they may or may not be formally educated on...

Deciding what types of activities would help them achieve their academic goals, the participants talked frequently about thinking “outside the box” – that is, challenging traditional methods of presenting curriculum and developing new ways to engage the students. “Make the

students think outside the box and even get them out into the world if the course allows it,” as stated by Professor B. Professor A stated,

My advice is to encourage shared activities, programs like habitat for humanity or programs that serve the needs of the socioeconomically disadvantaged. You could have the students write about their experiences as part of their assignment. This allows the student to be more engaged in their instruction and gain awareness of their shared responsibility for active participation in their community.

Providing interactive activities were mentioned quite often using such verbs as “creating,” “viewing,” and “doing.” Faculty believed that students needed to be provided with more interactive activities in the online courses and it was the responsibility of the instructor to do this. Professor D stated, “I think it’s the responsibility of the instructor to create an environment where that happens,” and Professor A stated,

I think distance learning affords that opportunity for students to go out and explore the community but the class formatting needs to be in the position where that is an expectation [exploration] and where the student is given the support and the resources and encouragement to go out and explore those kind of possibilities.

The types of interactive activities discussed in the interviews included the following:

1. Developing and maintaining a website or blog around a specific course topic;
2. Creating videos or displays to be shared at community fairs or town meetings;
3. Doing hands on assessments with community agencies either in person or using various interactive web tools;
4. Participating in actual hands on service events such as packing food or medical supplies; and
5. Developing and implementing complex projects (lesson plans, grant proposals, evaluations) within the community or organization under study.

Many believed that because it was an online course students would lose interest or the course itself would become monotonous, thus they felt it extremely important to include interactive activities that would keep students interested and motivated in the course.

Applied Knowledge and Reflective Thought

Another important component in designing an online course with civic engagement opportunities was the imperative that students apply the knowledge learned in the classroom to the community service/civic engagement opportunities. Colby et al. (2003) focused on pedagogical strategies that center instruction around students' needs and engaging curriculum. They stated that the strengths of these strategies if used well are to "support deep understanding, usable knowledge and skills, and personal connection and meaning" (Colby et al., 2003, p. 134). The majority of the participants agreed with Colby et al. (2003) and felt that to have successful course, students must be prompted to apply the knowledge that they have learned in the classroom to their experiences in the field, and, likewise, apply what they have learned in the field to the "real world." An important component of applied knowledge is that students also have the opportunity to think reflectively about their actions and experiences. Thus, applied knowledge and reflective thinking were part of almost every participant's course. Participants spoke to the need for students to connect the material learned to the application in the community.

It is important to note that participants indicated that adding civic education and community engagement to their courses provided a connection and an enriching experience, which not only provided students with added value, but in many ways prepared them for their futures. It was a way for the students to retain the material and gain more in the process. Professor C stated,

I feel as online educators, we need to make the learning experience interesting, engaging, and rigorous with high academic standards and add real-life components so the learning stays with the learners and they gain more for their personal lives and careers than just reading, discussing and watching lectures and/or videos.

Professor H stated that

What I'm trying to do in my courses is to bring it full circle or tie a knot at the end of the rope that keeps it all from fraying and falling apart. I think it's like the frame on the picture, if I didn't have service learning there would just be something missing, something that wasn't right.

Professor L said

When students move on and go into their practicum, which I hope will be in the area they picked to work in during my class, they can work with the same agency to improve that same blog [which was developed in the course]. The blog is continuous for them [the students], they can keep updating information and keep generating from it unlike a "normal" paper that will just going to go in a drawer after they get their grade.

When discussing applied knowledge, the participants spoke about it in two distinct ways: the need to produce a real-world project and the pedagogical benefits of applied knowledge. The first one was that students needed to produce a product or project based on the material developed in the course and apply it in a real life setting. This took the form of reports to send to companies, building websites, producing cost analysis, or even reporting environmental risk factors. Participants believed that by making students develop a product/project for the community to be shared with the community it provided a more realistic experience that would mimic their careers once they completed their degrees. Professor B stated, "...they'll be asked to critically think and create a presentation outline for the school board...I just wonder if they know how powerful some of this material is until they actually get into the field." Professor F explained,

We [the students] are making tutorials for people with brain injuries that help them [people with brain injuries] understand how to use technology to work around the challenges they now face because they have a brain injury... My students, by the time

they have finished my class, will have created a good sample of work as a professional and they'll have done something they can feel good.

Professor H stated,

The end product is the students actually produce a report, a professional level report, to send to the company saying: here is the result of the study and here are the recommendations we have that you change to your website to make it more useable ... it gives them a real practical experience and that just seems to be a huge connection.

Professor L added,

They [the students] analyze the service delivery system in terms of their own community and how it manifest in terms of government programs, nonprofit programs, and maybe private for profit entities. Then they must conceptualize the system, do some research on it, and create a blog instead of writing just a white paper to describe the system. In the blog I require them to take a position on system improvement because this blog will go public at some point.

Finally, Professor O stated,

Students work with the community partner on a grant that the partner then finalizes and submits at a later time. Students research the community partner and its projects, search for funding sources, draft the grant, receive feedback from the community partner, and then finalize the grant. These grants can be included in their resumes for future job opportunities and the experience is invaluable to getting their own scholarships or funding for other non-profits or academic projects.

The second direction was more pedagogical in nature. Faculty indicated that by providing an avenue for students to apply the knowledge they have learned in the course they were giving them an opportunity to learn the material more thoroughly. Professor A stated, "The student is getting a hands-on experience that is so vital to partner with the textual material and research they are doing in the classroom." Professor C said, "Students took what they learned in a book or a lecture or in labs and then they actually apply it out in their communities." Professor E said,

I think that having that service-learning component really makes a difference in how they learn the material and how they interact with the material because it's not just an abstract idea that they read about. They meet the people and they interact and I think that interacting, touching, talking component really takes it up to another level.

Additionally this “applied knowledge” allowed students to not only think about how they consume knowledge for themselves but how they are consuming knowledge for others meaning how they will use what they have learned for the betterment of society. Professor G stated that

Whereas if you can design education that enables you to go out and interact with people, it certainly changes the dynamics from what you’re collecting for yourself into more of what you can do to help other people learn and accomplish.

An important component of incorporating applied knowledge is including opportunities for students to engage in reflective thought about what they did. Faculty made sure that, when designing their course, they included opportunities for students to think reflectively about what they did and what they learned. Professor E explained the benefit of reflective thought: “One of the most common responses that we discuss in class, which is through the reflections online, is that they were amazed that in an hour and a half they could do so much work that would benefit so many people.” Professor G explained how important reflective practices are in his course:

We learn through reflective practice that the very best learning occurs when you have studied the theory or methodology, you’ve gotten out, and you’ve applied it and then you’ve reflected on it through some kind of writing in particular that will say not just here’s what I did but here’s what I learned from the experience...

Many participants felt that by using reflective thinking, it provided a way for students to understand the material and how it fits with the community much more deeply. Professor A stated, “This allows the student to be more engaged in their instruction and gain awareness of their shared responsibility for active participation in their community.” Professor E explained,

We did the service learning, then after that, online, they had the reflection piece relating that situation and the core readings that are central to the themes of the course. We also refer back to that [service learning] experience throughout the semester ...

Also many of the faculty believed that by using reflective thinking activities in the course they were able to help provide an outlet for students to work through what they experienced in the

field with their instructors, even though they were never in a face-to-face conversation. As noted by Professor L,

Because the reflection piece is so critical; they [the students] have to come back and share with the class, reflect on it, reflect with me, with the rest of the class. This reflection gives them some comfort because I'm not there to hold hands as they go out into the community.

Evaluation and Assessment

The final consideration in designing an online course with civic engagement activities was that of evaluation and assessment, particularly how to evaluate students in the civic engagement part of the course. Many of the instructors were unsure of how to measure something as abstract as engagement. Large service projects or engagement assignments can be extremely complex to grade and monitor. Professor explained,

You're right I don't have a sense of that yet. I really don't know, I don't really have a sense of that yet or their opinions on what they're learning. I'm assuming that they probably feel pretty confident or pretty good about it, but I don't know and I don't know if they really truly comprehend that. Like I said I think a lot of the critical thinking questions that they [the students] posed and that are posed to them [the students]. They [the students] certainly have the opinions and the critical thinking skills. But again, I really don't have a sense of how much they recognize that, yet. I am absolutely positive that as soon as they get their first job, they're going to go back and say holy moly I really have worked with so many different people and there's no one size fits all kind of solution.

Professor J stated,

You know, not really [in regards to if a students understand the value of the civic engagement activity]. What I can see is when they [the students] are not being civically engaged or when they're not being empathic toward a situation. For example, say one of my students go into a soup kitchen and they are very superior to everybody that comes by and gets food, I can pick up on that kind of thing in their writing. But in general there is really no way that I can determine the value of the of the engagement itself...

When I asked Professor E if her students were making the connection between the assignments, community, and civic engagement she stated, "... that's a little trickier, that one, to

gauge because it's the analytical piece, their civically engaged outside of the classroom in a way that I don't know how to measure.”

Finally, another important piece to evaluation and assessment that emerged from the data was that of getting the students involved in assessing the course itself. Faculty wanted feedback from the students about how well the class worked, what needs to be changed, and what needs to be dropped. Professor C noted that any instructor trying something new should be up front and honest with the students and should get them involved in assessing how well it works “...and I would often have the students evaluate things as we went along so if something wasn't working for them I could see it better than the way I'm seeing it from my point of view,” noted Professor C. Other participants agreed that having students evaluate the course, their community partners, and even each other helped the faculty receive a bigger picture into the effectiveness of the course. Professor H explained, “I have them do a 360 degree review, which means each of the students evaluate each other. They evaluate each other, their perspective of working with the client or with the community entity.”

Challenges

Thus far I have discussed the elements faculty believed crucial in designing a successful online course with civic engagement opportunities. However, what readily became apparent in discussions with faculty were the challenges they faced in designing both an online course and an online course with community engagement. By far the most pressing challenge for participants is time. The time to create the course, the time it takes to maintain the course, and the time it takes to monitor student progress.

Creating an online course requires a considerable amount of preparation (Dedman & Palmer 2011; King, 2010; Maguire, 2005; Osborne et al., 2009; Tabata & Johnsrud, 2008).

When one adds civic education components to the mix, this time increases (Dedman & Palmer 2011; King, 2010; Maguire, 2005; Osborne et al., 2009; Tabata & Johnsrud, 2008). Participants noted that creating a solid infrastructure online with clear instructions can be time consuming.

Professor D stated,

I can't stand up in front of a class and explain something, I have to document things because they are getting the information from me online, so it's just creating that infrastructure online so that there are clear instructions and maybe repository for document ...

Participants compared the online courses to their traditional counterparts in many instances explaining that the ease for improving and clarification in the traditional face-to-face courses just was not there. Professor H said, "It would be as if they walked into a face-to-face classroom and expected everything to be exactly the same. Right? It's not." Professor C further explained,

Seriously consider your workload [when asked what advice to give others designing online courses with civic engagement components]. The first time I integrated it [civic engagement component] into my online class I was not prepared for the work I created for myself. I required too much. Be open and ready for revisions for the next semester. Tell students this is the first time you are trying something like this and allow them to give feedback and evaluate how it worked from their perspective.

One of the biggest challenges before they can go "live" with their courses is finding agencies with which to partner. Obviously, finding and working with community agencies or partners to provide a location or service that students experience can take considerable amount of work, which was summarized by Professor J and H:

Having to figure out a different kind of component because I have connections within the [home city] that I can set up hours in the hospital or at the [local] program or any of the programs around [home city] but when I have someone from a different state it's more or less up to the student to find the place and then I will provide documentation and support them in it. But that's a difficult thing. (Professor J)

I think the biggest challenge that I've found is the commitment of the community or community agency/partner. I teach a technology course where we are trying to communicate with the agency about technology, like their web page or something like that, and it's the balance of getting the student to understand that the people [community

agency] they [the students] are dealing with don't really get technology details and at the same time it's trying to get the community agency to understand that this is not a true professional level situation, this is learning situation, and they [community agency] may not get a 100% deliverable in the end. (Professor H)

Many of the professors have students from all over the country. This requires that they either help locate or find community partners within each student's own community or develop a protocol for students to search out their own community agent. Either choice provides its own list of pros and cons. Professors who chose to take a hands-on approach to finding a community partner have more control over accountability and student exposure but are required to put in a great deal more time upfront in locating and establishing relationships with community partners. Professors who chose to take a hands-off approach and let students locate their own community partner save time in development but do not have that assurance of accountability or can be confident the student is learning the lessons the professor intended from the course.

The second need is that many participants cited that they required of themselves a "test run" of community partnerships or activities meaning that they must first go through the experience before placing it in their courses. This can take a considerable amount of time depending on the depth and scope of the project. Professor D explained,

First of all, don't just pick a project that you haven't done yourself. For example I picked this type of project because I understood it really well myself, I've done it myself. It was a familiar experience that I had done and knew it would be a wonderful service and learning scenario.

These "test runs" provide a way for the participants to confidently present a meaningful experience, which was discussed in the above section. All of which takes a time and effort on top of developing the standard curriculum requirements.

The participants also spoke of the time it took in the pre-design phase of course development. This meant they had to spend time researching what it is that the student is suppose

to be doing. Some suggestions they offered were to talk with colleagues in the field; research sites students may go to, and learn what the students' interests are. Professor E stated, "First, speak to someone who has already done it, which helps a lot. I found it easier to incorporate the service learning experience when it's something that I'm already passionate about."

Another time issue challenge mentioned by some of the participants was technology itself. A few participants continually honed in on the fact that because technology continued to change, they must reinvent their courses on a regular basis to add in the new improved technology. This continual revamping of a course from semester to semester can cause considerable strain on a professor's already tight schedule. Professor G said, "I just simply do not have the time or energy to be actively engaged in continuing to learn the technology as it evolves."

Another challenge related the significant amount of time it takes to communicate effectively with online students. The time it takes to provide feedback, contact the community partners, articulate instructions, and establish the accessibility of the course to students and the students to the community partners/population were mentioned often during my conversations with the participants. In today's 24/7 world, utilizing the Web 2.0 tools mentioned in Chapters I and II, students expect immediate feedback. This immediacy can create a lot of pressure for faculty. Professor L explained,

It is rigorous, in that students do expect you to be available 24/7. To me that has been interesting, if you don't answer their question right away they harass you more than the face-to-face students.

Professor A agreed,

Your communication with them [the students] is on an ongoing basis. It [communication] is a really critical component of that. As long as you don't allow too much time to lapse between the communication and the assignments that you are asking them [the students] to do, they [the students] do fairly well.

Communication, however, involves more than just communicating with students.

Instructors must also communicate with partners. This, too, takes an inordinate amount of time.

Professor J talked about how important it was to communicate and assess community partners but that it takes a considerable amount of time and effort:

I think for one thing, it's very important if the situations that they [the students] are going into are appropriate. Sometimes you can't really determine if "blue bird" daycare that they [the students] might be going in to observe is an appropriate place for them. You have to ask yourself: Are they seeing good quality care or not? So I think that knowing the places that your students might be going to for a service component is very important.

Professor M talked about how she must communicate constantly with her community partners to ensure that students are having a good experience: "You can't just require it and expect someone else to take care of your students...you have to kind of check up on them [the students] and see how things are going. So, in other words, faculty need to do a little bit more."

A further complication in communicating with students and partners is that access to broadband internet can be challenging. Professor A's students were from all across a district pocketed with rural communities. Working with a rural population meant students had to insure that the population being served had access to material either via the internet, handouts, or just understood the concepts and research behind healthy living that was being addressed. Also, these students themselves were usually situated in these rural communities, which meant reliable bandwidth for internet access was not guaranteed. Professor A stated, "Not only do you need to have access, but you also need to have the support of allowing these individuals in these rural communities to learn how to get engaged with online education in a meaningful way."

Another challenge in terms of time was that faculty are charged with finding viable ways to make students accountable for their service and volunteering, since the professors themselves are usually not present during these hours. Participants tended to go back and forth between

wanting to provide levels of accountability toward the community engagement component and simply trusting the students to perform responsibly. One participant in particular made the case that worrying about the students' level of participation took away from the learning process and that she felt she would be able to tell if the student was "making things up." Professor J explained,

I'm not sure which way is better, that the student has to document that he/she was there, or that I give them the benefit of the doubt trust that they [the student] is going to do it... I have a dichotomy of feelings about this. I don't require any documentation of whether or not my students do it or not. I think I can determine by their paper if they have participated...

Professor D further detailed,

So you [the student] certainly could fabricate stuff, but I usually ask them to get a photo of the state director, if it's a remote situation, and I usually have a sheet they have to have signed and scanned back to me which is like a state director's signature and I follow-up on those as well...

While time was the primary challenge discussed by participants in this study in designing their course, other challenges were also mentioned. One of those was making accommodations for students who could not participate in the outside classroom experience. Many of the instructors gave reasons for why someone may not be able to participate, such as the course was not advertised during registration as having community engagement components, justified students constraints, or even that the instructor felt that because it was an online course they could not strictly adhere to requiring the student to participate outside the "classroom." Professor C stated, "I do have an option for those who, it may be difficult to go to a school or an event, they can write letters to editors or to politicians about the concerns." Often the course engagement piece was designed around the community the university was situated in. This presented an issue for some of the distance-learning students who signed up for the online course. All of the instructors

who came across this issue provided accommodations and worked with the student to create activities to meet both the course objectives and the student's needs. Professor C stated,

However, I've had students take the course who are in different towns, we still do a thing on marine debris but if they live inland they go to rivers or lakes or a park and what they do is they go out and do a litter clean up.

And Professor J stated,

Well the biggest problem is a lot of the students are not local, so they take the courses from wherever. I have guys in the military that are in Afghanistan, etc. So having to figure out a different kind of component because I have connections within the [home city] that I can set up hours in...

Another non-time related challenge was the resistance or backlash that adding these components had on the participants within his or her own departments. Professor D explained,

The service learning in this particular type of class, at the college I was teaching at the time, I was considered sort of a rogue sort of; there was a little bit of resentment from some of my peers because they did not want to be burdened with having to be doing that as well.

Encouraging Civic Responsibility and Community Engagement

Research Question 2 was *How do faculty determine the success of their efforts to encourage civic responsibility and community engagement?* This question was harder to address. Participants provided clear descriptions on designing the course, however were less clear on determining the success of their efforts to encourage community engagement. In fact most of the participants acknowledged that they did not evaluate their course on whether or not their courses were successful in encouraging civic responsibility and community engagement. Most participants described that they were more concerned with evaluating whether or not the student actually participated in the activities and how well their students understood the material of the course.

When focusing on the civic engagement components participants incorporated the engagement activities into the traditional evaluation criteria for the course. The engagement components were used to assess fluency of knowledge concerning the course material and depth of knowledge obtained while participating in the activities but not if the activities encouraged civic responsibility and community engagement in and of themselves. The fact that participants could not answer if the students were being impacted civically provides the answer to the question. Faculty admitted not measuring the success of their efforts to encourage civic responsibility and community engagement in their online courses because the very nature of measuring such a thing as civic responsibility seemed ambiguous. Professor B explained, “You are right I don’t have a sense of that yet. I really don’t know what they’re learning [in regards to comprehending civic responsibility].”

One of the reasons described by participants in not creating evaluation criteria to see if the course has been successful on encouraging civic engagement was because the concepts of civic responsibly and community engagement seemed to abstract. Participants expressed their trepidation at where to begin measuring such a thing as civic responsibility. Professor E stated, “But that’s a little trickier, to gauge their [civic responsibility], because they’re civically engaged outside of the classroom, in a way that I don’t know how to measure.” Professor L stated, “Online education, the challenge I see with it is when you discuss things [engagement activities] that [through online communication tools] you can’t really see how they’re [the students] reacting to the experience, you have to take it by virtue of their written word.”

When asked what it would take to develop methods of measuring such a thing as civic responsibility many participants expressed that it would take a high level of complexity. Additionally, participants believed that by measuring one course on how it encouraged civic

responsibility and community engagement would not fairly depict what it takes to produce a citizen. To really measure civic responsibility and community engagement, students would need to be followed for years to see how the course affected them in their future actions. Tracking or even communicating with students after an online course has ended may be difficult as students graduate, move on, or are at a distance. Professor I noted this when explaining that tracking her students would be difficult because her course is one of the last courses they take before graduating and starting their professional careers. She said, “It’s hard for me to follow them especially with this being a summer course it’s probably one of the last courses [students take].”

Benefits of Civic Education and Community Engagement

As mentioned previously, much of the information gleaned from interviews dealt with the “how” part of incorporating civic education and community engagement into online education, thus answering Research Question 1. However, the study also rendered an unexpected insight about the benefits of community engagement to both students, instructors, and community members. This finding produced ample data and deserved its own section. Thus, three categories of benefits emerged. They included the following:

1. Benefits to *students* and how they developed academically and professionally;
2. Benefit to *faculty’s* personal and professional growth when adapting civic engagement into their courses; and
3. Benefit to the participating *communities* involved in the courses.

These three categories emerged upon final coding and analysis of the interviews and follow-up interviews.

Students

Within this benefit category, three additional subcategories emerged. I felt the most powerful of the three was that students developed self-empowerment from participating in community engagement. Participants indicated that when adding community service or community engagement it promoted self-confidence, which leads to self-empowerment. Professor O stated, “They [the students] are empowered to help the community and see their contribution as real, since the grants are living and result in tangible projects for the community.” Professor C stated that “They [the students] are getting out in the community and seeing one, that there are other people doing this type of work and two, they have a place in that work in their community and the positive change they can make.”

The second benefit was that that by having students participate in community service it inspired them to continue working in the community. Participants noted that by providing service and community engagement in their course it inspires students to learn and volunteer more. Some participants even noted that their students continued to work with the projects or population served even after the course had ended. Many participants described the rippling effect of community engagement from their course on the students in terms of continued community engagement. Speaking of one of her students who completed a service learning project in his course, Professor A noted how the student continued working with this population:

She [the student] went on and did other internship opportunities with some other local groups taking some of the material we had created in the classroom and using it in those other internship opportunities. Then, just the other day I was listening to NPR and this same student came on and was talking about how she's in the local county library. She [the student] is working with Russian immigrants and their families who do not speak English. She is helping them to learn how to read and write English, to give them opportunities to assimilate into the community. A completely different thing from what I teach and yet because of experiences that she had she felt very compelled to continue working with the community. Getting them [the students] engaged in the community creates kind of a desire to continue that giving aspect, so to speak, where they [the

students] feel like they want to continue to work with the local community. So I think it continues well beyond what we are teaching in our classes. I think the process encourages them to continue to be engaged in their community in meaningful ways...encourages the students to never stop the process of continuing to ask those questions, to explore and to base their decisions on what the evidence suggests we should be doing...

The third benefit was that by adding civic engagement it cut down on attrition. Civic education has been shown to lower attrition rates among students (Gallini & Moely, 2003; Muthiah, Hatcher, & Bringle, 2001). Several of the professors in this study incorporated service learning because it helped with student retention. One professor noted that providing a way for their students to connect to a community even virtually allowed them (undergraduates) to be less homesick and provided a stronger connection to their education leaving less room for dropout.

Faculty

Another benefit of incorporating civic engagement into online courses was unexpected, that is the benefit to faculty themselves. While most of the participants spoke of the benefit to students, several faculty also talked about how including civic engagement into their classes encouraged them to take on volunteer work or community engagement opportunities in their own personal lives. Getting faculty involved in the community or through service work when they normally would not have the time provided a value not only to their professional lives but also to their personal lives. Many of the professors actually continued to work with the community organizations even after the course ended. This small but powerful finding correlates again with Colby et al.'s (2003) *Educating Citizens*. The authors believed that faculty had to "buy into" an environment of civic engagement for it all to work. To do this, faculty need support, opportunity for development, and incentives. Professor E stated,

Because life gets busy and many times we say 'I don't have enough time for that', but I've often found, that since I require this of my students I also require it of myself. It's one of those situations where you're giving but you're also receiving. So the reward goes both ways. I think that having that service learning component really makes a difference

in how they [the students] learn the material and how they interact with the material because it's not just an abstract idea that they read about. They meet the people and they interact and I think that, this interacting, touching, and talking component really takes it up to another level.

Communities

The final benefit discussed was the benefit to the community. The incorporation of civic education and community engagement on the community and university emerged in several participants' interviews. Instructors acknowledge that the community benefited from their courses because it brought institutional resources, education, and volunteers, which would not have been available if they had not worked to incorporate community engagement into their curriculums. Professor A stated,

[Students] are having the opportunity to reach out into rural communities, where the traditional university, even the satellite campuses, doesn't provide significant access based on their [the communities] location. The concept of being able to provide online education that can be sent anywhere and accessed anywhere has tremendous possibilities.

Professor C agreed by saying,

For example, it benefits the community, because I have a student. She[the student] comes from a community where most of the families are working in the agricultural industry. They have some cultural barriers in understanding nutrition and understanding health issues as it relates to their community. They quite often do not have access to the types of health and wellness professionals that can speak to them in their language and in a way that they can respond to. So she was able to take a lot of the information and material we provided and turn it into something her community could understand.

This incorporation also brought dialogue and the exchange of knowledge to the community and between the community and students. The dialogue component, the sharing of knowledge, is reiterated over and over again throughout the interviews as a benefit, an opportunity of growth for both the student and the community partners/members. Professor F explained that

If we want to have multiple voices then everyone needs to see their role in creating information, circulating information, questioning information, exalting and deploring right and wrong information. We need to see our voices active and we need to see it as our role otherwise this isn't going to happen.

Professor L agreed,

So they [the students] are getting citizens involved in the dialogue and then asking citizens how they would change the system. They [the students] are asking the citizens how they would improve it? I consider that civic engagement... I am trying to get my students, not only to gather information to be able to describe something, but to actually engage other people in dialogue about it. I think that's practice towards becoming a good citizen.

Rethinking “Community” in Community Engagement

Another finding from the study that did not necessarily correspond to the research questions was that faculty were interpreting “community” in ways that expanded beyond the local community. Participants described how the term community was evolving to include a much broader geography and diverse population. With this evolution of terminology, I also saw how the participants were reshaping what it meant to be a citizen in these new expanded communities.

Expanded Community

Guthrie and McCracken (2011) called for a new definition of civic responsibility, one that connects the whole world. I discussed the emergence of read-write web tools and how they have created global discussion that has made connecting and communicating with individuals from different cultures, continents, and communities even easier (Bole & Gordon, 2009; Guthrie & McCracken, 2011; Simmon & Zoetewey, 2012). I showed where the local or micro community issues could be connected to broader or macro global issues. Within this study, these connections were talked about often in the interviews. Faculty were able to connect the current issues associated with their field and connect it to other communities whether within the U.S. or globally. Several participants described their course as looking at issues that affected another community and how those topics were interconnected with students' own communities.

Professor D explained that

They also get a sense of the concept of what it mean to provide free labor versus what would be the labor cost here in American if they had to hire workers. Then they contrast that with if they [the students] had to hire those labor cost in a different country. I make them see how our wage structures are different and why are the different?

And Professor E stated,

We look specifically at injustices that happen in Latin America and I make it to where the students realize Latin America is not a far off country. They find it really eye opening. I think it really links back to that great sense of community in that it is not just here in our city but beyond and they really seem to be interconnected most of it all.

Participants described how many times the products that students created such as the blogs, websites, or reports were found by individuals searching the web and provided beneficial information to their own communities; again connecting a local issues to another local issue a world away. Professor F expounded that

I would say once a week I get an email from someone, in the universe, who has discovered something that my students have created and ask something about it. For example they ask if they can have access to it, or if they can use it [students work] in this setting... it's so liberating, because it's no longer the student performing for the teacher, the student's performing for the world. The student is learning for themselves but their also learning for a broader purpose.

Changing Citizenship

A concept also explored in Chapter II was how the definition of a citizen evolves and changes depending on the needs of society at that given era. As we look at how education, technology, and issues are changing and merging around the globe it is reasonable to believe that the definition of citizenship is once again changing (Enrich, 1997).

Each participant was asked what they felt it meant to produce a citizen and how that definition emerged in their courses. Confirming some of the literature about changing citizenship, most participants did not mention voting or being involved in politics. The most impactful theme designated in this section was that participants felt to be a good citizen one must be able to think critically and take educated actions. To explain further, Professor A described

evidence-based research. Professor A required all his students to do outside research on topics before making decisions or engaging with the community in their service project. He felt that by doing this he was teaching and promoting his students to look beyond “face value” and truly understand a situation so that one can promote positive change.

I think how you incorporate the learning process; how you incorporate that desire to not just accept things on face value but to always go beyond. That to do your own research, to do your own investigation into what you perceive to be reality is a part of general approach to education that I think is critical... Evidence based... separating what is essentially available to them [the students] through the internet, public knowledge, through what we would call general knowledge and what is available to them based on research and based on organizations that tend to be known for their thoroughness in terms of their research and providing evidence based statements in terms of what we should be doing, what are procedures should be, how we should approach certain situations. I think having incorporated those kind of concepts into the formatting of both the online and lecture lab classes encourages the students to never stop the process of continuing to ask those questions, to explore and to base their decisions on what the evidence suggests we should be doing.

Professors D and F spoke along the same lines as Professor A in that a citizen must think critically and gather information and then become engaged. Professor D stated, “I think a good citizen is a person that thinks critically, contributes, and contributes to the overall community...”

Professor F explained,

I think in today’s world the demand for being able to think critically about extremely complex topics is much greater than it used to be and that’s because our circle of influence has changed so dramatically. When you think about various democratic inspired revolution that have happened recently using technology or just the opportunity to stand up to something, to protest to something, to facilitate a solution to something...

Professor N spoke to how looking at citizenship globally allows students to rethink themselves and the stereotypes that have been placed on many communities:

Them [the students] that was really a good positive experience [the civic engagement activity] and of course they had to rethink themselves and the stereotypes ... so I think it set them [the students] on the road to a more active citizen than they would have been if they hadn’t taken advantage of this opportunity.

Other less dominant themes but certainly adhering to the already general definition of citizenship was those of contributing to society with respect to the students' chosen field.

Professor B's comments about being a citizen as it contributed to her field of study summarizes many of the participant's reflections as they all related citizenship to their chosen field of study:

I would want them to contribute to society. I want them to help others. I want them to contribute to their field, to our field, kinesiology. And I want them to be engaged by knowing what's going on, to be able to reflect on the world or current events, and have opinions but also be able to articulate those opinions and stand up for what they believe... I hope that my students will have the confidence to do that and not just the confidence but also feel compelled as an expert in our field to contribute. So I guess a citizen to me is one who contributes, is informed, is engaged and wants to do good, if you will.

Professor G and Professor N's commented about the students understanding of why students are attending school and gaining an education and for what purpose this education is in helping reshape what it means to educate students in today's world.

If I can design education that enables my students to go out and interact with people it changes the dynamics. They [the students] are able to understand that they are no longer collecting knowledge for themselves rather they are gaining knowledge so they can help other people learn and accomplish great things. (Professor G)

Students need to participate in their community and help people less fortunate than themselves. I think that a lot of the students started to realize they're privileged but with privilege and education comes responsibility and if you can teach that to them and hopefully they will be better people as they grow into an adult. (Professor N)

All of these reflections and quotes emphasize that a changing definition of citizenship is being used in the classroom and that defining citizenship is a complex, multi-dimensional task. These faculty members are assessing their own field, experiences, students, material, and communities before providing a definition of what citizenship means to them and how citizens should be produced. These reflections are being passed on into the curriculum through their engagement activities.

Summary

The information presented in this chapter provides insight into how faculty go about developing online courses that incorporate civic engagement. Multiple components need to be considered to insure a successful course. Assessment of the learner in terms of motivation, self-discipline and access to resources and engagement activities is essential. Additionally participants discussed that instructors must design engagement activities that meet objectives and promoted critical thinking by relating the activities to real world experiences and then relating them back to their field of study, moreover these engagement activities and objectives need to be connected by guiding students to use reflective thought. This chapter also presented information about the challenges faculty face as well as the benefits of civic engagement. Finally it challenged the traditional meaning of citizenship and what constituted a community. Chapter V will discuss these findings in-depth and discuss several implications for practices and recommendation for further research.

CHAPTER V:
CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

As demonstrated in Chapter IV, there are many challenges that faculty face when attempting to incorporate civic engagement into an online course. However, all the professors in this study remain committed to researching ways to incorporate civic engagement into the changing curriculum and educational environment. For instance, Professor L committed to the thought,

As we move to more online education, I think we can't lose our momentum for service learning and civic engagement. I worry that the potential, given the market, that we're appealing to with online education, is that these programs are targeted towards working busy individuals. These individuals need to engage in their coursework late at night or on weekends and I just worry, given this market, there may be a tendency to abandon, not abandon totally, but to not have it as prevalent. So that's one thing I think is worth tracking. So this kind of research you're doing I think is very important.

Professor C also stated,

We really try to push our graduates to understand that online or let's say 21st century opportunities change the nature of how we can think about education. We have to understand our roles as agents in the learning process a little differently and think about it more broadly and it takes people a while to get that. They [instructors] are really steeped in the traditional model where the teacher is the expert and the student receives information from the teacher.

In this final chapter, I summarize the key findings of the study, analyze these findings, and discuss the implications for practice along with recommendations for future research.

Summary of Findings

Chapter IV provided detailed description of three overarching themes that emerged from the data: *designing a course, encouraging civic responsibility and community engagement*, and

benefits of civic education and community engagement. Within those themes, several subcategories were developed. Six key findings were uncovered from the themes and subcategories, which will be broadly described.

The most significant finding of this study was the time faculty needed to deliver a successful online course with civic engagement components (Dedman & Palmer, 2011; King, 2010; Maguire, 2005; Osborne et al., 2009; Tabata & Johnsrud, 2008). Instructors should consider the time commitments and not underestimate how long it takes to produce a quality course.

A secondary finding was the participants had a great deal of flexibility in designing and delivering their civic engagement components. As discussed in Chapter IV, civic responsibility and what it means to be a citizen are ambiguous in many respects. The definitions of civic responsibility and civic education are changing (Bennet et al., 2009; Bole & Gordon, 2009; Degelman, 2000; Elrich, 1997; Guthrie & McCracken, 2011; Putnam, 2000; Prentice, 2007; Simmon & Zoetewey, 2012; Thornton & Jaegers, 2006; Wilhite & Silver, 2005). Through the descriptions of each course examined in this study, it was clear that there is not a one-size-fits-all design and that civic engagement needs to happen across the disciplines. Faculty in this study had a supportive environment that allows for flexibility in designing civic education components within their courses.

Another finding uncovered was that the participants of this study were not assessing how successful their civic engagement activities were impacting a student's sense of civic responsibility. Faculty described how developing methods of measurement were difficult when trying to address such abstract concepts as personal civic responsibility and engagement. Additionally, participants stressed the level of complexity surrounding measuring the impact of

their courses on a student's sense of civic responsibility and civic engagement. Participants mentioned that any such measurement should be done over the span of several years.

An unexpected finding that emerged from this study was the overwhelming consensus by the participants that adding civic engagement components to their courses was extremely beneficial to several populations. Students benefitted in their academic and professional growth; faculty benefitted both personally and professionally by being involved in civic engagement; and communities benefitted by having access to resources that would have previously not been available to them.

Another finding was the extension of citizenship to include global citizenship. In the past, traditional civic education models focused solely on local communities with the curriculum focusing on specific populations in specific locations. This limited reach could, in part, be due to the fact that institutions of higher learning did not have the means to easily reach beyond local or regional communities. However, Wesch (2009) noted that the age of web 2.0 interactive tools allows anyone, almost anywhere, to communicate in a global manner. This study showed how online courses with civic education components were expanding their reach to include populations and locations that were previously unreachable.

The final finding was the discovery that the faculty had widely-varied definitions about civic engagement. Many of the participants agreed that citizenship education meant they must teach their students to think critically and take educated action. Only a few participants connected citizenship to a responsibility to understand and influence public policy. Other participants mentioned that being a good citizen meant that one should reassess preconceptions about stereotypes, social ideologies, and cultural boundaries. Even more so, these participants were developing notions of citizenship and engagement based solely from their fields of study or

disciplines. Many described that it was their responsibility to teach students how their chosen field can contribute to society in a positive way. This contribution, in turn, allowed students to reevaluate for what purpose they were gaining their education.

Discussion of Findings

Time

The study suggested that online course development can take several semesters, and participants even recommend teaching the course material several times before adding in community engagement components. Committing to researching community partners, engagement activities, and thoroughly understanding how the course objectives fit in with these components were mentioned over and over by the participants. In many cases, if possible, participants suggested dedicating time to established sustainable networks and relationships with community partners. Furthermore, time needed to truly assess the students enrolled in the course needs to be taken into account. Participants stressed the importance of “getting to know” the learners, their interest, needs, and accessibility to both the course and the community. Ideally, this assessment of the learner should be done before the course begins, but, as mentioned by the participants, the process often takes place over a few days at the beginning of the semester or quarter.

Maintenance and monitoring of these courses requires a constant communication regimen, prompt feedback, and, in many cases, meticulous dissemination of information – all of which require time. Finally, evaluation of the course takes time due to the uncertainty of assessment methods, quantity of evaluable data, and variables from course to course. In some cases, evaluation and assessment could span several semesters or even years. It was important to note that participants agreed it was important to get the students and community partners involved in evaluation of the course early on to produce the best assessment data possible. A

realistic timeframe for development, launching, and evaluation of an online course with civic engagement components will be necessary to ensure success.

Flexibility

Throughout the descriptions of the courses and the varying definitions of what constituted civic education by the participants, it became clear that flexibility was key in designing a course with civic education components. Participants were able to develop unique experiences that were molded to best fit students' and community partners' needs. Additionally, with the ever-changing definition of what constitutes a citizen in the 21st century, faculty could adapt quickly. This need for flexibility was even more important when looking at the larger picture drawn by the study: that civic education needs to be prolonged and happen across the disciplines. The courses examined included a wide variety of disciplines and student grades from undergraduate to graduate level courses. Limiting flexibility could potentially hinder the ability to engage the learner in multiple dimensions (Joyce, Brown, & Peck, 1981; Joyce & Hodges, 1981).

However, while flexibility can be seen as key to providing successful online civic engagement, it does bring with it certain critical questions. What also emerged from the data and supported by the review of the literature is that "civic engagement" has become a "catch all" phrase for any type of experiential education. While experiential learning certainly has its benefits, the unfortunate result of this "anything counts as civic engagement" understanding is that the "civic" part has been lost or significantly de-emphasized. This loss of the "civic" part of civic engagement is important given that Millennials and Generation Xers seem less inclined to participate in public life (Boyte & Hollander, 1999; Carpini, 2010; Harwood, 1991; Kezar,

Chambers & Burkhardt, 2005; Putnam, 1995). A recent report by the Pew Research Center⁹, *The Millennial in Adulthood: Detached from Institutions, Networked with Friends 2014* report showed how millennials are detaching from political parties, organized religion, and marriage. This report was based on findings from a telephone survey among 1,821 adults nationwide including 617 millennial adults combined with analysis of other Pew Research Center surveys conducted between 1990 and 2014. The report said that this detachment is at or near the highest levels of political and religious disaffiliation recorded for any generation in the quarter-century that the Pew Research Center has been polling these topics. The Center also reported that millennials have emerged as the least trusting of society and are less likely to self-identify as religious or patriotic. It can only be speculated that some of this distrust correlates with the disengagement of these youth with political and social activism. Thus, there is great need to ensure that universities are promoting the “civic” part of civic engagement.

Flexibility can be considered a key component in delivering a successful online civic engagement. Providing faculty with flexibility in developing a course can provide the ability to promote unique learning experiences and allow for quick adaptation. However, too much flexibility can also be a cause for concern. Faculty could lose sight of what civic engagement is about and how to best adapt it to meet the needs of the course outcomes and objectives. These two points provide ample opportunity for additional research that will be discussed further in the recommendations for future research section.

Success of Civic Engagement

The issue of how, or if, to assess student engagement in an online environment remains a topic of debate. As stated above, participants are not measuring how civic engagement

⁹ Pew Research Center is a nonpartisan fact tank that informs the public about the issues, attitudes, and trends shaping America and the world. It conducts public opinion polling, demographic research, media content analysis, and other empirical social science research. Mission taken from <http://www.pewresearch.org>

components are impacting a student's personal sense of responsibility or engagement. Instead, they are measuring how these components affect a student's understanding of the knowledge in the course. Participants noted that they are not measuring engagement because the concept seemed ambiguous. Civic responsibility and community engagement with its ever-changing definitions and interpretations just seemed too abstract to evaluate. But it is not just a lack of an evaluation tool that is at issue. The larger issue is whether or not we should prioritize measuring civic education components with respect to assigning how important they are in the curriculum.

In today's culture of accountability and standards, we are often called upon to provide data as to whether or not something is successful. However, we must also recognize that sometimes we are so focused on the measuring that we lose sight of the larger picture. Sometimes there are concepts that we cannot evaluate because they are hard to capture with a formal evaluation mechanism; one could argue that civic responsibility and community engagement to be one of those hard to measure concepts. The abstract nature of civic responsibility and what it means to be a citizen differs from student to student, instructor to instructor, and discipline to discipline. With such a multidimensional concept, it could be argued that an evaluation method would require too many strands of measurement. The more strands of measurement that are created, the harder it is to deliver such an evaluation (Finley, 2011; Foster, Shurtz, & Pepper, 2014; Shufflebeam, 2011). Furthermore, as suggested by the participants, any evaluation should be conducted over a long period of time to truly capture the impact of civic responsibility in students. The need for a longitudinal study brings with it even more complex issues including variables and pre-existing factors. Astin et al. (2000) described the many pre-existing factors and variables that would need to be considered when assessing long-term effectiveness of a student's engagement in a course or courses. These include students' overall

civic engagement portfolios and factors such as career choices, cultural background, or pre-existing community service experiences. In essence, a question that should be asked is how could one possibly measure if the engagement activities in one class impacted a student's sense of civic responsibility over the span of a lifetime? Even with the uncertainty of how to measure specific engagement, the research and participants in this study show that prolonged exposure to civic engagement is beneficial in so many ways.

If there was such an evaluation instrument, faculty and administrators could obtain more funding and support for civic engagement courses and activities. Armed with additional support and assessment data, faculty might have an easier time attracting more community partners. These data could potentially connect the importance of delivering community engagement to online students and the long-term well being of the community. Additionally, the data collected from such a tool could be used to develop new trainings and guidelines. Professional development could address what makes quality online instruction as it relates to civic education and provide guidelines to faculty with a road map of what successful civic engagement activities look like in the online environment.

There will always be the need for colleges and universities to provide data needed for accreditation purposes or how certain pedagogies are working to ensure expected student outcomes. As shown in this study, some concepts are important even if they cannot be evaluated. In this study, participants clearly perceived the benefit of civic engagement in their courses to be so great that the need to meticulously measure the success was unnecessary.

Benefit of Civic Engagement

Participants overwhelmingly agreed that the benefit of incorporating civic engagement into an online course significantly outweighed any negatives. Throughout these chapters, I have

described the lengthy time it takes and the challenges one must endure in incorporating civic engagement into an online course; and yet, these faculty, many without extra compensation, work to incorporate these components into their courses and wholeheartedly believe that the benefit is substantial. Even without data to show how it is impacting students' sense of civic responsibility and engagement, they stressed the perceived benefit just from teaching the course. This belief runs parallel with the conceptual framework and review of the literature for this study. Colby et al.'s (2003) purpose for writing *Educating Citizens* was to show that instilling civic and moral values into higher education students was a responsibility of institutions of higher learning because the lasting benefits outweighed any challenges associated with incorporation of those values. Furthermore, *Habits of the Heart* by Robert Bellah and *Bowling Alone* by Robert Putnam called upon universities and colleges to continue providing opportunities for the youth of America to be civically engaged.

The data within this study specifically focused on three populations that benefitted greatly from the incorporation of civic engagement into online courses. Students were shown to have become self-empowered because they were able to develop personalized projects that positively impacted their communities. In some cases, participants were able to report on former students who continued to work in the community long after the course had ended. Additionally, participants truly believed that by connecting the students to a greater purpose within the course, it helped provide them with a level of support to combat attrition. Faculty benefitted because they were able to participate in engagement activities along with students and in many cases continued to work with the community partners even after the course engagement activities ended. This participation provided an opportunity for faculty to “buy into” an environment that held civic responsibility and community engagement in high esteem. Finally, communities and

community partners, who were once too far away or too remote to be reached by the university or colleges, were receiving resources because either their own community members were the students themselves or the students working with them could contact and communicate with them with ease because of web interactive communication tools.

These benefits, even though not formally evaluated, were assessed because of faculty's intuitive nature to perceive the benefit of instruction and pedagogical methods. In essence, they saw the bigger picture without emphasizing the need for strict measurement tools.

Global Citizen

Bole and Gordon (2009) believe education should focus on instilling human values that transcend governments and borders. This means that faculty should begin to teach students how to think globally when it comes to contributing to society. Many faculty in this study have expanded their notion of civic engagement to include opportunities for students to become

Changing definition. This dynamic and changing understanding of civic education exemplified in the data is in concert with current literature on civic engagement. Enrlich (1997) has contended that developing a firm definition of civic education is difficult because the term "civic" is continually changing. Thornton and Jaeger (2006) have argued that the term civic responsibility at the beginning of the 21st century can also mean volunteerism, public action, and public discourse. They concluded that there are five specific meanings of civic:

1. Knowledge and support of democratic values systems and processes;
2. Desire to act beneficially in community and for its members;
3. Use of knowledge and skills for societal benefit;
4. Appreciation for interest in those unlike self; and
5. Personal accountability.

The authors conveyed through this study the importance of structuring a framework for civic responsibility that higher education institutions could use to evaluate initiatives and approaches to those initiatives for their effectiveness, resourcefulness, and successfulness. Dimensions of civic responsibility were key in developing their framework, but they also alluded to the complex nature of civic responsibility and engagement and how to incorporate that into a learning environment.

Furco (2010) and White and Silver (2005) noted that, in the 21st century, institutions of higher education are called upon to help solve some of the most pressing societal issues. It should be noted that both these articles were published at a time when the American public was seeing a great decline in civic and social participation by both Generation X and Millennial youth (Hodge, Lewis, Kramer, & Hughes, 2001). Thus, civic engagement reemerged as the central goal for higher education institutions (Jones & Abes, 2004). One way that colleges and universities have responded to this reemerging goal is to begin emphasizing the application of knowledge in real world settings. Incorporating civic engagement/service learning into the classroom allows for a way for students to apply the knowledge they learn in the classroom to the real world. While connecting the classroom and students to public engagement and meaningful opportunities to cultivate community good seems to still focus on the “civic” part of civic engagement, too often this really means applying knowledge to create information and solutions, rather than developing civic responsibility and duty in students (Bole & Gordon, 2009; Guthrie & McCracken, 2010; Malin, 2011).

Implications and Recommendations

Instructors/Faculty

The findings from this study have implications for instructors who are committed to incorporating civic engagement into their classrooms or contemplating such a move. With instructors playing the largest role in incorporating civic engagement into the online classroom, it is important for them to be aware of the many different dimensions they will encounter when building their courses.

Assessment. For these courses to be successful, instructors will need to designate their time and mental dexterity towards sharpening their skills at assessing their learners (Angelo & Cross, 1993; Ewell, 1988; Huba & Freed, 2000; Palloff & Pratt, 2009; Webber, 2012). To understand the learning style, personal environments, preconceived notions, technology fluency, and limitations of each individual student takes a considerable amount of preparation and planning at the front of a course. Instructors will need to focus on four key points if they are to access their learners effectively:

1. **Prior Knowledge:** Instructors need to understand the level of knowledge their students have with the technology that will be used in the course;
2. **Accessibility:** Instructors need to assess the student's accessibility to the technology needed to complete the course and access to the community agencies and/or engagement activities;
3. **Ability:** Instructors need to understanding the students' level of ability in communicating with each other, the instructor, and the community agency/partner using online communication tools. Additionally, instructors should assess their

students for the level of self-discipline needed to pursue these engagement activities in an online learning format; and

4. **Availability:** Instructors need to determine the level of commitment from the student in terms of the time each student can commit to the engagement activity.

Online civic education pedagogy. Once instructors have assessed their learners, they will need to insure their engagement components match up with proven online learning pedagogy. This has proven to be tricky for several participants of the study due to the fact that most civic engagement curriculum has centered on traditional face-to-face teaching methods. Several key points can already be made to help develop this new online civic education pedagogy:

1. **Match Outcomes and Objectives to Activities:** Instructors need to pay close attention to how the engagement activities correspond with the expected outcomes and objectives of the courses. It is not enough to simply place a volunteer opportunity within the course. Instructors must provide activities that incorporate knowledge learned in the course and opportunities for the students to work towards specific outcomes expected of the course;
2. **Real World Connections:** Instructors will need to shape experiences of their students around resources the student has access to (access to specific population, resources of the community, locality) as well as, keep in mind the career path of the student. In doing this students will be given a greater opportunity to thoroughly learn the information and as mentioned in previous sections apply the knowledge for the betterment of society;

3. **Accountability:** Instructors will need to produce a system of checks and balances that can be used to monitor student progress, evaluate transmission of information, and allow for accommodations when needed. This system will allow for quick action and flexible in the course;
4. **Motivation:** Motivation has been a reoccurring theme throughout the literature in online learning. As mentioned in Chapter II, retention and motivation has been a major downfall of distance education (Guthrie & McCracken, 2010). However, as Major (2014) stated, student engagement, when added to online courses, can increase motivation and retention. This incorporation is only possible if the instructors are able to truly understand what motivates their students. Instructors need to design their courses around student interest;
5. **Discipline Specifics:** Instructors must ask themselves how their profession can help better society. By understanding how their profession or course material fits into society, they will in turn be able to develop methods of incorporating civic engagement into their course. Once they have pinpointed methods of creating a civic experience for their students, they must insure that it fits well with their academic discipline expectations as well as look at the objectives for the course to insure that they match up. This creation and evaluation loop is ongoing as the course is developed and redeveloped as students change, society changes, and professions adapt; and
6. **Reflective Thought:** Reflective thought is key to a student's understanding of the course material, where they fit within society as a whole, and how they can contribute (Brookfield, 1995; Browne, 2003; Dewey, 1933; Gray, 2007; Hatton

& Smith, 1995; Kolb, 1984; Mezirow, 1990; Schon, 1987). Instructors must incorporate this proven pedagogy into their courses if they are to see students understand and connect the engagement activity to the course objectives.

Leading by example. Finally, the last recommendation for instructors who want to incorporate civic engagement components into their online course is to get involved. Almost all participants were actively involved in their communities and used their discipline-specific skills to help improve society in some way. In turn, all of the participants actively participated in the civic engagement experiences built into their courses. They believed this experience provided a level of “genuine” instruction.

Administrators

Administrators are key in producing change in higher education (Arreola, 2000; Birnbaum et al., 1988; Lucas, 2000; Rowley, 1997). Many times they take on roles such as supporter and cheerleader for faculty when new initiative are implemented (Academic Senate for California Community College, 2004; Lunday & APPA, 2010). Administrators are most notably the agents of change when there are new policies (Academic Senate for California Community College, 2004; Lunday & APPA, 2010). Even though many aspects of incorporating civic engagement into online courses can be done by instructors alone, to truly sustain successful courses within a department, administrators much take an active stance and get involved in the process.

Supporting environment. Within the study, participants described total support from administration in freely letting them explore new methods of teaching civic education. However, that was to be expected because the sites chosen already were well documented in having environments that successfully supported civic engagement. This supporting environment was in

large part due to administrator support; administrators who encouraged the development and delivery of online courses with civic engagement component by providing:

1. Incentive or Compensations: Administrators need to reassess compensation benefits that attractively incentivize adding civic engagement into online courses. Civic engagement can potentially lower dropout rates and increase retention (Guthrie & McCracken, 2010). Suggestions for compensation included course development allowances, course releases or overload pay, purchase of new software and hardware equipment, or the addition of graduate teaching assistants (Schifter, 2000);
2. Support: Administrators can actively participate in helping faculty attract community partners. As mentioned often in this study, faculty spent considerable time nurturing and cultivating community partners for their civic engagement activities. Many times these partners are taking on roles of teacher and instructors themselves by guiding students in the field. Community partners work with students to provide guidance about community projects, resources, social norms, and policies that effect their specific agencies and population served. If administrators take an active role in advertising the benefits associated with partnering with their department through informational correspondence, personal communication, or even compensation allowances, instructors will have an easier time finding suitable organizations with which to partner; and
3. Resources: A significant amount of research points to the area of faculty development with emerging technology (Chism, 2004; Diaz, 201; Gillespi, 1998; Johnson, 2012; Kenney, Banerjee, & Newcombe, 2010; O'Hara et al., 2013;

Schnackenberg, Maughan, & Zadoo, 2004). Technology not only impacts faculty teaching but their ability to conduct research, sit on committees, and collaborate (Gillespi, 1998). Even more so now that Web 2.0 and cloud-based technologies are so easily assessable to faculty (Diaz, 2011). Administrators already have major incentive to help faculty stay up-to-date on new technology, but within the confines of this study it is important in that it will create even more opportunities to incorporate civic engagement which in turn benefit students understanding and ultimately retention (Schnackenberg, Maughan, & Zadoo, 2004). Chapter V showed how faculty are using technology to connect global communities, allowing students to build interactive blogs, websites, and lesson plans. All of these projects required that the faculty be comfortable with the technology supporting them. If administrators take an active stance in training and supporting these technologies, more faculty could possibly be persuaded into incorporating these engagement activities into their classroom.

Transmission of information. Another key way that administrators can help faculty is to develop better methods of disseminating detailed student information to their faculty as soon as possible and optimally even before the course begins. Many of my recommendations for instructors, mentioned in the above section, focused on assessing their learners. Instructors are only able to assess their learners if given the correct information as soon as possible. By providing faculty with their students' contact information or demographic information well before the semester or quarter begins, faculty have enough time to do a thorough assessment of their learners as it relates to the course material and objectives.

One recommendation for increasing access of information is to incorporate two administrative components to their online courses with civic engagement components:

1. **Advertise:** Participants frequently mentioned having to accommodate for students who were unaware of the volunteer requirements before registering for the course. Administrators need to work with instructors to develop a method of advertising these civic engagement components to students before registering. Methods would depend on course registration system, catalog requirements and formatting, and method of delivering announcements to students; and
2. **Pre-Assessment:** Many times instructors are unable to begin assessments on learners until the first day of class. This delay in access requires instructors to spend beginning days if not weeks assessing students. Developing a system that allows instructors to communicate with students enrolled in their courses several weeks ahead of time could potentially lessen the strain on instructor, community partner, and student. Moreover, if administrators are taking a more active role in providing access for assessment, they need to also insure that instructors have proper knowledge and resources to perform assessments. This can take the form of developing training sessions related to learning online teaching pedagogy or educational assessment methods. It can also mean providing a resource person or team that can help faculty assess their students in an effective and timely manner.

Colleges and Universities

In this study, colleges and universities were selected because they already exhibited strong commitments to instilling civic responsibility in their students. Some of those commitment characteristics were unique to their institutions, students, and localities but others

can be taken and adapted to other institutions of higher learning wanting to build a strong commitment to civic education within their distance programs. When Colby, Ehrlich, Beaumont, and Stephens originally conducted their 2000 project, which incorporated four of my research institutions, they uncovered a significant characteristic. This characteristic was of a campus-wide push to incorporate civic responsibility in all aspects of a students' academic or extra-curricular education. Colby et al. (2003) wrote about this push in their book *Educating Citizens*. They described institutions that redesigned campus missions, restructured policies, mandated curriculum changes, and developed the support and resources necessary to insure those changes were implemented.

Examining the infrastructure. Going beyond the recommendations made by Colby et al. (2003) and specifically looking at how colleges and institutions can successfully incorporate civic engagement into online learning, I have made the following recommendations:

1. Technology: Institutions need to examine and assess whether or not instructors and administrators have access to emerging technology and the resources to learn these new technologies. These resources were found within almost all of the institutions in this study. As mentioned above, many of the institutions had centers for teaching and learning, but they also had centers or departments designated to instructional technology or information technology;
 - a. For those institutions that already have departments or centers for instructional technology, there should be a more efficient method of informing faculty of these services. Methods of doing this could include getting the faculty senates involved in disseminating information, providing weekly or monthly informational bulletins, producing short

- online video tutorials and reshaping communication methods that allow for easier access to members of these departments or centers;
- b. For those colleges and universities who do not have designated departments or centers for instructional technology or informational technology, they need to establish one; and
2. **Communication:** Institutions should spend time assessing how they are getting the word out about the centers mentioned above, why faculty are not using them, and how better to promote collaboration. This will also be discussed in the recommendations for future research; and
 3. **Policy:** Institutions should create better policies on implementing new technology that address faculty mandated training and department wide transitions as well as insure that these departments and centers are capable and knowledgeable about ways to incorporate civic engagement into an online environment or how to use emerging technology to produce civic engagement experiences.

Community Partners

Even though this study did not specifically look at community partners or directly communicate with partners associated with the courses under examination, there were a few instances where working with community partners took center stage. Participants described in detail the relationship that was necessary to successfully engage students in the community; therefore, it only seems appropriate to bring some of those findings to light in this implication section.

Community agencies need to be more involved in the planning stages of engagement activities if possible. Allowing partners to have an active role in what the students will be

participating in and how it will be impacting the community will provide faculty with a better opportunity to match course objectives and outcomes. Additionally, community partnerships should be encouraged to take on more ownership of developing the students working under their supervision. Participants continually referenced that the community partners took on lead facilitator in teaching the student about policies, procedures, and impact. This need for ownership will ultimately impact the quality of training the student receives while in the field.

Recommendations for Future Research

One of the most complex discussions developed within this study was whether or not measurement tools should be created to evaluate the impact of these online courses civic engagement activities on a student's sense of civic responsibility and community engagement. As stated in the previous discussion, both sides of this argument have merit. The development of a tool would allow data to be used to acquire additional support and funding to further incorporate civic engagement into online curriculum. Measurement might also provide a way to capture more effective ways to incorporate civic engagement into the online curriculum. Therefore, the development of a measurement tool could be seen as valuable research objective. However, an argument could be made that less time be spent on the development of a measurement tool and more time spent on understanding the perceived benefits of civic engagement on students, faculty, and communities which as this study has eluded to may not be measureable.

To help further define what civic responsibility is and what it means to be a citizen in the 21st century, a second recommendation for additional research is that this study should be expanded to include online students' perceptions and reflections with respect to how they believe their idea of citizenship has changed with respect to online courses with civic engagement

components. These reflections and perceptions combined with those found in this study could also help in developing a method of assessing and measuring actual impact of engagement activities on a student's sense of civic responsibility. It might also provide a more holistic picture of the benefit of civic engagement. Additionally, this expanded study would benefit from following students and faculty for a longer period of time, preferably five to ten years. Such longitudinal study would produce ample descriptive data that could be used for many of the above described research trajectories. The extended period of time will allow researchers to see how these courses are impacting student's sense of civic responsibility at the time of participation in the engagement activity as well as how this impact transitioned throughout a student's personal and professional journey.

This study briefly explored the role of the community partner in developing and delivering an online course with civic engagement components. However, this brief exploration showed that community partners play a key role the success of these courses. A third recommendation for additional research is that a corresponding study could be developed that examined the impact of these online courses engaging in the community. Areas of examination could include how an online student's impact on community agencies compares to a traditional student's impact on community agencies. Moreover, the study could look at the benefit and cost breakdown of these community agencies in working with students in online courses and traditional face-to-face courses.

A fourth recommendation for additional research would include a more thorough examination in the form of case studies of the courses examined in this study. An examination of their systems of support, culture of engagement, and belief in citizenship would provide

invaluable information to other institutions wanting to increase their commitment to community through online education.

The final recommendation for further research is that further data be collected from online courses with civic engagement components, combined with the current data collected, and a database of examples be developed. Throughout education there are resources available to instructors for incorporating specific subject matter into their classroom. Using this method, the ability to have a comprehensive database of lesson plans, activities, and examples of engagement components in online education that have been developed and evaluated would serve to be invaluable to faculty. Participants of the study have reflected on the need for such a collaboration to help grow civic education in distance education.

Summary

This chapter attempted to tie together several components of this study. Within Chapter I, I brought light the ever-growing problem of lost citizenship in society and within America's youth. I built upon the popular argument that institutions of higher education can help solve that problem (Austin, 1997; Barber, 2001; McDonnell, Timpane, & Benjamin, 2000; Saltmarsh, 1996). This solution, as I believed, should include online education.

In Chapter II, I provided a background description of civic education and how it has transformed through the decades. I shared my conceptual framework that consisted of three exceptional literary works that not only guided my study questions but my passion for civic education. The chapter allowed me to describe how technology has impacted the transformation of civic education and the potential for change if incorporated in online education. Even more so, it allowed me to build the argument that the very definition of citizenship is changing and the description of community was expanding because of this new and emerging technology.

Within Chapter III, I built a picture of the study itself. I described how I designed the study to uncover how faculty incorporated civic education and community engagement in their online courses, what changes they saw in their students' understanding of civic responsibility, and how they determined the success of their efforts. I explained that I decided to conduct this study by using grounded theory. I showed how grounded theory was the logical choice when reviewing the needs of this study. Grounded theory allowed me the flexibility needed to develop a holistic view. This holistic view was necessary because so little research has been conducted on this topic thus far (Waldner, McGorry, & Widener, 2012). Furthermore, by using grounded theory, I was able to allow the participants to uncover the knowledge. This knowledge allowed me to highlight the significant discoveries within an area that was virtually unstudied.

Chapter IV and V described the discoveries that my methodology provided. I was able to provide detailed descriptions of each participant and their institutions. These descriptions were important in understanding the reflections and perceptions of my participants. I also came to the realization that my methods resulted in collecting considerable amount of data relating to how faculty incorporated civic education into their online courses but little to what their expectations of students' understanding of civic responsibility were or how they determined their efforts of their teachings and activities as it relates to students' understanding. This realization allowed me to present my Chapter VI recommendations for future research and come to a very important conclusion, that, currently, methods of measuring the impact of civic engagement in an online course on a student's sense of civic responsibility do not exist.

The purpose of this study was to uncover new discoveries in how online education and civic education were merging. It attempted to pave the way for further research by showing gaps in the literature and uncover areas of uncertainty and unknown methods, such as how to measure

success of civic education components in how they impact a students' sense of civic responsibility. When this study began, it was my expectation to uncover methods that were of value to online education; however, it is clear to me now that much of what was uncovered can be transplanted across the board in multiple delivery methods.

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APPENDIX A

Approval of Table Use

Email Correspondence:

Hi Becky,

Thanks for contacting me. I am glad you found the “five dimensions” chart useful; certainly, you are welcome to adapt it for your work – which sounds like a very interesting study!

Best wishes on your dissertation proposal.

Courtney

Greetings Dr. Thornton,

My name is Becky Odom-Bartel and I am a PhD student at The University of Alabama in the College of Education. My field of study is Instructional Technology. I am currently writing my proposal which focuses on Online Education and its impact on students’ sense of civic responsibility, specifically looking at faculty perceptions of civic responsibility as it is seen in an online environment. I have been researching the term civic responsibility in depth to help add to my literature and came across your dissertation and found the chart with the dimensions of civic responsibility on page 19 to be very helpful.

I am writing to ask for your permission to adapt the chart for use in my dissertation. I will make sure that you are fully cited and given credit for the development of the chart.

Please let me know if you are willing to let me use your chart. I am available by email or cell # 205-523-4882.

I look forward to hearing from you,

Becky

APPENDIX B

Approval of Table Use

Email Correspondence:

Dear Dr. Marullo,

My name is Becky Odom-Bartel and I am a PhD candidate at The University of Alabama in the College of Education. My field of study is Instructional Technology and Foundations of Education. I am currently writing my final chapter of my dissertation, which focuses on Online Education and Civic Engagement. Specifically I am looking at how online faculty are incorporating civic engagement into their courses. As you can imagine service learning has come up several times along with other pedagogical methods of engagements. As I am writing my chapter I wanted to include the benefits as well as the critiques of service learning. While researching I came across your article *C. Wright Mills's Friendly Critique of Service Learning and an Innovative Response: Cross- Institutional Collaborations for Community-Based Research*. I found it to be extremely helpful in my collection of research.

I am writing to ask for your permission to adapt the listings on page 62 of the article for use in my dissertation. I will make sure that you, Dr. Moayed, and Dr. Cooke are fully cited and given credit for development of the summaries.

Please let me know if you are willing to let me use your lists. I am available by email or cell #205-523-4882.

I look forward to hearing from you,

Becky

APPENDIX C

Approval of Table Use

Email Correspondence:

Dear Becky,

Thank you for interest in the engaged campus figure. By all means, please use it if you find it helpful. I'm delighted to hear that you are including discussion of community engagement in your dissertation. I wish you great success in your work!

Take care, and enjoy the holiday season.

Andy

Greetings Dr. Furco,

My name is Becky Odom-Bartel and I am a PhD student at The University of Alabama in the College of Education. My field of study is Instructional Technology. I am currently writing my proposal which focuses on Online Education and its impact on students' sense of civic responsibility, specifically looking at faculty perceptions of civic responsibility as it is seen in an online environment. I have been researching what the literature says about what it means to produce a citizen literature and came across your article "The Engaged Campus: Toward A Comprehensive Approach to Public Engagement" in the *British Journal of Educational Studies* and found the figure 1 The engaged campus and the tripartite mission of higher education on page 382 to be very helpful.

I am writing to ask for your permission to adapt the figure for use in my dissertation. I will make sure that you are fully cited and given credit for the development of the figure and definitions.

Please let me know if you are willing to let me use your chart. I am available by email or cell # [205-523-4882](tel:205-523-4882).

I look forward to hearing from you,

Becky

APPENDIX D

Sample Interview Protocol

Research Questions Set One	
Topic #1 Faculty Preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you had any training in online teaching methods and tools?
Topic#2 Motivation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why did you make the decision to incorporate civic education into your course? • How does incorporating civic education into your course benefit or deter you in your own professional goals?

Research Questions Set Two	
Topic#2 How do faculty incorporate civic education and community engagement into online education?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the general makeup of the student population that takes online courses? • How are students able to receive service learning credit from online courses? • Can you describe the assignments for the course? • How do students connect with their community during these courses? • Can you speak to what you feel it means to produce a citizen • How does your definition of producing a citizen show through in your course? • What is the biggest obstacle for developing your online courses • What has been your biggest success story
Topic#3 What Changes do these faculty expect in students' understandings of civic responsibility and community engagement?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How is the community impacted differently when online students are involved in service learning compared to when traditional students are involved in service learning? • How are students using what they learn in the course to benefit or impact the community? • Can you speak on how students comprehend the importance of their service to the community and society? Do you think they will take further action to serve their community? • How do your online students develop different definitions of civic responsibility and community than their traditional student counterparts?
Topic #4 How do these faculty determine the success of their efforts to encourage civic responsibly and community engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can online courses effectively foster student sense of community and development of civic responsibility? • What is your assessment of how effective the course was at instilling civic engagement in your students? How effective do you think your class is/was at getting students to engage and think civically?

APPENDIX E

Original IRB Approval

Office for Research
Institutional Review Board for the
Protection of Human Subjects



November 29, 2012

Rebecca Odom-Bartel
ELPTS
College of Education
Box 870232

Re: IRB #: 12-OR-389, "Distance Education Faculty Reflections: A Look at Civic Responsibility and Community Engagement"

Dear Ms. Odom-Bartel:

Your application has been given expedited approval according to 45 CFR part 46. Approval has been given under expedited review category 7 as outlined below:

(7) Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies.

The UA IRB has approved this research study at the following institutions:

- 1. California State University, Monterey Bay
- 2. Duke University
- 3. Kapiolani Community College
- 4. St. Catherine University

If you modify the application, please complete the Modification of an Approved Protocol Form. Changes in this study cannot be initiated without IRB approval, except when necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to participants.

This approval expires on November 28, 2013. If the study continues beyond that date, you must complete the appropriate portion of the Continuing Review Form. When the study closes, please complete the appropriate Closure form. Should you need to submit any further correspondence regarding this application, please include the assigned IRB application number.

Good luck with your research.

Sincerely,



Carpanato T. Myles, MSM, CIM
Director & Research Compliance Officer
Office for Research Compliance
The University of Alabama



358 Rose Administration Building
Box 870127
Tuscaloosa, Alabama 35487-0127
(205) 348-8461
FAX (205) 348-7189
TOLL FREE (877) 820-3066

Recruitment Emails:

- If Representative would rather send me list of emails instead of contact faculty directly:

Hello,

I received your name from _____. She/he provided me with a list of faculty teaching at _____ through distance learning methods.

I am currently seeking any faculty member at _____ who teaches distance learning courses that have service learning components for research study through my dissertation at The University of Alabama

If you are interested in volunteering for a 60 minute telephone interview during the spring semester that will be part of a qualitative research study entitled "Distance Education Faculty Reflections: A Look at Civic Responsibility and Community Engagement, please contact me at rlodombartel@ua.edu or 205-523-4882.

Thank you for the opportunity to work with you all.

Becky Odom-Bartel
PhD Candidate
Education Leadership, Policy, and Technology Studies
College of Education
The University of Alabama
Box 870302
Tuscaloosa, AL 35487
205-523-4882
rlodombartel@ua.edu

- If Representative would rather send email themselves this blank template will be given to them as an example to send:

Hello,

Rebecca L. Odom-Bartel a PhD Candidate from The University of Alabama is asking _____ University/College for help in her dissertation Research.

She is currently seeking any faculty member at who is currently teaches or has taught in the last 2 semesters a distance learning courses that have service learning components.

If you are interested in volunteering for a 60 minute telephone interview during the spring semester that will be part of a qualitative research study entitled "Distance Education Faculty

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Approval date: 11/29/12
Expiration date: 11/28/13

Reflections: A Look at Civic Responsibility and Community Engagement or would like to know more about the study , please contact her at rlodombartel@ua.edu or 205-523-4882.

UA IRB Approved Document
Approval date: 11/29/12
Expiration date: 11/28/13

Confirmation Email:

Hello,

Thank you for your expressing interest in my research study with the University of Alabama. Currently I am seeking faculty members who are teaching or have taught a distance education course with a service learning component in it. If you think you meet the criteria I would love to schedule an interview with you. If you could please send me your telephone number and mailing address where I can send a consent form. I would like to set up a telephone interview once the consent form has been returned so please provide me with dates and times that you are available for a brief scheduling telephone call. If you have any questions feel free to contact me at 205-523-4882 or rlodombartel@ua.edu

Thank you for the opportunity to work with you all.

Becky Odom-Bartel
PhD Candidate
Education Leadership, Policy, and Technology Studies
College of Education
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Tuscaloosa, AL 35487
205-523-4882
rlodombartel@ua.edu

please note this is a cold template that will be adjusted depending on the faculty members initial response to the recruitment email. Example: if they pose any questions to start with or have already provided contact information

UA IRB Approved Document
Approval date: 11/29/12
Expiration date: 11/28/13

Participant
Address
City, State, Zip

Dear Participant,

Thank you for agreeing to participate in my research study **Distance Education Faculty Reflections: A Look at Civic Responsibility and Community Engagement**. As mentioned in the email correspondence I need to obtain a signed consent form from all participants before scheduling interviews. In this packet you will find the 4 page consent form along with a stamped return envelope for your convenience. If you would please read through the consent form and sign the signature page I would be very appreciative. Once you have finished filling out the consent form please place the form in the stamped envelope and place it in the mail.

If you have any questions about the form or the study please do not hesitate to contact me.

Thank you for your participation,

Rebecca L. Odom-Bartel
rlodombartel@ua.edu

205-523-4882

UA IRB Approved Document
Approval date: 11/29/12
Expiration date: 11/28/13

**UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA
HUMAN RESEARCH PROTECTION PROGRAM**

Informed Consent for a Non-Medical Study

Study title: Distance Education Faculty Reflections: A Look at Civic Responsibility and Community Engagement

Rebecca Odom-Bartel, Principle Investigator, PhD Candidate, ELPTS

You are being asked to take part in a dissertation research study.

This study is called Distance Education Faculty Reflections: A Look at Civic Responsibility and Community Engagement. The study is being done by Rebecca Odom-Bartel who is a PhD candidate at the University of Alabama. Ms. Odom-Bartel is being supervised by Professor Vivian Wright who is a professor of Education in the Educational Leadership, Leadership, Policy, and Technology Studies at the University of Alabama.

What is this study about? What is the investigator trying to learn?

This study is being done to help clarify and define what is expected of online students with respect to civic responsibility and community engagement. Using faculty reflections and perceptions it is hoped that a clear understanding of what civic responsibility and community engagement as it is situated in online learning will be developed.

Why is this study important or useful?

The results will help distance education faculty better understand the strengths and weaknesses of online learning when it comes to providing a sense of community and developing civic responsibility in students. The study will hopefully provide practical applications that can be incorporated into online courses to help strengthen the weaknesses.

Why have I been asked to be in this study?

You have been asked to be in this study because you are a faculty member who is currently teaching or has taught in the last 2 semesters a distance education courses with a service learning component.

How many people will be in this study?

About 10 other people will be participating in the study

What will I be asked to do in this study?

If you meet the criteria and agree to be in this study, you will be asked to do these things:

UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA IRB
CONSENT FORM APPROVED: 11/29/12
EXPIRATION DATE: 11/28/13

- No more than a one hour interview to be taking place via telephone or Blackboard Collaborate system, in the early Spring of 2013 with an additional follow-up interview scheduled on a case by case basis.
- If a Follow-up interview is needed it will take no more than one hour and will take place via telephone or Blackboard Collaborate system.
- Volunteer to participate in a one time follow-up focus group to be conducted over Blackboard Collaborate system in the late Spring of 2013
- Voluntary submission of course material such as course syllabi and course assignment description to help clarify and add to interview data

How much time will I spend being this study?

The interviews should take no more than 60 minutes. The focus group will take 60 to 90 minutes of your time.

Other time commitments will consist of email correspondence after the investigator has transcribed the interviews to verify correct information.

Will being in this study cost me anything?

The only cost to you from this study is time.

Will I be compensated for being in this study?

You will not be compensated for being in this study

Can the investigator take me out of this study?

If you would like to be withdrawn from the study the investigator will remove you immediately.

What are the risks (dangers or harms) to me if I am in this study?

No risk is foreseen

What are the benefits (good things) that may happen if I am in this study?

Although you will not benefit personally from being in the study, you will contribute to the advancement of understanding on how to develop distance education programs with a civic learning component.

What are the benefits to science or society?

This study will help faculty teaching online and hybrid courses have better insight into what is effective and ineffective in helping students connect with their community and develop a sense of civic responsibility

How will my privacy be protected?

All interviews will take place over the telephone or via a secure Blackboard Collaborate session over the internet with the participant and principle investigator only. Participants

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 EXPIRATION DATE: 11/28/13

do not have to answer any question if they do not want to and there is no obligation to participate in the focus group if they chose not to.

How will my confidentiality be protected?

All data collected using the participants name will only be shared with the professor supervising the research study. All recordings will be kept on a secure computer located within the principle investigators home office. Transcriptions and any resulting academic paper will use pseudonyms.

What are the alternatives to being in this study? Do I have other choices?

The alternative to being in this study is not to participate

What are my rights as a participant in this study?

Taking part in this study is voluntary. It is your free choice. You can refuse to be in it at all. If you start the study, you can stop at any time. There will be no effect on your relations with the University of Alabama.

The University of Alabama Institutional Review Board ("the IRB") is the committee that protects the rights of people in research studies. The IRB may review study records from time to time to be sure that people in research studies are being treated fairly and that the study is being carried out as planned.

Who do I call if I have questions or problems?

If you have questions about the study right now, please ask them. If you have questions, concerns, or complaints about the study later on, please call the investigator Rebecca Odom-Bartel at 205-523-4882.

If you have questions about your rights as a person in a research study, call Ms. Tanta Myles, the Research Compliance Officer of the University, at 205-348-8461 or toll-free at 1-877-820-3066.

You may also ask questions, make suggestions, or file complaints and concerns through the IRB Outreach website at http://osp.ua.edu/site/PRCO_Welcome.html or email us at participantoutreach@bama.ua.edu.

After you participate, you are encouraged to complete the survey for research participants that is online at the outreach website or you may ask the investigator for a copy of it and mail it to the University Office for Research Compliance, Box 870127, 358 Rose Administration Building, Tuscaloosa, AL 35487-0104.

I have read this consent form. I have had a chance to ask questions. I agree to take part in it.

I will receive a copy of this consent form to keep.

UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA IRB
 CONSENT FORM APPROVED: 11/29/12
 EXPIRATION DATE: 11/28/13

Signature of Research Participant

Date

Signature of Investigator_____
Date

Audio Taping Consent

As mentioned above, the individual qualitative interview will be audio recorded for research purposes. These tapes will be stored in a locked file cabinet in a locked room and only available to research staff. We will only keep these tapes for no more than 60 days and will destroy them after they have been transcribed.

I understand that part of my participation in this research study will be audiotaped and I give my permission to the research team to record the interview.

Yes, my participation in the telephone interview and focus group can be audiotaped.

No, I do not want my participation in the telephone interview and focus group to be audiotaped.

UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA IRB
CONSENT FORM APPROVED: 11/29/12
EXPIRATION DATE: 11/28/13

APPENDIX F

IRB Approval of Additional Research Sites

Office for Research
Institutional Review Board for the
Protection of Human Subjects

April 1, 2013



Rebecca Odom-Bartel
ELPTS
College of Education
The University of Alabama

Re: IRB # 12-OR-389 (Revision # 2) "Distance Education Faculty Reflections: A Look at Civic Responsibility and Community Engagement"

Dear Ms. Odom-Bartel:

The University of Alabama Institutional Review Board has reviewed the revision to your previously approved expedited protocol. The board has approved the change in your protocol.

Please remember that your approval period expires one year from the date of your original approval, November 29, 2012, not the date of this revision approval.

Should you need to submit any further correspondence regarding this proposal, please include the assigned IRB application number. Changes in this study cannot be initiated without IRB approval, except when necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to participants.

Good luck with your research.

Sincerely,



Carpantato T. Myles, MSW, CMAA
Director & Research Compliance Officer
Office for Research Compliance
The University of Alabama



358 Rose Administration Building
Box 870127
Tuscaloosa, Alabama 35487-0127
(205) 348-8461
FAX (205) 348-7189
TOLL FREE (877) 820-3066

APPENDIX G

IRB Renewal Authorization

September 13, 2013

Office for Research
Institutional Review Board for the
Protection of Human Subjects

Rebecca Odom-Bartel
ELPTS
College of Education
The University of Alabama

THE UNIVERSITY OF
ALABAMA
R E S E A R C H

Re: IRB # 12-OR-389-R1 "Distance Education Faculty Reflections: A Look at Civic Responsibility and Community Engagement"

Dear Ms. Odom-Bartel:

The University of Alabama Institutional Review Board has granted approval for your renewal application.

Your renewal application has been given expedited approval according to 45 CFR part 46. You have also been granted the requested waiver of informed consent. Approval has been given under expedited review category 7 as outlined below:

(7) Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies.

Your application will expire on September 12, 2014. If your research will continue beyond this date, complete the relevant portions of the IRB Renewal Application. If you wish to modify the application, complete the Modification of an Approved Protocol Form. Changes in this study cannot be initiated without IRB approval, except when necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to participants. When the study closes, complete the appropriate portions of the IRB Study Closure Form.

Should you need to submit any further correspondence regarding this proposal, please include the above application number.

Good luck with your research.

Sincerely,



358 Rose Administration Building
Box 870127
Tuscaloosa, Alabama 35487-0127
(205) 348-8461
FAX (205) 348-7189
TOLL FREE (877) 820-3066


Carpathato T. Myles, MSM, CIM
Director & Research Compliance Officer
Office for Research Compliance
The University of Alabama