Notes from the Chair

Michelle D. Deardorff • Jackson State University
michelle.d.deardorff@jsums.edu

In February, we held the fourth annual Teaching and Learning Conference sponsored by the American Political Science Association. Many of our membership attended, participated, moderated, and organized. Through this endeavor we are changing our discipline. We are declaring that our scholarship and our teaching connect to each other in significant, and substantial ways. We are demonstrating that the rigor we apply to our research can also be applied to how we scrutinize our teaching; that the collegiality we desire in our intellectual lives we crave in all aspects in our professional lives; and that what we do in our classroom **matters** (dare I say more) than our publications.

The political scientists who come to the Teaching and Learning Conference arrive craving different opportunities. Some seek a community in which to discuss and process teaching experiences and expectations. For those of us who feel alone in this endeavor, it is exciting to realize that political scientists across the country are doing the same things and asking similar questions. For others, it is a chance to hold our experiments, modifications and new inventions up to peer review in order to improve and develop our pedagogical repertoire. For still others, we come as groups of colleagues to find time away from the institutional chaos to focus on our collective plans.

Over the last four years I have attended the TLC for each of these reasons; regardless of what I was seeking, I have found it. The demographics of participants demonstrate this impact. We represent all stages of the professoriate, all subfields of the disciplines, and all types of institutions. This conference is the discipline of the political science—all of its facets. But what we do at TLC and APSA conference cannot stay there—we need to take the energy and excitement of these conferences back to our colleagues, departments, students, and our own work. Our colleagues throughout the discipline need to be exposed to our pedagogical explorations.

Our thinking on teaching and learning in political science has evolved as we have held these conferences. Our next step is to promulgate our collective work through resources webpages, articles in *JPSE* and *PS,* essays in *The Political Science Educator,* and edited collections. We need

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to demonstrate the value of our pedagogical scholarship to our discipline and our colleagues. To that end, this newsletter can be a valuable forum. Elsewhere within is a call for contributions that suggests formats and topics; feel free to contact me with ideas and contributions.

This edition of *The Political Science Educator* clearly demonstrates the range of our work, One essay is a report from a panel that met at the Southern Political Science Association to share their experiences and draw some conclusions about the recent implementation of Constitution Day in institutions of higher learning. Another essay is a reflection from a professor who engaged her students in a student learning exercise at a local elementary school and questions the meaning of the exercise for herself and for her students. Finally, another professor reevaluates the manner and method in which he had been teaching and revamps his courses and his own engagement with problem-based learning techniques.

As summer is soon upon us and we begin the annual process of evaluating our teaching and the significance of our own contributions to student learning (I hope it is not only me!), please consider sharing your self-assessments and discoveries with our community of political science educators. **PSE**

Constitution Day: Complying With the Mandate

Nancy Bednar • Del Mar College • nbednar@delmar.edu

Bruce Caswell • Rowan University • caswell@rowan.edu

Michelle D. Deardorff • Jackson State University • michelle.d.deardorff@jsums.edu

Karen M. Kedrowski • Winthrop University • kedrowskik@winthrop.edu

Judithanne Scourfield McLauchlan • University of South Florida - St. Petersburg • jsm2@stpt.usf.edu

Adam Stone • Georgia Perimeter College • astone@gpc.edu

Beginning in 2005 all educational institutions that received federal funds were required to observe Constitution Day on or near the anniversary of its signing: September 17, 1787. Some colleges, such as Dickinson College and James Madison University, have had Constitution Day programs in place for several years, given their namesakes' roles in framing the Constitution. However, for most institutions, this was a new requirement thrust upon them with no financial assistance. Many provosts turned to their Political Science Departments, home of Pre-Law advisors and professors of public law, to come up with events to satisfy the Constitution Day mandate.

The September date, coming as it does at the beginning of the semester (or worse, outside of the quarter), poses a challenge for event organizers. The lack of time to plan, combined with the lack of funding, and, often, the lack of institutional support (along with the Department of Education's absence of plans to monitor compliance) would seem to forecast a lack of success for Constitution Day programming.

Nevertheless, our colleagues are organizing creative events and activities to observe Constitution Day in a way that brings attention to important constitutional issues. Many have found that the success of Constitution Day can be assured by working with a variety of co-sponsors (e.g., Student Activities, law school, History Department, business school) to boost attendance and to secure additional funds. A panel gathered at the 2007 Southern Political Science Association meeting to discuss our experiences with the implementation of this mandate.

The mandate is very general; as a consequence, there is a great variety of activity across our campuses. Consider the following examples of Constitution Day programming from 2005 and 2006:

- Samba-style parade with members of the faculty wearing articles and amendments on sandwich boards

- Professors dress up like Framers and interact with students on campus in character; professional actors hired (e.g., "Ben Franklin") to distribute copies of the Constitution in high traffic areas on campus; history students wear costumes from the 1780s and distribute copies of the Constitution
- Marathon readings of the Constitution; readers include local elected officials, faculty, alumni, and students; interpretive readings by students in the theater/drama department; readings take place at an event on campus or are broadcasted throughout the week on the campus radio station
- Voter registration drives
- "Constitution Day Games," e.g., amendment game, ratification game, scavenger hunt; Constitutional trivia contests
- Display information about the Constitution on posters and data screens around campus; "Constitution Facts" posted along campus walkways and on the television announcement system
- Town Hall forums on constitutional issues, including debates about whether the campus should recognize Constitution Day
- Members of campus community sign parchment replicas of the Constitution; sign a parchment scroll with quill pen to signify ratification; "I Signed the Constitution" events; sign a copy of the Constitution as a delegate from their home state
- High profile keynote speakers, major campus events
- Speakers who are local alumni, frequently attorneys and judges
- Lecture series on the Constitution (often integrated as a part of course requirements)
- Panel discussions about constitutional issues— either professors from campus and/or outside speakers—including panel discussions about the constitutionality of the Constitution Day mandate
- Show video produced by Justice Learning (see "Additional Resources") followed by moderated discussion; show Constitution-related videos on campus television stations

- Distribute pocket-sized Constitutions, bookmarks and other information about the Constitution at an event and/or at tables throughout campus
- Essay contests; editorial writing contests (publication in the student newspaper), questions such as "Has the Bush Administration exceeded constitutional limits on presidential power?"
- Campus participation in "Civics Quiz"; data to be part of study on Civic Learning Assessment
- Show movies such as "1776," or various documentary films, followed by discussion
- "Freedom Stone" where students can speak about constitutional issues
- Brief constitutional speeches given by faculty and students performing as characters such as Senator Robert Byrd (responsible for Constitution Day mandate), Chief Justices John Marshall and William Rehnquist, poet Ralph Waldo Emerson or abolitionist Frederick Douglass
- Produce video of students on campus discussing the Constitution
- Constitution exhibition at the library

While there are many creative ideas for fulfilling the Constitution Day mandate, often the real issues arise in the implementation of this programming. Our panelists pooled their experiences and considered some of factors that campuses must consider when planning their campus activities.

How did you encourage student attendance?
The panel discussed several different strategies for encouraging students to attend Constitution Day events. They included:

- Holding events in during class time. This ensures a captive audience of several dozen students.
- Offering extra credit for students who attend.
- For those institutions that require students to attend a specific number of "cultural" or "enrichment" events, havingthe event designated as such.
- Holding the event in a high-traffic area, such as the student union. This will work when the event is appropriate for such a venue, such as a public reading of the text of the Constitution.
- Have students dress up as Founders on Constitution Day to raise awareness of the event, and bring in other students.
- Inviting student organizations, such as student government, political party groups or honor societies, to co-sponsor.

Is there Support for Constitution Day on Your Campus?
The level of support for Constitution Day varied at each of the six campuses represented by the panel members. The panel examined notions of traditional resource support such as funding, commitment of non-monetary institutional resources, departmental or administrative leadership as well as support from the community served by the campus. Also, because the panelists came from a variety of public institutions—including two-year/community colleges, comprehensive state universities, and research-focused universities—there were tremendous differences in two key dimensions of support outside the traditional considerations of resources: depth of institutional support and the locus of support.

The individual institutions determine the depth of support, not campus size or type of school. Del Mar College, a community college in Corpus Christi, Texas, made Constitution Day an entire campus event that included members of the local community. This approach required a tremendous amount of financial and administrative commitment to produce the event and record it for broadcast on local TV and the web. This depth of commitment is rare among institutions and creates an event that combines the Constitution Day mandate with community civic education. The other institutions did not enjoy such extraordinary support. They used guest speakers, ranging from a chief justice of the state supreme court to a famous political scientist to a local civil rights attorney with a national reputation.

Within each campus, the locus of support varied. Of course, all campuses had primary support from the Political Science (or in the case of two-year schools, Social Science) Department. In some instances, the institution provided support from administrative funds. In one case, support came from the library. In order to keep Political/Social Science Departments from being permanently responsible for the Constitution Day, the panel concluded that sharing responsibility with other departments is the key to future compliance. Bridges to colleagues in history, philosophy, and law will create a broader base for support. As a discipline, Political Science recognizes the value of interdisciplinary connections in scholarship. We should move outside our field to encourage other departments to creatively share the Constitution Day mandate.

Who has long-term responsibility for planning the annual events?
Reports about who assumes responsibility for the organization of Constitution Day events were mixed

among the group. In several cases, either the Political Science Department or a department including Political Science (Social Science) assumed responsibility for organizing the event. In other cases the campus library or Student Life assumed the organizational responsibility for the events. For those in academic departments, the organizing of Constitution Day events was an addition to regular duties, no compensation or release time was provided. The logical approach would be the creation of a Constitution Day committee that would work during the spring semester to plan the events. Events must be planned during the spring semester because it is difficult to arrange committee meetings during the summer.

How are Constitution Day events funded?

The question of funding was handled with great variation among the colleges and universities. In some cases, there was no funding provided for events and all activities were handled by professors and community volunteers. In other cases, department, library, or friends of the library funds were used. The funding issue illustrates a problem with the Constitution Day mandate. It is a perfect illustration of the unfunded mandate that Congress is so good at creating. Also, members of the group reported that having the funding to bring a guest speaker to campus does not guarantee a successful event if the speaker is not a good match for the audience. So, funding can improve the event, but the careful selection of speaker and activity is key to success. Unless there is a group on campus like the Friends of the Library that were happy to organize the event and had funds to do it, funding Constitution Day events will be a problem for most schools.

Is the Constitution Day mandate a good thing?

There were many questions about the wisdom of this mandate. Like most political scientists, the members of the roundtable were generally inclined to think students and the general public would benefit from greater political knowledge. This would certainly include knowledge of the Constitution. The panelists expressed concern, however, that a legal mandate to higher education to provide Constitutional instruction was a violation of academic freedom. There was fear the Constitution Day mandate would establish a precedent for other mandates and infringements upon academic freedom.

Other Federal laws actually prohibit curricula mandates. The Constitution Day provision evaded those prohibitions because of the manner in which it was passed. The language, carefully crafted not to sound like a curriculum

mandate, was inserted into an appropriations bill in 2004 by Sen. Robert C. Byrd (D-WV) and passed without much notice at the time. The law and the U.S. Department of Education regulations that implement it are ambiguous as to what is required of schools (the law applies to all educational institutions that receive federal funding.) The law is also an unfunded mandate and lacks an enforcement mechanism.

Some institutions have been creative in finding venues and resources for Constitution Day activities. Nonetheless, not many of the compliance activities could be described as high profile within their respective institutions. There was speculation that the very method of enactment of the law—a vague, unfunded rider snuck in at the last minute by a veteran legislator—undercuts the stated purpose of the law of bringing more attention to the Constitution. Many institutions have responded to the law similar to the manner in which it was passed. Members of the roundtable speculated that Constitution Day activities would fade over time without resources or enforcement.

Conclusion

Regardless of what they thought about the Constitution Day mandate, participants in the roundtable, all of whom were involved in implementing the requirement, used the opportunity creatively to encourage campus-wide (and some times community-wide) discussion of Constitutional issues. Through the programs at each institution, significant numbers of members of the campus community and the general public were exposed to lessons about the Constitution that they otherwise would not have been. Political science students who might otherwise only have received more conventional classroom lessons in the Constitution participated in a much more engaging, and one would expect more memorable, range of educational experiences. Some institutions and departments received publicity for their efforts. Despite the extra work and the uncertainties about timing, funding and requirements, the roundtable participants concluded Constitution Day can be an opportunity for Political Science departments to encourage public discussion of issues of significance for citizenship and democracy. **PSE**

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Notice of Implementation of Constitution Day and Citizenship Day on September 17th of Each Year
Read the notice from the Office of Innovation and

Improvement, Department of Education in the Federal Register: May 24, 2005 (Volume 70, Number 99): http://www.ed.gov/legislation/FedRegister/other/2005-2/052405b.html

US Department of Education
http://www.ed.gov/policy/fund/guid/constitutionday06.html

The National Archives
http://www.archives.gov/national-archives-experience/charters/constitution.html
http://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/constitution-day/
http://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/constitution-workshop/index.html

The Library of Congress
http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/collections/continental/
http://thomas.loc.gov/teachers/constitution.html
http://www.loc.gov/rr/law/constitution-day.html
http://www.loc.gov/rr/program/bib/ourdocs/Constitution.html

National Constitution Center
http://www.constitutioncenter.org/constitutionday/display/MainS/Home

The Our Documents Initiative (cooperative effort among National History Day, the National Archives, and USA Freedom Corps)
http://www.ourdocuments.gov/

FREE (Federal Resources for Excellence in Education)
http://www.free.ed.gov/subjects.cfm?subject_id=19
http://free.ed.gov/resource.cfm?resource_id=1792

U.S. Courts
http://www.uscourts.gov/outreach/resources/constitutionday.html
Note: This site also has an interactive game, "Double Jeopardy," that is a great icebreaker for public law classes (with categories on the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, the judiciary, etc.): http://www.uscourts.gov/outreach/DJ/index.htm

American Political Science Association, "Resources for Teaching the Constitution"
http://www.apsanet.org/section_614.cfm

Justice Learning
http://www.justicelearning.org/
http://www.justicelearning.org/constitutionday/Classroom.asp#
2006 DVD: "A Conversation on the Constitution: Judicial Independence" (featuring high school students talking with Justices Kennedy, Breyer, and O'Connor)
2005 DVD: Conversation on the Constitution with Justices Breyer and O'Connor

Congressional Quarterly Press
http://www.cqpress.com/incontext/

C-SPAN in the Classroom
http://www.c-spanclassroom.org/VideoDetail.aspx?category=C
This year C-Span aired an 18 minute documentary on the US Constitution that featured a presentation by Chief Justice Roberts).

The New York Times
http://www.nytimes.com/ref/college/collegespecial2/coll-constitutionday.html

Center for Civic Education
http://www.civiced.org/byrd2006/

FindLaw
http://public.findlaw.com/constitution-day/

See also:
Anne K. Walters, "Colleges Scramble to Plan Events to Comply with Federal Mandate for Constitution Day," *The Chronicle of Higher Education,* 2 September 2005, p. 34.

Constitutional Engineers: Using Problem Based Learning in Comparative Politics

John Ishiyama • Truman State University • jishiyam@truman.edu

"Active learning" is a buzzword in higher education. There is good reason to believe that it promotes student learning better than "passive" approaches (Shellman and Turan, 2006). Active learning leads to deeper learning of abstract concepts. Brock and Cameron (1999) argue that it is necessary for students to apply their "book knowledge" to real world situations in order to better understand abstract concepts. Smith and Boyer (1996, 690) contend that active learning approaches such as simulations "recreate complex, dynamic political processes in the classroom, allowing students to examine the motivations, behavioral constraints, resources and interactions among institutional actors." As Stephen Shellman (2001, 827) notes, active learning approaches "permit students to experience institutional processes in ways that reading textbooks and listening to lectures may not allow."

More recently instructors of comparative politics have begun to embrace the concept of active learning. Indeed there have been several simulations designed for comparative government (such as model EU, Model OAS etc) and there has been at least one recent textbook that has embraced the idea of "doing" comparative politics (see for example Lim 2005). By and large, active learning has been equated with simulations. Although simulations are of great benefit, they often require a great deal of preparatory work and monitoring by the instructor (Austin, McDowell and Sacko, 2006; Shaw, 2006).

Another active learning approach that has less following in political science is the Problem Based Learning (PBL) approach. PBL is an instructional method that challenges students to "learn to learn," by working cooperatively in groups to seek solutions to real world problems. These problems are used to engage students' curiosity and initiate learning the subject matter. PBL prepares students to think critically and analytically, and to find and use appropriate resources (Duch et al 2001; Burch 2000). In this essay, I illustrate how I use a variation of PBL in my Principles of Comparative Politics course (POL 315).

Restructuring My Comparative Politics Course

The way I currently structure my comparative politics course is very different from the past. Originally, the course was like any other lecture-based course. It focused on (among other things) the factors that impact upon the development of democracy (such as the level of economic development, ethnic and religious heterogeneity, constitutional designs etc). The first half of the course was spent on illustrating the basic principles of comparative politics, focusing on "grand theories," like systems theory and structural functionalism, as well as modernization theory, neo-Marxist dependency approaches, and the "new statism." In addition, I covered political culture, new institutional approaches, political economy and the like. In the second half of the course I focused on cases, mainly western (Europe and Japan), with some reference to Russia and at least one "developing country."

However, something changed for me in the Fall of 2002. At that time the debate over the invasion of Iraq was in full swing. By the end of the term it appeared that the invasion was inevitable (and that Iraq would be quickly defeated) so that many analysts were discussing various political scenarios and the future of democracy in a Post-Saddam Iraq. What a wonderful "teachable" moment! Near the end of the term I posed a question to the class – if they were to design a constitution for Iraq, what would they suggest?

Much to my chagrin, the class discussion quickly degenerated into accusations of "treachery" lobbed at "liberals," or claims that the President was "lying" about Iraq. In other words, students relied solely on their preconceived political notions, arguing from the basis of ideology as opposed to evidence. The students were not connecting the class material to a real-world problem.

Frankly, I was at first shocked. After the class was over I reflected on what had happened. Perhaps it was because the emotionally charged nature of the topic prevented students from applying the principles they had learned to analyze the situation (which is tantamount to blaming the students for not learning). I considered in the future avoiding controversial topics—but what would that accomplish? The world is full of controversy and students are going to have to deal with these issues.

In short, I had failed to help the students learn. All of the material I "covered" merely went into an unused bucket, full of relatively useless facts. They simply did not see how what we covered in class was useful to them. They were quite good at regurgitating information for the exam, but

were not using the knowledge they acquired and apply it to real world problems. I needed to get students to take ownership of their own learning.

I made changes and adopted a PBL approach to organizing the course. The course is now focused on a single problem—how to build democracy in countries that are not currently democratic. During the first part of the term I not only introduce students to theories of democracy, but also identify the variables in the literature most cited as impacting upon democratic development (economic, social, cultural, institutional, etc). The course involves students working together in groups to design a constitution that would help build democracy given social, economic, cultural and political constraints. The purpose of this exercise is not to suggest that democracy is the only political system that is appropriate for all national contexts, but to help the student realize the challenges facing democratizing states.

The structure of the course is designed to facilitate the problem solving exercise by providing the students with the basic analytical tools to "solve" the problem. In the first two weeks of the course we deal with the evolution of comparative politics, beginning with systems theory and structural functionalism. This is followed by modernization theory, and critiques of modernization theory in the form of dependency theory and new statism. Subsequently, we lay out the features of the "context"—approaches regarding political culture and ethnic politics, civil society and the impact of previous regimes on democratization processes. Then we focus on the literature that relates to the design features of a constitution—the relative merits of presidentialism versus parliamentarism; federalism and unitary systems; the impact of the electoral system; and finally the judicial system. The remaining three weeks of the course are devoted to the panel/group presentations. Typically the course has 35-40 students.

In the real world, people collaborate to solve problems—collaboration is a skill. To promote active student collaboration, I have the students work together in this collaborative research exercise and formulate a "plan" regarding the democratization of one of five countries (each team is made up of around 7 people). We then form groups in which students are asked to imagine they were "testifying" as experts on constitutional design. Students research the topic and formulate proposals regarding the structure of the executive branch, the electoral system, federalism, the legislature and the courts which they believe would be most appropriate for their country. These

constitutional designs are presented to the rest of the class during five class sessions. Since 2003, I have varied the exercise a bit every year. In 2003 the course focused on Iraq; now I randomly select the five countries by drawing names of non-democratic states out of a hat on the first day of class.

Evaluation

Judging from the evaluations and student comments, as well as from their final reports, this redesigned course was far more successful in getting students to apply principles they learned in class to the real world when compared with the past. In terms of student evaluations of the course, Figure 1 reports changes in student evaluations from 2000-2005 in response to three questions (these questions were derived from the standard evaluation form that I have used for the past decade).

 • How would you rate the instructor's style in presenting the course material?
 • How would you rate the organization of the course?
 • How would you rate this course on an overall scale?

Figure 1: Student Evaluations of POL 315, 2000-2005
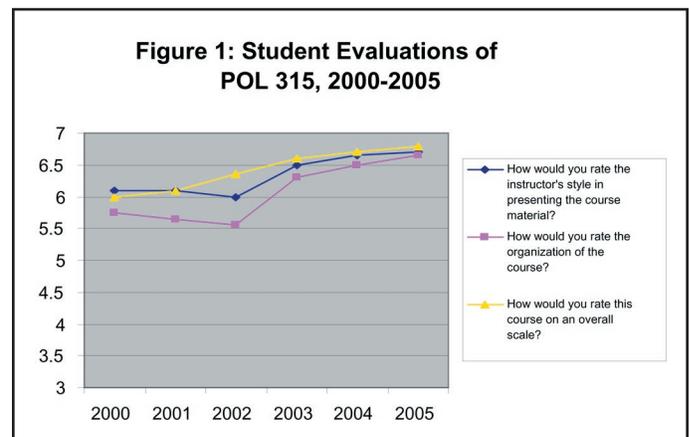
In Figure 1, there was slight increase across all three questions following 2002 (or when I began using a PBL approach in my course). This might suggest that students view the overall organization of the course more positively than before the implementation of the PBL approach. Further, there were improved scores in student estimations of the instructor's presentation of the material.

More telling are the comments that were offered by the students. Interestingly, prior to 2003, only about 40-45% of the students offered comments in the open-ended section of the evaluation. Since 2003, typically over 80% of the students offered comments on the course. Students were more motivated to comment on the course, and this may have reflected their greater sense of involvement.

The types of comments offered are also telling. Prior to 2003, the typical comment was generally quite positive, but very short. Often students would say things like "this was a great course" "or the instructor was enthusiastic"—usually quite short without much in the way of suggestion for improvement. After 2003, the comments were much longer, and often included suggestions for improving the project, such as "better integrating all assignments including the examinations with the group project" or "allowing students to select countries they are interested in" (I generally randomly assign students to groups, so students will be compelled to work with someone they may not know, and on a country that is not necessarily in their area of expertise).

Perhaps most interesting about the student comments is that they often communicate frustration in not being able to come up with the "perfect" constitution. Students come away from the assignment now quite sensitized to the difficulties involved in designing a constitution. They realize that constitutions designed in places like Iraq or Liberia are often imperfect designs implemented for the sake of political expediency. This for many students is quite a revelation.

In addition, what I have observed over the past three years is that the students are much more engaged in the material than before. Of particular interest to me is how the students grilled each other following the group presentations. The presenting students soon became aware that they would have to defend their group's position in the face of withering criticism from their peers. The level of familiarity with the assigned readings and the quality of class discussion (and debate) increased dramatically.

Conclusion

In sum, the adoption of a PBL based approach in my comparative politics class has worked very well in getting students to apply "book learning" to "solving" real world problems in a collaborative way. There are at least four advantages to using the PBL approach. Like other active learning approaches (such as simulations) this approach enables students to retain more information and give students a "deeper level of insight into the political process," as compared to traditional note taking and listening exercises (Smith and Boyer 1996). Second, this approach provides a break for ordinary lectures and it allows students to apply their knowledge from lecture to solving real problems. Third, it promotes collaborative work (which is not always present in simulations) that better mirrors circumstances in the "real world." Fourth,

it has helped increase interest in comparative politics among our majors. My course has been substantially over-subscribed for the past three years. Overall, changes that I have made in my course incorporating more PBL aspects have provided an enjoyable and stimulating environment for the students. **PSE**

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A version of this paper was presented at the Annual Meeting of the APSA Philadelphia Marriott, Philadelphia, PA, 31 August- 3 September 2006.

Shaping Private Spiritedness? Lessons About Citizenship from Service Learning and the Fifth Grade

Lanethea Mathews-Gardner • Muhlenberg College • matthews@muhlenberg.edu

This essay explores several important pedagogical lessons that emerged from a multiple-semester service learning partnership between students in introductory American National Government classes at Muhlenberg College and fifth graders at Jefferson Elementary School in Allentown, Pennsylvania. The partnership was loosely based on *We the People: Project Citizen*, a curriculum funded by the U.S. Congress and conducted by the National Conference of State Legislatures. This curriculum is designed to promote competent and responsible participation in local and state government, to create political efficacy among young Americans, and to build support for democratic values.[1] The students who participated in the Muhlenberg-Jefferson partnership only loosely applied the *Project Citizen* curriculum; their charge was to identify concerns and issues facing their communities, neighborhoods, and schools and to take some kind of public action to address them. For example, they could write elected officials, lobby the state legislature, or conduct public awareness campaigns in local schools and communities. As the professor overseeing the service-learning project, I was deliberate in the design and chose a project that, I believed, would clearly communicate a participatory model of citizenship.

Sure enough, the Muhlenberg College-Jefferson Elementary School service learning partnership *did* result in participation, both among my college students and the Jefferson fifth graders. Students wrote letters, designed posters, and delivered presentations on local issues and programs, all of which called for change and improvement. But, frequently the participation this project generated was decidedly *not* public. Rather than seeking change from government and public policy (what I consider in this context to constitute "the public"), many students involved in this project focused on corporations, businesses, and the private sector as agents of change.

I learned several lessons from this experience about the ways in which many young people—college-aged and younger—conceptualize their roles as citizens in relation to the public and private (or-nonpublic) realms. I also became more reflective about my role as a political science educator in negotiating student perceptions about the propensity for government and public policy *vis a vis* corporations and businesses in the private sector to effectively address social and economic issues.

Lessons from Research the Discipline

My aim was to create a service learning experience that would help students learn about politics and government. I sought to compel them to fulfill their responsibilities as citizens who have obligations to one another and to a shared vision of the public good. Like other political scientists embarking on service learning projects, I set out determined not to let service learning become a substitute for politics. The discipline of Political Science stands in tension with service-learning initiatives. Service learning is generally regarded as a good method for improving civic awareness, knowledge about democracy, and students' notions of civic responsibility, but empirical evidence regarding these claims remains mixed. Indeed, much empirical evidence suggests that service learning may not have a meaningful impact on the ways in which students see themselves as citizens, nor does it have a big impact on how students view government. Perhaps more significantly, service learning is frequently practiced as an individualized alternative to collective mobilization in politics. This is troubling to political scientists for two primary reasons. First, service learning might discourage citizens from looking to public officials and government institutions for change and reform. In this sense, critics suggest that the service learning movement within higher education carries with it a particular ideological bent, i.e. a conservative conception of what "good citizenship" entails. This conception of citizenship is individualized rather than participatory and emphasizes the personal responsibility and character of individuals, rather than active participation and common understandings among groups of citizens. Related to this, political scientists fear that service-learning projects compel students to avoid "politics" in favor of apolitical volunteer activities. By eschewing electoral and "political" engagement, service-learning projects may become estranged from the very purposes of civic education.[2]

Thus, I designed a service-learning project that sought to compel students to "do politics" and that sought to impress on participants the value of participating in the public—and political—realm. In terms of political learning, it was my hope participants would learn how to express political demands; how to mobilize one another toward

shared goals; how to participate in the political process, where, and through which parts of the government; how to negotiate obstacles and political opposition; and how to evaluate public policies and contemporary political issues.

I was also hopeful that this service-learning project would oblige students to address questions of social justice and power. Muhlenberg College is a small, private liberal arts institution located in the outskirts of Allentown, PA. The student body is affluent, overwhelmingly white (only 8% of 2200 students are nonwhite), and drawn primarily from upper class neighborhoods in New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania. Jefferson Elementary School, in contrast, is a public school in the City of Allentown in a community that is overwhelmingly Latino and African American and in which approximately 70% of school-age children are eligible for the free lunch program.

Project Citizen in Practice

Working in small groups of two to four, fifth grade students participating in the Muhlenberg-Jefferson partnership identified the projects and issues that they wanted to address with their college-partners. They identified a range of issues ranging from school safety issues (such as children playing with lighters in school, bullying and playground violence, and street crossing concerns) to insufficient school resources (inadequate library and playground facilities) to environmental neighborhood issues (poorly maintained playgrounds, insufficient trash and recycling services, pollution and littering) to economic inequality (unaffordable gas prices, lack of transportation, inability to participate in extracurricular activities).

After the Jefferson students identified issues that they wanted to address, Muhlenberg students led them through a series of brainstorming activities to put together plans of action. They discussed in small groups how they could collectively work to "fix" them. Table 1 (see page 11) lists a sample of the problems and "solutions" thus identified. I have grouped their "solutions" into three categories that I am calling "public-spirited," that is, solutions that directly look to public officials, government, and public policy for change; "mixed public-private-spirited," those solutions that appealed to a combination of public and private or semi-private solutions, such as private donations, changes in individual behavior, and/or appeals to companies and business; and "private spirited solutions," or solutions located solely within the private sector of business.

In this particular service-learning project, it was important to me that the identification of problems and solutions

was an organic process for both Muhlenberg and Jefferson students. I deliberately tried not to influence the direction that the students headed in addressing the problems that they had identified as most important to them. I did not accompany my students during their weekly trips to Jefferson Elementary School; my only interaction with the project while it was in-process was reading and responding to my students' journals and troubleshooting problems (transportation issues, negotiating behavioral problems, providing snacks for the fifth graders, etc.).

Pedagogical Lessons Learned: Public- versus Private-Spiritedness

It was not surprising to me that Jefferson students focused on very local issues. Not only was the list of "problems" constructed by students who were approximately 10 years old, but local issues affect citizens' lives on a daily basis. These issues may have the greatest impact on public perceptions and predispositions about government and their role within it. I was surprised, however, that the Muhlenberg students did not adopt a more deliberate posture toward government and policy in seeking ways to address the problems identified by the fifth-graders.

Thus, the lesson I learned as a political science educator. Government is not obvious to our students, even in political science courses or in politically-oriented (or at least policy-oriented) community learning environments. Political scientists are generally agreed that government has receded from the lives of ordinary citizens over the last 4 or 5 decades. This service learning experience gave me a more complex sense of how young Americans conceptualize public problems and the relationship between the public and private sector in seeking solutions to those problems. Why did my students seek corporate donations to compensate for insufficient resources, rather than contacting elected officials or government leaders? I cannot say for sure, but my hunch is that my students pursued action that they believed would most likely lead to meaningful change. Perhaps they also appealed more to mixed public/private-spirited and private-spirited solutions because they feel more effectual in these realms compared to the political process.

I learned a lot about my own pedagogical approach to this kind of service learning partnership—it is clear, for example, that I need to be more directly engaged in the project to ensure that students are focusing on government and policy. I also think there are some lessons to be gleaned here about service learning more broadly. For example, my experiences seem to confirm past research which suggests

PROBLEM	"SOLUTION"
Public Spirited	
Kids playing with lighters in school	Public Awareness Campaign; letters to mayoral candidates, both of whom responded, personally, in writing, encouraging public awareness.
Drug problems	Contacted local police and Allentown mayor
Smoking	Letters to PA elected leaders regarding General Assembly's failure to prohibit smoking legislation in public places
Mixed Public/Private Spirited	
Insufficient supply of computers in elementary school; malfunctioning computers	Letter to school principal and other school board officials; letter to computer companies
Insufficient after-school programs and activities	Letter to school principal
Littering	Public awareness campaign asking citizens to "do their part" to clean up neighborhoods
Private Spirited	
Insufficient playground and gym equipment	Letters to several gym equipment companies, one of which promptly responded by sending a large box of free jump ropes
Bullying and playground violence	Appeals to teachers in the school, several of whom volunteered to patrol playgrounds both before and after school
Insufficient library facilities	Letters to large book companies soliciting donations
Poor playground and sports field facilities	Letters to astroturf companies seeking donations

Table 1: Sample of Problems and Solutions Identified by Muhlenberg-Jefferson Students in the Project Citizen Service Learning Partnership

that the most effective service learning projects are those that include sustained, focused reflection connecting out-of-classroom service with in-classroom learning. On its own, service learning may simply reinforce, rather than change, students' perceptions about the relative responsibility government and citizens—and the private sector—share in addressing our communities' most pressing social issues. **PSE**

ENDNOTES
[1] More information is available at: http://www.civiced.org/index.php?page=introduction

[2] Mary A. Hepburn, Richard G. Niemi, and Chris Chapman, "Service Learning in College Political Science: Queries and Commentary," in *PS: Political Science and Politics* (September 2000):617-622; Susan Hunter and Richard A. Brisbin, Jr., "The Impact of Service Learning on Democratic and Civic Values," in *PS: Political Science and Politics* (September 2000): 623-634; Tobi Walker, "The Service/Politics Split: Rethinking Service to Teach Political Engagement," in *PS: Political Science and Politics* (September 2000): 647-649; Joel Westheimer, "Introduction—The Politics of Civic Education," in *PS: Political Science and Politics* (April 2004): 231-236; Joel Westheimer and Joseph Kahne, "Educating the 'Good' Citizen: Political Choices and Pedagogical Goals," in *PS: Political Science and Politics* (April 2004): 241-248.

Teachpol Editors Seek Feedback

As your new H-Teachpol editors, we want to explore how best this listserv can serve the needs of its members, balancing between being intrusive on the one hand, or irrelevant on the other. We'd like to know your thoughts on what you expect from this listserv, and any ideas you might have to improve its usefulness, make it more interesting, or become a better tool for discussions on teaching and learning in the field of political science. Feel free to share these ideas with the entire list, or you can write us privately at scotterb@maine.edu and D.P.Dolowitz@liverpool.ac.uk We look forward to hearing your ideas and working to make this listserv as interesting and useful as possible.

Working Group on Political Science Education at APSA

Greg Domin of Mercer University is once again spearheading our section's working group for the APSA conference. Please contact Greg at DOMIN_GP@Mercer.edu if you have any questions.

This group will attend panels and poster sessions related to teaching and learning in political science and identify any other interests they may have in the field. At our first meeting, participants will identify a list of panels and posters they would like to attend. Such topics may include, but are not limited to, teaching with technology, teaching research methods, assessment and learning outcomes, incorporating diversity in the classroom, service learning and community involvement, and using simulations and role playing in the classroom. The working group sessions will be used to identify potential fields of research as well as exchanging ideas and information on the topic.

Getting a Job at a Teaching Institution—and Succeeding!

This APSA short course will explore the interview and pre-tenure career experience at a diverse range of teaching institutions, providing participants with a chance to seek feedback about associated opportunities and challenges. We look forward to strong and interesting conversations between the faculty panel and all participants. There will also be an opportunity to review and strengthen *curriculum vitae* and cover letters, if participants wish. Please come! All questions and insights will be welcomed.

The short course will be hosted on Wednesday, August 29, 1-5 pm, at one of the conference hotels. For further location details, see the preliminary program at the APSA web site. If you have questions, or would like to submit materials for review, please contact MaryAnne Borrelli (mabor@conncoll.edu) in advance.

Call for Nominations: McGraw-Hill Award for Scholarship and Teaching on Civic Engagement in Political Science

McGraw-Hill is proud to announce the second annual Award for Scholarship and Teaching on Civic Engagement in Political Science. The award recognizes political scientists who advance civic engagement through the study of engagement and participation. The award seeks to honor a wide range of unique and new approaches to the scholarship and teaching of civic engagement, but in particular scholars who raise political awareness, involvement, and participation of undergraduate students. Nominations can be made by anyone, although self-nominations will not be accepted. Award winners will be chosen by a committee appointed by the Chair of the Political Science Education section of the American Political Science Association on behalf of McGraw-Hill. The award carries a small cash stipend and the winner will be announced at the annual Awards Reception at the American Political Science Association Annual Meeting.

2007 Selection Committee:
- Quentin Kidd, Christopher Newport University—Chair
- Rick Battistoni, Providence College
- Bruce Caswell, Rowan University
- Brigid Harrison, Montclair State University
- Chip Hauss, "Search for Common Ground"
- Monica Eckman, McGraw-Hill Publishing
- Alison Millet McCartney, Towson State University
- J. Cherie Strachan, Central Michigan University

Send nominations with supporting documentation to:

Quentin Kidd
Department of Government
Christopher Newport University
1 University Place/Ratcliffe Hall 203
Newport News, VA 23606
qkidd@cnu.edu

Nomination deadline is May 31, 2007

Call for Papers

Academic Exchange Quarterly, a peer-reviewed print journal devoted to educational research and development, has recently added consideration of articles dealing with the pedagogy of political science. The Winter 2006 issue of the journal included articles by Kerstin Hamann, Philip H. Pollock, and Bruce M. Wilson, Clyde Brown and David M. Paul, and many others. The table of contents and a sample article may be viewed at http://www.rapidintellect.com/AEQweb/win2006.htm. A call for papers for the next special issue of Academic Exchange Quarterly appears below.

Academic Exchange Quarterly is issuing a call for papers on the topic of Teaching Political Science, for publication in a special section in the Winter 2007 issue. We welcome submissions that span a broad scope of issues in political science education, including teaching techniques, new simulations and active learning exercises, experimental studies, distance learning, pedagogical inquiries, assessment, and synthetic essays. In short, both practical and theoretical pedagogical articles in all subfields of political science are invited for submission. The submission deadline is August 31, 2007. The submission procedures may be viewed at: http://rapidintellect.com/AEQweb/rufen1.htm or at: http://www.rapidintellect.com/AEQweb/5politic.htm. The Political Science Feature Editor is David L. Weiden, Department of Politics and Government, Illinois State University, dweiden@ilstu.edu.

Best Presentation Award

The Best Presentation Award is given for the best presentation (be it in a paper, poster, or roundtable format) delivered in a session sponsored by the Political Science Education Section at the 2007 Annual Meeting. Nominations are due to Michelle D. Deardorff by **May 15, 2007**, Section Chair at michelle.d.deardorff@jsums.edu

Award Committee for 2007
Kerstin Hamann, *University of Central Florida*
Bruce M. Wilson, *University of Central Florida*
Phillip H. Pollock*, University of Central Florida*
David M. Rankin*, State University of New York, Fredonia*

CALL FOR ARTICLES

For upcoming issues of *The Political Science Educator* we are currently seeking the following features:

• Debates between members on pertinent topics

• "Lessons Learned"—a continuing column on how the teaching of participants in the Teaching and Learning Conferences has evolved as a result of the TLC (approximately 500-1000 words)

• Feature articles that are "think pieces" about teaching and the discipline, discussions of teaching experiences and approaches, or preliminary research under development (@ 1000 words)

• "Teaching tips" and suggestions—including approaches and experiments that have been less successful

• "The New Professor"—essays designed to help graduate students and new faculty who are navigating the job market and early years of careers at undergraduate institutions

• "Research and Resources: The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning"—a column including literature reviews on specific topics, research notes, examination of new research threads

• "Technology and the Professor"—a column examining current options available for the classroom and classroom management, including resources available on the web

Items for the "Notables" and "Announcements" sections.

The deadline for the next issue is July 15. If you are interested in submitting an article, essay, or announcement (or a suggestion for other items to be included in the newsletter), please contact:

Michelle D. Deardorff, Editor
The Political Science Educator
Jackson State University
michelle.d.deardorff@jsums.edu

Judithanne Scourfield McLauchlan was appointed to be Director of the Center for Civic Engagement at the **University of South Florida St. Petersburg**. For more information about the Center and its initiatives, see www.stpt.usf.edu/community.

Alison Millett McCartney, Director, International Studies program at **Towson University** was recently awarded tenure and promotion to Associate Professor.

Gregory Domin, Mercer College, was elected to a one-year term as a Councilor to the Social Science Division of the Council on Undergraduate Research (2007-2008) and nominated for the 2006-2007 Spencer B. King Award for Outstanding Teaching. Greg Domin and Jessica Lerer had their article "Jimmy Carter (1924-): Peanut Farmer Turned Human Rights Advocate," published in *Twentieth Century Shapers of Baptist Social Ethics*, edited by W. Loyd Allen and Larry McSwain, Mercer University Press, Summer 2007.

About Our Contributors

Nancy L. Bednar is Assistant Professor of Political Science at Del Mar College in Corpus Christi, Texas, where she is involved in online education and the Dual Credit program. Dual Credit gives high school students the opportunity to take college classes for both high school and college credit. She has also been involved with the planning for the Constitution Day events at Del Mar, and has participated in both the 2005 and 2006 panels.

Bruce E. Caswell is Associate Professor at Rowan University where he specializes in elections and political participation, urban and state politics, and American political thought. Prior to coming to Rowan in 1989, he taught at Temple University, Rutgers University, and the University of Pennsylvania. He has also held positions as Research Director, Institute for the Study of Civic Values, a nonprofit education and research foundation, and as urban planner, policy analyst, and intergovernmental relations specialist with the Office of the Secretary, U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.

Michelle D. Deardorff is Associate Professor of Political Science at Jackson State University in Jackson, Mississippi and Founding Faculty Member of the Fannie Lou Hamer National Institute on Citizenship and Democracy, a coalition of academics who promote positive social change through citizenship education. She has helped organize Constitution Day events on her campus and has served as a speaker for the event on other campuses.

John Ishiyama is Professor of Political Science and Director of the Ronald E. McNair Program at Truman State University. He was the 2004 CASE/Carnegie Foundation Professor of the Year from Missouri, a 2003 National Carnegie Scholar, and winner of the Missouri Governor's Award for Teaching Excellence in 2003. He is currently the Editor in Chief of the Journal of Political Science Education.

Karen M. Kedrowski is Professor and Chair of Political Science at Winthrop University in Rock Hill, South Carolina. She specializes in American Politics, and is author or co-author of Media Entrepreneurs and the Media Enterprise in the US Congress *(1996, Hampton Press)*, Cancer Activism: Gender, Media and Public Policy *(2007 University of Illinois Press) and* Breastfeeding Rights in the United States *(forthcoming, Praeger Publishers.)*

Lanethea Mathews-Gardner is Assistant Professor Political Science at Muhlenberg College in Allentown, Pennsylvania. She teaches courses in American politics, including courses on Congress, the Presidency, Civic Engagement, and Gender & Politics. Her research focuses on gender and American political development, in particular on the ways women's civic and political engagement has changed as a result of political and institutional changes over the second half of the 20th century.

Judithanne Scourfield McLauchlan is an Assistant Professor of Political Science, Pre-Law Advisor, and Director of the Center for Civic Engagement at the University of South Florida St. Petersburg, where she teaches courses in American Government and Public Law. Her latest book, Congressional Participation as Amicus Curiae before the U.S. Supreme Court, explores how Members of Congress attempt to influence Supreme Court decision-making in specific cases. McLauchlan has organized the Constitution Day activities for her campus since the mandate went into effect in 2005.

Adam Stone is an Associate Professor of Political Science at Georgia Perimeter College, a multi-campus, two-year college serving much of the Atlanta area. He has enjoyed the challenge of coordinating Constitution Day at two of the College's campuses. His current research examines the problems of supermajorities. Recently, he served as President of the Georgia Political Science Association. **PSE**