Creating Civic Leaders: Educating for Citizenship and Citizenship for Educators

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Abstract

This paper presents a case for creating teacher education programs that prepare teachers for their dual role as citizenship educator and civic leaders. To begin post-secondary institutions are cast as sites of citizenship with an obligation to promote civic learning, making the case for reforms in teacher education that meet the principles of active engagement and civic leadership. Contemporary scholarship in the fields of citizenship education, leadership, and teacher education reform is reviewed arguing for a model of pre-service education that is socio-culturally informed, linking authentic forms of civic knowledge production as critical to teaching, civic learning and leadership. Civic service learning is highlighted as a pedagogy that will build situated knowledge, thus shaping teachers’ civic identities. The second part of the paper focuses on the University of Victoria’s teacher education program, highlighting how its current practices and proposed teacher education reforms will enrich the opportunity for socially just, ethical teacher leadership in communities at the local and global level.

Introduction

Citizenship has always been an implicit goal of education. Ideologically, educational institutions — from grade schools to higher education institutions — place what it means to be a ‘good citizen’ at the very center of their purposes. As a field of inquiry, citizenship education has enjoyed a recent surge of interest1 with an emphasis on how educating for citizenship might provide a means through which to more inclusively engage one another as democratic agents.2

Interest in civic education is not confined to K–12 schooling. The Council of Ministers of Education, Canada places the goal of creating a “healthy, democratic, civil society” among its central goals for post secondary education.3 This is reminiscent of Winter, Wiseman and Muirhead’s recent observation that universities (and, by extension, other post-secondary institutions) should be considered ‘sites of citizenship’ where programming can address concerns with perceived civic deficits and political apathy.4 At the University of Victoria (UVic), British Columbia, our institution has a strategic vision that calls specific attention to the goal of increasing civic engagement among its faculty, students, and community: “As members of a diverse and dynamic learning community we challenge one another to become thoughtful, engaged citizens and leaders, prepared to contribute to the betterment of a rapidly changing global society.” More specifically, the Mission statement calls on faculty and staff to employ “our core strengths to benefit our external communities — locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally — and promoting civic engagement and global citizenship.”5 This special edition of the UFV Research Review is also evidence of how discourses about citizenship and citizenship...
education have become central matters of inquiry and scholarship in post-secondary institutions across Canada.

Yet there are many competing discourses on citizenship education. Beliefs and understandings of what it means to engage actively as citizens in a democratic society are matters of considerable debate. What do we mean by citizenship? Whose views of citizenship matters? What forms of active citizenship are most valued? These are some of the questions which frame this article’s discussion as we report on the ways in which UVic’s teacher education program is being revised to reflect consideration for civic leadership. These program amendments reflect our vision that teachers have a central role in an increasingly diverse society as civic leaders and social change agents and, in particular, an understanding that teacher education programs have a critical role to play in preparing novice teachers to become both citizenship educators and civic leaders within a democratic society.

This article begins by briefly situating our views of citizenship in contemporary scholarship and its implications for educators. This is followed by a discussion of recent citizenship and teacher education scholarship and how these related strands of research can be united in an effort to prepare civically inspired educational leaders for changing times. We argue that teacher preparation needs to be shaped through the lens of civically informed action; that is, our program and pedagogies need to be re-focused towards finding ways to engage novice teachers actively in situated experiences designed to enhance civic knowledge production. In conclusion we reference some of our education students’ global and local experiences as civic leaders and consider next steps.

### Cultural Models of Citizenship

Several contemporary scholars have recently argued for cultural citizenship as a concept that best fits the global, multicultural and cosmopolitan society of the post modern world. The term cultural citizenship is a useful characterization which informs the tension between the category of citizen — often understood as an exclusionary term, benefiting only those of the dominant social, economic and political class — and claims for social justice informed by the different experiences that ‘cultural others’ live. It takes into account the perspective of those who do not enjoy the same rights and benefits that traditional definitions of citizenship assume are universal. Cultural citizenship also embraces the idea of multiple civic spaces not only those privileged in the public realm and practices of power as integral to the ways in which we perform or develop civic identities and discourses. Cultural citizenship then, evokes a discourse that is informed by both the notion of rights of inclusion and action or agency among civic subjects.

It is these ideas of inclusion and attention to an already existing differentiated citizenship that interest us as teacher educators. We see our novice candidates as ethically and critically informed potential civic leaders who can assist in challenging normative or oppressive discourses in schools, who can take on leadership roles in educationally inspired action in their communities, while also serving as facilitators of citizenship
learning among the youth with whom they work. We will return to the theme of leadership and its relationship to citizenship education shortly; however, situating our approach within contemporary citizenship education models is necessary first.

**Approaches to Citizenship Education**

Westheimer and Kahne present a useful heuristic for considering approaches to citizenship, arguing that citizenship education programs have three primary orientations: citizenship as personal responsibility; citizenship as a function of participatory engagement; and citizenship as critical analysis for seeking social justice.\(^8\) The model we are using fits within that of the justice oriented model. The teacher education program changes outlined in this article are exemplars of such a critical approach to unpacking social, political, cultural and economic conditions that affect students and their families in schools and communities: we see this approach as one based in *civic leadership*. Like Westheimer and Kahne, we favour this model over others due to its capacity for building a more democratic and inclusive society.

Arguing for a model of teacher preparation centered in civic action and teacher leadership in social and educational transformation draws upon a different set of values, beliefs, understandings and assumptions about teachers, teaching, and relationships with the community than those that have been traditionally emphasized in teacher education programs. A number of studies of pre-service teachers suggest that normative, instrumental beliefs about teaching, learning, and schooling are highly persistent, largely as a result of their own long pre-apprenticeship period in schools as students.\(^9\) Among these persistent beliefs are what Carrington and Robinson describe as “industrial-age assumptions about learning”; generally these can be characterized as ‘folk theories’ about how learning happens (through teacher-to-student transmission) and where learning happens (in schools rather than the world at large).\(^10\) Additionally, Paine has noted how teaching novices bring “an enthusiastic appreciation of personality factors and an under-developed sense of the role of . . .context.”\(^11\) Given more recent conceptualizations about learning as socioculturally situated, this lack of awareness of the contexts of teaching and learning becomes particularly problematic. Therefore any approaches to teacher education focused on a principle of active citizenship will require significant attention to how teacher education programs, including field-based and campus-based learning experiences, might alter existing novice teacher beliefs in ways that broaden an understanding of teachers’ roles and responsibilities in supporting children in multiple sites of learning.

**Educating for Citizenship/Leading for Change: A Dual Focus**

The dual focus of our intentions — to educate citizenship educators and construct active civic leaders — requires attention to two important strands of research: 1) what we know and understand about how teachers can support and develop civic learners; and 2) the field of teacher leadership. After a brief canvas of key approaches to citizenship education and teacher leadership that have been prominent over the past decade is a consideration of how the theoretical framework of knowledge production draws these two fields together and becomes a central design principle used in our civically inspired revisions to UVic’s teacher education program.
**Teaching ‘for’ citizenship.** Implicit in the design of all teacher education programs is the integral nature of methods-based classes so that novice teachers will become familiar with pedagogies and strategies that work in classrooms. Among citizenship educators one of the primary pedagogical means with which teacher-educators need to become familiar is how to promote and support critical thinking. By critical thinking, we are referring to a learning theory that involves two aspects: 1) a set of cognitive skills, intellectual standards, and traits of mind; and 2) the ability and intellectual commitment to use those structures to improve thinking and guide behaviour. Both of these aspects emphasize personal sense making using perspective taking, dialogue, and reflective components. While critical thinking is seen to have broad benefits to learning overall among citizenship educators, a key goal is how practices of critical thinking can be applied to processes of deliberate, reasoned argument, debate, and decision making. This capacity for critical and reasoned decision making is often characterized as a primary attribute of active adult citizens, so ‘teaching’ these skills to youth is posited as an important component of citizenship education. Indeed, as Glenn noted, “performing as critically thinking and speaking subjects in the classroom provides, for students, the basis for performing as citizen-critics outside it.” This idea of citizen-as-critic and the development of some form of critical consciousness are central pedagogical foundations that inform the work of many citizenship educators and scholars.

Some scholars extend the idea of critical consciousness into other forms of citizenship education: prominent among these is democratic multicultural education. This model emphasizes the ways to “improve race relations and to help all students acquire the knowledge, attitudes, and skills needed to participate in cross-cultural interactions and in personal, social, and civic action that will help make our nation more democratic and just.” Others argue that a globally focused civic curriculum—one that examines both hidden and explicit forms of globalization—can connect children’s and youth’s own experiences with those from around the world, creating globally informed identities committed to achieving socially just outcomes. These critical approaches to citizenship education emphasize teaching practices that reveal social, cultural, racial and economic biases in texts, discourses and master narratives; explore practices of Eurocentrism and hegemony in mainstream culture; and provide practice in deconstructing privilege and power.

However, emphasizing dialogue, critical thinking and deconstructing discourses can in some ways make citizenship essentially a discrete set of skills, personal attributes or abilities: the limitations of dialogue have been documented by several scholars, among them, Burbules, Boler, and Ellsworth. If our desire is to create teachers as civic leaders ready to engage in socially transformative civic practices, then the scope of our thinking has to move beyond the structured contexts of dialogue in a classroom and out into the world beyond formal schooling. We want to trouble or disrupt the preconceived notions about learning described earlier and believe engaging in the social and cultural world outside of school via alternative learning and field-based experiences offered as components of the teacher education program may be the means through which to accomplish this goal.
Missing pieces: Linking civic action, civic learning and civic identities. The missing component for developing culturally sensitive civic leaders, in our view, is the focus on civic action and its commensurate effect on the construction of civic identities. Civic activity is socially and culturally situated, and as we engage directly in civic spheres with other social actors, we are shaped by these experiences while engaging in actively producing civic identities. Discourses and dialogue about civic knowledge become resources that can be accessed in performing civic activity with other social agents. In other words, our activities shape or mediate our experiences. This is a socio-culturally informed model of sense making and learning, where learning is always a socially located and mediated process rather than one characterized by metaphors of self-construction.19 In this view of citizenship education the emphasis moves from internalized knowledge reproduction to socially situated knowledge production.

Becoming civic leaders. Socio-cultural approaches to citizenship education emphasize, as Giroux does, the relationship between power, knowledge, social practices and subject positions:

If students are going to learn how to take risks, to develop a healthy skepticism towards all master narratives, to recognize the power relations that offer them the opportunity to speak in particular ways, and be willing to critically confront their role as critical citizens who can animate a democratic culture, they need to see such behavior demonstrated in the social practices and subject positions that teachers live out and not merely propose.20

Important is the notion that teachers should live, not talk, their civic identities. By doing so, they model for learners the ways in which citizenship is not only understood, but practiced — it is the opportunity to engage actively in practices directing their attention to issues of civic identity and leadership that we are trying to infuse into our teacher education programs.

Earlier we drew upon the notion of cultural citizenship as the foundation of how we see and understand contemporary citizenship discourses and practices. A central feature of this type of citizenship is a commitment to achieve socially just outcomes in order to address educational, social and cultural inequities. This commitment to social justice — a cornerstone of cultural citizenship — is also a central element of civic leadership, the second principle which guides our approach to re-designing our teacher education program.

Learning to lead: Ethical practices. Storey and Beeman report that concern for social justice has become a top priority among educational leaders and scholars in educational leadership, and argue this paradigm is shifting the landscape of the field.21 Hence, teacher education institutions such as our own have placed a higher priority on providing courses in their programs to help teachers identify learning needs, consider alternative methodologies and instructional techniques, and acknowledge alternative epistemologies and ways of knowing, while also providing experiences in deconstructing bias in texts, policies, and practices.
However, in our view, there is a need to look beyond curricular and pedagogical ‘fixes’ and consider an ethically, socially informed view of educational change and our obligation, as teacher leaders, to address these gaps. This will mean developing a capacity among teachers to understand how taking actions and forming alliances with other like-minded educators, community groups, or citizens might provide the best approach to achieving more educationally just outcomes for students and learners.

While we believe that dialogue and classroom-based learning provide a useful foundation for engaging students in important debates about this role as ethically inspired and educationally informed leaders, we also believe that these efforts are not sufficient. And if, following Giroux we need to ‘live’ our social commitments, then there is a need to immerse pre-service teachers in an environment in which they can directly engage in practices as socially just teacher leaders.

In providing field-based experiences that encourage pre-service teachers to make sense of how action, leadership, power, agency and theory are linked, we believe that they will develop stronger civically focused teaching identities from which to draw on during their subsequent teaching experiences. This experientially-oriented focus provides an authentic space in which to develop a situated form of critical consciousness, an essential practice for civic engagement, knowledge production and leadership. This form of learning, we believe, accomplishes what Donahue described as the most powerful form of place based learning for teachers by making “explicit for new teachers the political context of schools.”

Likewise, it attempts to answer Westheimer and Kahne’s concern that a social justice orientation, in and of itself, is not sufficient in terms of altering student conceptions of their roles as citizens, leaders, or social justice advocates.

**From service learning to leadership for change.** Our proposed practicum placement in environments other than schools might be considered a form of service learning: service learning has long been a program option that post-secondary institutions have used as a means for promoting active citizenship among its undergraduate and graduate students. More prominent in the United States, nonetheless, it is enjoying some success in post-secondary institutions across Canada.

Battistoni differentiates, as we do here, between charitably and civically motivated models of service learning. Civically inspired models of service learning “emphasize[s] mutual responsibility and the interdependence of rights and responsibilities” but also political contestation. Following Gorman we are more interested in characterizing service as something that places an individual in a historically, politically, and socially situated context, exposing its contested and often controversial nature. Our goal is not to create a static or uniform version of civic responsibility, but rather to provide experiences that illustrate the often gritty, difficult, conflicted, and controversial nature of living, so as to unsettle or make problematic any simple views that service to others will resolve complex social problems. And, as noted earlier, our hope is that these community-based experiences will provide authentic opportunities to strengthen civic identities and ethical commitment, informed by the play of politics and power in everyday life. We want to accomplish, as Pompa noted, an experience that “involves depth, direction, hard work,
and a commitment to make change in the world.” In this way, we see civically oriented service learning as implicitly linked with becoming socially just leaders.

**Knowledge Production as a Model for Transformative Learning**

de Castell, Bryson & Jenson describe educational approaches such as civic service learning as a productive pedagogy: that is, an approach to learning which emphasizes knowledge production rather than the reproduction of existing knowledge. This is an important differentiation: To be productive, these authors argue, requires not only active engagement, but must also provide opportunities for contesting dominant norms or regimes of truth. This paradigm shapes the ways in which we approach citizenship education, simultaneously structuring the program to provide experiences in how to educate for citizenship but also providing civic education to our novice teachers.

With this paradigm applied to the question of civic knowledge production community-based field experiences can become sites of civic knowledge production, where teacher candidates engage with and make sense of the complex dynamics of social, cultural, and economic practices which shape the educational experiences of children and families in communities. Understanding the interrelatedness of school, home, and community is a primary goal that informs how learning is shaped through socio-cultural forces, while also creating opportunities for teachers to work as educational collaborators in non-school settings. In doing so, these same teacher candidates are given the opportunity to examine, re-inscribe or alter existing discourses and practices, simultaneously re-shaping their own teaching identities while engaging in activities focused on enhancing social inclusion and equity. By focusing on civic action — in partnership with communities — teachers become critical civic agents who engage collaboratively and productively in ways that break down barriers experienced by marginalized school populations, ultimately transforming and democratizing the practices of schooling.

This conceptual model of active civic and community-based engagement is one that will, we believe, provide the contexts for re-shaping teaching identities and beliefs so that civic engagement and practices of citizenship become central components of novice teachers’ pedagogy and practice. It has become a central design principle and a curricular lens through which we have revised our teacher education program.

**The Demand for Change in Teacher Education Programs**

Some parallel developments in educational reform among teacher education institutions in both Canada and the United States reflect some overlapping interests between the fields of citizenship and teacher education. Cochran-Smith documents a heavy emphasis on reforms that will meet the complexity of demands faced by contemporary education and teachers. There has also been a persistent finding that few proposed changes in teacher education programs have had the effect of substantially affecting new teachers’ practices. In response to these critiques, more recent teacher education reform initiatives have shifted their focus to how knowledge is produced among teacher candidates. Primary among the approaches advocated are an increased emphasis on university-school
partnerships, reflective and self-reflective practices, improved or lengthened field experiences, and improved theory-practice connections. Each approach is designed to disrupt the instrumental knowledge-as-transmission view by centering reform efforts in pedagogies and practices that encourage more active engagement of teacher candidates in understanding the relationship between curricular and pedagogical knowledge, learning as collaborative and socially located, and how these shape teacher and teaching identities.

These approaches also seek to address the consistent finding of educational researchers that pre-service teachers' beliefs and understandings about teaching appear resistant to change. This resistance has been addressed through constructivist teaching practices and models of collaborative learning communities that might enable a disruption of the discourses of schools where institutional learning is rejected in favour of existing teacher practice and craft knowledge.

At the same time, a different strand of research focused on how to make schools more effective places for learning among socio-culturally diverse and disadvantaged children and families has also been underway. Urban schools in particular face this challenge, argues Murrell: he presents a model of the community teacher, an approach to teacher education that considers not only preparation with how to deal with the culturally, linguistically and racially diverse student populations, but also how “to understand and develop successful practice within the complexity of urban schools and communities in an era in which racism and poverty still fuel educational inequality.” In this model, a focus on practice, particularly practices and ideologies that have enabled persistent structural inequalities in schools and the collaborative work with communities and parents that are foundational components for reducing and eliminating such inequalities, is seen as central to effecting positive social and educational change. Shirley similarly argues for an approach to urban education reform that results in transforming schools in response to the needs and desires of the community: partnerships that place schools, teachers, and community leaders as civic agents in action, collaboratively creating social, cultural and educational capital that benefits the community and its learners. This field of scholarship rejects an introspective or institutional view of schooling by arguing for a more situated and responsive community-based model, one that addresses more than the explicit curriculum goals or outcomes and includes attention to the implicit and hidden ways in which schools advantage some while disadvantaging others. These authors argue that schools and teachers are democratic tools that can produce social justice.

As the above discussion illustrates, there are common features between the educational reform efforts of teacher education scholars and our proposed program modifications that are based in a model of civically informed action and authentic forms of knowledge production. In particular, the emphasis on socially and culturally situated models of collaborative and place-based learning is consistent with the theory of productive knowledge production outlined earlier. It also answers the call for enabling the production of more civically and ethically informed teacher leaders. We believe our model of civic activity can answer both the need for program change while simultaneously engaging novice teachers in identity-constructing practices that enable the development of pedagogically and critically informed teachers in action.
Teacher Education Programs: Coherence and Design
We agree with Hoban that program coherence and design are essential features that teacher educators who wish to reform their educational programs must address. Hoban argues for a deeper integration of knowledge, practice, teacher identity development and sociocultural context, and teacher candidate learning. Socio-cultural approaches to learning and leadership can be used to provide authentic experiences to novice teachers that enable the shaping of civically inspired teaching identities through processes of situated knowledge production. The principles of civic leadership and active engagement were core design features of the UVic teacher education program reforms. The sections that follow provide some examples of how our program exemplifies coherence by showing the ways in which these principles are deeply integrated into our teacher education program through its attention to knowledge about learning, children, and teaching; practices and methods of instruction; socio-cultural complexity, including concerns for diversity, democracy, inclusion, and equity; and knowledge about how teaching identities are shaped through critical engagement with concepts of privilege, power, oppression and justice.

The University of Victoria’s Teacher Education Program
With more than 100 years of teacher education, UVic stands as one of the oldest but also most responsive teacher education programs, with regular review and amendment to accommodate advancements in the field. This most recent revision was driven by the scholarship outlined above, as well as by beliefs held by faculty and students about the need for program change and updating. Additionally, our approach was informed by the University’s mandate for community engagement and development: this reflects a growing interest in community-based research and the role the university can play in contributing to local and global citizenship and social justice.

However, as with most teacher education programs in the western world, the make-up of our student body is very homogenous — students’ present views and experiences largely located in a white, middle-class society where their position is one of privilege. Their notions of citizenship are framed around this positioning and are often unexamined individualistic, hierarchical, and patriarchal notions of the world. Their concerns for program change arise not so much from a concern for global issues of justice, equity, or ecological health, but more for an age-old desire to feel more ‘prepared’ for the complexity of a classroom, continually seeking effective ways to ‘manage,’ ‘plan,’ and to organize themselves and their students. Additionally, students traditionally attracted to the teaching profession have been successful themselves at ‘schooling’ and are reluctant to embrace discomfort and unease in this realm. As noted earlier, these beliefs are difficult to dislodge. These conflicting views and desires continue to cause tensions between university program participants and faculty who recognize the need for faculties of education to have a greater impact on social and environmental change and for graduates of education to recognize their civic leadership role in society.
Novice Teachers as Local and Global Civic Leaders

Although there are tensions for our students in relation to how they position themselves in schools, many opportunities exist for them to develop their skills and understandings as teachers as they progress through the program. Firstly, many of our students come to our programs with previous degrees and have considered deeply issues of social justice — class, race, gender, sexual orientation. Additionally, many of our students have traveled and worked in various parts of the world, including India, Japan, Thailand, South Africa, Central and South America. Often their work has included informal and formal teaching experiences. These experiences have profoundly affected the way they understand the world and their place in it, their responsibilities and obligations for others.

Scattered throughout the teacher education program at UVic, particularly in the elementary program, are various course-based opportunities to consider alternative perspectives in relation to social justice. In a series of courses available to students (for example, one entitled Community, Culture, and Environment), opportunities are provided for them to “explore the dynamic interaction among culture, community, and curricula toward understanding the implications this can pose for teaching and learning in a multicultural society.” Assignments in these courses encourage students to explore deeply their roles in society and their responsibility as educators to engage all children in active learning. For example, one course instructor asks all students to contemplate and then write their description of an “ideal citizen”, an activity that has an impact on them as they complete the program. Another course assignment requires students to complete a community-based project that is presented at the conclusion of the course. Another course focuses on teachers as leaders and examines ways that they provide leadership to their community, both in and out of school. Other courses provide opportunities to “identify community-related issues and/or situations and develop teaching/learning strategies that make a positive difference or contribution in response to these issues or situations.”

Community members, scholars, and elders are invited to take part in these courses, broadening the perspectives students bring to education. Raffi, a well-known children’s singer and child advocate, has participated in courses and presentations, sharing his vision and concept of “child honouring.” More recently, a series of courses focused on Aboriginal education have been offered to students, including pole carving, earth fibres, earth songs, Aboriginal history and Aboriginal ways of knowing. These course experiences enable a deep and embodied understanding of cultural impact on learning and teaching, involving elders, members of the Aboriginal community, students from the Education faculty and other faculties, both undergraduate and graduate students. These courses are integrally experiential, intertwining the processes of creating (a totem pole, a weaving, a song, a drum) and indigenous ways of knowing with conceptual understandings. Through these types of community-based assignments and activities, students are able to apply their newly developing understandings of the role that community plays in their students’ learning and the diversity of communities in which they will be working.

An internship opportunity to different communities in India has provided students in the Education programs with opportunities to better understand conceptions of citizenship
and community engagements from an international perspective. Students who have participated in this program not only develop a greater sensitivity to their role as citizens and their responsibility as community leaders but they also share their experiences with peers in courses and workshops upon their return.

The role these students play as leaders in the process of altering pre-existing teaching identities should not be underestimated. Providing leadership opportunities for these students helps illustrate our commitment to developing a deeper understanding that learning is a collaborative and situated process. As faculty, we are committed to modeling practices that recognize and value these experiences, building a community of learners in which students and faculty share the roles of teachers and learners. Other novice teachers then are apprenticed into this learning community by their frequent immersion in conversations, dialogues, readings, activities and assignments that require them to engage critically in explorations of their own educational and social beliefs. To this end, the initial focus of the teacher education program is shifting to develop a deeper understanding of learning and a more concentrated emphasis on the learners/students before they turn their attention to their own role as teachers/learners. Field-based experiences in non-school locations (i.e., community programs, adult learning centers, daycare facilities) provide students with opportunities to consider alternative sites for learning and to focus on the act of learning rather than on more formal aspects of teaching such as curriculum, methods, and management. Disrupting pervasive notions of learning as an activity that happens exclusively in schools enables, we believe, an opportunity for reconsidering the role of teacher and will provide spaces to rethink education with consideration to issues of culture, gender, and class.

Secondly, as previously mentioned, our program is increasingly providing students with course-based opportunities to explore learning from alternative perspectives, including Aboriginal pole-carving and earth fibres courses, community-based courses, and environmental experiences, all of which serve to enable our students to learn and re-learn alternative ways of knowing. As the teacher education program at UVic continues to develop, we are seeking ways to constantly interweave opportunities for students to take up leadership positions, to consider alternative perspectives, to understand their own perspectives, and to learn how to interact with and value the perspectives of complex and diverse groups of children. By providing students with program opportunities to consider teaching as an aspect of leadership, and then further as an aspect of civic leadership, we hope that they will incorporate all aspects of these notions into their own classroom and school experiences. Additionally, they can also think about teaching in alternative sites that they might not have previously considered.

Thirdly, our students are now more often being provided the opportunity to complete field-based (practicum) components of their teacher education programs in alternative settings, including international schools in first-world countries (Germany, Australia, New Zealand, Japan); third-world countries (India, China, Egypt); rural settings in British Columbia and Yukon (Haida Gwaii, Quesnel, Prince Rupert); alternative school settings (Montessori, Victoria School for Ideal Education, Christchurch Cathedral, Ecole Victor Brodeur); and other educational community settings (Institute for Achievement of
Human Potential, Philadelphia). In each instance, students gain a breadth of knowledge from these alternative locations. However, while undoubtedly students gain new understandings of education and the world, we question whether relocating field-experience learning is in and of itself enough to enable them to gain a strong appreciation for their responsibility to provide civic leadership for their future students. The program continues to evolve as alternative ways to broaden opportunities for student participation in different forms and locations of learning are sought and to provide further in-depth opportunities for critical discourse during and following these experiences. Implementation of an inquiry process, involving activating, expanding, deepening, enlivening, and extending the inquiry, provides program support to and understanding of students’ experiences and learning from alternative settings and exemplifies the integration of knowledge production pedagogies across the curriculum. It provides a reason to stretch the bounds of field-based experiences and consider many more ‘alternative’ settings, both locally and internationally.

As we consider further developments in our teacher education programs, we recognize the need to engage our students in thinking from a civic leadership perspective, attending to issues of social justice in all of their field-based and campus-based experiences and interconnecting the two. From an inquiry-based or knowledge production stance, we believe that by providing provocative experiences that prod and disturb normative understandings of learning and teaching, we can draw students to a recognition of their responsibility as educators — and in so doing, remind those of us involved in developing and teaching in the program of our own responsibility.

**Civic Service Learning at UVic: First steps**

The experiences of our students make clear to us the incredible value of civic service learning. However, not all of our students presently participate in such placement options. Our next step is to develop a way of providing all students with a community-based placement; we are in the early stages of implementing this program component. At present we are engaged in a mapping project designed to identify the many places within the greater Victoria area (and potentially others around the globe) that will offer our students the kind of authentic experiences described in this article. When this is accomplished, we will continue the process of amending course requirements that will carefully link pedagogy, practice, critical inquiry and leadership. So, for example, drawing upon the action research focus of some existing courses, we could consider how pre-service teachers might work with a local gay/lesbian/bi-sexual/transgendered youth organization, by collaboratively exploring barriers in schools to inclusion of GLBT youth. Other pre-service teachers might investigate how schools could support a community’s goal to enhance the availability of locally grown produce. Our goal is to broaden our students’ conceptions of what it means to educate in a community, to become ethically informed civic leaders, and to engage the diverse interests and needs in our increasingly diverse communities.

We have been very encouraged by the anecdotal evidence from pre-service teachers about the value of civic service learning and its potential in addressing the gaps that have been identified by educational researchers, particularly in the potential for developing
stronger civic identities and roles of leadership. However, such evidence needs to be more formally and methodically gathered so such changes in beliefs, understandings and practices among pre-service and newly hired teacher educators can be documented. This will involve a research agenda that includes ways to identify teacher beliefs and understandings before entering our education program and then assessing these again following their service experiences. It may also extend into more longitudinal research among those who go on into their own classrooms. Such research will, we hope, provide solid evidence of our initial observations. Finally, we are also committed to involving our education students in the design and implementation of this research agenda, modeling what we believe to be the most powerful form of learning: knowledge production.

**Resisting Change: Field-based Obstacles to Change**

Of course, rearticulating the work of teachers as civic leaders and social change agents cannot be accomplished without acknowledging the social, cultural and political contexts in which such actions are situated. We know that the type of civic leadership we promote here will be resisted by some schools, boards of education, principals, teachers and parents who may characterize such activities as indoctrination that is ideologically driven or simply inappropriate for schools. As Bell and Stevenson so aptly express, notions of citizenship are complex and often contested, particularly when they are linked to educational policy and practice. Markets, choice and accountability are now primary discourses among a range of educational stakeholders, and these themes shape the ways in which educational purposes are viewed.43

We do not underestimate the challenges that such beliefs bring into play nor the courage that teachers will have to bring to their work in classrooms when they enact their civic identities and act as civically engaged teacher-leaders. Earlier research by the first author suggests that such teachers will need the support of other school-based personnel, including the school principal, in taking advantage of a range of routes, strategies, and tactics necessary for advancing social justice initiatives.44 Changes in curriculum, such as BC’s recently announced Social Justice course, will provide some assistance in shaping political contexts in order to advance such efforts. Finding and creating allies, particularly in communities where equality and equity remain foundational concerns, must also be a part of efforts that see teachers not as individual actors responsible for change, but rather as socially, politically and culturally constituted actors who work with and through others in collaborative advocacy and/or social movement work.45 This latter point again reinforces the model we espouse for our undergraduate students, one that emphasizes the need for individual and group agency and structural change as necessary features that achieve socially just outcomes.

**Concluding Thoughts**

Significant changes to teacher education programming may bring considerable resistance from students, faculty or teacher advisors in the field. Beliefs about the nature of learning and teaching and the purposes of public education have developed over a significant period of time and are often deeply engrained. Altering these beliefs is a difficult but, we
believe, necessary effort if we are to meet the needs of today’s learners and the demands for ethically informed leaders.

We are highly committed to a vision that acknowledges the role that teachers might play as social change agents, through the practices of active, engaged, critical and informed citizens. Creating a program where civic leadership — emphasizing a situated form of critical consciousness — and engaged learning are central design principles provides the context in which such changes may be accomplished. We also acknowledge the importance of assessing these new initiatives, so that we might trace the degree to which our social-justice based orientation has produced teacher educators who espouse and practice civically inspired leadership, in their classrooms and in their lives. As Westheimer and Kahne noted, programs that espouse participatory and/or justice oriented citizens do not necessarily develop students’ abilities to critique root causes of social problems or effect change. However, we believe that our attention to the intersections between roles of leadership and how one teaches for culturally inclusive models of citizenship may offer significant promise as a means of creating the kind of equitable, just, and inclusive communities that have long been the goal of civic and political leaders in democratic societies.

Notes


5. The University of Victoria’s strategic vision is encapsulated in a document called A Vision for the Future: Building on Strength. Both the vision and mission statements make references to civic responsibility and civic engagement. The document was published after wide consultation with community and university stakeholders in March, 2007.


18. Each of these authors have sought to problematize the assumption that giving an individual or group ‘voice’ will necessarily provide representation, nor are such practices guarantees that these alternative views will be heard or understood. In particular, these authors explore how voice is actually a demand of the socially, culturally, racially or economically privileged. For a more in-depth discussion, see Nick Burbules, “The Limits of Dialogue as a Critical Pedagogy,” in *Revolutionary Pedagogies* (New York: Routledge, 2000); Megan Boler, *Democratic Dialogue in Education: Troubling Speech, Disturbing Silence* (New York: Peter Lang Press, 2004); and Elizabeth Ellsworth’s classic essay “Why Doesn’t This Feel Empowering? Working through the Repressive Myths of Critical Pedagogy,” *Harvard Educational Review*, no. 59 (1989): 297–324.

19. Sociocultural scholarship is drawn from Len Vygotsky’s work. Despite the fact that Vygotsky was a contemporary of scholars such as Dewey and Piaget, his work has only be fairly recently translated and is now being used to situate similar theories among contemporary Western scholars. For more details about sociocultural theory see Len Vygotsky, *Mind in Society: The Development of Higher Psychological Processes* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1978). Sociocultural theory has become more mainstream in Western educational scholarship, largely through the efforts of contemporary theorists such as James Wertsch, *Voices of the Mind: A Sociocultural Approach to Mediated Action* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1991) and *Mind as Action* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998).


32. Dan Butin, “The Foundations of Preparing Teachers: Are Education Schools Really ‘Intellectually Barren’ and Ideological?” Teachers College Record, ID Number:


38. Dennis Shirley, Community Organizing for Urban School Reform (Austin, TX: University of Texas, 1997).


41. These quotes are taken from two course descriptions, one written by Carole Ford, and the other by Stephan Scott (2005). Course outlines are available from the University of Victoria Faculty of Education, Teacher Education Office, PO Box 3010, STN CNC, Victoria, BC, V8W 3N4.


45. See, for example, Jean Anyon’s comprehensive blueprint for community-based issue campaigns, developed and led by teachers, students and community members in her book *Radical Possibilities: Public Policy, Urban Education and a New Social Movement* (New York: Routledge, 2005).


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