

ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation: FUELING THE FIRE: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL
EXPLORATION OF STUDENT EXPERIENCES IN
DEMOCRATIC CIVIC EDUCATION

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This study explores the lived experience of civic education for middle school students. It is grounded in the tradition of hermeneutic phenomenology as guided by Heidegger (1962), Gadamer (1960/2003), Casey (1993), and Levinas (1961/2004), among others. I use van Manen's (2003) framework for conducting research for action sensitive pedagogy in which I follow six tenets including turning to the nature of lived experience, investigating experience as we live it, hermeneutic phenomenological reflection and writing, maintaining a strong and oriented relation and balancing the research context by considering parts to whole. By calling forth the philosophical and methodological tenets of hermeneutic phenomenology, I endeavor to uncover the lived experience of civic education as well as what it means to be a *teacher as civic education*.

A class of twenty-nine students are taped as they engage in discussions, debates, a Simulated Congressional Hearing, and other lessons related to civic

education in a social studies class. Their reflective writing about their learning is used as well. Twelve students self-select to engage in conversations about their experiences. These conversations along with the taped class sessions are transcribed and used to uncover themes essential to their experience of civic education in the social studies classroom.

Two central existential themes of lived body and lived relation emerge from this inquiry. The importance of embodying one's learning, as well as connecting to one's society, are apparent. When they are face-to-face with the Other in group activities, debates, games, and simulations, students are afforded the opportunity to experience what is fundamental in a democracy, including their ethical and moral obligation to the Other. The students' learning through their corporeal and relational experience create the civil body politic of the classroom and inform their behavior outside in society.

These insights from this study may inform curriculum theorists and developers, policy-makers, and social studies teachers. Recommendations are made to reconceptualize social studies in order for students to capitalize on their bodily and relational experiences within the classroom so that they may grow in their role as citizen. Students may then embody the ideals essential in civic education and democratic societies.

FUELING THE FIRE: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL EXPLORATION OF
STUDENT EXPERIENCES IN DEMOCRATIC CIVIC EDUCATION

by

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As I come to the close of this journey, I turn to Maxine Greene who states, “Education...like democracy, is always in the making, forever incomplete, founded in possibilities.” Although the pages contained in this “vinyl binder” represent a complete work, it is but a beginning. I heartfully thank the following people who have enabled this possibility.

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CHAPTER ONE: FINDING THE FIRE WITHIN

“Fire”

What makes a fire burn
is space between the logs,
a breathing space.
Too much of a good thing,
too many logs
packed in too tight
can douse the flames
almost as surely
as a pail of water would.

So building fires
requires attention
to the spaces in between
as much as to the wood.

When we are able to build
open spaces
in the same way
we have learned to pile on the logs,
then we can come to see how
it is fuel, and absence of fuel
together that make fire possible.

We need only to lay a log
lightly from time to time.
A fire
grows
simply because the space is there,
with openings
in which the flame
that knows just how it wants to burn
can find its way.
(Brown, 2003, p. 89)

Building a fire is an apt analogy when exploring the pedagogic intentions of civic education. Civic education has been defined by many but agreed upon by few. For example, Gutman (1999) argues, “An adequate civic education is to cultivate the skills and virtues of deliberative citizenship” (p. xiii). Another interpretation of civic

education comes from the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE) (2003), which states, “Civic education should help young people acquire and learn to use the skills, knowledge, and attitudes that will prepare them to be competent and responsible citizens throughout their lives” (p. 4).

Civic Education, in general, is that which occurs to enable citizens and prospective citizens to act in a democratic society, promoting the democratic ideals upon which the society was formed. These ideals include rule of law, natural rights that are protected by a government whose power is limited, majority rule, higher law, the right to speak, petition, and protest, freedom of religion, assembly and press, and the right to due process under the law. In laying the foundation for students to understand these ideals and act in ways that reinforce and/or question them in society, civic education provides the logs and the fuel to build the fire. What types of logs are used to build the fire of civic education? Some use conservative strategies and approaches in civic education. Others seek more transformative methods to teach civic education. Regardless, the choice of “logs” used in civic education will have a profound and far-reaching impact on the student, and consequently on society.

Civic education implies that an action is required once the knowledge is acquired. The logs and fuel are the beginning of the foundation for that action. But it is the spaces between the logs that allow for the fire to grow. As stated in the poem, “So building fires requires attention to the spaces in between as much as to the wood.” These spaces are essential in civic education as students are able to take their new understandings and dispositions and grow with them in their own ways. It is in

these spaces where transformational civic education can reside. Transformational education, as defined by Henderson and Hawthorne (2000) is education that is

Thinking centered, performance-based, multiliterate education [teaching students to] think of themselves as caring, responsible, lifelong learners and informed, participatory citizens in a democratic society. (p. 5)

With regard to civic education, education is transformative if it goes beyond the mere transmission model and spurs students to think, act, and respond in the classroom and act in a caring, empathetic, critical and socially conscious way.

We often hear the expression that one needs to “light a fire under their heels.” In civic education that “fire under their heels” is meant to propel students to act in the larger society with a sense of urgency. Indeed, when one thinks of citizens such as Martin Luther King Junior, Erin Brokovich, and Abbey Kaufman, one can picture the sense of urgency with which they pursued their goals for the betterment of society as a whole.

Civic education has always been a part of me from as early as I can remember in my educational career. Indeed, as I reflect back I marvel at the experiences that have shaped my ideas of civic education and have influenced how I act as a civic education teacher and citizen today. What were the “open spaces” of my experiences that allowed me to build my understandings of citizenship? What was the “fuel and absence of fuel” that led me to where I am today? How do my own experiences in civic education and my pre-understandings of it influence how I now teach social studies? Ultimately, what I seek to understand is the nature of civic education as experienced by middle school students.

As the poem *Fire* suggests, it takes a balance of logs, fuel and open spaces to create a fire that will burn to its fullest extent. It is when all of these factors are in communion with each other that the fire warms, illuminates and perpetuates existence. As it is with fire, transformative civic education requires the right amount of space, fuel, and logs for its flames to grow and spread optimally. Furthermore, who has not been transfixed by the unpredictable dance of flames as the spaces between the logs allow them to “find their own way?” As I explore my own experiences with civic education, I identify the times when I have been given the space to grow, provided with the right materials, influences and fuel to develop my own sense of citizenship in the classroom and outside in society. I turn to the phenomenon of civic education and ask: **What is the lived experience of civic education for middle school students?**

This chapter traces my turning to the lived experience of transformative civic education. Additionally, it elucidates some of the questions I seek to explore in my interactions with middle school students. This chapter begins with my own turning to the phenomenon and an exploration of my own experiences in civic education, both as a student and as a teacher. These experiences open a discussion of the nature of civic education and how it is defined presently. In exploring my own pedagogy with regard to civic education I frame it within emancipatory civic education. Finally, this chapter provides the rationale for my turn to hermeneutic phenomenology to illuminate the phenomenon of civic education.

What Makes a Fire Burn?

I begin my exploration of civic education by recalling one of my first experiences with one of the most common forms of civic engagement: voting. My first experience of voting came in third grade. We were holding school-wide elections for our elementary Student Government officers. The students running were all fifth and sixth graders and I recognized some of these older students. We assembled in the all-purpose room and listened to their campaign speeches. I remember thinking about what connections I had to any of them. Loralyn Doran, running for president, was my friend's older sister. Doug Gunster, running for vice president, had accepted my submission to the school newspaper. I surely would vote for them. The others...I would just have to wait and see how I felt when the time came. I was excited to be a part of the process. As we walked back to our classroom, I asked my friend for whom she would vote. I remember her saying to me that it did not matter because since the whole school voted, only the older students' votes really mattered. I was not sure of her logic, and I remember feeling let down that she was not as enthusiastic and optimistic as I was. Back in our classrooms, we all voted and turned our pencil and paper ballots in to our teacher. The next day, we learned some shocking news. There was a tie between two of the presidential candidates: Loralyn and one other girl had both received the same number of votes. I was in shock! My vote had mattered! I felt powerful and important. I realized at that moment, that had I not voted, or had I voted differently, the fate of these two girls, and indeed the whole school, would have been different. We had a run-off election and once again I voted for Loralyn. She won! I won! I had been right to vote for her, both times. In the end I remember feeling a

personal sense of accomplishment at having elected her myself. That experience cemented in me the unflinching belief in the power of one.

I left that experience in third grade and return to it now with many of the same questions. Why did my peer not feel as empowered as I had in the voting process? What was it about the turnout of the election that enabled me to feel like an integral part of the election process? Why did I automatically turn to those whom I recognized as the candidates for whom I would cast my ballot? Were these elements of civic education, and if so, how did I internalize them at the age of eight?

Voting –An Act of Devotion

In seeking to get underneath my early experience in civic education I turn to the etymological roots of the word “vote.” Often when one thinks about civic education, the first example of civic action is voting. Dating back to thirteenth century Latin, *votum* meant “a vow, wish, promise or dedication” (<http://www.etymonline.com/v2etym.htm>). What was it I promised to do when I voted for Loralyn? How is voting a civic act? What does it mean that citizenship has been tied to one’s right to vote over time as shown in the 15th, 19th, 24th, and 26th amendments, all of which extended voting rights, and thus citizenship, to different groups of people in our country? How did my right to vote in the student government election fix my own citizenship in the school? When students experience the electoral process within their own schools, perhaps they, too, recognize the importance of the “vow” they are taking. Perhaps voting is not just a right but also a right of passage that helps to establish one’s role in society.

One other early definition of the root word *votum*, dating back to 1591, was that one who votes is an “ardent devotee of some aim or pursuit” (<http://www.etymonline.com/v2etym.htm>). Thus, perhaps we can understand civic action to mean one’s commitment to a democratic society. This was certainly true for me, as after that election I firmly believed in the power my one vote held. One of my former students had a similar reflection on the right to vote:

I think because we can vote and we can make change and elect people who represent us, it makes us feel that even if we are one person, we can make a difference... because one vote does make a difference... The whole Bush and Gore thing the whole controversy in 6th grade... That definitely tells you one vote can make a difference... I don’t think the title really matters. Technically if you need to vote, your title does matter. (Rachel)

Rachel’s reflection indicates the belief that “one vote does make a difference.” Did Rachel feel a sense of devotion to her country even though she was not able to vote yet? What was it about the close election that pulled her into the political process? Had the election not been as close would she have formed the belief that one vote does make a difference? How will Rachel act in society once she herself has the right to vote?

Often, research on civic education focuses on the voting trends and patterns of young adults as a measure of the effectiveness of a program of civic education (Quigley, 1999; Turney-Purta, 2002). Indeed, voting is one of the most significant democratic actions. It implies a dedication to the democratic system of government and a reliance on that government to do what is right and necessary for the common good of the people. But much research focuses on why people do not vote (Patterson, 2004). Researchers, then, turn to civic education and ask what can be done differently to influence more citizens to vote.

Because my vote tangibly counted, did that influence my future actions? What connections can I draw between my experience with the school election and my consequent civic behavior? How was a transformative space created as a result of my participation in this particular example of civic education? A majority of schools hold school and class-wide elections. Is merely participating in an election civic education, or does there have to be another aspect of the experience for students to come away from it transformed? If there had not been a tie, or if my candidate had not won I may not have felt as optimistic or confident in the democratic process. Further, if the goal of civic education as Gutman (1999) asserts is “to cultivate the skills and virtues of deliberative citizenship” (p. xiii), how did this experience fulfill that purpose? What can schools and civic education teachers do to use school-wide elections to promote deliberative, *thoughtful* citizenship?

Running—An Act of Sacrifice

In fifth grade, we ran for class offices and elected new presidents, vice presidents, secretaries and treasurers every marking period. I ran for one of those offices and won. I do not remember doing much, but I do remember a sense of pride as if I were lucky to have been chosen. My classmates saw something in me they believed in and therefore bestowed in me their trust.

Consequently, every year in junior high and high school I ran for an office of my class. It varied from year to year and sometimes depended on what offices my friends and peers were seeking. My main goal was always to win, knowing that once elected, the title meant very little with regard to the actual work that I could do. I always had bright ideas that I knew my classmates would like, and I genuinely

believed that I could do the job better than most other people. Some years I won, and others I did not. The years I did not win, I joined every class committee I was able to so that I could work on projects and put my good ideas to use. I remember the lunches my fellow officers and I ate in our advisor's classroom while planning homecoming, prom, graduation, fieldtrips and a plethora of other school activities. We made sacrifices in our social lives for the good of the school and our class. I remember realizing that I had not eaten lunch with my friends for over a week and reflecting on how much easier life would be without the responsibilities of class officership. But I did not dwell on these thoughts for long. The call to serve my class and make our school year special and memorable was stronger.

As I reflect on my own experiences of running for and serving as a class officer, I recognize the belief that I could make a difference. I understand that there were trade-offs, but I was willing to give up some aspects of my life to serve my fellow classmates. I believed in the system and believed that I could make the lives of my classmates better through my actions. Harkening back to the fire analogy, what was it that lit the fire under my own heels and put me in motion to run, again and again, in hopes of serving my fellow classmates? From what experiences do students draw in deciding to run for offices themselves? Does this experience influence later political participation?

In *The Civic Mission of Schools* (2003), CIRCLE reports that classroom instruction in social studies, discussion of current events, and extracurricular activities all have a positive correlation on later political participation. These studies do not take into account, however, other factors that may have influenced participation in

government and politics, such as personal experiences and characteristics as well as familial influence. The connection between running for a class office and the extra-curricular activities that lend themselves to aspects of school governance is worth noting as the “fire” that later propelled me to run for class offices in college. Perhaps it was the experience itself of running and governing that reinforced my belief in this particular aspect of democracy.

Petitioning –An Act of Perseverance

My call to action was not limited to duties of an elected official. At the end of 11th grade after my third year on the track team, I was distressed over the lack of options in female athletics our school offered. In the spring, while other schools had soccer, track, softball and other competitive varsity sports, our school only offered track and softball. I had been running track for the last three years out of default. I really wanted to play soccer so I began by speaking to the athletic director about it. I realized very quickly into the conversation that he was against the formation of a girls’ soccer team for personal and political reasons. As the former track coach, he knew that another team would draw students away from track and the program might suffer as a result. Indeed, he was right. This was evident in my own actions. Politically, because of title IX legislation (my parents clarified this for me after the meeting) he knew he would have to redistribute funds if we started a new girls’ sport. I listened to every obstacle he put forth, left his office and went into action.

During the fall of my senior year, through talking with my parents and friends who played club soccer, I connected with a father who would be willing to coach the team. I started a petition to see how many girls would play soccer if we had a team.

By spring that year, I had addressed all of the athletic director's concerns and road blocks, including money for uniforms (there were girls' field hockey jerseys we could use in the spring), scheduling practices (the boys' soccer practice field was usually free), and participation, but alas, there was more to the formation of a team than what I had considered, and we were not able to form a team for that spring. After realizing this, I encouraged the girls who did want to play to keep the effort going. I submitted all of my work to the principal and decided not to run track that year. Even though there were other reasons for that decision, it was in a small way my rebellion against the lack of choices our school offered for girls' athletics. As it turned out, because of my petition and legwork, the school did start a team the next year. My sister, who is two years younger than me, played goalie for the first ever Poolesville Girls' soccer team. I remember feeling disappointed that I never was able to play but profoundly proud that I had started a ball rolling that impacted the lives of girls and the entire school itself. When I had met with the athletic director, I remember feeling as if the reasons for "no" he mentioned were just obstacles for me to overcome. While I would have liked to have been told "yes," I was not deterred and set my mind to overcome anything that would stand in the way of the formation of the team.

Again, as I reflect on this experience, I ask what prompted me to act? I recognize my belief again that I could make a difference. Despite any obstacle presented, I believed they could be overcome. I was working within a system to change the system. This belief in my own self-efficacy must have been developed at some point. Was this civic education? And if so, what was it that made it civic education?

Perhaps some data from the United States Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics (2001) report on "What Democracy Means to Ninth-Graders: U.S. Results From the International IEA Civic Education Study" might lend some perspective. Of the 9th graders surveyed, 90.2% agreed that everyone has the right to express their opinions freely. Furthermore, 77.9% agreed that the right for "people (to) peacefully protest against a law they believe to be unjust" is good for democracy (p. 54). These statistics speak to a predominant belief in the expression of first amendment freedoms of speech, petition and assembly, among others. It was these rights that I myself used to get my message across to the athletic director, school, and community. While my actions are commensurate with the beliefs of the participants in this survey, it does not explain, however, what caused me to act. Does belief in the goals and fruits of democracy always translate into action? Civic Education would surely come into play here to turn belief into action.

Anarchy—Action in the Classroom

Interestingly enough, most of my reflections on my own civic education have been experiences that happened outside of the classroom and outside of the social studies curriculum. As the above mentioned U.S. Department of Education report (2001) states, "Learning about citizenship and civic issues does not happen only in school, but is also acquired in families and social groups and from the media, institutions, and the wider culture" (p. 3). There were a few instances, however, of civic education within the classroom that I remember shaping my ideas today. One such lesson was when we were studying forms of government in Ms. Schultz's class. This was in preparation for the Citizenship test. We had just learned what anarchy

was. I think she had defined it on the board. She was about to move on when I raised my hand and asked, “What’s so wrong with anarchy? I think it would be cool to have no laws.” I was anticipating an answer, when instead she came over to my desk, took my purse, and began to open it. She then put it on her desk and said, “I like your purse. I think I will keep it.” “That’s not fair!” I protested. “You can’t do that!” “Aha! But if you live in anarchy, anything goes. That is what might happen! There are no laws to protect you or your property. What do you think of anarchy now?”

I was outraged and incredulous, surprised and befuddled. I looked around at my fellow classmates, most of whom I had known since kindergarten. What did they think of what just happened to me? Some students laughed. Others looked as puzzled as I felt. I did not know how to react, at first. Then, I got it! She returned my purse. I was a little embarrassed because the lesson had been at my expense, but I got the point and never forgot it. I experienced anarchy and was able to feel even if just for a brief moment, the uncertainty, lack of safety, insecurity, anxiety, and potential pain anarchy could bring. My understanding of anarchy in that way further strengthened my understanding of democracy. I got over my embarrassment and after a while was proud that my question had spurred such a demonstration from the teacher for the benefit of the whole class. My classmates talked about it after class, and I believed then and now that we all truly learned from that experience. Who was I in the classroom? I was an instrument of learning for the rest of the students. Did Ms. Schultz plan this? How did she know I was going to ask this question, at this time, in order that she make this point?

Maxine Greene (1998) states, “When people individually have high degrees of self-expression, that’s when the community functions at the highest level” (p. 27). Ms. Schultz’s teaching allowed for my optimal self-expression. I was moved to ask questions and take risks in her classroom. A few weeks later in Ms. Schultz’s class we learned about the Constitution more fully. I do not remember the exact lessons she taught, but I do remember being moved to act. I went home after school and drafted a class Constitution, complete with a preamble, articles and amendments. It included our rights as a class and a way to elect class presidents, legislators and jurors. The next day I showed it to my friends. I remember they thought it was great. At the beginning of class, I asked to present it. Ms. Schultz loved it too. She laughed and kept repeating how “cool” it was that I would choose to do that. She commended me for my effort. I told her it was for the whole class. From there she allowed us to elect class representatives to work on a final draft. Indeed, her curriculum truly allowed for us students to function as a community at the highest level.

Ms. Schultz’s curriculum can be compared to building a fire. She had laid the foundation for the fire, the logs, when she introduced the concept of anarchy. Because of her style of teaching, I felt the “space” to ask a question. She seized upon this opening and by forcing me to live the experience of anarchy, she added fuel to the already growing flame. In doing this, she continued to allow my fire to grow by adding just the right amount of “logs,” the right balance of written curriculum, while still allowing for the curriculum of the class to develop as an intersection between herself and the students. In addition to the lived experience of anarchy, I have taken from Ms. Schultz a way of being with students.

Van Manen (2003) asks, "What is it about your relationship with these children that makes it teaching?" (p. 42). I would answer that it entails being a curriculum for each other. Schubert (1986) challenges us to "Live as if your life were a curriculum for others and balance that principle by realizing that every life you meet could be a curriculum for you if you perceive with sufficient perspective" (p. 423). When curriculum is taken to enhance being, then a natural symbiosis occurs between teacher and student. The give and take within the curriculum of Ms. Schultz and her students allowed for this symbiosis. That she was a teacher of social studies and civic education took this symbiosis one step further, as she allowed students to act in the world in transformed ways.

Rivkin (1991) suggests that, "What you actually teach is yourself. This is very humbling" (p. 67). I am drawn to this idea the way one is drawn to the force of gravity; it is almost an inevitable truth that while in the midst of teaching, doing what we have been called to do, we are in essence and by the very nature of our job, teaching ourselves. This is profound because to accept this belief dictates an acceptance of certain teaching styles and uncovers beliefs about pedagogy. For example, how much does the lecturer or conveyor of knowledge actually learn? The teacher standing at the pulpit learns only what comes out of his or her own mouth. That amount of knowledge is finite and discrete. Where there is no dialectic or multiple interpretations, there is no further learning than what the teacher has already gleaned for oneself and decided to bring forward to the class. Furthermore, Ms. Schultz was not only teaching civic education, she was transmitting her being.

A teacher, however, like Ms. Schultz, who recognizes the symbiotic nature of teaching and learning knows that they have as much to gain from their students as the students do from them. This ties in with the view of curriculum for the purpose of enhancing being, not just imparting knowledge. One would think that the social studies (the collection of curriculum encompassing history, economics, sociology, geography, psychology and civic education), a natural fit for discussion and analysis, would reflect this symbiosis, but this is not necessarily so. It takes an effort to truly *let learn*. As Heidegger (1993b) states, “Teaching is even more difficult than learning...because what teaching calls for is this: to let learn” (pp. 379-380). Ms. Schultz allowed for the space to let learn. I took from her teaching much more than concepts of democracy; for me, she “lit the fire” that prompted my civic action.

Civic Education: In and Out of the System, In and Out of the Classroom

As I explore my own experiences in civic education, I turn to experiences such as voting in and running for school elections—experiences that occurred outside of the classroom but still within the system of the school. My civic education also seems to have occurred within the school but outside of the system when I petitioned for a girls’ soccer team. I can relate that example to others in which I have worked outside of the system but within the school, such as the time I petitioned for the return of 8th grade camp, or when I walked out of a class when I believed the teacher had violated my rights. What do these experiences mean with regard to my civic education? What is it about these experiences that made them civic education? Was it that I chose to act as a result? Indeed, I have not related any accounts of actual

traditional social studies lessons. My turning to the phenomenon has taken me to reflections on times when I have acted, when I have been compelled to act.

Action itself seems inextricably tied to civic education. In CIRCLE's (2003) report, *The Civic Mission of Schools*, two of the four goals of civic education are action oriented. The reports states that "Competent and responsible citizens... participate in their communities. They belong to and contribute to groups in civil society that offer venues for Americans to participate in public service, work together to overcome problems, and pursue an array of cultural, social, political, and religious interests and beliefs," as well as, "act politically. They have the skills, knowledge, and commitment needed to accomplish public purposes—for instance, by organizing people to address social issues, solving problems in groups, speaking in public, petitioning and protesting to influence public policy and voting" (p. 10).

Connected to action is freedom. In his 1988 address to students at Moscow State University, Ronald Reagan (2003) declared:

Freedom is the right to question, to change the established way of doing things. It is the continuing revolution of the marketplace. It is the understanding that allows us to recognize shortcomings and seek solutions. It is the right to put forth an idea, scoffed at by experts, and watch it catch on fire among the people. It is the right to follow your dream, to stick to your conscience, even if you're the only one in a sea of doubters. (2003, pp. 224-225)

What Reagan is alluding to is the political action mentioned by the CIRCLE (2003) report. One might question how Reagan's administration reflected these ideals. For Americans, or anyone for that matter, to act in freedom, they must first come to understand what their freedoms are. But knowing their freedoms is not always enough to promote action. We need a place where we can practice using these

freedoms. The social studies classroom is one place where that can happen. This speaks to the call for a transformative civic education.

Finally, my memory of civic education takes me into the social studies classroom where I recalled a lived experience with a concept of democracy. Was this lesson a deliberate action on the part of my teacher? And if not, how would my concept of civic education be different today if she had not reacted to my question the way she did? How did the school provide the logs and fuel for the fire? Did I create the spaces to move, act and grow or merely discover them? Were these spaces created for me? Would I have been able to act in the ways that I did had the spaces not been there? I continue to explore the phenomenon of civic education as I now examine my own pedagogy.

Fueling the Flames

In my twelve-year career as a social studies teacher, I often have been struck by the different ways in which students have accepted or rejected ideals of American democracy. Why do some students so readily embrace American ideals such as all persons are created equal, and popular sovereignty without questioning? Why do other students actively challenge the legitimacy of theirs and others' rights to religion, privacy, and the role of the government in our lives? Furthermore, what are the factors that ultimately influence these students' conceptions of American democracy and citizenship? If it were only the curriculum, mine or any other teacher's pedagogy, we would see much more uniformity in acceptance, rejection, comprehension, or questioning of American democratic ideals. Instead, there is great variance. This

variance makes for great social studies lessons and leads me to question what else influences the students' concepts of democracy.

This question is central to uncovering the phenomenon of civic education. To probe it further I turn to the etymological roots of the word "influence." The term dates back as early as 1374 as an astrological term that means, "streaming ethereal power from the stars acting upon character or destiny of men" (<http://www.etymonline.com/i2etym.htm>). When we speak of the factors that "influence" our students' behaviors it is interesting to think of their behavior as being guided by un-earthly power acting upon their destinies and character. If one ponders the way teachers can influence students, the etymology of the term reinforces the awesome nature of a teacher's relationship with his or her students. Also from the 13th century the Latin translation of *influentia* is "a flowing in" (<http://www.etymonline.com/i2etym.htm>). If a civic education teacher were to thinking of his or her curriculum as something that "flows in" to students or that democratic ideals followed as if in "a flow of water," their teaching would take on new form and meaning. To "flow in" here might suggest more natural rhythms, rather than the idea of "filling up" students' minds with received knowledge. What classroom experiences would the students and teacher need for this type of learning to take place? Further, if to influence is ultimately to shape the character and destiny of students then the teacher of civic education has an unparalleled moral responsibility.

Understanding this can open a new world to teachers who may have experienced the same or similar phenomena in their classrooms. Understanding how students form their concepts of American democracy and citizenship and what

ultimately influences their actions also would serve to inform social studies curriculum. For, a written curriculum can take teachers and consequently their students only so far. The learned curriculum is ultimately a configuration of the written curriculum, the teacher's hidden curriculum and the students' curriculum. What curriculum do suburban middle school students (diverse in race, ethnicity, class, and gender) bring to the classroom, and how does it interact with the national, state and local curriculum as taught by the teacher? What kind of curriculum is called for that will move social studies students out of the classroom and into society with a transformed set of beliefs and behaviors that will ensure the survival of our American democratic system? The following vignette serves as an example of the civic education that takes place in the openings I try to create in the curriculum. These are openings for the students' fires to grow.

An Opening for Protest

“Ms. Pao, I want to protest. Are we allowed to protest?” Brendan, a young man with a shock of red hair asks me. He is one of the 29 students in my fourth period class. In the beginning of the year, we framed their social studies class with the idea that democracy is an active, ever-changing form of government that relies heavily on the participation of its citizens. We began the year with a simulation of the Pilgrims' journey to the New World on the Mayflower. After a close read of the Mayflower Compact, students applied the same principles of democracy to the writing of their own class compacts. We stepped back into the present and used the Student Rights and Responsibilities Guide as an example of “rule of law,” and

students closely investigated their privileges and duties at school. Since that time, at least once a week, I have fielded a question like Brendan's.

"What do you want to protest, Brendan?" I ask in return. I notice a few more students perk up when they realize I am not going to dismiss his request.

"...Building fires requires attention to the spaces in between..."

"Well, I think we should be able to wear hats. Why can't we wear hats to school?"

"Look in your *R&R Guide* and see what it says," I reply. Several students do this. Others wait eagerly to see what their classmates will find.

"It doesn't say anything about hats!" Nico exclaims. "So shouldn't we be allowed to wear them?" Choruses of "Yeah, that's right," along with "Who cares about hats" follow.

"What could you do to change this school rule?" I ask the class. Several students call out, "Petition!" Others think of more drastic measures and suggest a walk-out or a sit-in. One student recommends vandalizing the school.

"...A fire grows simply because the space is there..."

"The colonists protested against Britain. Isn't that what we are learning now? I mean, when they boycotted, the British took notice and changed their laws. Why can't we do that," Brendan asks.

"What would you boycott?" I ask, "that would make a difference to the school? And how would it relate to your issue of wearing hats?" I like the connection he is making, and try to guide him without squelching his enthusiasm.

"I know," an excited Kristen says. "We can all wear hats to school and refuse to take them off!"

"Yeah, like civil disobedience! Like MLK or Gandhi," Jeff adds.

"And they can't punish all of us if we all do it" Brendan adds.

"...with openings in which the flame that knows just how it wants to burn can find its way..."

"Ms. Pao," Nico asks, "Why don't you help us with this protest?"

Here is where I am torn every time. I would like nothing better than for the students who feel strongly about the "no hat" rule to take action. I savor how they are applying democratic concepts and principles to their own lives and consider

themselves agents in their own democracy. But often, it ends here. The students do not always take the next step. As the poem *Fire* indicates, “One only need lay a log occasionally to keep a fire burning. It is the spaces, the absence of fuel as well as the fuel that keeps the fire going.” Have I added too many logs to this fire of rebellion in my students, or not enough? I want my students to find the sources for their fire from each other and from within themselves as well.

I see my curriculum and my pedagogy as fuel for the students. When they embrace their democratic rights and responsibilities and challenge my curriculum and the systems in which they are educated and socialized, I see that I have added the right amount of logs. I must attend to the “spaces in between,” however, to allow for my students’ maximum growth as students, citizens of the classroom and the world. It is a fine line the teacher of civic education walks. Often, it is as Palmer (1998) states, “We fear encounters in which the other is free to be itself, to speak its own truth, to tell us what we may not wish to hear” (p. 37).

Now I have to explain to my students that as their teacher I am in support of their protest, but that as an employee of the school system, I have to uphold the rules. Is this the log that allows too much space or the log that “douses the flame?” I tell them I feel like a British tax collector. They laugh. I wait to see if any student will take the issue further, hoping that one will. This time, though, they do not. The prospect of getting into trouble and their belief that petitions alone will not help, keep them from acting further this time. I could add a log to the fire, but this might be one too many. The students’ fire has subsided, for a while. I use the opportunity to segue into the lesson on whether the colonists were justified in their revolt against Britain.

Later, as I am reading my students' writing about the ideals in the Declaration of Independence, I reflect back on the class discussion from fourth period. I also am reminded of an earlier protest during my first period class when I tried to assign homework over the weekend. Sam had instantly opened his notebook to the class compact we had forged at the beginning of the year and read it aloud to the class and me. It clearly stated no homework over the weekend without an additional day's notice. I consequently moved the due date to a Tuesday. I used the opportunity to reinforce the idea of a written constitution in a democracy and remarked that Sam's classmates should thank him for sticking up for their rights.

I often turn to the work of Maxine Greene when I contemplate my pedagogy and its effects on my own students. As mentioned earlier, Greene (1998) states, "When people individually have high degrees of self-expression, that's when the community functions at the highest level" (p. 27). The idea of the classroom as a community functioning at the highest level possible, speaks to the ultimate aims of civic education. Where else but in a social studies class can students raise questions and challenge the system in which they are educated, try out new ways of understanding themselves and each other, and practice behaviors that will take them into society?

This leads me to ask what it is about my curriculum that allows students to question school rules and norms? I see them making connections to previous lessons, but why do they not always follow through to action? Is the mere questioning of such rules and authority enough, or do students need to act in order to embody a civic education curriculum fully? Were my students satisfied that I listened to their ideas

and took their stances seriously, or do they need me to act with them? How can a civic education curriculum be taught and learned for the ultimate transformation of students and teacher?

Simulating Civic Education

I also have allowed for civic education through the use of simulations in the classroom. History curriculum is ripe for infusing simulations and role-playing activities. Perhaps Rachel's account of her experience in a simulated congressional hearing can illustrate the type of emancipation that dynamic civic education can bring.

I knew we were like doing a project and we were presenting it in front of people. But I really thought we would just go into our books and find evidence and write that in our speech. I really did not see the purpose of it. And then I guess the more we got involved, the more we got excited about it and I was like, Oh my gosh, I am actually learning things. So I realized that we were learning stuff, we were thinking, we were learning like present events and like making links about why things happen and the theory behind everything. And that linking was really awesome because I was like oh my gosh, I understand why the government is like this or why this happened. I think once you understood that, you just got more involved because you wanted to do so in the end... and yeah, we learned how to public speak, and it was a good activity because we were working in groups and all of that good stuff, but I think one thing I really liked about it was how in the beginning you weren't sure, but in the end you wanted to do more. Because you got yourself into it. (Rachel)

Rachel's experience of civic education illustrates how she connected her learning with her doing. As a teacher, I can look to Rachel's' description and gain insight on her experiences with civic education and understand how she has changed as a result of it. How often have I looked out over my students while they were engaged in a lesson, a simulation, a reading, a discussion, a debate, and wondered what they truly were experiencing. What is it like for them to be in civic education?

What is their sense of civic education? I, too, have administered surveys and conducted discussions after different activities in the classroom seeking feedback on their experiences, what they have learned and what to do better in the future. Still, this type of data has not transferred necessarily into my pedagogical decisions. Yet, as Rachel's account illustrates, it is possible, through emancipatory civic education to transform the lives of students and teachers. Emancipatory civic education, which is explored below, is education that allows students and teachers to explore, question and challenge the power dynamics that shape their societal and educational systems within which they work.

We might begin to get behind the phenomenon of being in civic education by exploring Rachel's use of language to describe her experience. One might begin to understand civic education as a way to *link*: "...We were learning like present events and like making links about why things happen and the theory behind everything. And that linking was really awesome because I was like oh my gosh, I understand why the government is like this or why this happened..." Rachel seems to have experienced civic education as a way to link current events with theories and history. "That linking was really awesome..." The verb form of the word *link* dates back to 1385, meaning, "to bind or fasten" (Barnhart, 1988, p. 599). A more intriguing etymological derivation, however, comes from the Middle High German *Gelenk*, meaning "flexible parts of the body" (p. 599). How was Rachel's experience one of using flexible parts of her body? Because her thinking changed did her bodily responses and actions toward and in civic education change? Perhaps as Heidegger (1971) suggests, language confines the meaning of thought. Rachel's use of the word

link to describe her experience suggests that her experience was flexible and ever changing. There is a tension here, however, between the former root of *link* meaning to bind or fasten. Was Rachel's experience both binding and flexible? Perhaps civic education, then, is an experience in which new ideas or understandings are "bound" within in us, while at the same time they provide us with more "flexibility" to act and be in the world.

Another possibility stems from an earlier etymological origin of *link* which dates back before 1415, meaning "one ring or loop of a chain" (Barnhart, 1988, p. 599). How did Rachel's experience allow her to feel like she was part of something larger, like a chain? In her text she reveals, "...then I guess the more we got involved, the more we got excited about it..." Do students experience civic education as a "chain" of events? Do they have the sense of being part of a larger "chain?" These etymological renderings and questions illustrate a beginning uncovering of the phenomenon of civic education.

My Pedagogy of Freedom

A teacher in search of his/her own freedom may be the only kind of teacher who can arouse young persons to go in search of their own. (Greene, as cited in Ayers & Miller, 1998, p. 75)

I think about this statement when I examine my own mode of being in the classroom. I try to share with students my own quest for meaning and freedom so as to allow them to do the same. I embrace a type of curriculum known as *currere*, defined by Pinar (as cited in Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery, & Taubman, 2000) as a focus on "the educational experience of the individual as reported by the individual" (p. 414). So many times, when we are in *currere* together students ask questions that I

cannot answer, such as if I agreed that there should be a drinking age. We were discussing the amendment process and the prohibition amendment and repeal. I had an answer, a long one, but I did not want the students to think there was just one answer. I turned it back on them. “Why do you think we have a drinking age?” “Do you think it is necessary?” “What does it mean to have a drinking age in America?” They saw that I was unresolved in this issue, and so it was okay for them to be as well. I do not know if this is exactly seeking freedom, but it is an ongoing quest for meaning.

I never want to be that teacher, deliberately, or inadvertently who keeps students from imagining the possible. Civic education, and social studies in general, contribute to these modes of being. As Maxine Greene states, “I feel successful if I can make it possible for students to come upon ways of being they have not thought of before. Part of that demands an activation of imagination; in part, a refusal to screen the self from the world” (Greene, as cited in Ayers, 1995, p. 323). This is vital in civic education. I want the students to see what is possible for them and to be able to picture what maybe they could not previously picture doing. Sometimes I feel like I question their beliefs too much. I hear my voice and how unrelenting my questions are and wonder if my students would rather be left alone to continue believing what they thought before our encounter. They rarely relent their views. Nor would I want them to. But it is always so surprising to me how strongly they can and will defend their claims about knowledge, politics, education, and pop culture.

What is the role of questioning and debate in civic education? What role does the teacher need to play in order for students to experience a truly emancipatory civic

education? What should teachers do if the written curriculum does not call for this?

To explore these and other questions, I next examine a class within which these questions emerge, as well as my own journey, as teacher of this class, and as a teacher of civic education.

Exploring the Social Studies

I continue to explore the phenomenon of civic education with an explanation of social studies and what is meant by that designation. What are the social studies? For the past twelve years, I have been a social studies teacher. One persistent question, however, which I can never answer the same way twice, is what is this thing we call social studies education? Is it history teaching? Is it citizenship education? Geography? Teaching for social justice? Democratic education? Ask ten different social studies teachers and you will receive ten different answers. In fact, at a recent Gifted and Talented coordinator's meeting for Montgomery County Public Schools, in which representatives from middle schools all over the county were asked, "What is social studies?" teachers from many different disciplines gave answers such as the following:

Social studies is a race, from the revolution to the civil war.

In the 70's, social studies used to be geography. Now it is nothing but history.

Social studies used to be the really fun class because you used to learn how things change over time.

Social studies packs in a lot of stuff. Now things get left behind.

Social studies is the study of people and culture.

We had a social studies curriculum that might have been fun...but we needed them to be able to think. (Personal communication, November 25, 2003)

These responses reveal the complexity of social studies and the wide variations of what a course in social studies could or should entail. Social studies is a class that “packs a lot of stuff” and often feels like a race against time “from the revolution to the civil war.” Indeed, a curriculum that must incorporate geography, economics, U.S. and world history, culture and political science can seem to be overextended in content and under-extended in time. Nonetheless, these myriad responses indicate that social studies is anything but well defined and set in stone. The curriculum of a social studies class seems as influenced by the teachers themselves as much as by the written prescription of the school system.

These responses also speak to a change in the social studies, at least in Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS), the location of this study, from the “fun” class, to a class where students are encouraged to think. Teachers who have born witness to the many changes in curriculum over time express a frustration with the current trend in social studies: “Social studies used to be really fun...Now things get left behind...Now it is nothing but history.” These responses to a definition of social studies speak to a pre-conception of what social studies is, or should be. Nowhere in their responses did the teachers mention the ultimate goal of social studies. Nor did they mention any connection to civic education. Thus, as is explored later, an orientation toward social studies as civic education is most likely a deliberate one on the part of the teacher. As Thornton (2006) suggests, “Teachers’ purposes, then, guide how far they open the curricular-instructional gate; for whom, when, and which gates to what they open” (p. 418). One also might suggest that for most students, social studies has been “the fun class” or the class with all the stories. What

does it mean that now we need students to “be able to think?” Can that not also be fun? What do these responses say about pedagogy and social studies teachers’ underlying curriculum orientations?

Social Studies –The Written Curriculum

The MCPS Middle School Social Studies Curriculum, Assessment, and Instruction Blueprint (CAI Blueprint) (September 7, 2001), defines social studies as, “...the study of the interaction of human and physical systems and how these interactions occur over time” (p. 1). Furthermore, it elucidates the goal of social studies as, “...to help create literate and well-informed citizens who actively participate in a democratic society” (p. 1). In that the purpose of social studies is defined in the written curriculum ultimately as the creation of active, literate and informed citizens, it is curious that most social studies teachers do not mention this aspect of their curriculum. What does this discrepancy tell us about social studies classes? How do the disparate views of social studies influence students in the classroom?

I have defined the social studies, as it pertains to the written curriculum, and have asserted what the ends of social studies are for the student. To unpack the phenomenon of student experiences in a social studies curriculum for civic education further, however, perhaps an understanding of each word in its part will serve to elucidate the whole of social studies.

A curriculum of eagerness. Beginning with the act of studying, the stage can be set for the type of work, the “how” of the social studies classroom, by exploring the roots of the word “study” itself. To study comes from the Latin "*studium*,"

“study” or “application” (Barnhart, 1988, p. 1029). Originally, it meant “eagerness.” Are these children placed before me eager? And is it inherent in their learning that they will *apply* what they study? Do I promote an eagerness in them that will facilitate their learning a social studies curriculum? Perhaps this is where the “spaces in between the logs” come in.

A second origin is found in the word *studere*, originally meaning "to be diligent," or "to be pressing forward" (Barnhart, 1988, p. 1029). These meanings imply a motivation or desire on the part of the student to press forward through a subject. They are deliberate in their attempts to learn the content and have a motivation that drives them through a curriculum. But not all students are motivated by every subject they study. Thus, is a true "student" of something someone who is intrinsically motivated by his or her subject matter? And, then, is it even possible for students in a social studies class to become true students when they are not all necessarily drawn to the subject matter? Perhaps social studies as civic education can be the draw for the students in itself. Further, what does this imply about the role the teacher must play? It would seem to be the teacher's charge to motivate the students, and not just extrinsically, to want to learn their subject for them to be true "students" of that subject.

In response to Berman's (1991) statement, “Certain responsibilities fall to me,” Aoki states, “These words pull me again to the question of the relation between the teacher and the taught. Somehow, even though both teacher and taught face the unknown future together, there is, as you implied, a certain asymmetry in responsibilities” (p. 161). Aoki names the phenomenon well in that despite the

intrinsically linked roles of student and teacher, certain responsibilities do fall to the teacher. There is an asymmetry in their student-teacher relationship, although this need not be a power-over relationship. The student alone will not carry a class. The teacher must do his/her part as well. It is the teacher's moral obligation to facilitate the students in "pressing forward." What does "pressing forward" look like and feel like to students in a social studies class?

A third and even more intriguing meaning for student comes from the Indo-European root *steu*. The original meaning of this root is "to push, stick, knock, beat" (<http://www.geocities.com/etymonline/>). Are students, then, those who "knock around" a topic or perhaps "beat a dead horse?" Do they "push an idea" or "stick holes in an argument?" In any case, the students, according to this definition, take an active, almost physically aggressive role in their acquisition of knowledge. True students in this definition of the word, then, are active seekers of knowledge and truth and they pursue them with tenacity, aggression and an unrelenting energy. So whatever the "what" may be, the social studies are accomplished through this tenacious seeking of...what?

A curriculum of strangers. The "what" is illuminated through the exploration of the "social," which takes its roots from the Latin *sociālis*, meaning "united, living with others" (Barnhart, 1988, p. 1029). Indeed, there are many uses of social that speak to this understanding. The Pilgrims and strangers on the Mayflower wrote and signed the first "Social Compact" agreeing to work toward the betterment of the whole group once they landed in the strange new colony. The Social Contract has its roots in John Locke's writings dating back to the 1600's (Barnhart, 1988, p. 1029).

But with the Pilgrims on the Mayflower there was an element of the unknown. There were *strangers* on board: men who did not worship the same God, nor come from the same country. There was no common cultural background from which all the passengers could draw. This social contract gave them the agreement by which they could all form a new bond in order to move forward together and prosper. The words in the Mayflower Compact reveal the Pilgrims' desire:

To covenant and combine ourselves together into a civil Body Politick, for our better Ordering and Preservation, and Furtherance of the Ends aforesaid; And by Virtue hereof to enact, constitute, and frame, such just and equal Laws, Ordinances, Acts, Constitutions and Offices, from time to time, as shall be thought most meet and convenient for the General good of the Colony; unto which we promise all due submission and obedience. (Mayflower Compact, 1620, as posted on www.law.ou.edu/hist/mayflow.htm)

I have explored the idea of a covenant with my own students. On the first day of school we simulate the Mayflower voyage. I do not hand out any rules or class expectations. Students in each class draw up their own social compacts. Students who have participated in such an activity have reported that they experience a sense of unity and responsibility that would not otherwise have been present in a classroom. For example, Mandy, a former student reflects that establishing a class compact,

...Sort of united the class and under the compact everyone would abide by the same rules... Some of us did not know each other and it was a good way for us to interact with each other. ...I think it was a good basis for the year because throughout the curriculum, we were able to make references back to the compact. (Mandy, Reflection, June 2004)

Furthermore, as Henry, and other former student states,

(The compact) made a binding agreement between the students and (the teacher). Both the students and (teacher) are honor and duty bound to follow the compact, and neither party could object because both parties approved it. (Henry, Reflection June 2004)

Finally, as Anita states,

Making the compact not only gave us a say in the rules and our rights in the classroom, but also we learned about the Mayflower and some aspects of frameworks of governments like our own Constitution. (Anita, Reflection, June 2004)

As these students reveal, the class compact was something that *united* and *bound* them to each other and to the class as a whole. The *social* aspect of a social studies class comes through when students are forced to recognize that they are in it together, and are “honor and duty bound.”

Interestingly, just as the notion of amicability was absent from the experience of the Pilgrims, and this necessitated the social contract, another root of the word, *socius* leads to etymological roots in the idea of an “associate” or “companion” as the Old Icelandic *seggr* and Old English *secg* connote (Barnhart, 1988, p. 1029). There is, then, a sense that the social is more than just a gathering of people, but an underlying attitude toward those people of companionship and empathy. The contract of the Pilgrims created this sense of responsibility. It also created in them a reason for their alliance and a promise of protection. How do students in a social studies class experience this sense of alliance and protection? Do they? Is it automatic, by virtue of being a member of a class, or must the teacher and students construct this alliance? How do the experiences of students differ depending on the extent to which they feel empathy for or an obligation toward others in the class? How does this attitude toward the class and its members shape the learning experiences of students in civic education?

A curriculum of unity. Returning to the social studies as a whole, one could now discern that social studies is the active seeking of ways in which to live united

with others, amicably. The student of social studies dwells in the terrain of what it means to be one with humankind, what it entails to choose an alliance with others willingly and promote the common good. The MCPS social studies curriculum makes use of enduring understandings as the benchmark for all learning. Related to the themes uncovered above, some of the enduring understandings for the eighth grade American history curriculum are:

Political systems are the people, practices and institutions that use power to help make and enforce societal decisions. Governments are the formal decision making institutions created in a political system. In a democracy the political system reflects belief in a government that represents the people, protects individual rights, and helps determine the common good.

People may change political systems by working within the system or outside the system. However, when a political system won't change, people may try to abolish it and create a new system. This may cause violent conflicts. (Montgomery County Public Schools, 2004, p. iii)

These enduring understandings speak to the very nature of a student's role in the social studies classroom. Mediating between "individual rights" and the "common good" the teacher heeds his/her call as well. From this arena, a study of the chronology of events illustrates how humans have done this over time. Students may study the impact physical land features have had on how individuals join with other individuals for a common purpose. In the social studies students can "knock around" how persons, so joined together, seek to manage natural, human and capital resources. The student of social studies also can push through the multitudinous landscapes of beliefs, practices, languages, religions and other differences that shape how individuals live with one another. These practices constitute the history, geography, economics and cultural studies that typically make up a social studies curriculum. Yet, still one more facet of the social studies remains: civic education. Without this

component, how can students develop empathy toward their fellow classmates and the larger society?

Curriculum as Fire

To explore the phenomenon of students' experiences in a civics education curriculum, one must first explore the meaning of a social studies curriculum. Phenomenologists refer to curriculum as "*currere*" (Pinar et al., 2000). Etymological renderings of "curriculum" give us a Latin root dating back to 1633 in which curriculum meant "a running," or "course" and derives from *currere*, "to run" (Barnhart, 1988, p. 244). Taken this way, phenomenology views curriculum as a "course to be run," or the experience of the journey. This understanding is often very different from teachers' and students' understanding of the curriculum. A teacher with a phenomenological orientation toward the curriculum interacts with students in a much different way.

Curriculum conceived as "a running" carries with it an epistemology that knowledge is constructed. As Pinar et al. (2000) state, "Knowledge is grounded in the lived experience of the subject" (p. 414). Therefore, in a phenomenological sense, *currere* seeks to "slide underneath" the end products of education (concepts, conclusions, generalizations) to get to the pre-conceptual experience at their foundation. Pinar et al. (2000) further explicate that phenomenology distances one from the "everyday and familiar" in order to see them for the first time with freshness and immediacy. Thus, in *currere*, the goal of teaching is to "...recover those forms of life, especially in language, that enable (the teacher) to be with students in a more

livable way” (p. 415). How different this type of curriculum is from that of what one may see in a traditional social studies classroom.

Henderson and Hawthorne (2000) elucidate the contrast between mainstream (traditional) and transformative curriculum philosophies. For example, in mainstream curriculum philosophy teachers rely on students learning obedience to authority and learning “cooperative/ compliant behaviors in the context of a competitive educational meritocracy” (Henderson & Hawthorne, 2000, p. 5). In transformative curriculum philosophy students learn diversified, lifelong, inquiry responsibilities as well as “learning informed, democratic citizenship related to equity, civility and diversity” (Henderson & Hawthorne, 2000, p. 5).

How, then, are the experiences of students shaped by a curriculum conceived as the latter? If curriculum is a course to be run, then we as teachers may be in a position to “light a fire under their heels.” In this way, the curriculum is the fire to spur the action of the students. As one former student tells of her experience of learning social studies, there are ways learning can be structured for a more transformational experience:

I was studying in Brussels, Belgium. The director of the program was full of energy and excitement for the European Union. We went on field trips to NATO and to Eastern Europe as we learned about the differences between East and Western Europe and how much farther the east has to go before consideration in the EU. This bit of history stands out in my mind because I have no memory and if I can remember it, then the teacher must have been remarkable.

Another is in Mrs. K's class. Every time we had to do a debate, I would learn so much about the issue, the historical events, etc. However, I cannot tell you now what they were, but at the time I remember thinking that it was such a cool way to remember the facts, to debate them. (Lisa)

Lisa's recollections indicate that the role of the teacher is a very important one in helping students experience a transformative curriculum. Her teacher was not just knowledgeable, but enthusiastic as well. "The director of the program was full of energy and excitement for the European Union." She experiences a hands-on element in her learning of history that may have cemented the experience in her mind. What does it mean to have a hands-on experience? Hands-on experiences force students to take an active role in their learning. But these instances seem to be the exception, rather than the norm in social studies teaching.

Looking back to the poem, *Fire*, "... Building fires requires attention to the spaces in between as much as to the wood." This implies that the teacher and the students, as they run the course together, must attend to what is written, asked, debated, discussed, and provided as well as to what is not. Teacher and students must create the "spaces in between" that allow for the full igniting of the fire. This seems to have been the case for Lisa in these instances.

Imagining curriculum as fire brings to mind the imagery of sitting before a fire, transfixed by the brilliant, dancing flames. Many can sit before a fire in silence, for hours and simply be. This peaceful silence has its place in the classroom as well. Taylor (1991) states that silence in the classroom is productive, not void. Further, "To teach in this way means to create an atmosphere, to provide a space wherein students are listened to, listen to the other, or to the silence of what the ancients call Great Nature" (p. 353). I create this space when I ask a student to unpack their thinking in response to a question I did not expect. Then I open up the student's ideas to the rest of the class and invite them into the space the first student and I created. "What do

you think of their idea?" "Do you agree?" "What is your interpretation?" The written curriculum is pushed aside as the students and teacher co-create a new curriculum, the lived curriculum. I create the space for this co-constructed learning and invite the students in to take part as active members. I do not let them off the hook, and I let silence reign as they think about the questions in the air. This is a formidable challenge for it is a teacher's natural inclination to fill the silence. As Palmer (1998) explains of silence:

Panic catapults me to the conclusion that the point just made or the question raised has left students either dumbfounded or bored... But suppose that my panic has misled me and my quick conclusion is mistaken. Suppose that my students are neither dumbfounded nor dismissive but digging deep.... Suppose that they are not wasting time but doing a more reflective form of learning. I miss all such possibilities when I assume their silence signifies a problem, reacting to it from my own need for control rather than their need to learn. Even if my own hopeful interpretations are mistaken, it is indisputable that the moment I break the silence, I foreclose on all chances for authentic learning. Why would my students think their own thoughts in silence when they know I will invariably fill it with thoughts of my own? (p. 82)

It is in the silence that Palmer describes that the teacher creates the space for the fire to burn.

In that the silence of which I speak so often follows a question, I seek to understand the role of questioning, both on the part of the teacher and the students, in a civic education curriculum. According to Gadamer (1960/2003), "The essence of the *question* is to open up possibilities and keep them open" (p. 299). He views questioning as a hermeneutic priority, that to question, one also has to be able to identify what one does not know. Gadamer (1960/2003) states, "In order to be able to ask, one must want to know, and that means knowing that one does not know" (p. 363). This should be true for both students and teacher. For if a teacher is fully

present to one's students, as Palmer (1998) calls for, then for a teacher to ask a question is an invitation to the students to bring out their own "teacher within." In this vein, asking questions is essential in *currere* as both teacher and students seek to discover the knowledge within themselves.

Hence, curriculum as a mode of being with children in a "more livable way" (van Manen, 2003) reframes curriculum as an active entity in the social studies classroom, an entity that is co-created by the teacher and the students. It destroys the notion of curriculum as being confined to a vinyl binder of objectives, standards, assessments and "black-line masters" that sits on a teacher's shelf. Curriculum, as the course to be run, is a configuration of the lives of all the persons in the classroom. As Pinar et al. (2000) explain, "...*currere* seeks to understand the contribution academic studies make to one's understanding of his or her life" (p. 520). This has powerful connections with the goals of social studies.

The Fire in Social Studies

Curriculum, taken in a phenomenological sense, insists that one's teaching and therefore students' learning, transcend the written curriculum. Given this, one still can examine the text of the written curriculum to discern its role in the social studies classroom throughout the course to be run. First, the written curriculum calls for a connection between the present and the past. As stated in the CAI Blueprint (MCPS 2001):

The most common unit design throughout the curriculum is a present/past concept mix. Concepts are introduced in the here and now for relevancy to the student, then applied to past times or distant lands to further develop the concept or to measure its attainment... Each unit will focus around several of these large concepts combined into an "enduring understanding." The past-present mix allows a more student-friendly introduction to the difficult

knowledge and concepts necessary to understand the past and present world.
(p. 3)

How does this orientation of the written curriculum, as taught by the teacher, shape the students' experiences in learning social studies? What is it like for students to learn about past events in that way? How does this approach to curriculum lend itself to a civic education in the social studies?

Also, as framed in the CAI Blueprint for social studies, the instructional approach in social studies asserts that the curriculum must do the following:

...requires consistent, yet varied opportunities for students to be actively involved in social studies. Social studies curriculum will promote instruction that:

- values all learners and is differentiated for their strengths, interests, and learning styles.
- enables students to demonstrate appreciation and understanding of diverse individuals, groups, and cultures.
- is investigative in nature and steeped in the disciplinary requirements of the social sciences and humanities.
- emphasizes depth in understanding of knowledge, procedures, strategies, and concepts, rather than broad, superficial content coverage.
- begins with learners' frame of reference to establish understanding, but quickly moves out to a larger idea. (p. 4)

Within this blueprint, the social studies teachers must make the space for the fire to grow. Phenomenology would interpret this curriculum blueprint as a starting point for students and teacher in the "course to be run." When Brendan raised the idea of protest, he was making a connection between past events (the revolutionary war) and his present life. Brendan, and the rest of the class, were participating in *currere*, and just as Pinar et al. (2000) assert, connecting the past with "...one's understanding of his or her life" (p. 520). Do all social studies students have a sense that their curriculum is unique to their class, to themselves? When we actively make

connections from the present to the past, how does this shape their experience of a civic education in a social studies classroom?

To continue to open up the phenomenon of what it means to learn in a civic education curriculum, I examine the lived experience of a student participating in such a curriculum. Some students, such as Kevin, a former student, believe considering an issue from multiple perspectives is essential to the goals of social studies:

I felt as if I was helping the students see that there is always more than one side to a story and it's not always black and white. There are sometimes some shades of gray and there are more sides to the story and you can't just always take what has been presented to you. You have to go to different sources and kind of take what one person has said and what hasn't been said about that particular subject and draw conclusions from many different spoken and unspoken things. (Kevin)

This begins to uncover the phenomenon of learning in a social studies class. Kevin felt the responsibility to help other students in class see that there is more than one side to a story. His experience may indicate that this type of learning does not naturally take place in the social studies classroom. What has to happen in the classroom for students to emerge from a passive role and speak up to open a dialogue about different interpretations of events and issues? How can the course to be run achieve this?

In Kevin's experiences in social studies class, the lecture mode of instruction was the norm:

In some classes they just give you notes, loads and loads of notes and lectures and they just expect you to ... They just give you tests, loads and loads of tests... (Kevin)

He also intimates the danger of receiving instruction in history through this modality:

Then you are being cheated from learning all the subtleties and fine points and details that influenced a decision or a major event. A person who has been taught all that will do much better in life than you because you won't have that sort of knowledge to call on. You won't have certain skills you need in certain jobs...If you keep getting lectures you're gonna [sic] become gullible to what people are telling you. You aren't going to question what people are saying because you haven't been taught to question. You don't think you can ask questions. And if that happens you are probably not going to fully understand what you have been told anyway... (Kevin)

Clearly, Kevin sees a strong connection between the type of instruction one receives in social studies class and one's ability to make judicious decisions in real-world contexts. According to Kevin, there is value in learning about "all the subtleties and fine points" of an issue. He also does not believe this function of learning can be achieved by the students listening to a lecture. Kevin places a high value on asking questions in social studies class. This recalls the initial etymological rendering of the word "student" as one who actively seeks knowledge with tenacity. In the social studies classroom, this would be doubly appropriate. By mere virtue of being in a social studies class, the imperativeness of asking questions, and more importantly allowing the space for those questions, is obvious. The MCPS CAI Blueprint alludes to this necessity when it asserts as one of its strategies the primacy of "depth of understanding" over breadth of knowledge.

Perhaps Jessie, another former student, was learning in a civic education curriculum when she studied the Czech Republic:

In 6th grade my social studies teacher, Mrs. O, gave us a project to do on any culture in the world. I chose to do the Czech Republic. The time was during the time when the country was voting on separating or not. I pretended to be a ballot collector telling the story about how I stood around and waited for ballots but only two people showed up to vote. So, I went from house to house asking for votes, handing alcohol to people before they cast theirs. As I told this (in English) I moved down the chairs giving water to people in place of alcohol. Then, in the end, I broke out into drinking songs in Czech. I still

remember everything because it was like hands-on and I found the information about it. (Jessie)

Jessie had supplanted herself and her fellow classmates into another time and another place. She transformed her class into members of an historical event. The students in the class were an integral part of Jessie's construction of knowledge about the Czech Republic. If Jessie had merely given a report on the topic, would she and her classmates have experienced the depth of understanding? In her own words the experience was "hands-on," and this active physical role she played in her learning was what made her lived experience of civic education memorable and transformative.

Indeed, learning social studies in a "hands-on" way is an essential aspect of civic education. One recommendation included in CIRCLE's (2003) *The Civic Mission of Schools* report includes, "Encourage students' participation in simulations of democratic processes and procedures. ...Empirical evidence indicates that simulations of voting, trials, legislative deliberation, and diplomacy in schools lead to more political knowledge and interest" (p. 28). The methods mentioned in the recommendation are similar to the experiences of many students reflecting on effective civic education. Simulating a society, actively debating a piece of legislation, and participating in school-wide voting exercises are all hands-on ways to experience different aspects of citizenship. Although CIRCLE (2003) recognizes that simulation is only second best to authentic democratic participation, one can still ask what is it about this type of hands-on learning that makes it civic education.

The Fire of Civic Education

The teaching of social studies does not automatically include the teaching of citizenship education. Instead, it is a conscious choice. This curriculum of civic education has unfolded in my classroom as an intersection between my own beliefs about the social studies, the civic education materials I have pulled into our existing MCPS written curriculum, and the curriculum that my students and I bring into the room ourselves. The social studies curriculum, then, is much more than an intersection. It is a mixing bowl. Without civic education, the social studies may remain situated in the time period studied, in the past as an abstract, long gone, nonessential set of understandings. Although MCPS has not named it as such, it is the civic education component of the social studies that pulls it into the present and teases out the transformative nature of the possible curriculum. It is my belief that the ultimate aim of social studies education is to teach students to be active, informed and critical citizens, and that is where civic education resides.

To assert this, however, one must get behind what civic education is. What is civic education? And what does a teacher who takes this stance in the classroom do for students and with students? What does it mean to teach for civic education? What does that look like in a classroom? To further get behind the phenomenon of learning in a civic education curriculum, I turn to Casey (1993) to illuminate, or perhaps more appropriately, situate my stance toward the curriculum.

Civic Education in Place: Of, With, For and As

All such prepositions, however, articulate various concrete modes of ingress into buildings via the intimate interface between our living-moving bodies and built places. The modes are prepositional in status not just as they

are named by particular prepositions, but more crucially because they are prepositional in character. (Casey, 1993, p. 122)

Naming the social studies classroom as a place, allows for how the teacher and students can pre-position themselves. How does the naming of our relationship to the curriculum change the way we teach, the way students learn?

A Social Study “of” Civic Education

The social studies classroom is a place, and I am a teacher **of** civic education. Civic education, as a binder of materials, resources, a set of books, lesson ideas and materials all sit before me and I dispense them and use them with my students. The **of** suggests that civic education is the “what” of teaching, a set of standards to be met, a course to be run and a goal to be reached. What do students experience when they learn from a teacher **of** civic education? How do they conceptualize American democracy and their role in it? Do their experiences necessarily transfer? A teacher **of** civic education may implement a written curriculum but may not necessarily be a co-creator of the “course to be run” with the students. Would students see themselves in the curriculum that a teacher **of** civic education teaches?

A teacher **of** civic education would fulfill the goals of such organizations as the American Council of Trustees and Alumni (ACTA) who lament the deterioration of the knowledge base and active participation of many our country’s young graduates from top colleges and universities. For example, in *Losing America’s Memory, Historical Illiteracy in the 21st Century*, Neal and Martin (2000) report that as part of the great experiment of democracy, the Founders viewed public education as “central to the ability to sustain a participatory form of government” (p. 1). They quote Thomas Jefferson in saying, “If a nation expects to be ignorant and free, it

expects what never was and never will be” (p. 1). Their report raises the question as to what must be taught in the public schools, from elementary through university level, to encourage participation in our constitutional democracy. Is learning the facts and dates about our American history enough to give us the “civic glue” for which Neal and Martin call? A teacher **of** civic education would fit the bill in this argument, but will a traditional social studies course teach students in a way that spurs them to responsible action?

What form of education truly will make a difference in the political and social behaviors of Americans? How does this compare to the history education that is called for by groups such as ACTA? If our schools are to produce an active citizenry, a body of people who take advantage of their democratic and natural rights, then can a teacher **of** civic education teach in such a way?

Social Studies “with” Civic Education

A teacher **with** civic education connotes someone who combines aspects of civic education into their existing curriculum. Along with the history, geography, economics, etc. the curriculum makes room for civic education as well. The teacher brings in civic education when necessary and appropriate. A teacher **with** civic education teaches America as the place to be. America is synonymous with freedom, democracy and equality. How do students experience civic education from a teacher **with** civic education? Do they find themselves reflected in the curriculum if they are not from the dominant group? Where do they see themselves in America? Do they view their civic education as but one more part of the whole of the social studies? Do they appreciate its place in the exploration of how people unite over time for the

common good? Perhaps, as Rachel's text earlier has shown, teaching **with** civic education is a beginning.

I think because we can vote and we can make change and elect people who represent us, it makes us feel that even if we are one person, we can make a difference. The whole Bush and Gore thing the whole controversy in 6th grade... That's all we heard about in school. That definitely tells you one vote can make a difference. (Rachel)

Rachel states that "one vote can make a difference." This is an enduring understanding that has come out of a teachable moment in her education. A teacher **with** civic education took advantage of the real-world event and folded it into the curriculum for Rachel.

Social Studies "for" Civic Education

A teacher **for** civic education has a different job. Such a teacher seeks to teach students with the goals of transforming students into civic-minded citizens. This teacher sees the ultimate aim of teaching history, geography, culture and the other social studies to be transformative of civic education. The teacher **for** civic education dwells in the emancipatory interest. Such a teacher is a change agent and actively "knocks around" issues and questions with students. Are the students of this teacher transformed? Have they learned in a way that allows them to act? Kseniya may have learned from a teacher **for** civic education.

Our English teacher asked us last week if we stood to say the pledge and only half of us said we did. He said "Good" because we shouldn't be forced to stand if we don't want to and he told us that we shouldn't be sent to the office if we don't want to because we should be able to express our opinions. Then he said we should go to the office and report the teacher. I sit down because I don't believe in God, yet... (Kseniya)

Kseniya appears to have experienced curriculum **for** civic education. Her English teacher was pushing his students to act, calling on them to question the

authority of the teachers and of the Flag itself. Kseniya herself was spurred to act. Would she have stood for the Pledge had she not participated in this teacher's curriculum **for** civic education?

“In” Social Studies “for” Civic Education

What about the teacher **in** teaching **for** civic education? Such teachers do not leave their students behind. They are on the same path or journey as the students. This teacher lets learn and allows self to be transformed by the curriculum co-created and illuminated in the classroom. A teacher **in** teaching **for** civic education has taken a stance, a position, a pre-position towards the curriculum and the students. Such teachers recognize that they are as much the learner in the classroom as are their students.

I found myself in this position when I defended my students' rights to submit a petition against a new dress code, as well as when I supported their questioning of a teacher who violated their right under the discipline code, in the *Student Rights and Responsibilities Guide*. I let myself learn, along with the students, what it means to take a stand and act on behalf of justice.

Social Studies “as” Civic Education

One final pre-position worth considering is a teacher **as** civic education. This idea lifts the roof off the classroom and tears down its walls. The teacher's curriculum is not limited to the classroom itself, but rather the teacher **as** civic education exists as a curriculum oneself. This notion speaks to Schubert's (1986) idea of living, "...as if your life were a curriculum for others and balance that principle by realizing that

every life you meet could be a curriculum for you if you perceive with sufficient perspective" (p. 423).

This is a profound statement. How does one live one's life as a curriculum for others? This would entail an awareness of one's influence on others. This means deciding to empower those around you through your actions and how you choose to speak to them. The teacher as civic education would be pre-positioned to the classroom and the curriculum, but also to life, in this way. The boundarylessness of teaching as civic education calls to mind an early experience in civic education that occurred outside of the classroom.

Upon entering junior high school, my civic activism began to take a different shape. When I learned that the traditional 8th grade camp had been cancelled due to the poor behavior of the previous 8th grade class, I decided getting camp reinstated was a fight worth fighting. I began by visiting my principal and asking him for the reasons of the cancellation. Then I asked him how we could get it reinstated. He and I drafted a parent permission slip and I left with copies of the form that would go home to every student as well as the direction to enlist at least 8 teachers who would volunteer to chaperone. If at least half the students returned the form in time, and I enlisted enough faculty support, then 8th grade camp was on. I remember the joy I felt as the permission forms filed in and the number of faculty who agreed to chaperone grew. I felt confident while talking to teachers, many of whom I did not know, because this was a cause I believed in and could answer their questions. My friends thought I was a hero for trying and most pitched in, urging fellow students to return their forms on time. "Way to be," one of my friends said to me. And at the time, I remember thinking about that statement. Was my activism a way of life? A state of being? If my friends felt the same way I did, why did they not take a more active role? Why was I one of the few who were called to act? In the end, we did not get enough support from the student body and we never did reinstate the 8th grade camp program but the experience taught me a valuable lesson. The worst that could happen, in most cases, is that one could hear the answer "no." I remember feeling embarrassed at first when teachers did not want to chaperone, but then stronger as a result because I had had a difficult conversation and survived. (My reflection)

This experience speaks to living one's life as civic education. My principal helped to empower me and I had acted. No classroom was necessary. It was his pre-

position that allowed me the space to try. It was my pre-position that had prompted me to act. The other side of this is realizing that others are a curriculum for you if you are open to them. One must be open to learning from others. In this way, just as the teacher is the curriculum for the students, they, too, can and should be a curriculum for the teacher. This is truly *letting learn*. Did my principal learn from me? Did my non-active classmates and friends learn from me? And what did I learn from them? How symbiotic is the learning for students in a civic education curriculum with a teacher as civic education?

This ties into the idea of the students and teacher learning with each other. Taken either way, this has boundless implications. The students teach the teacher and the teacher must be open to *letting learn*. As Heidegger (1993b) insists, while teachers must have a large store of knowledge, they must also appreciate the silence. Many teachers feel that they are abdicating too much power by being silent, that their students will lose faith and trust in them as authoritative sources. But the poem *Fire* suggests, "...too much of a good thing...can douse the flames..." And as Taylor (1991) explains, teachers who withhold information are not withdrawing altogether. Instead they are active in a different way. "To teach in this way is not to cancel oneself out, but rather to listen openly and attentively. One must be silent and yet supportive, leaving space for learning. It requires that the teacher learn how to listen and how to speak from silence" (p. 353).

Thus, the teacher as civic education neither has all the answers, nor all the questions. The teacher as civic education, however, does create space for the fire to thrive. Such teachers hear the silence in between the questions they ask, in between

the questions the students ask. This silence actually invokes a physical bodily response from the teacher and the students. The heart rate increases, and waiting out the silence becomes a matter of wills. The students are counting on the fact that the teacher will cave in and speak, call on the first hand in the air, or answer his/her own question rather than make them accountable for their learning in that instant. It is through this practice that students are perpetually the passive recipients of knowledge instead of constructors of their own learning for which Taylor (1991) calls. In this regard, to fill the silence before its time has come to pass is to abdicate. The teacher **as** civic education does not abdicate. This type of civic education lends itself very strongly to what Giroux (1980) termed “emancipatory citizenship education.”

Emancipatory Civic Education

If Citizenship Education is to be emancipatory, it must begin with the assumption that its major aim is not ‘to fit’ students into existing society; instead, its primary purpose must be to stimulate their passions, imaginations, and intellects so that they will be moved to challenge the social, political, and economic forces that weigh so heavily upon their lives. (Giroux, 1980, p. 357)

Giroux, in that celebrated article, claims that civic education, up to that point had been a large failure. Schools are not the embryonic democracies the progressives envisioned, nor do they serve the purposes of citizenship education. With regard to citizenship education, Giroux differentiates between technical rationality, hermeneutic rationality and emancipatory rationality. In the technocratic model, citizenship education is a matter of transmission of facts and knowledge in a value-free, linear fashion. Knowledge is objective, and as such, citizenship education can be reduced to mastery of pre-determined objectives and behaviors. In this way, students are trained to be adaptive and conditioned as opposed to active and critical. It is this

technical model that pervades not only citizenship education, but all education as well, including teacher preparation programs. As previously referenced, Henderson and Hawthorn (2000) refer to this orientation as a “mainstream curriculum philosophy” (p. 5).

Persistence of a Poor Pedagogy

According to Cuban’s (1993) landmark analysis of pedagogical trends, despite some variances, recitation and other forms of teacher-centered instruction persist after the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries. While in later years, recitation lessened, the teacher-centered pedagogy from which the practice emerged still remained a consistent form of teaching throughout the 20th century. In Cuban’s (1982) earlier work he contends there are several reasons for this persistence. First, he cites the overall organizational structure of the school as an instrument that perpetuates teacher practices inside the classroom. In other words, the schools, with their separate grades, subject matters, bell schedules, building-wide rules and routines, force teachers to strive for efficiency so as to fit in with the larger model of efficient use of resources (time). Simply put, this organizational structure makes teacher-centered instruction with its “...straightforward ways of transmitting knowledge,” the most effective method of instruction in this setting (pp. 36-37).

Another explanation Cuban (1982) offers for the persistence of teacher-centered pedagogical practices are the belief systems of the teachers themselves. As he very eloquently states, “The idea that students learn best in structured situations where the rules are clear and equitably enforced, and that the teacher’s authority,

rooted in institutional legitimacy and the knowledge that the teacher possesses, stands unblemished” (p. 38).

Toward a Pedagogy with Fire

This transactional view of teaching and learning means that it is no longer adequate to speak simply of teaching without at the same time speaking of learning. (Grundy, 1987, pp. 101-102)

Standing in stark contrast to the persistence of the technical orientation toward teaching and curriculum, the emancipatory interest changes the language of education. It redefines what is meaningful in education. In the technical interest, those experiences that serve to fulfill a predetermined end, those that help the student reach set standards are meaningful. But is the process itself meaningful? The emancipatory interest takes hold of the actual experience and defines meaningfulness as “a matter of negotiation between teacher and learner from the outset of the learning experience” (Grundy, 1987, p. 102). Should this model not be how the social studies are taught?

Another way to understand an emancipatory curricular interest is through critical pedagogy. According to Kincheloe (2004), critical pedagogy is one that brings out one’s “impassioned spirit” (p. 4). Furthermore, Kincheloe elucidates, “Critical pedagogy wants to connect education to that feeling, to embolden teachers and students to act in ways that make a difference, and to push humans to new levels of social and cognitive achievement previously deemed impossible” (p. 4). This is indeed the call of emancipatory civic education.

Participating in a curriculum in the emancipatory interest students would be involved in a learning experience where the teacher and students take part in a dialogue. Most important, however, meaningfulness of an educational experience

comes as the experience encourages students and teachers alike to, “confront the real problems of their existence and relationships. ...When students confront the real problems of their existence they will soon also be faced with their own oppression” (Grundy, 1987, p. 103). I see glimmers of this when students such as Brendan notice that they should have more rights than they do.

Greene (1998) frames emancipatory civic education as teaching for social justice. She states, “Teaching for social justice, we must remember, is teaching what we believe ought to be... Moreover, teaching for social justice is teaching for the sake of arousing the kinds of vivid, reflective, experiential responses that might move students to come together in serious efforts to understand what social justice actually means and what it might demand” (as cited in Ayers, Hunt, & Quinn, 1998, pp. xxix-xxx). Thus, civic education, taught from an emancipatory interest, would be the most appropriate curriculum through which social justice may be pursued.

Education through the emancipatory interest is dissatisfied with current power structures and discontent with the status quo. Class discussions are a starting point for some type of action or advocacy to raise our standard of living. The emancipatory interest assumes that we are all living under some sort of oppression, and that we all have chains to shake off. As Kincheloe (2004) states, “Simply caring about students, while necessary, does not constitute critical pedagogy. The power dimension must be brought to bear...” (p. 9).

The social studies classroom is the place to explore, question, criticize and name those power dimensions. Teaching in the emancipatory interest is education stripped of its innocence. In a democratic society, how can we expect our students to

assume their full roles as citizens if we do not provide an education within which they can examine the very constructs that serve to liberate and oppress, and thereby make informed decisions for themselves and for society at large?

Preparing for the Challenges

Bringing about change in the actions, behaviors, and dispositions of one's students is, indeed, a challenge. Most teachers who teach from a critical pedagogy are able to accept the effects of this teaching. Students are more critical, ask more questions and do not readily accept everything that they are told to do. As Kohl (1998) explains, however:

It is not enough to teach well and create a social justice classroom separate from the larger community. You have to be a community activist as well, a good parent, a decent citizen, and active community member. ...Certainly it isn't easy and often demands sacrifices. Believing that all children can learn can be a blessing in your own classroom and unleash your creativity. It can transform angry and resistant students into challenging, creative, funny, loving learners. It can also get you in trouble with your supervisors for creating new expectations... (pp. 286-287)

I, too, have had to learn to accept my students' questions and allow for their growth. Just as my students began questioning my decisions, though, they also challenged other teachers as well. Social studies teachers may worry that they will become unpopular teachers and employees of a school system. It is this type of complacency and unwillingness to "rock the boat," however, that perpetuates power dynamics in our society. We must, as Kohl (1998) asserts, take this kind of teaching "for the moral and social necessity that it is. And don't be afraid to struggle for what you believe" (p. 287). If we continue to question and challenge the power structure, we do not become complacent. EVERY decision, every policy, every law, etc. is tied to some form of a "power over" relationship. As Grundy (1987) has stated,

“Emancipation becomes the act of finding one’s voice” (p. 107). Hearing the students’ voices sometimes means listening to things we do not want to hear. Many teachers are unwilling to do this. But it is ultimately the social studies classroom where this exact kind of pedagogy should take place.

In an emancipatory curriculum, students and teachers are co-creators of culture and curriculum. The emancipatory interest does not allow teachers or their students to be complacent. Teachers do not perpetuate the same power-over relationship with their students. In this way, teachers need to fuel the fires of prospective citizens before they assume a permanent role in society. The fires that are lit and fanned in the social studies classroom will spill over into society.

The Fire in Phenomenology

In this chapter, I have illuminated my journey as a student in civic education, teacher in civic education, as well as my pedagogical and curricular philosophies. Similarly, in chapter two I explore various literary sources regarding civic education to continue to understand how this phenomenon can make itself manifest, especially for middle school students. Chapter three explores phenomenology as the chosen research methodology to uncover the lived experience of civic education. I now conclude this chapter with a brief look at hermeneutic phenomenology, the methodology through which I choose to explore **the phenomenon of the lived experience of civic education for middle school students.**

Building the Fire

The goal of civic education essentially is to provide opportunities for students to experience a way to be in the world, their world, that supports a democratic

society. A preponderance of the research conducted on civic education curriculum and programs seeks to discover how much information students remember from their social studies courses, the content and major themes of social studies classes, voting habits of young adults, and how active they are in politics and in their communities after graduation (*The Civic Mission of Schools*, 2003; *Education for Civic Engagement in Democracy*, 2000; and Patterson, 2004). This type of research is important and, indeed, has its place in civic education research. What these studies fail to capture, however, are the lived experiences of students as they experience civic education. What do the daily experiences of students in social studies classrooms have to do with their experience of civic education? What does it mean to experience transformative civic education? Are not the classroom experiences of the students the essential determinant of their future behavior?

Creating the Spaces in the Fire

The research and writing of van Manen speak to me as the way to understand the phenomenon, not only of my pedagogy, but also of the lived experiences of my students. As inextricably tied together my curriculum, my pedagogy, and students' experiences are, I find that my source for illumination is through phenomenology. In this study, I seek to explore the "...textual reflection on the lived experience and practical actions of..." students in civic education (van Manen, 2003, p. 4). As van Manen (2003) states, "Phenomenology is a philosophy of the personal, the individual" (p. 7). Those unique experiences, however, are grounded in the world—and in the case of my phenomenon—the lived world of the social studies classroom.

In chapter three I explore, in depth, van Manen's (2003) six components of hermeneutic phenomenological research and how I seek to uncover my phenomenon through them. They include:

- (1) Turning to the Nature of Lived Experience;
- (2) Investigating Experience as We Live It;
- (3) Hermeneutic Phenomenological Reflection;
- (4) Hermeneutic Phenomenological Writing;
- (5) Maintaining a Strong and Oriented Relation to the Phenomenon;
- (6) Balancing the Research Context by Considering Parts and Whole. (pp. 30-31)

With van Manen's framework in place, I turn to Heidegger, Gadamer, Casey, Merleau-Ponty and others to illuminate the path on which the research takes me. In conducting my research, I seek to allow the phenomenon to reveal itself. As a teacher in *currere* with students, this methodology is especially appropriate and respectful of the students, because as van Manen (2003) maintains, I as the teacher/researcher can learn new ways to be with my students, ultimately for the benefit of all.

Attending to van Manen's framework, in chapters four and five I explore the themes that emerge and I strive to uncover what it means to be in civic education. Chapter four explores the element of lived body in civic education. Chapter five dwells on the lived-relation of students in civic education. Finally, in chapter six I attend to the broader meaning of my new understandings of student experiences in civic education and suggest new lines of flight this research may take policy-makers, curriculum developers, teachers, students, and citizens.

Perhaps the most intriguing aspect of my research is that I am challenging the very system in which I teach students. I am challenging the ways we measure students' success on a national, state and local scale. I am calling into question the

deep seeded beliefs that have shaped our existing educational structures and informed our policies. My research seeks to go beyond traditional or mainstream pedagogical practices to those practices that allow for ultimate student and teacher transformation. For what is so often lost in measurements of “Annual Yearly Progress” (AYP) as mandated by the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act, are the experiences of the students who are being measured.

Grumet (1992) asks a very appropriate question that shapes my research, especially in relation to civic education. In explaining Husserl's orientation to research she states that he asks, “How does educational experience shape the cognitive lens, change the vision so that the world is, in fact, encountered differently?” (p. 42). **This** is an essential question in civic education research. So many of the civic education programs, reports, studies, and policies are centered around changing students' behaviors and attitudes toward society and their commitment to their communities. Would it not be fruitful to get underneath the educational experience that shapes the students' lenses initially?

In examining our past as if for the first time, free of conceptual entrapments, we liberate ourselves to re-imagine our present. We carry with us in our present our past as we experienced it. If we, as Greene suggests, “make present the shapes and structures” so that our “past appears in altered ways” we can “shake the bonds that have thus directed our present actions and live in a present less bound by rationalization and more open to possibilities” (as cited in Ayers & Miller, 1998, p. 148).

This same theory can be applied to the middle school students I currently teach. Every year I hear how they “never liked social studies,” or were “never good at social studies.” What do these statements mean? These students enter my classroom for the first time with educational baggage. They do not know that I am seeing them for the first time, with new eyes. They carry with them the expectations, opinions and experiences from previous teachers, for good or for ill. They need a way to shed these past experiences and be in the present in a new way, a way that allows them to be more fully engaged in the curriculum, as if for the first time, because the curriculum of this classroom is different and new. From this, they can experience their current learning in a new way, “more pungent, more grounded” (Greene, as cited in Ayers & Miller, 1998, p. 148).

The Call of the Fire

Hermeneutic phenomenology, or as van Manen (2003) frames it, action-sensitive pedagogy, is the right match for the phenomenon I seek to explore. Ultimately, civic education seeks to bring out in students a desire, motivation, and disposition to act in the larger democratic society in a way that is thoughtful, critical, and engaged. As such, the students’ learning is connected with their doing and being in the world. As my underlying moral aim in participating in this research is to inform mine and others’ pedagogy for the ultimate benefit of students, and thus society, phenomenology is the most appropriate philosophic framework and methodology for exploring student experiences in civic education. Thus as Heidegger (1977) states, “We must keep our eyes fixed firmly on the true relation between teacher and taught”

(p. 356). To research in this way is to inform my own pedagogy and learn to act in ways with students that are transformational for teachers, students, and society.

I now move on to continue the exploration of the fire of civic education and seek to open other ways in which to see the phenomenon. For as the poem *Fire* states, “Building fires requires attention” (Brown, as cited in Intrator & Scribner, 2003, p. 89). I now turn my attention to the phenomenon more fully and call forth the voices of others who have participated in different parts of building the fire that is civic education.

CHAPTER TWO: EXPLORING THE MAKING OF CITIZENS IN CIVIC EDUCATION

What is Education that is Civic?

This study's purpose is to explore the lived experience of civic education for middle school students. What is it about this type of education that makes it **civic** education? How does the teacher's pedagogy bring about the students' experience of civic education? What are the transformative aspects of civic education for middle school students? Chapter one set out to examine my own turning to the phenomenon of civic education. As such, I provided examples of my own lived experiences in civic education both as a teacher and a student to illuminate aspects of civic education. This chapter seeks to explore civic education in more depth, as it is known in classrooms, to teachers, curriculum specialists, and political scientists and historical figures in the United States today and over time.

Before I uncover the experiences of middle school students in civic education, I must explore the essence of civic education from a variety of sources. These sources include historical documents and texts, current research in the field, anecdotal accounts, literature, speeches, and American foundational documents. Additionally, the exploration of civic education allows me to examine my own pre-understandings, biases and assumptions about civic education as fully as possible, so that I may, as phenomenologists suggest, bracket them in order to view the phenomenon with fresh eyes. Thus, I begin with an investigation of the nature of civic education and its historic roots. Subsequently, I explore the calling of and for civic education. I then

turn to the purposes of government and explore civic education through the paradoxes it presents.

On Democracy (and Republics)

In advance of an exploration of civic education and its historical and contemporary roots, a definition of democracy is in order. Taken literally, democracy is rule by the people. It derives its etymological roots from the Greek “*demokratía*, from *demos* common people, district + *krátos* rule, strength” (Barnhart, 1988, p. 264). American democracy has come to imply much more, however, than simply a government in the hands of the populace. American democracy includes several principles such as majority rule, rule of law, protection of basic, civil, and legal rights, equal opportunity and equal justice.

Our American democratic system is often referred to as a republican democracy. The term “republic” comes from the Latin, “*res*, meaning thing or affair and *publicus*, public: loosely rendered, a republic was a thing that belonged to the people” (Dahl, 1998, p. 13).

Are democracies and republics fundamentally different? In their origins, no. As they are understood in America today, yes. The full meaning of American republican democracy developed during the constitutional period of American history when in 1787 James Madison, chief architect of the constitution, distinguishes between the two: “A pure democracy by which I mean a society consisting of a small number of citizens who assemble to administer the government in person [and a] republic, by which I mean a government in which the scheme of representation takes place” (as cited in Dahl, 1998, p. 16). With this distinction, Madison established the

form of representative government in which local and state governments administer a more direct democracy while maintaining a larger republic for national affairs. With this understanding of American republican democracy, I now turn to what it means to teach for civic education in a democracy.

Heeding an Early Call: Founding Civic Education

Civic Education, which has also been called citizenship education, is not a new concept. Although not explicitly named as such, many of the Founding Fathers of our country have alluded to its necessity. Early in American history, Benjamin Franklin, for example, argued for the necessity of education that would in turn benefit the public good. In his *Proposals Relating to the Education of Youth in Pennsylvania* he states:

The good Education of Youth has been esteemed by wise Men in all Ages, as the surest Foundation of the happiness both of private families and of Commonwealths. Almost all Governments have therefore made it a principal Object of their Attention, to establish and endow with proper Revenues, such Seminaries of Learning, as might supply the succeeding Age with Men qualified to serve the Publick with Honour to themselves and to their Country. (Franklin, 1749, found on www.MarksQuotes.com/Founding-Fathers/Franklin/index2.htm)

Clearly, even before the staging of the American Revolution, writing of the Declaration of Independence, or establishment of the U.S. Constitution, Franklin foresaw the necessity of an education for citizens as the surest foundation of the happiness and a citizenry replete with “Men [sic] qualified to serve the Publick with Honour.” What does it mean to link education to a foundation of happiness? How do these values get interpreted? Such foundational ideas speak to the need for civic education that is essential in a democratic country.

George Washington connects democracy with enlightened citizenry in his

Farewell Address of 1796 when he states:

Promote, then, as an object of primary importance, institutions for the general diffusion of Knowledge. In proportion as the structure of government gives force to public opinion, it is essential that public opinion be enlightened. (2003, p. 38)

In other words, because democracy is a system of government that “gives force to public opinion,” it is essential that the people’s opinion be enlightened. He recognizes that democracy calls for a certain type of education. This notion has been recognized, in fact, by leading civic education groups such as CIRCLE (see for example, *The Civic Mission of Schools*, 2003.)

Thomas Jefferson takes the connection between maintaining a democracy and civic education one step further. In an 1820 letter to William Charles Jarvis he states:

I know no safe depository of the ultimate powers of the society but the people themselves; and if we think them not enlightened enough to exercise their control with a wholesome discretion, the remedy is not to take it from them, but to inform their discretion by education. (Found on www.MarksQuotes.com/Founding-Fathers/Jefferson/index3.htm)

Jefferson makes the case for the safe perpetuation of a democratic society and the education of the people in whose hands the powers lie. If the purpose of education, then, is to inform the discretion of the people who hold the power in their government, then what is called for is civic education.

Civic Education as Written

To explore civic education, as it is written in curriculum, I turn to two different sources, both of which influence the written curriculum in my own teaching. Within these sources I explore the underlying ideas about what makes civic education what it is.

An education for literacy and participation. I begin with the CAI blueprint from MCPS, which states, “The goal of social studies is to help create literate and well-informed citizens who actively participate in a democratic society” (2001, front page). From this simple definition, we have an entry point for understanding civic education. What does it mean to create literate students? In addition to its traditional definition meaning “able to read and write,” there also are etymological roots of the word that mean “learned” or “educated” (Barnhart, 1988, p. 602). This is not a surprising connection as any school curriculum sets out to educate its students. But these two additional meanings give the student of civic education more depth. It is not enough that they can read and write. Instead, civic education wants them to act in an “educated” or “learned” way. This implies an attitude or disposition of thoughtfulness that goes beyond mere acquisition of facts.

Next, MCPS wants students to “actively participate.” Turning to early etymological roots of these words we find that to “act” dates back to 1380 where it is derived from the Latin *agere* meaning “do, set in motion, drive” (Barnhart, 1988, p. 10). Civic education, then, becomes the educated decision to do something. The second part of the phrase is “participate” which dating back to 1531 means to “have a share, take part” (Barnhart, 1988, p. 759). So in essence, civic education can be understood as an educated drive to take part.

A final look at the MCPS definition of civic education draws us to the end in which we see their goal is for students to develop an educated drive to take part in a democratic society. Although MCPS has defined “social studies” in general as having

this goal, it is very evident that imbedded in this perspective lies the idea that at its core, social studies **is** civic education.

An education of ideas. The next source of written curriculum that informs my pedagogy is the “We the People...” program established by the Center for Civic Education (CCE). The preface to the teacher’s guide for the Level Two text elucidates some of the goals of the program. For example, it states that the text’s intent is:

To provide students with an understanding of how the Constitution came into existence, why it took the form it did, and how it has functioned for the past two hundred years. ... One result of this sort of educational experience is that the student is better equipped to participate in contemporary debates on public issues. The ability to participate in this way is one of the most important qualifications of citizenship. The aim of this text, then, is to provide students with an understanding of the American past and to equip them intellectually to be active participants in the American present and future. It is a text that enables students to learn something about political philosophy, history, and political science. In other words, it attempts to provide students with the foundation of a civic education. (Center for Civic Education, 1998, p. ix)

This is a rich description of what the “We the People” program offers teachers and students. In coming sections, I examine more fully the implications of such a program for civic education. Immediately, however, there are similarities to the MCPS definition of civic education. The CCE wants students to become “active participants” as well as become educated in the country’s history, philosophical ideas and political science.

The layer this program adds to my curriculum is that in addition to seeking to develop educated, driven students who take part in a democracy, as derived from the MCPS definition, the CCE curriculum seeks to enlighten students with ideas. The preface states, “This book is a history of ideas” (CCE, 1998, p. ix). What does it mean that this curriculum seeks to transmit ideas? Early definitions of the term date back to

1398 from the Greek *idéa* meaning a “look, semblance, form, kind, ideal prototype” (Barnhart, 1988, pp. 504-505). Is civic education one that seeks to transmit semblances and forms of democracy to students? Who decides what is democratic? What does this imply for the experiences students would have in the classroom? Civic education as a history of ideas may take the shape of students getting underneath the “forms” of democracy or participating in experiences that are “semblances” of democracy. What does this look like in the classroom? What is civic education as an education of ideas like for students?

Another etymological derivation of the term “idea,” first noted in Shakespeare’s *Love’s Labour’s Lost* from 1588, is “something imagined or fancied” (Barnhart, 1988, p. 505). This root, too, gives civic education yet another dimension. Civic education as the transmission of “something imagined or fancied” calls for the use of imagination, creativity and desire on the part of the students and teacher. To teach a curriculum of ideas the thing “fancied,” in this case democracy, must be understood and desired. This understanding would have to precede all other learning. Thus, civic education through this light, calls for not just an understanding of democracy, but also a democratization of the process as a starting point. This democratization ties back in to the earlier definition of “idea” as that of a “semblance” or “ideal prototype.” Indeed, what better place to experience a “semblance” of democracy or work towards an “ideal prototype” of democracy than in the social studies classroom? The question, though, remains: Whose idea of the “ideal” gets promoted?

What Calls for a Civic Education?

When the school introduces and trains each child of a society into membership within such a community, saturating him with the spirit of service, and providing him with the instruments of self-direction, we shall have the deepest and best guarantee of a larger society which is worthy, lovely, and harmonious. (Dewey, as cited in Cremin, 1961, p. 118)

An Historic Calling

Dewey and other progressives would assert that the purpose of education is to ensure that children can become active, informed, and empowered citizens in the larger society. This is where the role of civic education, specifically, comes into play. The history of education itself should have cemented civic education as one of its permanent pillars. As schools emerged as an organized force over the last half of the 19th century, the public schools took on a new function. Replacing local, familial, cultural, and religious-based moral education, public schools became “creators of the self-governed, self-controlled, self-disciplined, and virtuous citizens who would embody in their behavior and disposition a fusion of public and private good” (Finkelstein, 1998, p. 18).

Indeed, with the ratification of the Constitution in 1788, addition of the first amendment in 1791 and subsequent permanent separation of church and state, the role of civic education in the schools should have been established permanently. It was in this separation that founding fathers like Jefferson and Washington foresaw the need for such an education if our fledgling democracy was to thrive. In fact, CIRCLE’s (2003) *The Civic Mission of Schools* corroborates this notion stating, “The establishment of American public schools...assumed that all education had civic purposes and every teacher was a civic teacher” (p. 11).

A Current Calling

The challenge that social studies teachers encounter today is that once they enter the public schools, they often are faced with the daunting task of implementing the local or state curriculum, which may or may not contain written aspects of civic education. Often, social studies classes are the first classes school systems cut while facing the challenges of passing local, state and national exams.

An unlegislated calling. The NCLB act has already had a large impact on the teaching of social studies in the elementary and middle schools. NCLB requires, among other things, yearly testing in reading, math and soon, in science. Many local and state leaders in the social studies fear that social studies education will suffer the consequences of not being legislated as the other subject areas are. In fact, this is already the case in one county in Maryland where social studies instruction time has been reduced by one-third in elementary and middle schools. In another Maryland county, the elementary social studies program has been reduced from 90 days to 72 days. Still in other counties in the state, local schools have cut out social studies education altogether. This phenomenon also is noted by Galston (2004), who cites CIRCLE's *The Civic Mission of Schools* in reporting that social studies classes for fourth graders have decreased from 49% to 39% between 1988 and 1998.

How do the lack of national, and consequently state mandates, for civic education shape civic education in the classroom for teachers and students? Would civic education, as experienced by myself and my students be different if there were a high-stakes test attached to it at the end? One could argue that without such mandates,

a teacher has more flexibility and autonomy with the curriculum. How does this dynamic ultimately influence the experience of civic education for students?

A subversive calling. Furthermore, as progressive reformer Francis Parker (1894) states, “The common school is the embryonic democracy” (p. 423.) And yet, schools are anything but democratic. As a social studies teacher, every year my students and I marvel that as we are learning about democratic principles and values, we are doing so within a very un-democratic structure. The class itself is authoritarian as is the school and the school system. It is almost a subversive act to teach democratic ideals within the present schooling system. After reflecting on the experience of creating a class compact modeled after the Mayflower compact, one former student notes:

Although the class compact and the process of making it was fully democratic, I believe that the classroom will eventually lapse back into authoritarian order. I feel this way because the very idea, essence of school is authoritarian to most teenage kids. Although I respect the intentions of the teacher, I believe establishing democracy in a classroom will never reach its full potential of everyone being equal. (Anton)

The challenge of teaching democracy in an authoritarian setting also was present recently as I taught my students about the Bill of Rights. To help students connect it to their own lives, we made a comparison between the original Bill of Rights and their rights as students spelled out for them in their Student Rights and Responsibilities Handbook. Students were amazed at not only how many restrictions they had on their rights, but also at how flagrantly some teachers infringed upon the rights they did have. Armed with their highlighted and annotated Rights and Responsibilities Handbook, students approached teachers who punished the whole class for the actions of one student. They started a petition when there was a rumor of

an impending dress code. They knew the principal had to respond to their petition within ten days and made sure he did. Some students even chose not to say the Pledge of Allegiance as a form of protest against what they believed to be an infringement on their freedom of religion. One student was actually sent to the assistant principal's office for refusing to recite the Pledge.

This student, who had been the most vocal about the Pledge of Allegiance issue, ran into the room excitedly. "Ms. Pao!" he exclaimed. "I tried to sit during the Pledge because I don't agree with the "One nation under God part" in Ms. S's class and she told me to stand! I refused and she sent me to the office. I told Mrs. C. (the assistant principal) that you taught me it was my right. I even showed her in the book." "How did she respond?" I asked. "She said that I still had to be quiet, but that she would talk to that teacher." "So when Ms. S. threatened to send you to the office, you decided to go rather than just stand for the Pledge?" I asked. "Yes. I knew I was right. You taught us to know our rights and to stand up for them. Isn't that what you taught us?" Indeed this student was right, but I realized that the experiences the students have in my classroom are far from the norm. Most students do not experience this type of civic education, if they experience civic education at all in their social studies class. What prompted this student to act? Was this civic education? What are the moral dilemmas of teachers prompting action from students when such actions are met with resistance?

A Calling of Conflict

Part of the challenge of defining civic education, as mentioned previously, is the spectrum of views on what should be included in a social studies curriculum.

Social studies traditionally encompass all social sciences including geography, economics, political science, history, culture, sociology, and psychology. There are many who argue that the focus of social studies should be on history and lament its demise in lieu of a broader social science curriculum. Yet, others suggest that civic education has been a failure because of its traditional delivery as a set of dry facts and processes. These conflicts speak to the underlying differences in epistemologies of teachers, curriculum specialists, policy-makers, and social scientists.

To explore these varying ideologies of what is called for in civic education, imagine a conversation around a conference table between the following people:

Lynn Cheney, Senior Fellow, American Enterprise Institute, wife of Vice President Dick Cheney and author of *Telling the Truth: A report on the State of Humanities in Higher Education*;

Ann Neal and Jerry Martin, authors of *Losing America's Memory: Historical Illiteracy in the 21st Century* (2000);

Kathleen Kennedy Manzo, a reporter for the *Education Week*, author of the article *History Invades Social Studies' Turf in Schools* (2003), posted on <http://www.edweek.org/ew/ewstory.cfm?slug=19hist.h22>;

Philip Phenix, author of *Realms of Meaning* (1966);

Chuck Quigley, Executive Director of the Center for Civic Education, author of *Civic Education: Recent History, Current Status, and the Future* (1999), posted on <http://www.civiced.org>;

Henry Giroux, author of *Critical Theory and Rationality in Citizenship Education* (1980); and

John J. Patrick, author of *Defining, Delivering, and Defending a Common Education for Citizenship in a Democracy* (2003).

Opening Questions in Civic Education

Donna: I thank you all for coming. I have assembled you all as experts on the topic of what is civic education so I can understand this phenomenon more fully. I realize you all have differing views on what civic education and social studies

should be and I welcome your views to help me inform my own understanding.

Neal and Martin: Perhaps we can open the discussion by asking, “Who are we? What is our past? Upon what principles was American democracy founded? And how can we sustain them? —These are the questions that have inspired, motivated and perplexed since the beginning. And they are questions which still elude our full understanding.” (Neal & Martin, 2000, p. 1)

Donna: I agree these are very important questions. And how one answers them will surely speak to one’s epistemology, pedagogical beliefs and philosophical practices regarding civic education and the social studies.

Manzo: Yes. In fact, “Differences in pedagogical philosophy —both clear and subtle—have competed since early in the 20th century, when some educators promoted a new approach to teaching history, one that placed greater emphasis on the recent past and social perspectives to make the subject more relevant to students’ lives.” (Manzo, 2003, p. 3)

Donna: So it seems a fundamental difference in beliefs about civic education lies in how one approaches the subject. What are some of these differences and what leads to them?

Manzo: Since 9/11 there has been a move towards a more narrowly focused history curriculum. Many historians do not favor the “social studies” approach because it promotes a “critical view of the nation’s history and a betrayal of the Founding Fathers’ view of education.” (Manzo, 2003, p. 2)

Failure in the Public

I think back to some of the founding fathers’ views on education and wonder how they would view civic education in light of recent events such as the terror attacks. In addition to the terror attacks, other events have brought into focus the need for civic education. In fact, the importance of a social studies education that emphasizes civic involvement comes to a critical mass, in light of recent events such as the war in Iraq, the terror attacks on the United States and even the 2000 presidential election, one of the closest in history, the office of the president being decided by a difference of only a handful of votes. The House of Representatives

almost had to exercise their Constitutional power of choosing the President in the event of a tie. The Supreme Court stepped in to render a decision as to whether to allow the recount of popular votes in Florida to continue. The media coverage lasted for weeks alternating between footage of vote-counters in Florida, interviews with the candidates in their homes, and press conferences with the Attorney General of Florida and the Justices of the U.S. Supreme Court. Shows like Meet the Press, Dateline, The Wolfe Blitzer Hour and others interviewed citizens all over the country, and reported from universities, high schools, middle schools and elementary schools to see how American students, teachers and professors alike were interpreting the political process. In classrooms all over America, social studies teachers, like myself, held debates and discussions over the purpose and function of the Electoral College, the constitutionality of the recount, and the history of how the office of President had been filled. It was a great time in the classroom for civic education.

As for American's political consciousness, in the words of Charles Dickens, "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times." All across America citizens were taking an interest in the political process and how to interpret the text of the Constitution. An outside observer of the press coverage of the election might think that a majority of Americans were an enlightened and active citizenry, but they would have been mistaken. Despite the closeness of the race and the national clamor the conflicts between the two factions aroused, the voter turnout for the 2000 presidential election was one of the lowest in history. According to the National Census Bureau, a mere 54.7% of eligible voters cast ballots in this election. This is an appalling statistic given the fact that our democratic system of government founded on ideals such as

majority rule, rule of law, and popular sovereignty ensures more freedoms for its citizens than any other country. Yet, as proven by our behavior in the last election, Americans know very little about the foundation of our government and the ideals upon which it was based. For example, according to a gallop poll surveying the public's knowledge of politics and issues, in 1991 only 37% of Americans knew what majority is needed to override a president's veto. In 2000 a mere 8% knew who the Chief Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court was (Smith, 2004).

What **would** our founding fathers say about the state of civic education and civic consciousness today? In light of our ever-growing diversity and the disparity between the classes, would they favor a more critical pedagogy with regard to civic education?

This recent situation also draws me to an understanding of the role of civic education. In what other class than the social studies would students learn about participation in a democracy including how and why to vote, the impact and role of politics, and democratic principles that guide and influence our daily lives? What was lacking from the civic education of Americans who did not vote or who misinterpreted the actions of the Supreme Court? Or, perhaps, the question should be, what was the essence of their civic education that left them with the dispositions they had?

Civic Education as Essential History

Donna: Is it possible that civic education be critical without “betraying” our founding fathers’ hopes for education?

Manzo: Perhaps. “Some experts contend, however, that students must first master the essential history content to have a context for the issues and themes they encounter.” (Manzo, 2003, p. 5)

Donna: So civic education needs to include some aspects of history education. I understand that some argue that history should be the focus itself, rather than civic knowledge, dispositions, and issues related to social justice. Others believe that history needs to be problematized.

Giroux: Yes! Exactly. “Citizenship education’s own problematic must begin with the question of whether or not this society should be changed in a particular way or left the way it is.” (Giroux, 1980, p. 349)

Donna: Does the view of social studies that largely emphasizes traditional history education allow for this?

Giroux: Good question, Donna. The “traditional history education” you name falls under what I call *technocratic rationality*. Along those lines, “Two traditions in citizenship education that are strongly wedded to the basic assumptions of technocratic rationality include the citizenship transmission model and the citizenship as social science model. ...The citizenship transmission model represents the oldest and still most powerful tradition in citizenship education. ...In the name of transmitting cherished beliefs and values, this model of citizenship education ends up supporting, through its methodologies and content, behavior that is adaptive and conditioned, rather than active and critical.” (Giroux, 1980, pp. 336-337)

Donna: So civic education should take a more critical approach with regard to the study of history rather than a traditional objective narrative approach. What really is the role of history in civic education? Maybe it is not essential to learn history in a civic education?

Neal and Martin: I take issue with that notion. “It is sometimes said that historical facts do not matter. But citizens who fail to know basic landmarks of history and civics are unlikely to be able to reflect on their meaning. They fail to recognize the unique nature of our society, and the importance of preserving it. They lack an understanding of the very principles which bind our society—namely, liberty, justice, government by the consent of the governed, and equality under law.” (Neal & Martin, 2000, p. 4)

Phenix: But we must continue to question how it is we teach history. “In the discipline of history, nineteenth-century scientific historians had been confident that that the historian could strictly present the facts about what really happened in the past. In reaction against this reduction of history to empirical science, the subsequent Historicist movement emphasized the personal, irrational, and contingent factors in historical judgments, thus bringing into question the possibility of any reliable historical knowledge.” (Phenix, 1966, p. 45)

Cheney: I believe there is such thing as reliable historical knowledge and that this knowledge is sorely lacking from our American youth today. “Knowledge of the ideas that have molded us and the ideals that have mattered to us function as a kind of civic glue. Our history and literature give us symbols to share; they help us all, no matter how diverse our backgrounds, feel part of a common undertaking.” (as cited in Neal & Martin, 2000, p. 1)

Phenix: “If education is to be regarded as grounded in the search for meaning, the primary goal of a philosophy of the curriculum is to analyze the nature of meaning” (Phenix, 1966, p. 5). In other words, teachers should not present history and literature as absolutes but rather as vehicles for the student to uncover the nature of meaning themselves.

The comments of the participants give me pause at this time to reflect on the role of history in civic education. I think back to my own history education and remember a curriculum similar to that which Neal, Martin, and Cheney describe: historical landmarks, patriotic songs, events, people, battles, government processes, and election results that I had to remember later for tests and quizzes.

This history was presented under the umbrella of social studies, in all grade levels. What is it about this static learning that occurs in most history classes, even if only in part? Applebee (1996) would argue, “If there is too much material to cover...dialogue is almost of necessity supplanted by monologue, in which the teacher reverts to telling students what they need to know” (p. 55). In traditional history classes where the emphasis is on coverage, this form of teaching is pervasive. The pitfalls of this method, however, as Applebee (1996) asserts are that “In a completely new domain, students don’t know ‘enough’ to take independent action...If we do not structure the curricular domain so that students can actively enter the discourse, the knowledge they gain will remain decontextualized and unproductive” (p. 57). Furthermore, as stated in *Integrity in the College Curriculum* (1985):

If everyone and everything has a history, then opportunities for nurturing historical consciousness...are manifestly unlimited. That does not mean, however, that that historical consciousness comes naturally, nor that it can be delivered on order by the history department in large survey courses or in textbook assignments in narrative history...The best way to develop historical consciousness is to study historical situations in depth, whether the situation is the emergence of a school of painting, the outbreak of a war, the critical reception of a major writer, the adoption of certain economic policies. (p. 18)

This struggle seems most pertinent in traditional social studies classes that emphasize attainment of historical knowledge. What is civic education like for students who experience this type of curriculum? Is it true civic education? Is knowledge of history essential to the experience of civic education? If so, who determines what history is essential to learn? With these questions in mind, I return to the conversation.

Civic Education United by Principles

Patrick: Mrs. Cheney, this ‘civic glue’ of which you speak, I agree that we need something that unites us as an American people. Allow me to expand on that idea. “Civic educators of yesterday and today have understood that Americans have been and are a people tied together primarily by common civic principles and values rather than common kinship, ethnicity, or religion—the ties that have bound most other nations in the world. A main point of civic education in the United States, therefore, has been to develop among diverse people a common commitment to principles and values expressed in such documents as the 1776 Declaration of Independence, the 1787 Constitution, and the 1791 Bill of Rights. Building and maintaining national unity from social and cultural diversity is an imperative of education for citizenship in a democracy like the United States.” (2000/2003, p. 18)

Giroux: Likewise, I am not arguing that historical facts not be taught, but we need to examine how we teach them and to what end we are serving. For example, “Teachers and students within this (technocratic) context are expected to be either passive consumers or transmitters of knowledge, rather than negotiators of the world in which they work and act” (Giroux, 1980, p. 338). What end does this mode of instruction serve? Certainly not the ultimate goal of a common civic education as the founding fathers envisioned it. In the hermeneutic, or practical interest, as well as in the emancipatory, we will find a closer vision of what citizenship education should be.

With Giroux's remarks, I am reminded of something Bradbeer (1998) writes related to the practical interest in curriculum:

The teacher's duty, with respect to the student, however, is not to facilitate curriculum, nor to sweeten, nor merely make the curriculum interesting, but to make it possible, to make it speak to life as it is perceived in our times... The possible curriculum, which stands against the opaque and the exhausting, is the teacher's 'sacred' duty. (Bradbeer, 1998, p. 129)

If nowhere else, the social studies is the place for the *possible* curriculum.

Social studies teachers who forever seek to make the knowledge relevant to our times, must take it as a *sacred duty* to illuminate the curriculum. Thus, the practical interest speaks to the "right" thing to do. How can we judge what is right as teachers, and how can we expect our students to do the same if we do not frame the learning in our present situation? In this way, I see Giroux's point about our need to problematize historical knowledge. The moral judgment comes from our interaction with knowledge in our own contexts. In this way, we teach the *possible* curriculum in that we do not know what it is going to be (entirely) until we bring together the students, the material and ourselves (as teachers). It is through the interaction of these elements that the possible curriculum is co-constructed. How does this view of curriculum shape the experience of civic education for students?

An Education of Paradox

Returning to the conversation, Quigley has been contemplating the dual roles of learning history as well as how to participate in a democracy in civic education.

Quigley: I, too, do not think we have to forsake one for the other. Knowledge of history is important, as is development of the skills and dispositions Professor Patrick mentioned. "Our task should be to develop the student's capacity to participate competently and responsibly. This includes fostering among our students a reasoned commitment to the fundamental values and principles of American constitutional democracy. Thus prepared, they should have the

capacity and the inclination to work together to preserve our democratic heritage and narrow the gap between our ideals and reality.” (Quigley, 1999, no pagination)

Donna: I see that there is still an essential conflict surrounding what needs to be emphasized in social studies and civic education. How would a civic education course be designed to bring about in students “the capacity and inclination to work together to preserve our democratic heritage?” And tying back to my initial research interest, what would the experience of the students be like in such a course?

Patrick: I can speak to the notion of how civic education can be designed. As I, and others in my field, see it, the four essential components of a common education for citizenship in democracy should include: (1) knowledge of citizenship and government in a democracy, (2) intellectual skills of citizenship in a democracy, (3) participatory skills of citizenship in a democracy, and (4) dispositions of citizenship in a democracy.

Quigley: I like your model, Dr. Patrick, and for emphasis, I add, “Aristotle said that ‘If liberty and equality, as is thought by some, are chiefly to be found in a democracy, they will be attained when all persons alike share in the government to the utmost.’ I think this statement conveys an important thought, but I would like to take the “liberty” of adding something to it. What is missing from Aristotle's statement is the idea that participation alone is not enough. We need to develop **enlightened** participation and the best way to do that is through civic education.” (Quigley, 1999, no pagination)

Patrick: Donna, you have been witness to quite a discussion of civic education. No doubt our varying views and ideas leave you with more questions than answers.

Donna: Yes! And as I get close to conducting my own research on the experiences of students in civic education, I am sure more questions will emerge. But this dialogue has given me many entry points for uncovering what it might mean for students to experience civic education. I cannot help but mention the underlying tension, however, between the need for an education that allows for a continuation of democracy while at the same time works toward change.

Patrick: You have identified an essential paradox in civic education. “Civic education in an authentic constitutional representative democracy has the paradoxical mission of sustaining a particular kind of political order and, at the same time, promoting free and independent choices by autonomous citizens.” (2003, p. 29)

Donna: I think of something Thomas Jefferson once said, “If a nation expects to be ignorant and free, it expects what never was and never will be” (as cited in

Neal & Martin, 2000, p. 1). It is easy to agree with this notion wholeheartedly. How we must set about educating our children and prospective citizens, however, is open for debate. It is my contention that the social studies classroom is the place where civic education must come to life for the students if we are going to maintain our democratic system of government. I will continue to explore how to balance the paradox between order and freedom within civic education.

The Paradox of Civic Education

The tension between order and freedom is ever present in education, in the individual teacher's classroom as well as in politics and democracy. As Martin Luther King Jr. writes in his *Letter from Birmingham City Jail*, "I must confess that I am not afraid of the word tension. I have earnestly worked and preached against violent tension, but there is a type of constructive tension that is necessary for growth" (2003, p. 166). The rival political parties base their platforms on how to mediate this tension. The Patriot Act, for example, illustrates a move down the continuum forsaking some liberties such as privacy for order and safety in the post 9/11 era.

Civic education also can be viewed in light of this tension. At the root of the disagreements between conservatives and critical theorists is the ultimate purpose of civic education. Should it be an education that teaches students to be obedient, lawful citizens, or one that teaches them to be critical citizens who fight to keep the governmental infringement on our liberty in check? To pursue these and other questions of civic education further, as well as to frame the multiple views and perspectives on the goals and purposes of civic education, I turn to the Preamble of the U.S. Constitution as a framework for exploring the possibilities and paradoxes of civic education.

We the People...

It is no accident that the first three words of the preamble are “we the people.” The founding fathers substituted these words for “we the states” so that they could emphasize the importance of the role each individual must play in a democracy. Thus, I ask, what do these three words imply about the role civic education must fulfill? In *Democracy in America*, De Tocqueville asks, “How does it happen that everyone takes as zealous an interest in the affairs of his township, his county, and the whole state as if they were his own? It is because everyone, in his sphere, takes an active part in the government of society” (2003, p. 79). De Tocqueville is getting at the essence of what he believed it meant to be an American citizen in the 1800’s. How can civic education today inspire this type of active involvement and empathy in students for their local and state societies? This type of disposition seems to call for the development of a sense of ownership and identification with one’s country and citizenship within the local, state and national levels. De Tocqueville further states, “As the American participates in all that is done in his country, he thinks himself obliged to defend whatever may be censured in it; for it is not only his country that is then attacked, it is himself” (p. 79). What would a civic education that inspired in students such ardent fervor towards their country and government look like?

When students read or hear the words, “We the people” do they picture themselves? Do they think of themselves as part of the group of people on whom the future of American democracy relies? What type of civic education would propel students to this point of inclusion? As mentioned previously, I begin each year with a simulation of the journey of the Mayflower. My goal is to teach students about the

social compact and the idea of consent of the governed by allowing them to create their own class compact modeled after the Mayflower compact. How does this type of experiential learning lead students to an identification with themselves and each other as “We the people?” Is the experience of citizenship in the classroom itself necessary for students to learn fully what it means to be a citizen outside of the classroom?

As shown previously, policy-makers, educators and citizens all have different and often competing notions of what civic education is and what its ultimate purpose should be. As almost all U.S. citizens and residents would agree, democracy is desirable. Therefore, teaching for democracy, or civic education in a democracy is a desirable endeavor. What is little agreed upon is civic education’s ultimate purpose. Westheimer and Kahne (2004) frame the disagreement by entitling their article, “‘What Kind of Citizen?’ to call attention to the spectrum of ideas about what good citizenship *is* and what good citizens *do* that are embodied by democratic education programs nationwide” (p. 237).

Good character = good citizens. Westheimer and Kahne (2004) describe three different types of citizens and call into question the type of citizen toward which civic education should be directed. The “Personally Responsible” citizen is the product of the most prevalent kind of civic education. These citizens are taught to act responsibly within their community, obey laws, and volunteer when needed. Proponents of a civic education that promotes this type of citizenship assume, “To solve social problems and improve society, citizens must have good character; they must be honest, responsible, and law-abiding members of the community” (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004, p. 240). But is this the kind of citizen emancipatory

civic education seeks to create?

Criticizing programs such as “Character Counts!” for falling short of providing students with real civic education, Westheimer and Kahne (2004) state, “Visions of obedience and patriotism that are often and increasingly associated with this agenda can be at odds with democratic goals. . .Fostering honesty, good-neighborliness, and so on—are not *inherently* about democracy” (p. 244). This stance raises the question of whether character education is an essential aspect of civic education. Can students experience civic education without an emphasis on virtues? Furthermore, whose virtues should be emphasized?

Participation. The second kind of citizen Westheimer and Kahne (2004) term the “Participatory Citizen.” Civic education geared towards this type of citizen seeks to educate persons who are active members of community organizations and who know how government agencies work. Civic education in this light is based on the assumption that “To solve social problems and improve society, citizens must actively participate and take leadership positions within established systems and community structures” (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004, p. 240).

I think of this type of citizen and ask if participation and leadership in an existing democratic system is enough. Many popular civic education programs emphasize this view of civic education, including “We the People” curriculum in which students participate in a simulated congressional hearing. What if the teacher does not raise the question as to why the problem exists to begin with? Are citizens who participate actively the ultimate goal of civic education?

Challenging the system. The third type of citizen entertained by Westheimer

and Kahne (2004) is the “Justice-oriented Citizen.” This citizen critically assesses political, economic and social issues and structures to see beyond the effects in search of causes. Teachers in civic education for the justice-oriented citizen assume, “To solve social problems and improve society, citizens must question, debate, and change established systems and structures that reproduce patterns of injustice over time” (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004, p. 240). In light of the justice-oriented citizen, is the school enough for creating such a citizen? Are schools the ultimate place where this education can exist?

In all three of these models, the third of which Westheimer and Kahne argue should be the purpose of civic education, the outcome is that students will want to solve social problems and improve society. How does this notion get established to begin with? Do students, by mere virtue of being in a civic education classroom come to understand their role as citizen as one who seeks to improve society? Do students feel an immediate sense of “we the people?” Does one purpose of civic education over another instill in students the drive to do this more than another? Is it ideal or even possible to create social-justice oriented citizens, or do societies need a mix of the three types of citizens described?

In Order to Form a More Perfect Union...

The beginning of the Mayflower Compact states that the Pilgrims came together so as to “...covenant and combine [themselves] together into a civil Body Politick, for...better Ordering and Preservation” (Mayflower Compact, 1620, as posted on www.law.ou.edu/hist/mayflow.htm). In a similar way, teachers of civic education facilitate a space for their students to come together in full membership of a

learning community. Thus, to allow for letting learn and the co-creation of curriculum, the teacher's role must be redefined. Teachers must be facilitators of space: space for students to hear and think, space for them to think and then speak, space for them to speak and then listen.

A coming together. I think about the physical space between myself and the students, and the physical space that exists between each of them. All of the space is confined within four walls. What is this space, this classroom space? What makes the actual classroom space sacred, a more perfect union? What is it about the room that allows for the other kinds of space students and teacher co-create there? We find the Old English root of the word "room" to be *cofa*, ancestor of the word *cove*, a variant of *coven* or *covenant*. Covenant comes from the 13th century Old French meaning "agreement" or the Latin *convenire*; "Come together"

(<http://www.geocities.com/etymonline/>).

The room itself is an invitation for students to take part in a gathering. By virtue of entering the sacred physical space, students and teacher make an agreement, just as the Pilgrims did in 1620. They make a covenant that they will *let learn* together. Indeed, just as a covenant was used to describe a meeting of witches, students and teacher together in the classroom form a whole whose powers converge to co-create new meanings. Thus, perhaps civic education calls for the creation of sacred space or the continual co-creation of a more perfect union. The students and teacher are *coven* together. Perhaps students of civic education can take this experience into their lives outside of the classroom and feel *coven* to their country.

E pluribus unum. The idea of creating citizens who strive towards a “more perfect union” is reinforced by Parker (2003) who contrasts citizenship with idiocy. Deriving from the ancient Greek, idiocy has its roots in “*idios*, which means private, separate, self-centered—selfish” (p. 2). Parker (2003) contrasts the self-centered idiot with the publicly aware citizen and frames the challenge of democracy thus:

We are free *so that* we can create a community life *so that*, in turn, we can be free. ...*Idiots are idiotic precisely because they are indifferent to the conditions and contexts of their own freedom.* They fail to grasp the interdependence of liberty and community. (p. 4)

I marvel at the implications such a theory has for civic education. What would an education look like that drew students’ attention to the conditions of their own freedom? In many respects, this theory seems contradictory to the entire structure of schooling. While trying to reinforce the notion of community and a common citizenship, students are learning in an environment that is highly competitive and rewards individual achievement. How do teachers of civic education mediate these tensions if they strive to overcome idiocy in favor of citizenship?

Creating citizens. Parker (2003) asserts that to lead a non-idiotic life, one must be connected and engaged fully with the community and the common good. He frames the challenge of mediating the tension between individual liberties and public life:

It is citizens who walk the paths to the public squares and, by walking them, *create* them. There, struggling to absorb as well as express, to listen as well as to be heard, they strive to communicate across their differences, recognizing them and joining them with deliberation. This is how publics come to be. Citizens, then, balance the need to enjoy private liberties with the obligation to create a public realm, specifically to create policy decisions about how we will be with one another and what problems we will solve together and how. (p. 11)

Mediating the relationship between private freedoms and public concerns is at the heart of civic education, according to Parker (2003). How do students experience civic education taught through this tension? I am reminded of the experience of creating the class compact. In striving to “form a more perfect union” in the classroom, many students experience the tension between their own rights and freedoms and the common good. One former student comments:

It was cool because we got to have a say in what rights we wanted, like chewing gum, picking our own seats, and a review day before tests and it was like a real democracy. Even though we didn't all get what we wanted, since we voted on it and all signed it, it was what was best for the whole class. The common good is to learn and get good grades so the class compact should do that. (Simmi)

Is the forming of a “more perfect union” a pipe dream, an unattainable ideal, or a goal towards which all civic education must strive? Darling-Hammond (1998) states, “If equality, humanity, and freedom are the promise of democracy, then education is the promise-keeper. ...It provides a vehicle for all citizens, regardless of wealth or circumstance of birth, to secure their inalienable rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness” (in Ayers & Miller, 1998, p. 79). What does a civic education look like that provides this vehicle?

In seeking to form a “more perfect union” in the classroom and out in society, teachers of civic education have enormous responsibility in shaping the experiences of their students. As Maxine Greene (1984) states, “Freedom is made possible only when people come together with some common notion of personal integrity...in a life consciously lived in common” (p. 5). Thus the teacher and students, the *coven*, must combine together for this purpose and develop this notion of personal integrity towards a life lived socially.

Establish Justice...

How can civic education establish justice? Promoting justice could begin at the school level in the classroom. As Greene states:

Now and then, we can find a school committed enough to transform its neighborhood to speak explicitly about social justice. ...That means, of course, to learn to reflect on experience in the culture and the social world, to discover how much of the stuff of actually lived experience has been shaped by an oppressor somewhere—a landlord, an inspector, a principal, a physician—and how much has been freely chosen by the individual empowered to create her- or himself as she or he lives a life. (Introduction in Ayers et al., 1998, p. xl)

What are the situations teachers for civic education can create for students to allow for the recognition of their experiences shaped by an oppressor? Is this not the emancipatory citizenship education for which Giroux (1980) calls? Civic education that seeks to promote justice calls for emancipatory citizenship education, for how can a teacher fully teach purposes of government in ways that allow students to transform, without calling into question the nature of justice itself?

Sacred rights. I am drawn to examples of Americans who have fought to promote justice. In 1873 Susan B. Anthony was sued for refusing to pay a fine for voting illegally. Her vote was illegal because she was female. Before pronouncing her sentence, the judge permitted her to speak on her own behalf. She states:

I am not arguing the question, but simply stating the reasons why sentence can not, in justice, be pronounced against me. Your denial of my citizen's right to vote is the denial of my right of consent of one of the governed, the denial of my right of representation as one of the taxed, the denial of my right to a trial by a jury of my peers as an offender against the law, therefore, the denial of my sacred rights to life, liberty, property... (2003, p. 159)

In light of Anthony's testimony, promoting justice is viewed as the pursuit of full citizenship and the natural, civil, and political rights that come with it. Civic education in this vein calls for, as Greene states in the previous quote, a process "to

discover how much of the stuff of actually lived experience has been shaped by an oppressor somewhere.” What sacred rights are important for students to recognize? How can civic education be structured so that students examine and learn how to fight for their own sacred rights?

Recognizing the oppressor. Kseniya, a former student, had an opportunity to recognize an oppressor while in conversation with her English teacher. In reflecting on why she sometimes says the Pledge and other times not, she states:

Kseniya: Well, just sitting down and not talking shows respect so why do you have to stand up? What if you are not an American citizen and you don't go under those words? ...So you can just sit there and not talk. You don't have to stand up. Our English teacher asked us last week if we stood to say the Pledge and only half of us said we did. He said “Good” because we shouldn't be forced to stand if we don't want to and he told us that we should not be sent to the office if we don't want to because we should be able to express our opinions. Then he said we should go to the office and report the teacher.

Donna: How did you come to understand that you didn't have to say the Pledge or that you had a choice?

Kseniya: “Students Rights and Responsibilities Handbook.” And in social studies class. I don't know if I believe in God yet, but I am still really open-minded and I don't get offended with the God part...but I can understand how other people would.

This instance of civic education was not bound by the time and place of a social studies classroom. Kseniya recognized the place where her understanding began, but the true experience of realizing her rights transcended the social studies class. If she were to take her learning further and apply civic education for the promotion of justice perhaps she would mount a campaign to inform other students of their rights and the violations many students suffer without realizing it. Thus, civic education in the social studies classroom represents a starting point.

Westheimer and Kahne (2004), however, would take this scenario one step further and problematize it. It is not enough that the student recognizes limits on individual freedoms. Rather, students need to seek out the root causes of injustice and social issues, according to their social-justice model for civic education.

Ensure Domestic Tranquility...

Thoreau asks, “How does it become a man to behave toward this American government to-day?” (1849/1999, p. 268). He led by example of what it means to question the authority of one’s government when he refused to pay a poll tax and consequently spent a night in jail. Civil disobedience seems to fly in the face of ensuring domestic tranquility in that it is by its very nature, disobedience of law which can very quickly lead to a breakdown in order. Yet, as Thoreau argues, it is this exact kind of behavior that is essential in perpetuating American democracy.

How does an education for freedom prepare students to behave in a way as to ensure that order will prevail? In that one of the main purposes of any government is to maintain order, what should civic education do to promote this aspect of democracy? Perhaps because of the prevalence of educational practices that restrict freedoms and posit the need for order over the free expression of personal liberties, this aspect of democracy is most protected and therefore needs to be challenged as opposed to instilled in students of civic education. Thoreau (1849/1999) further notes:

The authority of government, even such as I am willing to submit to... is still an impure one: to be strictly just. It must have the consent of the governed. It can have no pure right over my person and property but what I concede to it. The progress from an absolute to a limited monarchy, from a limited monarchy to a democracy, is a progress toward a true respect for the individual. (p. 287)

Taken this way, civic education can be viewed as an education of progress “toward a true respect for the individual.” Thus as students learn within a current system of bells, rules, regulations, and restrictions, civic education with respect to ensuring domestic tranquility may take the shape of civil disobedience. I think back to my student who sat down during the Pledge of Allegiance and wonder if when he enters society with the full rights of a citizen what his sense of ensuring domestic tranquility will be. Perhaps he will have the sense that to challenge the system is the best way to allow it to continue.

Provide for the Common Defense...

Providing for the common defense is the other aspect of purposes of government in place to establish order. As fundamental to government as providing a common defense is, recent events such as the war in Iraq, terror attacks, and the U.S. involvement in other foreign affairs calls into question the nature of defense in a democracy. What shape does civic education take in light of these events? How is civic education different in a time of terror or war than in times of peace? What is the place of war in a country that honors peace?

An international wrong. The tension between order and freedom is no stronger than during times of war. I am drawn to an excerpt from a poem by Auden entitled *September 1, 1939*:

Accurate scholarship can
Unearth the whole offence
From Luther until now
That has driven a culture mad,
Find what occurred at Linz,
What huge imago made
A psychopathic god:
I and the public know

What all the schoolchildren learn,
 Those to whom evil is done
 Do evil in return...

Into this neutral air
 Where blind skyscrapers use
 Their full height to proclaim
 The strength of Collective Man.
 Each language pours its vain
 Competitive excuse:
 But who can live for long
 In an euphoric dream;
 Out of the mirror they stare,
 Imperialism's face
 And the international wrong.
 (pp. 433-434)

These stanzas seem to raise the question of the role of America in international affairs. "What all the schoolchildren learn, those to whom evil is done do evil in return." What is the moral obligation of civic education teachers with respect to teaching students about our country's national defense policies? The second stanza speaks to a critical stance that one can take toward capitalism and American democracy. This poem, first written as a reflection on the Nazi occupation of Germany, is even more pertinent to us in post 9/11 America.

A true patriot. At a time in our history when patriotism is encouraged as a way to show support for the troops abroad, a critical pedagogy in civic education is not always looked upon favorably. But is true civic education the simple transmission of American democratic culture and values, or is it the critical examination of these values even at the risk of "unpatriotism?" In mediating the tension between order and freedom, what role do protest, petition, free speech and assembly have in the civic education classroom? Is civic education in the time of terror different from civic education at other times?

I turn to Frederick Douglass' 1847 address in Syracuse, New York, *If I Had a Country, I Should Be a Patriot*. In it he states:

How can I love a country where the blood of my own blood, the flesh of my own flesh, is now toiling under the lash? ... So long as my voice can be heard on this or the other side of the Atlantic, I will hold up America to the lightning scorn of moral indignation. In doing this, I shall feel myself discharging the duty of a true patriot; for he is a lover of his country who rebukes and does not excuse its sins. (2003, p. 203)

Douglass asserts that a true patriot *is* one who is critical of his country and “does not excuse its sins.”

Civic education in war, terror and peace. Finally, returning the Westheimer and Kahne's (2004) model of three types of civic education, it would appear that the first kind of citizen, one who is personally responsible, would be ideal in a time of war. This citizen would buy war bonds, and donate time and supplies for the war effort. Similarly, the participatory citizen would benefit society by enlisting in the armed forces. The social-justice citizen would seek out solutions to inequalities within the armed forces ranks, protest the war, and petition the government for foreign policy changes to promote peace.

Is it possible that civic education changes depending on the state of the country? If the country were composed of only social-justice seeking citizens, would the government be able to defend itself adequately at home and abroad? War brings to light the conflict between the different intentions of civic education and their ultimate role in society. Do teachers of civic education have a moral responsibility to teach for a certain type of citizenship during times of war? Furthermore, how do students experience their civic education and citizenship during times of war, terror, and peace? Might not the teaching of moral responsibility keep us on the path to peace?

Promote the General Welfare...

The teacher who creates the world of curriculum, situating its phenomenon in space and time, in the politics of discourse, shaping its sense and its reference, is more closely bound to convention than the writer because she invites other people's children to actually spend their days within the pages of her book... the teacher is more legally and historically bound to an intricate history of conventions. (Grumet, 1999, p. 240)

The obligation of civic education. As teachers we are more confined to convention because of our "obligation" to students. But what is this obligation and who defines it? From Grumet's (1999) perspective, it is clear that the traditional obligation assumed here is that of a technical orientation. In other words, the accepted and expected obligation of teachers, with regard to their students, is to deliver the linear model of instruction, to follow the "guide" and to make sure the standards are met. It implies that to deviate from this model would be considered doing a disservice to our children, not promoting their welfare. Emancipatory civic education would not have a place here. Grumet (1999) uses the phrase that teachers "invite other people's children to actually spend their days within the pages of her book." Indeed, what an enormous responsibility we take on when we invite other people's children to learn from us.

We are tied to conventions such as standardized assessments and objectives because that is what our society values. Moreover, as Grumet (1999) implies, parents trust that in our care, within the pages of our books, their children will learn the skills, the *techné* necessary to measure up to these standards (Grundy, 1987). Do they also assume that the teacher of civic education will teach their children how to be a "successful" citizen? It is as if despite our best efforts and purest intentions, the technical model keeps teachers tied to conventions. Are we short-changing our

students if we do not “teach to the test,” help them “meet standards” to pass the high-stakes tests, or to be obedient students and citizens?

With regard to civic education, what sense do students get of their own welfare when they are in teaching with each other in civic education? When students are pushed to question norms, name their oppressors and take critical stances towards our country’s history, how does this shape their sense of their own welfare as a student in civic education or as a citizen outside of the classroom?

Citizenship as public achievement. Civic apathy is one of the most detrimental obstacles to democracy. Civic education researchers such as Putnam (2000), and Neal and Martin (2000) have documented and bemoaned this apathy. Boyte’s (2000) study of the Public Achievement approach to civic education strives to counterbalance this trend toward civically unengaged youth. In a framework similar to that of Westheimer and Kahne’s (2004), Boyte (2000) frames three different concepts of citizenship and civic education, including:

- 1.) the idea of citizen as a voter, associated with political theory, embodied in civic education approaches like civics;
- 2.) the idea of citizen as volunteer, associated with communitarian theory and the modern service learning movement; and
- 3.) the concept of the citizen as civic producer or co-creator of a common world, what the Center for Democracy and Citizenship terms the public work or commonwealth framework. (p. 65)

It is this third model of civic education and citizenship that can be attributed to the civil rights movement. Civic education from this stance would, indeed, put students in a place to contemplate the general welfare and work toward its betterment.

The challenges of such a civic education, however, are many. As Boyte (2000) notes:

These are powerful tools for civic education and citizenship. But they also go against the normal structures and practices of a highly commercial and technicized society. Few spaces or experiences exist that prepare people to think about the “why” of their efforts. (pp. 68-69)

Indeed, I am reminded of Anton’s reflection of participating in a democratic process in the authoritarian setting of the school. How can schools and classrooms be restructured to allow students to think about and experience the “why” of their civic efforts? If students are not afforded these opportunities, can they still participate in civic education that would allow them to act as co-creators in society? Gutman (1999) frames this essential conflict by stating the need to, “investigate the extent to which schools that are more internally democratic support the development of more democratic values among students” (p. 88). Because, as she notes, there are very few schools with democratic structures; this type of comparison is a challenge. Instead, we are left with a majority of schools teaching a discipline and order orientation, and as such I ask, is the authoritarian structure of the school fundamentally necessary for education in a democracy?

Secure the Blessings of Liberty...

On the other side of order, in the paradox of civic education, is the need for freedom or liberty. An essential purpose of a democratic government is to protect the rights and freedom of its people. What is the role of freedom in civic education? How does liberty in and out of the classroom shape the experience of civic education for students? Judge Learned Hand’s 1944 address at the “I am an American” festival in New York might set the stage for an exploration of the spirit of liberty. He states:

The spirit of liberty is the spirit which is not too sure that it is right; the spirit of liberty is the spirit which seeks to understand the minds of other men and women; the spirit of liberty is the spirit which weighs their interests alongside

its own without bias; the spirit of liberty remembers not even a sparrow falls to earth unheeded. (2003, p. 220)

Civic education taught in the spirit of liberty is an education that is “not too sure if it is right” and one that seeks to understand the minds of others. What a profound pedagogical creed. In this vein, students participate in a curriculum in which they weigh individual rights and the common good. Civic education takes on the form of social justice as students are reminded that “not even a sparrow falls to earth unheeded.” I am reminded of Dewey’s (1897/2004) Pedagogical Creed in which he states:

I believe that the individual who is to be educated is a social individual and that society is an organic union of individuals. If we eliminate the social factor from the child we are left only with an abstraction; if we eliminate the individual factor from society, we are left only with an inert and lifeless mass. (Found on <http://www.infed.org/archives/e-texts/e-dew-pc.htm>)

What are other implications for freedom in civic education? Can students be taught to be lovers of freedom? Is that civic education? In his 1940 essay “Freedom,” E.B. White states, “I resent the patronizing air of persons who find in my plain belief in freedom a sign of immaturity. If it is boyish to believe that a human being should live free, then I’ll gladly arrest my development and let the rest of the world grow up” (2003, p. 206). Perhaps civic education in this vein is a return to the innocent belief that “a human being should live free.” If an education resting on this belief is civic education, what implications does this have for pedagogy? How do students experience civic education as education for freedom?

To Ourselves and Our Posterity...

As a parent and teacher, (one has) to leave the ego and fix on the something that goes on after you. (Murray, as cited in Bradbeer, 1998, p. 83)

The founding fathers who wrote the U.S. Constitution were very much aware of the need for structures, organizations, policies, and practices that would allow democracy to continue and flourish, even long after they were gone. In this vein, they spoke of the need for an education that would support democracy as an ongoing ideal as well as an ever changing, living and breathing system of government.

Fixing on what goes on after you is like leaving your legacy. For teachers in civic education the need to focus on posterity is even more urgent as they are called to further the cause of democracy. This calls for a release of ego, which enables teachers to give themselves fully to their students. Perhaps part of the problem in giving yourself fully to your students comes from not being able to release the ego.

Civic education releases ego. I have been tossing around the idea of what it is like to let go of ego in the classroom. I remember feeling it very briefly at the end of my student teaching experience. I remember getting to the end of the semester, a week away from saying my goodbyes and returning to the life of a full time student before graduating and teaching full time. I stood in front of my class as if I were for the very first time. I saw Dorian, Aricelli, Natasha, and all the others for who they were and not as they existed in relation to my own existence. I remember thinking how much time I wasted thinking about myself, my clothes, my voice, my lesson plan, my evaluation, my classroom management. I realized that in my preoccupation with my own performance, I had missed valuable opportunities to really know my students. And now, it was almost too late. I only had a week left! Why had it taken so long?

At the time, I did not dwell on this. It was my very first experience in the classroom. I was teaching in the Bronx and I was happy that all of my expectations of what it was like to be a social studies teacher had been met. But I distinctly remember leaving with a feeling that I have since coined the “Schindler’s List” effect: that I could have done more. I could have thought less about my own insecurities and known my students that much better, taught them that much more, and therefore furthered their civic education and the cause of democracy that much more. Such wasted time!

As my teaching career progressed, I had other glimpses of this recognition at different times. I remember feeling like there had to be a point in one’s career when one spends more time thinking and caring for the children than for oneself, a giving over, if you will, to the teaching moments. My seventh year teaching was the first time that this giving over was more dominant than my preoccupation with my ego. It is a scary thing to contemplate, the release of one’s ego in the face of 30 or more children. They have so much power. I think that is why teachers are so used to establishing the power for themselves. Perhaps an essential element of civic education is an examination of this power structure. If students witness and experience their teachers giving over their power, their sense of civic education and democratic ideals may be strengthened through this experiential process. Perhaps students will see that power is tenuous and capable of being challenged.

This giving over is, indeed, very difficult for teachers, because by nature, it is the students who hold the power. In my seventh year of teaching, when the children left at the end of the year, I was more devastated than I could ever have imagined.

For when I gave myself to my students and they left, they took a part of me with them. But they were never mine to begin with. There is the ego again. As Murray (1998) states above, I recognize that they had to go on after me. This kind of pedagogy is heart wrenching, painful, beautiful, fulfilling and alive. But perhaps civic education is just this, and thus, the teacher of civic education must be a teacher who fixes on that which goes on after oneself.

Civic education sees things as they could be otherwise. In *Releasing the Imagination*, Maxine Greene states:

Our ‘fundamental anxiety’...is that we will pass through the world and leave no mark; that anxiety is what induces us to devise projects for ourselves, to live among our fellow beings and reach out to them, to interpret life from our situated standpoints, to try—over and over again—to begin. ...Seeing things close up and large...here is the possibility of looking at things as if they could be otherwise. (as cited in Ayers & Miller, 1998, p. 93)

Greene’s call for looking at things large can be applied to civic education. Perhaps civic education is an experience of doing just that. It is through this quest to examine life “over and over again” from different standpoints that helps students find themselves in the world. Greene’s stance also asserts that to do this puts us in a situation to examine situations “as if they could be otherwise.” This approach to civic education connects to the founding of our democracy “to ourselves and our posterity.”

Greene also speaks of a reaching out to our fellow human beings as a way to alleviate a “fundamental anxiety.” Perhaps this basic human experience is what situates civic education. Thus civic education takes the form of co-creating situations for students and teachers in which they have opportunities to reach out to each other, situate themselves firmly in society, be it in the classroom, the school or in the larger

community, so as to feel more fully alive and connected to future generations. As Goldberg (1993) asserts, to be fully alive one must be grounded in society. Thus, civic education could be viewed and experienced as a pedagogy of life.

Civic education deliberates. In contemplating an education as something that goes on after us, and one that imagines things as they could be otherwise, I am drawn to Gutman's (1999) notion of democracy education. Gutman (1999) states, "Democracy Education argues that a necessary condition of an adequate civic education is to cultivate the skills and virtues of deliberative citizenship" (p. xiii). In a similar vein, Parker (2003) puts forth the idea that civic education must include the skill of deliberation, which he differentiates from discussion. He compares the two by stating that in discussion the goal is to reach a greater understanding of a powerful text and asks questions such as "what does this mean?" Deliberation, on the other hand, asks "What should we do?" and seeks as its goal to reach a decision about what "we" should do about a shared public problem.

What does it mean to deliberate and how would deliberation shape civic educational experiences? To deliberate comes from the Latin "*de* –entirely + *librare*... to balance, weigh" (Barnhart, 1988, p. 261). Students in this model of civic education are expected to weigh a situation or issue carefully. Perhaps their solutions need to achieve balance. Is the purpose of deliberation in civic education to strike a balance for the good of society? Similarly, when students deliberate do they feel the "entire weight" of their citizenship?

A Pedagogy of Light

When they focus on the illumination of the lived experience of teachers, curriculum workers are concentrating their attention on what is, in actuality, the operating curriculum in every school. (Leonard, as cited in Pinar, 2000, p. 417)

I take this a step further and suggest that illuminating the lived experience of the *students* will allow one to understand the “operating curriculum.” Nonetheless, the idea of illumination is a way to understand teacher and students’ experiences in the curriculum.

The Curriculum of Light

Throughout this exploration of civic education there is yet one more theme that emerges to help get underneath the phenomenon: the theme of light. I began chapter one with the poem “Fire.” Throughout the chapter, I likened civic education to the building of a fire, allowing enough space and providing enough fuel and logs for the fire to build. Civic education in this analogy can be experienced as allowing a fire “that knows just how it wants to burn (to) find its way.” Civic education, in this vein, **is light.**

Illuminating possibilities in civic education. Bradbeer’s (1998) plea for the possible curriculum which stands in contrast to the “opaque and the exhausting” (p. 129) led me to understand the sacred duty of teachers to *illuminate* the curriculum. In this interpretation I imagine curriculum as if lit from behind, its brilliance manifest for all to see, for miles at a stretch. Can civic education be this illumination of prospective citizens? Civic education is an experience of a possible curriculum, one that illuminates possibilities for students as they choose how to be in the classroom and in society.

An enlightened experience. Our founding fathers stress the urgency of an education that would “enlighten” citizens. George Washington in his 1796 farewell address notes, “It is essential that public opinion should be enlightened” (p. 38). Similarly, Thomas Jefferson states that if we do not think the people are enlightened enough to make informed decisions, it is our duty to educate them. The founding fathers, and others since their time, have thus viewed civic education as necessary for enlightenment. What did these founders envision for civic education in the context of enlightenment? What type of society would such an education call for?

A platonic ideal. I am drawn to yet another metaphor that may be used to understand civic education: Plato’s (380 B.C.E./1992) Allegory of the Cave, from *The Republic*. In this allegory, a man spends his life in a cave and only views shadows as his reality. When someone brings him out of the cave, into the light of the sun, at first he is blinded and wants to go back in. But he is convinced that to go back into the cave and live among the shadows is to deny reality and truth, for once one has known truth, one cannot live among shadows.

It is like this for civic education. If civic education is the light, then once students are brought out into it, they cannot return to their ignorance. Once confronted with truth, they are forced to stay out in the light. It may feel safer and more comfortable in the cave, in the dark, but it is in the light where the truth is found. In this way, civic education is a path to the light, to the truth. It is a way to bring students out of the dark and into society as full members. It also can be a way for them to examine themselves honestly and construct meaning of their own existence and that of their fellow human beings.

The light of freedom.

I've got the light of freedom
I'm going to let it shine
I've got the light of freedom
I'm going to let it shine

I've got the light of freedom
I'm going to let it shine
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.
(Pete Seeger, 2003, p. 222)

Civic education as a pedagogy of freedom is also a pedagogy of light. In Seeger's (2003) song, the light of freedom must be let to shine. I explored civic education with regard to securing blessings of liberties. E. B. White (1940) reminds us that "a human being should live free" (2003, p. 206). If freedom is taken as light, as in Seeger's (2003) song, then humans were born to live in the light, as Plato extolled in his famous allegory. Thus, civic education can be taken as a cause to help students find their own light from within and to let it shine. I think of former president George Bush's "1000 Points of Light" campaign in which he rewarded people for magnanimous and heroic acts that benefited society on large and small scales. Bush encouraged this kind of citizenship. Thus, once again, citizenship is compared to light.

As I have continued on my journey through civic education, I begin to think of my purpose as a teacher in civic education to bring out the light in my students. Perhaps more appropriately, it is the civic educator's job to allow the students to find their light themselves. The civic educator can allow students the space, time, *logs*, and *air*, to build their own fires, thus shining their own light in their own way. What do students experience when they participate in this pedagogy of light?

Guided by the Light of the Lantern

What is the lived experience of civic education for middle school students? I have undertaken my journey to understand the essential experience of civic education. Turning to various sources from our country's past and present, I have one more step to take before seeking the future. In Chapter three, I explore the philosophic framework, hermeneutic phenomenology, through which I conduct my research into the lives of students. Once again, I find myself in the light. Drawing on Nietzsche, van Manen brings forward the analogy of the lantern. "Whoever is searching for the human being must first find the lantern" (Nietzsche, as cited in van Manen, 2003, p. 4). And thus I continue to seek the light.

**CHAPTER THREE:
EXPLORING CIVIC EDUCATION THROUGH HERMENEUTIC
PHENOMENOLOGY**

Seeking a Way to Understand

The goal of civic education is essentially to provide opportunities for students to experience a way to be in the world, their world, that supports a democratic society. In our American republican democracy, citizens must make decisions that serve the interests of the common welfare. The perpetuation and growth of our society relies on citizens who demonstrate civic virtue, and are informed, active, and critical.

A preponderance of the research conducted on civic education curriculum and programs seeks to discover how much civic knowledge students remember from their social studies courses, how many college students vote, and how active they are in politics and in their communities after graduation (Niemi & Junn, 1998; Patrick, 2002; Soule, 2001; Turney-Purta, 2002). This information is important and, indeed, has its place in civic education research. What these studies fail to capture, however, are the lived experiences of students as they engage in civic education. What do the daily experiences of students in social studies classrooms have to do with their experience of civic education? What does it mean to experience civic education? For are not the classroom experiences of the students an essential determinant of their future actions?

Understanding Lived Experience

The term “lived experience” may at first seem redundant, indeed even tautological. For, as Burch (1990) asks, “What might an experience be if it were not

‘lived’” (p. 132)? He reminds us, however, the term “lived experience” is not derived from English, and therefore one must understand its German etymological roots to appreciate how “lived experience” in phenomenology is different from Dewey’s notion of experience. Derived from the German word, *Er-lebnis*, lived experienced is that which “unfolds and endures from life by virtue of life itself” (Burch, 1990, p. 133). To examine lived experience, one seeks the essence of an experience, or as explained by Burch (1990):

The term suggests that this lived character consists not simply in what is felt or undergone by sentient beings in the passage of time but of what from this passing sentience is meaningfully singled out and preserved. (p. 133)

Further, in contrast to other uses of experience in human science research, lived experience differentiates itself in that the meaning does not lie in the experience itself, but rather in the reflection upon the experience after it has taken place.

Finding Phenomenology

I found phenomenology, or rather, it found me during a course on communication in the curriculum. After experimenting with ways to be more present in my curriculum with my students I realized the potential for a more transformative pedagogy. The research and writing of Max van Manen spoke to me as the way to understand my interest in civic education teaching, not only of my pedagogy but also of the lived experiences of my students. As inextricably tied together the curriculum, my pedagogy and the students’ experiences are, van Manen was the source of illumination through which phenomenology was made present to me in my research. In this study, I seek to explore the “textual reflection on the lived experience and practical actions of” students in civic education (van Manen, 2003, p. 4). As such, I

choose to draw on van Manen's model for hermeneutic phenomenological inquiry, a methodology that allows me not only to *see* my phenomenon, but to *know* it as well.

According to van Manen (2003), phenomenology “describes how one orients to lived experiences” (p. 4). Hermeneutics, on the other hand, “describes how one interprets the ‘texts’ of life” (p. 4). Drawing on Nietzsche, van Manen brings forward the analogy of the lantern. “Whoever is searching for the human being must first find the lantern” (Nietzsche, as cited in van Manen, 2003, p. 4). In other words, even with a lamp in broad daylight one cannot find a real human being. Also, the light of the lantern not only will illuminate the journey as well as that being sought, but also will serve to cast shadows—thereby drawing attention to the “dark side” of the experience as well.

Researching in the dark. I apply this puzzle to civic education. There is much more to civic education than what we can “see.” We can see the results of a civic education when we witness citizens voting, attending town meetings, demonstrating, recycling, showing tolerance for others, and other civically engaged behaviors. Indeed, much of civic education research has focused on these areas.

Correlations. Walter C. Parker's (2003) *Teaching Democracy: Unity and Diversity in Public Life* centers around three essential questions: What is citizenship? What does it mean in a multicultural, diverse society? How can we teach to foster deliberation and “non-idiotic” education? In his book he draws on statistics about civic education such as the correlations between citizenship outcomes and years of formal education. For example, in one chart we find “Knowledge of Principles of Democracy” with a .38 correlation with the years spent in school, which in turn

impacts democratic enlightenment. In the same chart we also find a .29 correlation between the citizenship outcome of participation in difficult political activities and its dimension of political engagement. He ends his book with examples of his own pedagogy and suggestions for teachers in promoting deliberation, discussion, unity and tolerance in their classrooms.

This type of research is important for teachers and curriculum designers as it has implications for civic education lesson design. As well, it helps to elucidate the connections between education and civic behavior. What it misses, however, is the experiences of the actual students in civic education. For example, what are the lived experiences of students participating in deliberation?

Efficacy. In another example, the Center for Civic Education publishes research on the effects of their programs on civic engagement and participation by young adults as measured against assessment tools such as the American Freshman: National Norms for Fall 1997. This report demonstrates, for example, that an all-time low of 13.7% of college freshmen claim to discuss politics frequently compared to a 29.9% high in 1968 (Quigley, 1999). This same source also reports the results from the “National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Report Card in Civics” from 1990, showing that only 28% of eighth graders knew that Congress makes laws. Similarly, 1997 research from the National Constitution Center shows that 90% of students agree that the Constitution is important to them, but less than 40% of them can name all three branches of government, and over 50% of them did not know how many senators we have (Quigley, 1999). Once again, teachers can take from the research what students at different ages may or may not know about civic education

and citizenship and make decisions regarding curricular content accordingly. This research, however, still does not tap the actual experiences of the students being tested for their knowledge.

Attitudes. A final example is an extensive statistical analysis report entitled “What Democracy Means to Ninth-Graders: U.S. Results From the International IEA Civic Education Study” published by the National Center for Education Statistics in April 2001. This report, through the use of quantitative data reports on U.S. students’ attitudes, achievement rates, knowledge base in and out of school, and involvement in civic activities and democracy. Through the use of disaggregated data we see such information as 68.7% of students believed their teachers encourage them to discuss political or social issues about which people have different opinions, and that more than 60% of U.S. ninth-graders report spending less than one hour a week on social studies homework. This report draws conclusions from its extensive data collection, such as television was the primary source for information gathering by those ninth-graders who reported this behavior, and girls were more likely to become politically active than their male-counterparts (p. xix).

These and other studies are important to the field of civic education because they raise awareness of the need for a different type of teaching and learning. Education policy-makers may be able to use this information to justify budget, curriculum and scheduling decisions, but what are the implications of such a policy? On what philosophical base are the decisions made? What are the consequences for teachers? Finally, what data can teachers use that will inform their pedagogy and transform their teaching, curriculum, and students?

Van Manen—Switching on the Light

As van Manen (2003) asserts, “Much of educational research tends to pulverize life into minute abstracted fragments and particles that are little use to practitioners” (p. 7). In other words, I as a teacher may read a study to learn how many students show tolerance toward people with views different from their own, or how many college students vote in state and national elections. What does this information tell me, though, about how these individuals *experience* their citizenship? What have the people participating in this study experienced in civic education? What about their lifeworlds is addressed in the statistics reported by such studies? And how can I use this information to inform my pedagogy? As Smith states, “The most remarkable thing about contemporary North American teacher education may be that in the name of concern for children, we have banished children...under a dense cover of rationalistic, abstract discourses about cognition, development, achievement, etc” (as cited in Pinar et al., 2000, p. 432).

Illuminating the self in research. There is no doubt a place and use for the above-mentioned research. In a republican democracy such as America, learning how many young people vote and what programs may influence their future behaviors is important, but it is not the full picture. One needs to ponder the question of what it means to be in civic education. This is the job of the phenomenologist. As van Manen (2003) states, “Phenomenology is a philosophy of the personal, the individual” (p. 7). From here, one may come to understand how one’s being-in-the-world is shaped by one’s experience in civic education. I am reminded of a poem that names this well. In *Remember Your Essence*, Williams (1994) states:

Remember that your essence is experienced by you as a feeling.
 The trap is this: wanting to know who you are which means you want to be able to say some words, think a thought, cling to a description.
 The question comes: how can I find out what my essence is?
 There is nothing to find out.
 Remember it. Experience it. Feel the feeling of it. (p. 10)

This study seeks to capture the lived experiences of students in civic education in order to find out the essence of such an experience to inform pedagogy and curriculum. In doing so, I ask students to *remember*, *experience* and *feel* civic education. I choose phenomenology because of the opportunity it affords me to do that. This is also a pedagogically appropriate methodology because it helps the researcher understand the phenomenon of education, “by maintaining a view of pedagogy as an expression of the whole” (van Manen, 2003, p. 7).

Illuminating the student in research. Perhaps an account of a student from a previous class experience in civic education can serve to illustrate the “expression of the whole” that phenomenology brings. Below, Robbie, a former student, reflects on his participation in a simulated congressional hearing:

This experience was so much different than any other social studies project or experience ever. This isn't your ordinary go buy a poster board project. This is a long lasting project with a group of people to work together on one topic to get your best understanding of it. Then to present it in front of people like the mayor of Rockville and the head of the Board of Education etc. That was the most exciting part of all to meet those kinds of people. I have changed as a result of this project. I think it has made me a bit more mature. This made me a better worker in groups. Also to learn how to share ideas with five other people. I will take this experience with me forever. I will be a better group worker in high school when I am working with people two years older than me and I have to be mature. This helps to be a better presenter in front of the class or judges. (Robbie)

Robbie's learning clearly transcended the typical social studies lesson and combined his being with his doing. Thus, a teacher attuned and open to the possible curriculum

through a pedagogically sensitive research methodology is also open to the transformation of the lives of students and teachers.

In that the ultimate goal of human science research is for educators to “act tactfully in pedagogic situations on the basis of carefully edified thoughtfulness” (van Manen, 2003, p. 8), it is imperative that the researcher understands the philosophical grounding for this approach. I turn to van Manen as the lantern to illuminate my journey in hermeneutic phenomenology. I draw on his writings of human science research to help illuminate my path and shed light on the phenomenon. Just as a lantern illuminates, however, it also casts shadows on that which is not in its path. In this way, I too, must recognize the dark sides of the journey and the phenomenon.

Phenomenology describes the lived experience as told in the language of those who experience the phenomenon. Phenomenology searches for the essential meaning or the essence of an experience. It is the study of human experience as it is experienced, pre-reflectively, before we theorize or conceptualize it. It seeks to get *under* an experience by transforming the lived language. Phenomenology is reflective, in that an experience is explored after it has happened. It relies on the concept, *intentionality* of consciousness, where there is an outward manifestation and an inward consciousness based on memory and meaning-making of an experience. It is important for the researcher to set aside or “bracket” her own pre-understandings of the phenomenon in order to unfold the phenomenon as it was experienced.

Husserl and Bracketing

In pursuing phenomenology as a methodology for my research, I first turn to Edmund Husserl (1859-1938), who is credited with the founding of phenomenology.

Husserl's initial struggle in phenomenology centered on the task of recognizing consciousness as the condition of all experience. According to Husserl (1931/1967), understanding lived experience is a challenge because consciousness itself is easily obscured and confused. He believed we must somehow overcome our prejudices, which stand in the way of true understanding of an experience. To do this, Husserl asserts that we can realize an absolute and pure transcendental ego, that is, one devoid of prejudices and biases, through *epoche*. This notion, however, has been challenged and rejected by subsequent phenomenologists, such as Heidegger, on whose tradition this research draws. While bracketing can never be complete, it is a helpful attempt to be open to what one hears.

Connecting to the Ancient Greeks

Epoché, meaning cessation, was taken by Husserl from the Sceptics. In explanation, Barnes (1990) states, "Suspension of intellect is a standstill of the intellect, because of which we neither reject nor accept anything" (p. 9) (see Moran, 2000, p. 149 for further discussion). For ancient Greek Sceptics, *epoché* was meant to lead to tolerance and openmindedness.

I find an important connection between the attitude of the hermeneutic phenomenologist in research with the goals of democratic citizenship. Once I enter into my research, I seek to uncover how my methodology and attitude of "tolerance and openmindedness" might be likened to the experiences of my students as they participate in civic education. *Epoché* is the bracketing, or setting aside, of all of one's presuppositions, biases and own conceptualizations of an experience. To what extent can this be accomplished with students in civic education so that they, too, may experience their citizenship with fewer biases and assumptions? How can bracketing

help students experience curriculum and citizenship more fully? Is it really possible to bracket in this way? These questions emerge as I turn to my own biases and preconceptions about civic education.

Exploring My Own History

In phenomenology, to get underneath a lived experience, one must first explore one's own ideas about and orientation toward the experience. Following is an example of this process as it served to allow me to explore my own pre-understandings and biases toward the teaching and learning of social studies.

Up until eighth grade, I did not consider the study of social studies to have any type of craft. I associated it with geography, map skills and memorizing information from encyclopedias and textbooks. It was just another class where the teacher gave us information and we had to remember it. Likewise, I did not consider my teachers to have had any special skills except that they had read a lot and knew how to tell stories. This statement is very telling right here. Up until eighth grade, my concept of history was that it was a series of stories. Some teachers were better at telling the stories than others. The teachers who told the stories well and incorporated other aspects such as simulations, songs, and field trips helped the history sink in. If history is perceived as a series of stories of past events, then what is the role of the student of history within these stories? Did I see myself in these stories? Did the stories of the past affect me? Must they affect the true student of social studies? Were other students' experiences with social studies like my own? (My reflection, 2002)

In my research I must, then, put aside these understandings of learning in social studies so that I am open to my students' experiences without being clouded by my own judgments. If I were to assume that all eighth grade students' experiences were like my own, I would miss out on the valuable opportunity to let their experiences open up to me. I would continually view their phenomenon through the lens of my own assumptions and thereby miss the essence of the phenomenon. In this way, Husserl asserts the necessity for a " 'putting out of play' (*außer Spiel zu setzen*) all

judgments which posit a world in any way as actual..." (as cited in Moran, 2000, p. 147). Husserl believes that phenomenology calls for a move away from the imbedded, conceptualized, naturalistic assumptions about our world that drive our behavior, in favor of a return to the transcendental self. This transcendental self, however, is problematic.

The (Im)possibility of the Pure Phenomenon

Husserl was seeking the experience of the "pure" phenomenon when he stated:

Thus at this point we speak of such absolute data; even if these data are related to objective actuality via their intentions, their intrinsic character is *within* them; nothing is assumed concerning *the existence or non-existence of actuality*. (as cited in Moran, 2000, p. 150)

Thus, from Husserl I take the necessity of bracketing or setting aside my own experiences, biases, assumptions and pre-conceptions of the phenomenon so that the phenomenon, as close to it as one may get, may reveal itself to me. Although Husserl is credited with the founding of phenomenology, his insistence on complete reduction is criticized in light of the belief that Merleau-Ponty and Heidegger, for example share, that complete reduction is impossible and that we can "only think back to our own being-in-the-world" (Moran, 2000, p. 160). Husserl, however, leaves me with a view of what is possible, and what may not be directly grasped. He termed this "the horizon." Husserl (1931/1967) states, "There belongs to every genuine perception its reference from the 'genuinely perceived' sides of the object of perception to the sides 'also meant' –not yet perceived but anticipated" (p. 19). Husserl, then, helps guide my path toward the horizon of my phenomenon. Other philosophers, such as van Manen, Heidegger and Gadamer, continue to clarify the ways in which

phenomenology will allow the phenomenon of civic education to open up to me. For, as van Manen (2003) states:

To *do* hermeneutic phenomenology is to attempt to accomplish the impossible: to construct a full interpretive description of some aspect of the lifeworld, and yet to remain aware that lived life is always more complex than any explication of meaning can reveal. (p. 18)

Thus, with this challenge in mind, I continue on.

Continuing Toward the Horizon

Returning to van Manen's lantern, in this way, phenomenology allows me to see and know the essence of the phenomenon without its conceptual trappings. As my research seeks to uncover what it means to be in civic education, I ultimately am interested in the experiences of students, as they exist in my classroom. To explore phenomenology as a way to uncover these essences, I next turn to Martin Heidegger.

Personal Politics

Before proceeding, however, I must address a persistent issue with which I am confronted in my reliance on Heidegger's philosophies, that is, Heidegger's affiliation and public support of the Nazi party in Germany. Heidegger's involvement in the Nazi Party is a controversial topic given he never publicly renounced his affiliation before his death. This is troublesome for anyone seeking to rely on Heideggarian phenomenology as it creates the problem as Safranski (1998) states, of "admiring his philosophy and detesting his politics" (p. 228). Heidegger himself only reminded his critics that one must judge him within the context of the rise of National Socialism and the state of Germany in the 1930's. As is common in the study of history, Heidegger's supporters criticize his detractors for taking an ahistorical view of his

politics. One is more apt to judge those through the retrospective lens of today rather than situated in the time and circumstances during which he lived.

As Heidegger's contribution to phenomenology cannot be discounted, ignored or omitted, I find myself facing the dilemma of how best to reconcile his allegiance to the Nazi Party and his remarkable role in the development of phenomenology.

Interestingly, I find this question to be very closely related to the phenomenon of civic education itself. Much of what civic educators seek to do is to allow students to confront essential questions and persistent problems in history and civil society. Some of these persistent problems include reconciling the good and evil in human nature.

In thinking about my stance toward Heidegger, I find myself turning to similar issues my students and I confront together in class. For example, how does one study and respect the contributions of the Founders of our country knowing that many of them were slaveholders? Throughout American history and indeed the history of the world, we are confronted with contributions that move humankind forward, by great persons whose personal lives do not always reflect the ideals they espouse. For example, Thomas Jefferson, the author of the Declaration of Independence, was a slaveholder. How can we study the achievements and contributions of a man who fought for freedom for the American colonies, yet held humans in bondage? My students and I wrestle with this issue every year. Yet to discount Jefferson's role in the American Revolution and the founding of our democratic republic would be to sidestep history. As my students and I discuss, there is no clear way to account for Jefferson's personal decisions in light of his fervor for American freedom. What we do have to recognize, however, is that as all humans are, Jefferson was mortal and

therefore flawed. We must also regard Jefferson's slavery within the historical context and not through a presentism that is so prevalent in most students' historical thinking. This is one of the challenges the *teacher as civic education* faces every day.

Taking it a step further, I use opportunities such as these to encourage students to think about what it means to live in a democracy and to act in a civic-minded way. All people are entitled to the same rights despite race, gender, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, or age. Thus, how should we treat others whose beliefs and actions we do not support? How do we reconcile the dual nature of good and evil in humankind?

While the practice of slavery is not the same as the goals and the ultimate effects of the Nazi Party and its actions, it is with a similar mind I approach Heidegger's politics. Is it possible or even desirable to separate his personal politics from his philosophical contributions? As Bambach (2003) artfully states:

To rip Heidegger's texts from their historical context and organize them around thematic of our own choosing runs the risk of laying them on the Procrustean bed of hermeneutic violence. Such readings—especially when they concern the question of the “political” in Heidegger—often tell us more about the politics of the interpreter than about Heidegger's own work. (p. xix)

I do not desire to discount Heidegger's contributions to phenomenology, nor do I wish to pretend he did not support the Nazi Party. His politics are a persistent concern for anyone wishing to base their inquiry in philosophical phenomenology. One might consider, however, that Heidegger did not agree with every aspect of Nazi ideology. Among his disagreements with the Nazi party platform were its emphasis on biological racism “in all its forms as Aryan supremacy,” as well as its interference in German academic life (Bambach, 2003, p. xxv).

Regardless, while I do not condone his acceptance of other Nazi Party goals and actions, to eliminate Heidegger from my research would make me guilty of not confronting the essential questions about human nature that are an integral part of my craft as a teacher of civic education. Thus, as Bambach (2003) explains, “The challenge...is to engage Heidegger’s work in such a way that we are forced to confront our own political assumptions even as we come to terms with his” (p. xxvi). Therefore, having explored the issue of Heidegger, the Nazi, I now turn to an exploration of Heidegger’s philosophy and rely on Heidegger, the phenomenologist.

A Star in the World’s Sky

Heidegger, drawing on Husserl’s work in phenomenology, was most concerned with one’s “being-in-the-world.” Heidegger states, “To think is to confine yourself to a single thought that one day stands still like a star in the world’s sky” (1971, p. 4). In this light, Heidegger’s single thought was the question of the meaning of being. He asked the question, “*ti to on?*” or, “What is being?” He posits that *dasein*, or existence, is the “open space where beings reveal themselves... coming out of concealment into their ‘truth’ and withdrawing again into obscurity” (in Krell, 1993, p. 20). *Dasein* is always ahead of itself in that it contains three parts at once: history, affairs of the present and projections and plans for the future. As Huebner (1975) states, “Human life is...a present made up of a past and future brought into the moment. ... Human life is never fixed but is always emergent as the past and future become horizons of present” (p. 244). In this way, an experience cannot be understood ahistorically, but rather, it must be historically situated in order to reveal its truth or *aletheia*, which means a revealing.

Truth in dreams. This notion of “coming out of concealment,” then withdrawing again into obscurity, is like when you are just about to fall asleep. The thoughts that pass through your preconscious mind reveal truths that while awake elude you. While falling asleep at night, we often toss and turn and wake up a few times before deep slumber completely overtakes us. It is in these moments of dream awakesness that if we were able to record our thoughts, “truth” might be revealed. But just as we are about to make waking sense of the thoughts, their meanings slip from our minds. And no matter how hard we try to retrieve them, their essence is gone. So we fall back asleep once more and hope to reconnect with these elusive truths. Throughout the day we might play with the residues of their essence, allowing them to speak to us in their language, instead of our own. For we find that in describing them to others, they lose their meaning. It is as if their meaning is beyond the context of human language.

Liberation in waves. *Dasein* is tricky and elusive to know. Just like in the dreams of the preconscious, it makes itself known; its truth is revealed then hidden again, just as one attempts to understand and describe it. Embedded in this quotation is the very job of the phenomenologist. Similarly, as Moran (2000) explains, existence must be explored by retrieving essential meanings “of key words expressing existence from beneath the weight of encrusted tradition” (p. 197). Thus, phenomenology is the work of liberating experiences from the weight of their conceptual meanings. It makes one’s head spin, however, to think that language, the very tool which we humans use to conceptualize and describe an experience, is what we must set aside, then reuse to reveal the truth. How tricky language is that we use it

to both confine and liberate; yet, this challenge is at the core of doing phenomenology. Phenomenology dwells within these tensions, playfully teases the truth out of its confining language and, like a wave washing upon a shore, continues to reveal its essence only to conceal it once again with the next wave. What will the “waves” reveal of the phenomenon of civic education? What elements of language can I re-purpose to get underneath my students’ experiences?

A single thought. Harkening back to Heidegger’s poem and a “star in the world’s sky,” phenomenology makes us question the nature of thought. As related to the dual nature of language, this poem seems to imply that once language is applied to thought, its meaning stands still. Or, is that just the meaning we ascribe to it? Once again, we are drawn back to the idea that language is confining. The ultimate challenge of the phenomenologist is to find or possibly create the language that will liberate the experience from its conceptual entrapments. We do this through exploration of the lived language of the phenomenon as it is experienced.

Referring back to Rachel’s experience, a student I worked with in a previous class, from chapter one, we might begin to get behind the phenomenon of being in civic education by exploring her use of language to describe her experience, such as I did through her use of the word “link.” Such etymological renderings and questions illustrate a beginning uncovering of the phenomenon of civic education.

Heidegger (1961) believes that phenomenology seeks “being” through the exploration of language because it is the vehicle that can both reveal and conceal. He states, “It is in words and language that things first come into being and are” (p. 11). In exploring language to see what it can reveal about being-in-the-world, the

phenomenologist can get behind the conceptual language so often used to describe events and experiences, and instead seek to know a phenomenon at its core.

Assembling a World in Civic Education

Heidegger (1971) offers further insight into phenomenology in his essay entitled “The Origin of the Work of Art.” As he explores the nature of art he states, “The nature of art would then be this: the truth of beings setting itself to work” (p. 35). I turn this notion to the civic education classroom and ask what is the “art” of civic education? In what ways would students seek the *alethia*, or truth, as they set themselves to work? What is this work like in civic education?

Toward, yet away, from civic education. Heidegger (1971) takes this one step further and posits that the true experience of something, the “thingness” of the thing is unable to be identified through conceptual lenses (p. 20). He cautions:

To this end, however, only one element is needful: to keep at a distance all the preconceptions and assaults of the above modes of thought, to leave the thing to rest in its own self, for instance, in its thing-being. (1971, pp. 30-31)

How will I keep my preconceptions and assaults at a distance as I seek to understand my students’ experiences of civic education? I must be vigilant and understand that to attend to my phenomenon I must take the paradoxical stance of turning toward the phenomenon while at the same time allowing it to be. As Heidegger (1971) explains, “We ought to turn toward the being, think about it in regard to its being, but by means of this thinking at the same time let it rest upon itself in its very own being” (p. 31). Already, I imagine a pedagogy based on this notion of turning toward one’s students and curriculum, while at the same time allowing it to “rest upon itself in its very own

being.” What would a civic education be like experienced through this pedagogic framework?

Work in civic education. Heidegger (1971) continues to expand on the notion of a work of art by asking, “To be a work means to set up a world. But what does it mean to be a world?” (p. 43). He explains:

Wherever those decisions of our history that relate to our very being are made, are taken up and abandoned by us, go unrecognized and are rediscovered by new inquiry, there the world *worlds*. (p. 43)

When something is “worlding,” it “assembles a whole world in terms of time and space” (Safranski, 1998, p. 96). What are the elements of civic education that make up this experience of worlding? How does this relate to the experience of the classroom? In social studies, when my students remember something from my class, I want them to re-embody the knowledge and experience it as a complete sense of time and space. One of the challenges social studies teachers face is that because of the way their courses are taught students remember very little of the “facts” and stories relevant to the history being studied. Often students study for a test or quiz by memorizing information from a text or notes, lists, charts and other inert documents created from the class, but disengaged from any real experience once attached to the knowledge. Students do not remember this, no matter how skilled they are. What they do remember are the classroom situations in which they can experience and respond in a bodily way. Simulations, role-plays, debates, reflections, and discussions are all events in a classroom that students will remember long after the list of dates and causes of the Civil War.

A Many leveled unity. Gadamer (1960/2003), too, elucidates this aspect of the phenomenon of learning, stating:

Memory must be formed; for memory is not memory for anything and everything. One has a memory for some things, and not for others; one wants to preserve one thing in memory and banish another. It is time to rescue the phenomenon of memory from being regarded merely as a psychological faculty and to see it as an essential element of the finite historical being of man, [sic]. In a way that has long been insufficiently noticed, forgetting is closely related to keeping in mind and remembering; forgetting is not merely an absence and a lack but, as Nietzsche in particular pointed out, a condition of the life of the mind. Only by forgetting does this mind have the possibility of total renewal, the capacity to see everything with fresh eyes so that what is long familiar fuses with the new into a many leveled unity. (p. 16)

One can use this text to begin the exploration of the phenomenon of learning about civic education. First, “Forgetting is closely related to keeping in mind and remembering; forgetting is not merely an absence and a lack...but a condition of the life of the mind” (Gadamer, 1960/2003, p. 16). This would explain why, especially in social studies classes, so often, we remember that we forget. “I know we learned about the Middle East, but I forget what we learned about it,” as Lisa, a participant in a previous study, relates. Gadamer’s further point is that by forgetting, we open ourselves up to renewal and the possibility of looking upon things with a fresh perspective. This implies a great utility for forgetting. I see this in social studies education where in our K-12 curriculum we teach the same concepts several times, at different levels of depth, at different grade levels. Often, to simplify concepts such as democratic principles of government or punctuation rules, the curriculum omits information that may otherwise confuse young learners. When they encounter the same content a few years later, the omitted information is included and the students,

perhaps having forgotten their previous learning, now must, as Gadamer (1960/2003) asserts, fuse what is long familiar with the new into a “many leveled unity” (p. 16).

In Heideggerian terms, the ultimate aim of the social studies teacher is a “worlding” on the part of the student. One particular lesson I have conducted comes to mind that may exemplify this concept as applied to the classroom. We teach the students about the first shot fired in the American Revolution, the “shot heard around the world.” The irony is that most middle school and high school texts do not clarify who fired the shot and how historians know who fired first. After we raise this question, students are exposed to eight different historical sources on who fired the first shot. In small groups, they each act out the historical scene as their source tells it. After reenacting the battle scene from various perspectives, students compare the perspectives and evaluate their reliability. They then debate this with the other students in class. Finally, they write a “page of history” about the event using the evidence they have evaluated. How do these curricular and pedagogical decisions create a world in which students work in civic education? How can the civic education classroom be constructed so that students have maximum opportunities to experience civic education as art, and as such, “the truth of beings setting itself to work” (Heidegger, 1971, p. 35)?

Existentials in civic education. Van Manen (2003) can lend further meaning to the students’ experiences in this curriculum, as well as to the notion of “worlding,” as he explicates four existential themes he believes are useful for researchers to understand human phenomena. These include lived space (spatiality), lived body (corporeality), lived time (temporality), and lived human relation (relationality). *Lived*

space is felt space. Conceptually we can describe space in miles, square feet, etc., but the human experience of *spatiality* goes far beyond.

Van Manen (2003) explains that spatiality is not something we usually put into words, but rather something we feel. For example, we might feel small while standing in a large cathedral, and returning to one's parents' home evokes certain memories, feelings, attitudes and behaviors because of what that space has come to mean.

Lived body deals with the fact that we are bodily in the world. Instances of being caught doing something makes us aware of our bodies, as they might be present to others. We often have heard the description of someone who is uncomfortable in his or her own skin. This sense of awareness of our physical presence is what van Manen refers to as *corporeality*.

Lived time, or *temporality*, is experienced or subjective time as opposed to clock time. I remember as a five year old learning to mark time as adults do. I was playing in the sand on the beach. My mother said we were leaving in five minutes. I did not know how long that was or what it meant. I filled up a sand bucket to the top, dumped it out and patted it down. Just as I was going to fill the bucket again, my mother came over to take me home. For a long time after that incident, five minutes to me meant the time it took to fill up a bucket and dump it out. From there I formed my own understanding of time by multiplying the memory of the sand bucket by two for ten minutes or rushing the process in my head for one minute. Our experiences of lived time also carry with them a sense of our own past, present and projections of who we want to be in the future.

Lived relation or *relationality* is the experience of living with others in a social way as well as the interpersonal space we maintain. This theme explains how we reinterpret our own selves as we experience others. Van Manen (2003) explains, “As we meet the other we are able to develop a conversational relation which allows us to transcend our *selves*” (p. 105). These four existentials are inherent in any phenomenon one seeks to understand. It is the work of the phenomenologist to tease them out so as to understand the essence of an experience.

Worlding in civic education. Relating back to lessons I teach about the battle of Lexington, the students’ experiences can be interpreted through van Manen’s four “existentials.” It takes a week for this sequence of lessons. This is a lot of time to spend on one event in history. This pedagogical experience, however, comes close to the “worlding” of which Heidegger speaks. For one, the experience the students have in class invokes lived space. In the classroom the four walls, chairs, desks, boards etc. are transformed, if not physically, then in our imaginations through the students’ actions, into a battlefield. They have experienced corporeality as they acted out battle scenes based on the texts. As they move around the classroom re-embodiment a historical scene, their bodies also become a way of teaching their classmates, the tools of instruction themselves. Over the course of five days the students are transported back and forth through time. Their sense of lived time is transformed as they interpret historical primary sources and then write about them in the present. As the students themselves work with each other and learn from each other in new ways, their lived relation evolves. It is these existential themes that bring the phenomenon of students’ learning in civic education forward.

Are not these existential themes what Heidegger means when he says, “We dredge up the lectern and a whole world comes with it” (as cited in Safranski, 1998, p. 96)? Students, when reminded of the battle of Lexington, will be able to remember themselves as students of history immersed in their learning. Another aspect of worlding is the student’s own place in history. When they remember the battle of Lexington, we do not want them only to recall their experiences in the classroom, but the event itself, as brought to life by the classroom, the whole of time and space, as reconstructed through their learning. As teachers, we have an obligation to provide students with the appropriate experiences so that learning becomes a form of “worlding.” We cannot underestimate the importance of rich educational events and the students’ abilities to remember essential understandings that persist long after the class has ended and students have moved on to the next grade.

Gadamer: Playing with Questions, Historicity, and Hermeneutics

In continuing to explore the terrain of phenomenology as it helps me know my phenomenon, I turn now to Hans-Georg Gadamer to understand the role and importance of hermeneutics within this philosophical tradition. Gadamer, a student and follower of Heidegger, especially in his belief of the inextricability of hermeneutics in philosophy, views humans as expressing their being-in-the-world primarily through language. As he states in *Truth and Method*, “Language is the medium of the hermeneutic experience” (Gadamer, 1960/2003, p. 384). As such, Gadamer’s phenomenology is described as a philosophy of conversation that we have with the world, as well as with the text of our lives through music, words, art, and anything else with which we interact. Ted Aoki (1999) states, “Deep understanding

seems to come to those who come to know and feel the limits of one's horizon, for it is at the point of limit that a phenomenon reveals itself through the dialectic of the being that is and the being yet to be" (p. 174). Gadamer's emphasis on play, one's historicity, the role of question in understanding, and the hermeneutic circle make his work vital to the interpretation and understanding of the phenomenon of civic education I seek to uncover.

Gadamer at Play in the Social Studies

The player himself knows that play is only play and that it exists in a world determined by the seriousness of purposes. But he does not know this in such a way that, as a player he actually *intends* this relation to seriousness. Play fulfills its purposes only if the player loses himself in play... Someone who does not take the game seriously is a spoilsport. The mode of being of play does not allow the player to behave toward play as if toward an object. The player knows very well what play is, and that what he is doing is "only a game"; but he does not know what exactly he "knows" in knowing that. (Gadamer, 1960/2003, p. 102)

Gadamer's philosophy speaks strongly to the social studies in his exploration of "play." Play is a vital part of history and civic education, including the use of simulation, role-playing, and games. In all three situations, one has to play. *The player himself knows that play is only play and that it exists in a world determined by the seriousness of purposes.* When I initiate a game or simulation, students only are going to take it as seriously as the class culture will allow. Before this play can take place, allowing students to form meaning, there has to be meaning for them in my classroom. I have to establish social studies as an essential element in their education. This is often a challenge because of their prior experience with social studies. Often it is the one "easy" class the students have had in other years. They have to memorize and take a lot of quizzes, but do not do any really challenging work. It is my challenge at the beginning of the year to establish a "seriousness of purpose."

Without this, any play will have little meaning. Once the seriousness of purpose for the class is created, then play has its place. I ponder how students experience civic education in light of the games and simulations constructed to help them experience their learning more fully.

Play fulfills its purpose only if the player loses himself in play. Indeed, this is the goal in initiating a game or simulation in civic education. The students must be immersed in the world I have created for them so that they may experience something temporally, spatially, and corporally. A student who still is guarded, on edge and reticent will not have the same experience or acquire the same learning as the child who is able to let go and lose himself in play. It is only through this losing of oneself that the child can re-find himself at a later point as someone new, someone who has been transformed because of the experience of the play. The purpose of a game or simulation in social studies class is to engage students in a way that creates multiple pathways to their memories so that knowledge of the past and how to behave in the present can be created. Students must initially lose themselves in order to be present fully to all the play has to offer.

Someone who does not take the game seriously is a spoilsport. I teach this kind of student from time to time. Just recently in fact, I conducted a simulation in which I pretended to tax the students for their papers in order to simulate how the colonists might have felt during the American Revolution. I watched the students react and vacillate between belief and disbelief. Those who believed it were moved to protest this new “tax.” This was the point of the lesson! They were upset with the policy, but at the same time I could see a perceptible excitement emanating from their

voices and in their actions as they mobilized to protest. There were a few students who sat back and did nothing because they were not sure if they believed the tax or not and did not want to risk acting out if it were real. Then there were a few students, one or two in each class, who knew that the tax was phony and felt compelled to spoil the lesson for the class. They tried to convince the other students that it was fake and that they were foolish to react. They (very keenly) pointed out flaws in the set-up of the simulation and so forth. In each class, I tried my best to come up with counter-arguments. I, myself, was a player in this simulation and had to act in the role of “just the messenger” for this new tax.

These “spoilspport” students, after the simulation was revealed, gloated, “I knew it all along!” “That’s great,” I said to them and the rest of the class. “You are very smart. But look at Katie. Her heart was racing a minute ago. Daniel has a petition that he wrote very passionately, and Avery wrote all over his quiz in protest. Ilona was too afraid to protest so she paid the tax and was worried about getting in trouble. These students will remember this simulation for a long time because they allowed themselves fully to experience it. The player knows very well what play is, and that what he is doing is “only a game;” but he does not know what exactly he “knows” in knowing that. I made similar speeches in each class, as there were a few students in each that did not allow themselves to get lost in the play. For even the students who suspected the true purpose of the simulation and let themselves go along with it had corporal, temporal and spatial experiences. Indeed, even after the students found out that the tax was not real, they continued to “play” for the benefit of other students who had yet to go through the simulation. As such, the entire grade

experienced an act of civic education including protests, petitions, sit-ins, and civil disobedience throughout the entire day. These existential experiences are the “stuff” of the social studies, and particularly civic education. In a class where students learn how to be in a democratic society, students use classroom experiences to connect their being with their doing.

Play in civic education as an art. It is learning experiences such as this that speak to teaching as a form of art. As Gadamer (1960/2003) states, “The work of art has its true being in the fact that it becomes an experience that changes the person who experiences it” (p. 102). The ultimate goal in teaching is change. The ultimate goal in civic education is change that is manifest through the students’ actions as members of a larger society. They reinterpret their world through lenses that have been developed, modified, adjusted, tested and retested through their experiences in the civic education classroom. Their lenses are changed not just by the teacher’s influence, but also through the influence of their peers and the work of art that the teacher and students co-create each day as a class. If teaching is viewed and treated as art, then teaching cannot help but change students and teacher alike. And teachers are called to interact and be in teaching with their students in a much different way from what we often see in the classroom. What a calling! If every teacher strove to teach as an art, then education would truly change lives and not just roll off the shoulders of children like rain off a yellow slicker.

Civic education as self-presentation. As we have seen, the self-presentation of human play depends on the player’s conduct being tied to make-believe goals of the game, but the “meaning” of these goals does not in fact depend on their being

achieved. Rather, in spending oneself on the task of the game, one is in fact playing oneself out. The self-presentation of the game involves the player's achieving, as it were, his own self-presentation by playing –i.e., presenting- something (Gadamer, 1960/2003, p. 108).

First and foremost, play is self-presentation. Perhaps this is why some students are reluctant to let themselves get lost in the play. To do that involves a forgetting of oneself but also an opening of oneself to others. If the student does not connect with the goals of the game, or even the goals of the teacher, or classroom or school, then the student will not ever be a full participant in the play. Similarly, if students do not connect with the “game” of society, they will be reluctant to “play” in society. Because to spend oneself on the task of the game means that the student has connected with the system. Children make themselves vulnerable when they give over to learning. They self-present, trusting in the teachers and system to do right by them. In this vein, civic education has a moral obligation to create a system in which students are authentic players so that their vulnerability, their “giving-over” to their learning is not in vain or at their own detriment. What is the experience of students “giving over” to their role in a democratic society?

Historicity

Gadamer's exploration of the nature of history, historical knowledge and historicity, through the discussion of others' works, speaks very strongly to the goals of the social studies. Gadamer (1960/2003) states, “To think historically now means to acknowledge that each period has its own right to exist, its own perfection” (pp. 200-201). What does this mean for civic education? Students must get a sense of

being a member of society as an ever-evolving process, constructed and influenced by the statutes, laws, events and leaders at the time. Certainly, the fact that we are studying American history and civic education in the year 2006 has as large of an influence on the students' learning experiences as the knowledge they gain from the actual time period being studied. This idea of historicity also has implications for a pedagogy that allows students maximum opportunities to experience a time period.

Significance in civic education. One aspect of learning history with which historians and teachers both grapple is that of significance. What determines an event's significance? Furthermore, the challenge for the curriculum writer and ultimately the teacher is what to include in a history class. What knowledge is worth knowing? What historical knowledge is worth re-membering? And who should determine this?

To open up Gadamer's (1960/2003) answer to this question we can take his statement, "Decisions are made wherever actions are performed in freedom, but that this decision really decides *something* –i.e., that a decision makes history and through its effect reveals its full and lasting significance –is the mark of truly historical moments" (p. 204). I think of the American history curriculum we teach in the eighth grade in MCPS. How is it decided that we teach what we teach? How is historic significance determined? And by whom? I have asked these questions before and the answers never come down to the level of the students. The students do not determine what is significant to study. We do not put the responsibility of determining significance or making curricular decisions in the hands of our students. I imagine a curriculum wherein the students themselves have a stake in the decision of what is

worthy of study. I ask how such decisions would influence the students' experiences in civic education.

If we examine the written curriculum we can see a pattern of events that are included in the content standards. These are events, people, and ideas that influenced our great western tradition. But the notion that decisions are performed in freedom sheds light on why more non-western, nonwhite, non-male examples are not studied in history. The history of marginalized groups such as blacks, women, Native Americans and others is rife with power-over, struggles for freedom and equity, and adversity. Until these groups "won" their freedom from the dominating culture, their decisions were not made in freedom. How do students understand the significance of this omission? Some preliminary research with my students to find out how they themselves determined significance in history, reveals that students think that the "important" events were those that they had already learned through traditional history education. This belief is echoed in other social studies research on students' views of significance (see for example Seixas, 1994).

Civic education as decisions made in freedom. Gadamer (1960/2003) allows us to imagine a social studies curriculum in which students approach history as decisions made in freedom when he states, "The links that create historical continuity are 'scenes of freedom'" (p. 204). What a different approach this would be compared to what we traditionally study. How could I restructure the existing curriculum in this context? What would be different about the content through this lens? Perhaps it would emerge as a curriculum on freedom wrought through resistance, struggle and decisions made from moral stances. This, indeed, would be a transformative way to

conceptualize civic education. What does the writing of history that follows scenes of freedom look like if that history is about oppression, dominance and power-over?

Furthermore, what are the experiences of students in civic education if it is experienced as a curriculum of scenes of freedom?

The Question and the Hermeneutic Circle

For students engaged in civic education, Gadamer's understanding of one's historicity is especially salient. Students need to understand their own place in history. Teachers, in turn, need to understand their students' understandings of their place in history as well. In seeking this understanding, teachers can begin to get underneath the students' experiences in civic education.

Gadamer understands philosophy as a conversation we have with the world and with the text of our lives such as music, art and literature. He defines conversation as a dialectic process between questions and answers: "The essence of the *question* is to open up possibilities and keep them open" (1960/2003, p. 299). In this vein, he asserts that the question that the text, art, music, or experience make you ask *is* the interpretation. To question in order to open up possibilities and keep them open is to be open to the hermeneutic circle and to be ready to accept a reinterpretation of the original question.

This act is essential in the social studies and especially in civic education. Students need to question what it means to be a citizen, the nature of freedom, equality and justice and what constitutes effective government. Questioning is central to civic understanding and knowledge, for civic education is essentially an experience. As Gadamer (1960/2003) states, "We cannot have experiences without

asking questions. Recognizing that an object is different, and not as we first thought, obviously presupposes the question whether it was this or that” (p. 362).

We find a practical classroom application of Gadamer’s philosophy of hermeneutic phenomenology in its relation to van Manen’s “action sensitive pedagogy.” For example, in Kincheloe’s (1991) description of critical research, he states, “The action researcher uncovers the student’s perceptual organization of the information and gains insight into who the student really is by asking a series of questions” (p. 197). He goes on to list these questions and concludes by stating, “Such research promises to grant teachers a degree of empathy with students rarely achieved in educational settings” (p. 197). The idea of having empathy for one’s students while at the same time teaching them and doing research, brings to mind van Manen’s notion of human science (research) for action sensitive pedagogy.

Inherent in educational research is a view of knowledge. The teacher’s epistemology ultimately guides his pedagogical decisions. For a teacher whose epistemology speaks to the co-construction of knowledge, the co-creation of curriculum will be at home in the hermeneutic circle where she and her students will be engaged. Indeed, teachers must embrace a pedagogy of “not knowing” in order to be vested fully in the journey with their students. As Gadamer (1960/2003) asserts, “In order to be able to ask, one must want to know, and that means knowing that one does not know” (p. 363). How does this premise play itself out in the civic education classroom? What might a teacher do to call into question what it is students do not know? Some students may be unaware of the full extent of their role in a democratic society and the rights and responsibilities of citizenship. The teacher and the

curriculum, in this regard, must be the vehicle through which the students discover what they do not know.

Civic Education as that Which Happens above our Wanting and Doing

According to Gadamer, hermeneutics seeks to take us beyond the actual experience. Jardine (1992) states this understanding eloquently when he asserts that hermeneutics is concerned with “not what we do or what we ought to do, but what happens to us over and above our wanting and doing” (p. 264). That which “happens to us over and above our wanting and doing” is the essence of an experience. In other words, in hermeneutics, you cannot interpret or make sense of an experience as it is happening, nor can you control or manipulate a lived experience. The sense of an experience only comes after it has taken place and is beyond our control. The experience is what is and hermeneutics helps us to understand its essence. In this sense, it is essential in civic education for students and teacher both to reflect on their actions in and out of the classroom in order to come to an authentic understanding of their civic identity.

Remembering, Placing, and Imagining

Just as imagination takes us forward into the realm of the purely possible –into what *might be* –so memory brings us back into the domain of the actual and the already elapsed: to what *has been*. Place ushers us into what *already is*: namely, the environing subsoil of our embodiment, the bedrock of our being-in-the-world. If imagination takes us *beyond* ourselves while memory takes us back *behind* ourselves, place subtends and enfolds us, lying perpetually *under* and *around* us. In imagining and remembering we go into ethereal and thick, respectively. By being in place, we find ourselves in what is subsistent and enveloping. (Casey, 1993, p. xvii)

As I explore the pedagogical implications of Casey’s work, I am drawn to this vision of the relationship between imagination, being-in-place and remembering, especially as it pertains to civic education. Beginning with remembering, we open to

the idea that it is a teacher's hope that students will indeed remember what they have learned. Specifically tied to civic education, students will need to draw on their background knowledge, insights, and classroom experiences to remember what they have learned. But already, with memory has come the implication of place: the classroom wherein they co-create their knowledge and wherein they have the experiences that shape their background knowledge.

Re-Membering Civic Education

To get behind the act of remembering, I turn to an etymological rendering of the word *remember*. What does it mean to remember something and what does this have to do with learning history or civic education? The word "remember" itself comes from the 13th century old French *re-membrer* "recall to mind" which is further derived from *re-* meaning "again" and *memorari* to "be mindful of" (<http://www.geocities.com/etymonline/>). To take it a step further, the root word "member" also constitutes the 14th century notion of "constituent part of a complex structure" (<http://www.geocities.com/etymonline/>). In this meaning, to re-member history is to re-belong to a complex structure, a society or organization in the past.

John Dewey once said:

When the school introduces and trains each child of a society into membership within such a community, saturating him with the spirit of service, and providing him with the instruments of self-direction, we shall have the deepest and best guarantee of a larger society which is worthy, lovely, and harmonious. (as cited in Cremin, 1961, p. 118)

What this suggests is that in order for historical knowledge to be meaningful, there must be teaching for transfer. In other words, as students become a member of history through their involvement in a lesson so, too, must they transfer what they learn and

fulfill their responsibilities as a member of the larger society. How does what the students learn about history affect their behaviors in everyday life? Dewey would argue that this is the ultimate test of what one has learned; that is how one directly applies new knowledge to real-life situations. Will students, learning about the roots of American democracy, be active members of their community? Will they vote and demonstrate other civic virtues as a result of re-membering their lessons in American history? And if not, can one assert that they learned history or participated in civic education? Is it enough that students remember the lesson, or do they have to apply the lessons to their own worlds? Have the students successfully gone behind themselves in recapturing this memory of their learning? And what will it take for them to go beyond themselves and apply what they have learned in new situations?

A Place for Civic Education

Casey's exploration of imagination seeks to open up the phenomenon of what it means to act in new places. What does a civic education classroom have to entail in order for students to apply what they have learned in the "real world," and to act in transformative ways? Before I explore the future pedagogical implications of Casey's work, I explore the present, the place itself, the classroom.

The power a place such as a mere room possesses determines not only *where* I am in the limited sense of cartographic location but *how* I am together with others (i.e., how I commingle and communicate with them) and even *who* we shall become together. (Casey, 1993, p. 23)

This quotation encapsulates how I view my classroom. It is a haven, a sanctuary, for myself, away from the daily grind of everything that is "schooling." For my students, my classroom is a place of excitement where, once they have

entered, they become valued and exalted members of a group that is responsive to each other and the curriculum they co-create.

Casey's study of the significance of place calls to mind the co-creation of curriculum. In my classroom with its four walls, three windows looking outside to the baseball field and feeder high school, its one window looking into the hallways and across at the computer lab, and one door, the place itself serves to shape the curriculum of myself and my students. How does the classroom shape the experiences of my students? Will they remember the posters on the walls? The smell of the air freshener in the back of the room? The breeze from the open windows? Will remembering what they have learned also elicit memories of their seat partner at the light brown wood-grain trapezoidal tables? Will their curriculum be filled with the discussions that seem to spring up out of nowhere, or by one classmate's errant comment and the new understandings that they all reach as a result? These understandings may be related to the written curriculum for the day, or orchestrated by myself, part of the hidden curriculum. Why is it I pause, although not out of nervousness or guilt, when another enters my room? This other can be faculty, administration, or a foreign student and still I react the same. They do not belong, not at that time, anyway. The students and myself in the room, at the prescribed time are who belong. We are the unit that is co-creating, and outsiders will change that current. I have observed a palpable tension that emerges when student after student is sent from the office to deliver messages for my students regarding upcoming guidance counseling appointments. Even though I can maintain the momentum of the class, the students and I both feel a slight lull in time as we wait for the door to close

behind the exiting student so we can resume our places in the curriculum. What does this signify? How does my classroom become sacred space? Furthermore, how does this sacred space shape the experiences of my students in civic education? Is the sacred space necessary for them to re-member their place in history and in present society?

I ask myself these questions in light of Casey's assertion that the place shapes who we are. Indeed, I know students who are stars in my classroom and ridiculed in the hallway, and students who are leads in the school play and are shy and withdrawn in the classroom. Who they are in the place of the classroom is shaped by the other students and the teacher in the room, and the fact that they are there together in time and place to experience something together.

The place of the classroom serves as headquarters. During the Simulated Congressional Hearing, students come into the room and have a purpose. The energy and excitement surrounding the hearings are palpable throughout the school, and difficult for even the most reluctant 8th grader to resist. During this month-long period of intense research, writing, discussion, practice and competition, the students are transformed, and even if they are thinking about lunch while in the hallway, the place of my classroom changes them once they enter. Desks in tables, team signs posted, their names on the board and classmates already hard at work draw them into the curriculum and continue to create the place where this significant experience takes shape. Lucky are the students who get to use this classroom for the actual competition. It comes down to one class. How do I decide? I deliberately have assigned my classroom to the class who needs it the most, the students who most

strongly need the advantages of a sense of place. These students could possibly look at their own desk and remember something they learned while sitting there. A poster might elicit a memory of a class discussion, and their names, still on the wall, may help them remember they are an integral part of the whole experience.

This place, however, must remain with all my students. Even after they have graduated and left the building, that year, they will always have the place wherein they were transformed. Calling back to the notion of a re-remembering, the student now has become a member of that place, the classroom place. How is this similar to being a citizen in which one is a member of a particular society or government? In the larger world, citizens have privileges and responsibilities, as they do in the classroom. There is a push and pull between a sense of entitlement and a sense of obligation. What compels the student to speak out against assigned seats, yet at the same time, collect the work for a missing classmate? Has their citizenship taken root in them? And if so, what does their citizenship in the classroom entail? How will it transform them? And do they feel a sense of citizenship in other classrooms, or just the classroom of the teacher for civic education?

Imagining Civic Education

Moving forward in time to the realm of imagination, I contemplate what it is I want for my students. What is the ultimate aim of education? What are my hopes and aspirations for the curriculum we create together in the classroom? As a history teacher, I want them to remember the past, but for what purpose? Their learning must move beyond the mere acquisition of knowledge and come to move them to act. As a civic educator, I want my students to act. I want them to imagine a world in which

they would like to live and let their actions be guided by this image. We practice this on a smaller scale while still in school together. We imagine a school that we want and act accordingly. The curriculum created in the place of the classroom serves to empower students to petition if they believe a school policy is unjust, to speak up when they know their voices count and to question the norms under which they are being schooled. This imagining of a new world order is a disruptive, salacious process and one that truly transforms the place of the classroom. Students, filled with the experiences of the place and memories of a history of a young country, are now armed to transform their world around them. With these hopes, aspirations, yet always still more questions in mind, I return to van Manen to continue to illuminate my chosen path.

A Re-Turn to the Lantern

As Husserl, Heidegger, Gadamer, Casey, and others have provided insights into the traditions underlying hermeneutic phenomenology, I now return to van Manen to continue to illuminate my path as I search to know my phenomenon. As he posits, phenomenology is a methodology in which the results of the research are inextricable linked to the method. As such, it transforms the nature of the research questions.

Turning (to) the Questions

Using empirical analytic methodologies, a researcher might ask, “What is the impact of a particular curriculum on student attitudes and behaviors in civic education?” or “How does higher education impact political activism among young adults?” Both questions are relevant to the field of civic education. Hermeneutic

phenomenology, in its pursuit of “that which makes some-‘thing’ what it is—and without which it could not be what it is” approaches the phenomenon differently (van Manen, 2003, p. 10). I ask instead, **What is the nature of the students’ lived experience in civic education?** Given this type of inquiry, the results of hermeneutic phenomenological research cannot be summarized in a table or chart, quantified or boiled down. It is essentially a poetizing process. As van Manen (2003) states:

...A poem cannot be reduced to a summary, to a capsule meaning, but rather, to understand a poem is to participate in “how a poem means.” Likewise, phenomenological research cannot be reduced to “results.” Like poetry, phenomenology attempts an incantational evocative speaking, a primal telling, wherein the phenomenologist aims to utilize the voice to present an original singing of the world. (p. 13)

Van Manen (2003) also asserts that phenomenology asks the question, “What is the nature of human being and what does it mean to ask this question?” (p. 5). He states that being human is not just something you are automatically but something you seek to be, that to know the world is to be in it in a certain way. Further, in striving toward this, one acquires an *intentionality*, or inseparable connection to the world.

In conducting this phenomenological study, I seek to follow van Man’s (2003) six components of action sensitive pedagogy: turning to the nature of lived experience, investigating experience as we live it, hermeneutic phenomenological reflection, hermeneutic phenomenological writing, maintaining a strong and oriented relation, and balancing the research context by considering parts and whole.

Turning to the Nature of Lived Experience

In chapter one, I began to open up the phenomenon of civic education and my own experiences with it. Similarly, in chapter two I explore various literary sources

regarding civic education to continue to understand how this phenomenon can make itself manifest, especially for middle school students.

Questions from the heart. I began my turning to the lived experience of civic education with reflections of civic education from my own schooling. I explored experiences within the classroom, outside of the classroom and outside of the system. Just as Heidegger (1961) explains about the nature of a world, I turn to these experiences while at the same time allowing them to be. As a student of civic education as I was moved to act to answer my questions and seek justice; my actions opened up new questions and called to mind new ways to understand civic action and citizenship.

Van Manen (2003) states, “To truly question something is to interrogate something from the heart of our existence, from the center of our being” (p. 43). My turning to the phenomenon reveals that civic education has been a part of my being long before I became a teacher. I seek to understand this phenomenon as I seek to understand myself.

“In” teaching for civic education. Civic education is the one discipline where every student has a stake. Not all students who take English will become writers. Not all algebra students become engineers or mathematicians. But **all** humans are part of a society and as such need to attend to their citizenship, or lack of it, in that society. Thus, I experience my job as someone **in** teaching **for** civic education. I have named the social studies classroom as the place where this call to action resides, and it is my hope that, through this research, I will come closer to knowing how the world of civic education *worlds* for my middle school students.

Maintaining tolerance and openmindedness. As I conclude my recollections of my own experiences in civic education I recognize the need for bracketing or *epoché* so that I can research the lived experiences of my students with a fresh perspective. Just as in civic life we tend to judge the actions of others through the lens of our own experiences, beliefs, and values so, too, is the tendency in research. It is essential in hermeneutic phenomenology to bracket my prejudgments and minimize the impact of my own experiences as I interpret the experiences of my students. As such, I continue to approach the phenomenon with a tolerance and openmindedness reminiscent of the Greek Sceptics. I will be open to the lived language of my students as I recognize that my choice of words and analogies to understand my experiences are not the same as others.

Investigating Experience as We Live It

As van Manen (2003) explains, “The lifeworld, the world of lived experience, is both the source and the object of phenomenological research” (p. 53). As such, the collection of “data” in this research is unique. In investigating the phenomenon, I collect “data” in the form of conversations with students, observing them in my classroom, discussions, as well as their written texts and reflections. All of this is considered “data,” but in phenomenology it is referred to as text. In that all recollections, recordings, and transcriptions are transformations of the lived experience, I strive to “find access to life’s living dimensions while realizing that the meanings we bring to the surface from the depths of life’s oceans have already lost the natural quiver of their undisturbed existence” (van Manen, 2003, p. 54).

Letting learn from my students. As I conduct my research, the phenomenological tradition allows the phenomenon to speak to me in a way that is authentic. I seek to allow the phenomenon to reveal itself. To do this, I reflect on my own personal experiences in civic education. Next, I seek to collect the personal experiences of my students. As a teacher in teaching with students, this methodology is especially appropriate and respectful of the students because as van Manen (2003) maintains, I as the teacher/researcher can learn new ways to be with my students, ultimately for the benefit of all of us. The relationship I seek to develop with my students as I conduct my research is one to which Heidegger (1993b) speaks in the quotation below:

Teaching is even more difficult than learning...because what teaching calls for is this: to let learn... If the relation between teacher and learners is genuine... there is never a place in it for the authority of the know-it-all or the authoritative sway of the official... It... is an exalted matter...to become a teacher –which is something else entirely than becoming a famous professor... We must keep our eyes fixed firmly on the true relation between teacher and taught. (pp. 379-380)

In exploring the phenomenon of students in civic education I need to be open to what their experiences are. I need to “let learn” so that as the researcher I am open to learning what the phenomenon and my students themselves have to teach. I see my research, as Heidegger states, strengthening the genuine relationship between my students and myself.

Turning the lived language.

Being attentive to the etymological origins of words may sometimes put us in touch with an original form of life where the terms still had living ties to the lived experience from which they originally sprang. (van Manen, 2003, p. 59)

An integral part of hermeneutic phenomenological research is the investigation of the lived language of the phenomenon. Heidegger (1971) asserts the necessity of getting back to the roots of the language we use as well when he states:

Roman thoughts take over the Greek words without a corresponding, equally authentic experience of what they say, without the Greek word. The rootlessness of Western thought begins with this translation. (p. 23)

Thus, to get to the roots of my phenomenon, I explore etymological renderings of the lived language of civic education as I have experienced it thus far. For example, the name for the course in which civic education resides, “social studies,” gives the discipline more depth once its roots are explored. Similarly, idiomatic phrases such as “having a voice” also reveal more about the essence of civic education. In turning to historical and contemporary sources regarding civic education, as well as foundational documents in American democratic history, I have drawn meaning from the language of our country’s founders.

As I continue in my research, I need to be open to the lived language of my students as they reveal the phenomenon in their own language. What words and phrases do they use to describe their experiences? Where do they find meaning in our country’s foundational documents? Opening to this type of questioning is also in line with the goals of civic education in that to encourage critical, informed, democratic participation, citizens need to question norms and conventions of society and problematize those assumptions which are normally taken for granted.

Gathering and reflecting with the students. An essential aspect of phenomenological research is the gathering of the texts of others because as van Manen (2003) states, “We gather other people’s experiences because they allow us to

become more experienced ourselves” (p. 62). As such, I invite my students to reflect on their experiences in the classroom in writing through the use of journals.

Pedagogically, this is a decision for the benefit of students to help them internalize what they have learned. When students participate in simulations, discussions, role-plays and close-reads of primary and secondary documents, reflective writing serves an ontological purpose in helping students make sense of and find new meaning in their classroom experiences. In research for action sensitive pedagogy, these reflections allow the researcher to understand the experiences of her students in new ways and serve as a starting point for reflecting on the meaning of their experiences.

Beyond the natural use of reflective writing in the classroom, I invite my student-participants to participate in protocol writing. This “generating of original texts on which the researcher can work” helps me gather more rich descriptions of the students’ lived experiences of civic education (van Manen, 2003, p. 63). As most people, including students, find it difficult to write, I need to be mindful of the challenges this writing may present to them as well as to myself, the researcher. Asking the right questions is one way to assist students in writing their lived-experience descriptions. At the root of the prompts that elicit a lived-experience account is the request to “Write a direct account of [civic education] as you lived through it” (van Manen, 2003, p. 65).

Additionally, I gather the stories of my students through the process of conversations, and use that term in contrast to interviews to call attention to the difference that makes a difference in our talk. Van Manen (2003) clarifies the meaning of interviews in phenomenology:

In hermeneutic phenomenological human science the interview serves very specific purposes: (1) it may be used as a means for exploring and gathering experiential narrative material that may serve as a resource for developing a richer and deeper understanding of a human phenomenon, and (2) the interview may be used as a vehicle to develop a conversational relation with a partner (interviewee) about the meaning of an experience. (p. 66)

To preserve this meaning without confusing it with interview language, I choose the language of conversation. So that I gather the appropriate type of experiential text, I have questions that may start the students thinking and speaking about their experiences in civic education. These include asking students to share a story, incident, or experience in which they participated in civic education. The conversation process is open-ended, but this is not to mean that the student-participant talks endlessly. As the researcher, I am mindful that I need to guide my students to stay on track or in the horizon of the phenomenon. By maintaining a strong orientation to my phenomenon and initial research question, I ask students questions to keep them speaking in an authentic, narrative way, such as prompting them to provide an example, and asking them to tell me what their experience in civic education is like. Finally, as I continue to gather student experiences, I seek to engage in reflective conversations with them so they can help me understand their meanings.

Looking closely at the students. As a teacher of students in civic education, I am in a unique position to participate in close observations of my students as they experience the phenomenon. Observation in hermeneutic phenomenology is unique in that it requires, “an attitude of assuming a relation that is as close as possible while retaining a hermeneutic alertness to situations that allow us to constantly step back and reflect on the meaning of those situations” (van Manen, 2003, p. 69). As such, I look for meaning in the situations I observe *while* it is happening, and yet have the

opportunity to go back and retrospectively deepen those understandings as we engage in conversation about them later. In human science for an action sensitive pedagogy, these interpretations are acted upon and also recorded. In doing this, I must be mindful of my own preconceptions of my phenomenon so they do not cloud my close observations of my students.

Connecting to literature and art. Just as I have turned to literary sources such as Thoreau's (1849/1999) *Walden* and Phenix's (1966) *Realm's of Meaning*, as I continue to gather and reflect on the anecdotes from my students' experiences in civic education, I am drawn to other literary sources as well. These sources serve as other possible human experiences and may allow me to gain more insight into the human condition. Additionally, as I use art in my own classroom practices, historical engravings, pictures, political cartoons, broadsides and advertisements may be sources of art that students interpret and add to their own meaning of civic education. My students themselves may make references to literature and art that have held meaning for them with regard to the phenomenon of civic education, thus exposing new pathways to get underneath the phenomenon.

My personal journal. As I have prepared for my research in chapters one, two and in this third chapter, I have chronicled my experiences with the phenomenon of civic education as I have experienced it and researched it up to this point. It serves me well to continue my own reflective journaling to keep track of insights and understandings as they emerge. Likewise, as mentioned previously, my students, too, are invited to keep journals of their learning in civic education. Both serve to lead the researcher and the students to new understandings of the phenomenon.

Phenomenological literature. Finally, I turn to phenomenological literature as an additional source to provide understanding of my phenomenon. As van Manen (2003) states, “Phenomenological literature may contain material which has already addressed in a descriptive or an interpretive manner the very topic or question which preoccupies us” (p. 74). For example, van Manen and Levering’s (1996) *Childhood Secrets: Intimacy, Privacy, and the Self Reconsidered* lends an understanding of the nature of secrets in the classroom as may come into play in civic education. Similarly, as I have described the “sacred space” of the classroom, Bachelard’s (1994) *Poetics of Space* offers interpretations of space germane to the classroom experiences of my students. Such sources as they help me to “reflect more deeply on the way we tend to make interpretive sense of the lived experience” (van Manen, 2003, p. 75).

The Pedagogical Essence Through Hermeneutic Phenomenological Reflection

Throughout this research I am on a search for meaning. As van Manen (2003) states, “To be human is to be concerned with meaning, to desire meaning” (p. 79). This desire for meaning keeps me going back again and again to seek the meaning of my phenomenon. Ultimately, I seek to gain a more direct contact with the lived experience of civic education.

Themes as experiential structures.

Making something of a text or of a lived experience by interpreting its meaning is more accurately a process of insightful invention, discovery or disclosure — grasping and formulating a thematic understanding is not a rule-bound process but a free act of “seeing” meaning. (van Manen, 2003, p. 79)

After gathering the anecdotes, stories, biographies and examples that make up my students’ experiences in civic education, I make use of themes to get to the essence of the phenomenon. The themes are not the phenomenon itself, but rather

entryways into understanding the phenomenon. As van Manen (2003) states, “Theme gives control and order to our research and writing” (p. 79).

Themes in phenomenological research are different than in other situations such as literary analysis. The phenomenological quality of a theme includes a “needfulness or desire to make sense” (van Manen, 2003, p. 88). A theme is the sense one tries to make of one’s experiences as well as an openness to something. As I reflect on my students’ experiences, I seek out the themes in the students’ lived language to help me “get at the notion” and “give shape to the shapeless” (van Manen, 2003, p. 88).

In isolating thematic statements I approach the phenomenological descriptions in three different ways: (1) the holistic approach in which I find phrases that capture the fundamental meaning of the text as a whole, (2) the selective reading approach in which I look for phrases and statements that strike me as particularly revealing about the phenomenon, and (3) the detailed reading approach in which I question each sentence or sentence cluster about the phenomenon being described. As I employ these methods I enter the hermeneutic circle and continue to move toward and away from my phenomenon in the desire to know it.

Transcripts and journeys. Hermeneutic interpretation is a journey that the researcher and participant (teacher and student) take together as opposed to one taken alone by the researcher (teacher). Kvale (1988) highlights this view in his essay *The 1000-Page Question*. He asserts that the researcher must have a temporary bracketing in analyzing the experiences, but that background and pre-knowledge are essential to understanding and making sense of the phenomenon. Thus, the researcher temporarily

removes oneself, then puts oneself back in and takes the journey with the “subject” through the process of analysis.

In *Toward Curriculum for Being: Voices of Educators*, Rivkin (1991)

mentions the challenges faced when deciphering transcripts. Kvale (1988) visits this topic with the caveat “Transcripts-Beware!” (p. 97). He states:

The transcript is a transgression, a transformation of one narrative mode –oral discourse—to another narrative mode –written discourse. The interview is an evolving conversation between two people. The transcript is frozen in time, abstracted from the ongoing action and decontextualized from the social interaction...the abstracting and fragmenting of the originally lived interviews is further increased... (p. 97)

This reflects Rivkin’s (1991) assertion that often in interpretation of a transcript, there is a fragmentation, a boiling down of the holistic experience into parts such as emotional, cognitive, and physical. While this is appropriate for psychology, it is counterproductive in philosophical phenomenology.

But Kvale (1988) goes further to state that not only are transcripts somewhat boring to read and decipher, but they also serve as a screen between the researcher and the original lived interview. He states that in a conversation, “We normally have an immediate emphatic access to the meaning of what others say” (p. 99). In reading transcripts, we do not.

The phenomenological purpose of transcripts is to interpret them as expressions of subjects’ lived experiences. The texts can be interpreted hermeneutically. Transcripts also can be viewed in a philosophical way as recordings of dialogues as in the Socratic method of searching for truths. Gadamer (1960/2003) warns, however, “All correct interpretation must be on guard against arbitrary fancies and the limitations imposed by imperceptible habits of thought, and it must direct its

gaze ‘on the things themselves’” (p. 267). Thus the teacher/researcher may take from Gadamer the import of gathering students’ experiences through the use of questions, as well as the moral obligation to interpret them as the “things themselves.”

Determining themes.

In determining the universal or essential quality of a theme our concern is to discover aspects of qualities that make a phenomenon what it is and without which the phenomenon could not be what it is. (van Manen, 2003, p. 107)

As I sift through the transcripts, protocol writing and reflections of my students and draw out themes, I must be ever mindful of distinguishing essential themes from incidental themes. One way to do this is to conceive of the experience without the theme and assess if the phenomenon loses its fundamental meaning. This process guides my actions as I move through my research.

Writing into the Phenomenon

As van Manen suggests, “To write is to measure the depth of things, as well as to come to a sense of one’s own depth” (as cited in Pinar et al., 2000, p. 438). In hermeneutic phenomenology, writing *is* the method. Writing allows one to distance oneself from the phenomenon while at the same time allowing it to reveal itself more clearly. The act of putting an experience into words recognizes the linguistic nature of this methodology. The writing is not a one shot, one time experience. In phenomenology the researcher writes, and re-writes, and re-writes and re-writes. The writing allows us to construct multiple layers of meaning and come closer to understanding the “depth of things.”

Phenomenological research is inextricably linked to the practice of writing. The importance of language in the description and interpretation of lived experiences

is paramount. Continuous revisions of the text are crucial to communicating the phenomenon.

Seeking the truth in silence. As mentioned previously, Taylor (1991) highlights the importance of silence in education. Phenomenologists, too, like to state, “Nothing is so silent as that which is taken-for-granted or self-evident” (van Manen, 2003, p. 112). It is the job of the phenomenologist to understand what lies underneath and beyond the silence.

Literal silence, or the absence of speaking, is one kind of silence I may experience in my research. Certainly, at times, I have experienced this in my classroom. In this case, it is sometimes preferable *not* to speak or write rather than fill the void with awkward or forced language. In the classroom, as mentioned previously, this silence is connected to the “wait time” teachers must practice to allow students the time to find the language they need. I must attend to this silence when I ask students to write reflectively as well as when I engage in conversations with them.

Epistemological silence is “the silence we are confronted with when we face the unspeakable” (van Manen, 2003, p. 113). It is in these cases that people tend to borrow words and phrases from others such as poets, philosophers, and other skilled writers and linguists. As I listen to my students in class and in conversation, I must attend to these silences especially as they pertain to their experience of civic education. With regard to citizenship specifically, many do not act because they are unable to access the information needed to do so in an informed way. What barriers in language, experience, and culture might my students experience with regard to their

citizenship? To what sources of language do they turn to find the language that eludes them?

The third type of silence to which I must attend is *ontological silence*, or the silence of “Being or Life itself” (van Manen, 2003, p. 114). It is in this type of silence that we are confronted with truth itself. As I listen to the words and the silences of my students, I aspire that they and I both find truth of the lived experience in civic education. For as van Manen (2003) states, “Even in the most profound and eloquent poem it seems that the deep truth of the poem lies just beyond the words, on the other side of language” (p. 112).

The students’ stories. As I have written into the phenomenon of civic education, I have made use of anecdotes and stories of mine and others’ experiences. Similarly, as I seek the stories of my student-participants, I must attend to and make use of their anecdotes they share. As van Manen (2003) explains, anecdotes can be “a device for making comprehensible the phenomenon of *conversational relation* which every human being maintains with his or her world” (p. 116). As well, I construct anecdotes as a way to typify the phenomenon and add to the larger narrative. As such, I seek to reconnect with my being as a teacher.

The hope of lived language. Through anecdotes and the recovery of the lived language of civic education, I aspire to refine my hopes for my students. Van Manen (2003) frames this particular challenge by stating:

What are we to make of the language of teaching that is thus made unavailable to teachers? Herein lies the irony of the profound contradiction: the language by way of which teachers are encouraged to interpret themselves and reflect on their living with children is thoroughly imbued by hope, and yet it is almost exclusively a language of doing—it lacks being. We do not know how

to talk of our being with children as a being present with hopes for these children. (p. 122)

As someone in teaching for civic education, I am always striving to communicate my hopes for my students. Teachers are expected to use the language of doing in the form of instructional and behavioral objectives, aims, and outcomes; however, a teacher in human science research must transcend the language of doing and retain a focus on being. As such, teachers may open up possibilities to students. Van Manen (2003) asserts it well in stating, “To hope is to believe in possibilities” (p. 123).

Writing to measure the depth of things. As mentioned previously, in hermeneutic phenomenological research, the imperative and priority of language indicates that writing *is* the method. Van Manen (2003) explains, “Writing fixes thoughts on paper. ...The object of human science research is essentially a linguistic project: to make some aspect of our lived world, of our lived experience, reflectively understandable and intelligible” (pp. 125-126).

In hermeneutic phenomenology, not only does writing serve the purpose of showing what the research has yielded, but it is also the way into the research itself. Writing is the way I come in close to the lifeworlds of my students, while at the same time, distancing myself in order to examine the phenomenon as a whole. Writing about the phenomenon allows me to discover what I know so as to realize that which I do not know. Writing also turns me back to my practice and helps me act in a more thoughtful way. Through these seemingly contradictory aspects of the writing experience, I continually make sense of the parts and the whole of the lived experience of civic education.

Maintaining a Strong and Oriented Relation

In maintaining a strong and oriented relation to my students during this research it is imperative to remember my pedagogic stance. As van Manen (2003) asserts, so much of educational research yields theories that do not render very pedagogic decisions. One need only look at the standardized testing practices across the country to understand how, without the appropriate pedagogic stance, theories in education can still be void of educational authenticity and value with regard to students' lived experiences.

Keeping the students in sight. As the researcher/teacher I must also temper my ability to write about the students' experiences for the purposes of my research along with my moral duties as their teacher. I must not fall into the trap as Rousseau did in conducting research for the benefit of children while neglecting my own (students) right in front of me!

Finally, Gadamer (1960/2003) adds to this issue when he asserts:

For it is necessary to keep one's gaze fixed on the thing throughout all the constant distractions that originate in the interpreter himself. A person who is trying to understand a text is always projecting. He projects a meaning for the text as a whole as soon as some initial meaning emerges in the text. Again, the initial meaning emerges only because he is reading the text with particular expectations in regard to a certain meaning. Working out this fore-projection, which is constantly revised in terms of what emerges as he penetrates into the meaning, is understanding what is there. (p. 267)

In my research, I seek to be "animated by the object in a full and human sense" (van Manen, 2003, p. 33). As I delve deeper into the phenomenon of civic education, I expect to be transformed in profound ways. In turn, my students will be transformed as well. For as Aoki suggests, "What matters deeply in the situated world of the

classroom is how the teachers' 'doings' flow from who they are... Teaching is fundamentally a mode of being" (as cited in Pinar et. al., 2000, p. 428).

Toward a theory of the unique. As my research centers on students at the middle school level, I take heed from van Manen's (2003) warning not to "confuse what is possible with what is pedagogically desirable" (p. 150). Ultimately, my research serves to inform mine and others' pedagogy. As such, pedagogical theory needs to be a "theory of the unique" (van Manen, 2003, p. 150). Van Manen explains:

Theory of the unique starts with a single case, searches for the universal qualities, and returns to the single case. The educational theorist, as pedagogue, symbolically leaves the child—in reflective thought—to be with the child in a real way, to know what is appropriate for this child or these children, here and now. (p. 150)

As researcher and teacher, I must be responsive to the ever-changing emotions, energy, moods, and constructions of self and of my students. Especially pertinent to civic education, the students' experience of self in and out of the classroom is at the heart of the research. In my times away from my students, my human science research informs my "kid talk" with other adults, parents, and educators.

Staying on the Illuminated Path

Although balancing the research parts with the whole is the sixth component of research that van Manen includes, it begins at the beginning to help keep a clear focus throughout. The research design and construction must be clear and focused. I need to know from the beginning what it is I seek to understand and uncover. It is possible to get lost "underneath" the multiple layers of interpretation and thematization. I must keep a focus on the phenomenon of civic education itself and be continually working towards the goal of understanding that lived experience.

It is this aspect of the research that also speaks to uncovering the “truth” or *aletheia* of the phenomenon. As van Manen (2003) states:

In ontological silence we meet the realization of our fundamental predicament of always returning to silence –even or perhaps especially after the most enlightening speech, reading, or conversation. It is indeed at those moments of greatest and most fulfilling insight or meaningful experience that we also experience the “dumb”-founding sense of silence that fulfills and yet craves fulfillment. Bollnow (1982) describes this as the fulfilling silence of being in the presence of truth. (p. 114)

To serve these ends, I now turn to the more specific process I employ to uncover the lived experience of civic education.

Finding the Students

Student-participants for this research study include a class of eighth-grade students enrolled in Robert Frost Middle School, where I teach. Before identifying these students, however, I conducted some preliminary work to create the optimal setting for researching their lived experiences.

First, in June 2004, I mailed letters to all seventh grade students’ parents informing them of my upcoming research desires, the nature of the phenomenon I was investigating, and their options with regard to their child’s participation in the study. I enclosed a response form, which they could return if they did not give permission for their child to be scheduled in a class that might possibly be used for the study (see appendix A). Out of 420 students’ parents contacted, nine returned the form, and those students were not scheduled into any one of my four classes. In soliciting this early feedback from the community, it was my hope to have at least one “open class” where the students all had permission to be part of the taped class

sessions. Of the remaining 411 students, approximately 110 were scheduled amongst my four classes I taught during the 2004-2005 school year.

Since the school year had begun, I had already engaged in lessons with my students within the MCPS curriculum guides, “We the People...” curriculum resources, and my own curricular decisions. As such, students in all of my classes had been assessed on various topics related to civic education such as the purposes of government, and how people can change government. From conducting observations, grading assessments, and reading reflections my students had written, I narrowed the scope of my student groups to two classes. These two classes represent the diversity of the school in academic ability, gender, race and ethnicity. From these two classes, I chose one class based on their responsiveness as students to the curriculum and other factors such as the following. I invited students, via written invitation (see appendix B), to participate in my formal study. As these students are under the age of consent, their parents received a similar letter seeking permission as well (see appendix C). The students in the class were informed of their rights as well as provided pertinent information about the actual research in which I engaged them.

Finally, from the class identified, I invited orally and in writing students to be individual participants (see appendix D). In inviting students, I allowed for self-selection while also contacting certain students who already had demonstrated an openness and willingness to express their ideas, as well as students who had already shared an interest in participating in the study. In finding these students, I strove for balance among academic ability, gender, race and nationality, where appropriate. This balance is not essential in phenomenology; however, the phenomenological

renderings may be richer due to the diversity of the group who participates. Out of the twenty-nine members of the class, there were twelve students who became my core group of conversational partners through either self-selection, or invitation on my part.

Engaging the Students

The students participating in this study shared with me their lived experiences in civic education. There are several ways they did this including conversations, reflective writing, and classroom observations. The students were aware of all of these methods of data gathering and were aware of when they were engaging in them.

Students in conversation. Twelve of my student-participants participated in individual conversations as well as group or partner conversations with me and formed my core group of conversational partners. These conversations were tape-recorded and transcribed by me and a transcriptionist. The duration of these conversations varied from 30 minutes to an hour and fifteen minutes. Although these conversations are an essential aspect of the research in phenomenology, the questions for these conversations were not pre-scripted. I, however, had various prompts to get the conversations started, including:

- Describe some of your most powerful experiences in civic education from school.
- What is the meaning of civic education to you?
- Describe what it was like when you participated in the (simulation, discussion, debate, etc.)
- Tell me about a time when you used what you learned in civic education in the “real world.”
- Describe a barrier you experienced in learning civic education.

From here, depending on the students' responses, I asked follow-up questions to clarify their ideas and prompt them to keep their descriptions in narrative form rather than a listing of experiences or explanations.

The text produced from the conversations is what I use to uncover themes and essential elements of the lived experience of civic education. In subsequent conversations, I referred back to the students' texts to ask follow-up or clarifying questions. I also shared with students themes I began to identify as they emerged.

Finally, since a portion of my research focuses on the students' experiences in participating in a simulated congressional hearing, the third round of individual and partner conversations focused on that particular lived experience.

Students in writing. As mentioned previously, all students participated in reflective writing as part of their regular instruction in civic education. In addition to this, I asked some of my student participants to engage in more extensive reflective writing about their experiences and learning in civic education. Therefore, in addition to the core group of twelve students, several other students voices are included through the use of their written reflections. Some reflective writing prompts included:

- Explain what you learned from (the recent lesson). What aspects of your learning were civic education? How did you feel and what did you experience during this lesson?
- Share a time when you were an active citizen. How did you know what to do? What made your action that of citizenship? What was it like to do what you did?
- Describe a time when you spoke "True Words." What was the issue that caused you to speak? Why was this issue important to you? What was it like to speak in this way?

Just as in the transcribed conversations, the text from the students' written reflections is another source from which I drew themes for analysis.

Students in action. Finally, as an educator in teaching for civic education, I had access to the actual classroom experiences of my students. One final element of my text gathering was to tape-record certain class sessions, including the simulated congressional hearing. As their teacher I was not able to take notes while I was in teaching with my students. I, thus, listened to the recordings and made notes of the students' questions and conversations throughout the course of the class session. In doing so, I raised questions such as:

- ❑ What was the “objective” for the class?
- ❑ What questions did the students ask?
- ❑ What questions did the teacher ask?
- ❑ What was the nature of the interactions between the teacher and students, and student and students?
- ❑ What did I hear, see or witness while the students were engaged in their learning?

These observations and recordings served to inform my potential questions for students in individual, partner, and group conversations, as well as future pedagogic decisions. Students had opportunities to give me feedback, written and oral, throughout the entire research process.

Meeting the Class

Let me introduce my class selection process, and the class that became my choice, period four. While awaiting approval from Montgomery County Public Schools and IRB at the University of Maryland, I had from September through December of 2004 to learn about my students and decide which class I should choose for my research class. Of my four classes I teach I really only had three from which to choose. Period five was an on-level/special education inclusion class. I did not want to choose this class because I wanted a group with a wider range of student abilities. I also ruled out my period one class right away. With 26 gifted students and four on-

level students, they were my highest achieving class and so for similar reasons as my period five, I wanted a class with a wider range of student abilities.

My period two was a viable choice. But schedule changes at the beginning of the school year moved 20 students into my class of eleven the second week of school, and this unique beginning left me with a feeling that these kids were just borrowed from another teacher for the year. I tried hard and made good progress with the 21 boys and ten girls in the class, to make them my own. As a morning class, subject to the rotating schedule, they too, displayed different levels of energy throughout the week, depending on when they met. And every once in a while they still seemed like strangers to me, until that first student of the day calls out, “Ms. Paoletti...” Then I am home. Regardless, the unbalanced gender ratio made me hesitant to choose this class, although there were many students in the class interested in having conversations when they found out about my research agenda. I sought permission from a few of these students to use their written reflections.

That left me with period four. Period four is different. They are always the same. The class meets at the same time everyday, right before lunch, and I believe that accounts for their constancy. They are not my “best behaved” class, nor are they the most consistent in doing their work. Period four is a wild mix of special education students, students who receive other academic support, on-level students and gifted students, 29 in all. I knew in my heart that I wanted to choose them to work with this year. This was the class that asked me weekly if I would choose them for my research. This was the class that stood up and cheered the day I returned after successfully defending my proposal. This was the class that left the room and

marched around the school in mock protest during a simulation. This was the class that made me late for my own lunch many a time because they had unresolved issues with each other that had to be hammered out after the bell rang. As I often describe them to other teachers, period four is my heart.

Period four chooses itself. Period four is always there, always needing me, always mine to teach. They sometimes, often times, have their own agendas, as precocious students will. But they are always my period four. If I was not convinced that I should choose this class, one incident that happened in December served to affirm for me that they were the class to choose. After about the third day in a row of teaching past the lunch bell I told the class that I was concerned that their behavior would impact their learning and that I was reluctant to choose a class that had so many conflicts. The next day the students were better behaved than they had been since the first day of school. I watched as the class discussion moved fluidly without the usual student or two making a joke or trying to get others off task. I was mesmerized as the end of the period approached and they all automatically returned to their seats and waited quietly for my final words. I saw when Fletcher started to make a comment, four students turned to him and he immediately fell silent. I watched Mack communicate with his eyes to his peers around him and Jamilla nudging the reluctant Sam to pay attention.

I told them they had behaved wonderfully and asked what brought about the change. Fletcher was the first to blurt out “We had a meeting!” Mack, Jamilla, Amy, and others shot darts at him with their eyes. Mack said, “Be quiet Fletcher.” The bell rang and I dismissed the students to lunch, on time. But I was curious. I asked

Fletcher, who usually hung around after class to talk and delay going into the lunchroom, what meeting he was talking about.

“Oh. We had a meeting yesterday at lunch about how we should all behave better in your class. They all told me especially to not call out as much. Everyone from class was there.”

“How did you all decide to meet like that?” I asked as we walked down the hall towards the cafeteria and the door that led to my office.

“Well Mack got on the microphone and at first I didn’t go but then people from the class told me to get up with them. Some of them were mad at me. Okay, Ms. Paoletti. See you tomorrow,” and he left running down the hall.

Spontaneous order. Magic in and out of the classroom. Life is that which happens above and beyond our wanting and doing. How had this meeting taken place? It was no surprise to me that Mack had initiated it in some way. He was a natural born leader. Most of the kids in class took their cues from him. Why was it important to him that I choose their class? That they are perceived as well behaved? What was his motivation? This incident alone led me to believe that civic education was alive and well in my period four. This community building, the social implications of such a meeting, the organization and mobilization; I could not have planned this myself. It came from them, from their beings, from who they are. And I wanted to learn that. What made them do that? What was it like for them to come together in such a way, and how did their actions outside of class relate to what they experienced inside of class?

Had I planned such a meeting, it most assuredly would not have produced the same result. In explaining the “invisible hand” behind such a spontaneous gathering,

Loan (1992) suggests:

Voluntary institutions...embody norms of reciprocity, trust, honesty, fellowship, and thrift without which no stable social order is possible. The evidence shows that when these norms are articulated and expressed through voluntary action, they are enhanced and strengthened to everyone's benefit. Attempts to mimic the invisible-hand process that has generated them will not only fail; they will actively undermine and destroy these norms. (no pagination)

The social order that emerged in period four and was continuing to evolve was of the students' own doing. I was almost incidental to it. This emergent social order happens in other classes too, though perhaps not to the extent I had just witnessed it in period four.

A few weeks later, after a rather interesting lesson in class for which I did not plan, I had an opportunity to speak to Mack. I asked him how their lunchtime meeting came about. He told me:

Well, we were worried you weren't going to pick us because of the students who are bad in class. So I went to the microphone and called everyone in your period four to meet outside the lunchroom on the steps. Almost everyone came. Amy and I told them we needed to act better and be quieter and follow directions and everyone agreed. But a few people didn't come. We made Fletcher come.

“Wow,” was all I could say at first. “So you just went to the microphone and called for everyone and they came?”

“Yeah. And haven't we been better, I mean most of the time?”

“Yes, you have,” I agreed. “It is almost weird. But today there was more of the old period four.”

“I know. I know. I got loud. I studied and I wanted the quiz,” Mack admitted, referring to an abrupt change in the lesson plan we had made. But I was concerned about something else. Why do students think that teachers want them to “be quiet?” Why is being quiet equated with being good? What place does “being quiet” have in civic education? I would have to come back to this later in my research.

Being “chosen.” I am aware that choosing one particular class over another with whom to conduct my research has moral and ethical implications. At the time, I believed it was more ethical to rule out the classes where there was the least interest in participation from the students. I opened the possibilities of being conversants to any students in my other three classes who wanted the opportunity, and a few gladly took me up on the opportunity. I believe, however, that the classes I did not choose neither suffered any repercussions nor harbored any resentment toward me for not choosing them. Period four’s excitement and interest over my research and their potential involvement was so overwhelming and genuine, I saw no other choice but to choose them. I needed to be mindful that I would learn the most from students who could articulate and name their experiences easily and period four demonstrated an ability to do this from the beginning. As a group, these students did not shy away from voicing their opinions, asking questions, and even taking action on their own behalf.

In other types of research, there may be legitimate concern over the selection process of finding “subjects.” If I were conducting another kind of study, using self-selecting students may indeed “skew” my “data.” In phenomenology, however, one strives for a theory of the unique. As such, any participants’ lived experiences are

valid and helpful to human science researchers to understand the phenomenon. In subsequent chapters, I reflect on my role as the researcher and my relationship to my students as I use their text to understand the phenomenon.

The Students Emerge

Period four meets from 10:53 until 11:39 on all days except for delayed openings, early dismissals and exam weeks. This is a class of 29 students, 17 of whom are boys, twelve of whom are girls. There are four black students, one of whom moved before the research could start, two of whom are half Caucasian and one who is Ethiopian. There are five Asian students and one student of Hispanic origin. Of the remaining 19 “white” students, one is Iranian, two are Indian, and one was born in Russia. Another had just moved from Germany after living on an American military base for the last several years. There were 20 students coded as “gifted” in social studies. Of the remaining nine students coded as “on-level” in social studies, two received special education services and two others received other academic support.

These numbers and statistics, however, do very little to paint a picture of whom these students really are. Instead, I turn to the students’ own voices as expressed in their own authentic text. I begin with a description of a classroom situation that will serve as the basis for illuminating some of the students in the class and the essence of the class as a whole. Although the students themselves as well as their parents gave permission for me to use their real names, MCPS specified that pseudonyms be used instead. As such, the students have chosen pseudonyms that are

used throughout this dissertation. The following are descriptions of the core group of twelve students who engaged in conversations with me.

Mack. Mack I call “Mr. Wonderful.” He is a half black, half Caucasian, beautiful young man with a thousand watt smile. He is captain of the basketball team and easily the most popular boy in the eighth grade. He is always willing to help a teacher, take the lead, or take a risk. He is mischievous, but you can’t help but forgive him. He waters my plants, hands back papers and is the first one to point out the humor in classroom situations.

One day I had assigned students to read a few pages in the text for homework. I had from time to time given homework quizzes to keep the kids on their feet and honest. Is this a punishment or a form of power-over? Why do I give these quizzes? There is pedagogical merit to it. As we go over answers we clarify what the students read the night before. But is it moral to record their grades to these quizzes? What if they read, took notes and still did not understand the content until after we discussed it? Is it their fault? Should their grade be penalized because of this? Another teacher gives similar quizzes but does not always count the scores. Can I begin to implement this policy? Some kids see the quizzes as an easy grade and like them. Others, who do not read or take notes, loathe them, but some of those students remember to read the next time in anticipation of another quiz.

Mack, Mr. Wonderful, had read and taken notes and was ready for the quiz, the quiz that I did not intend to give. Instead, I planned a simulation, one of my favorite lessons in which students learn about human nature. We then relate their experiences to theories of government. Mack asked as soon as the class settled if we

were going to have a quiz, because he was ready. “Come on, I want a quiz. I read. Let’s go!” he said. I began my introduction to the class. “Well, we could take a quiz, but I had actually planned something else...” Before I could continue, Mack interrupted. “No! We want a quiz. Come on. We are ready!” Choruses echoing Mack’s sentiments followed. “This is a democracy, isn’t it?” Mack asked. “Let’s vote. Who wants the quiz?” The entire class shouted for and against having a quiz. I looked around incredulously and counted 16 hands of students who pretty faithfully did their homework. They all wanted the quiz. This was a majority. I decided to go with their concept of democratic classroom: majority rule.

“Okay. Here is your quiz. Clear your desks. Take out a sheet of paper and a pen.” I proceeded to administer a quiz off the top of my head. We went over the correct answers and I turned it into a developmental lesson. As predicted, sixteen students did well. Thirteen others did not do as well. At the end of class I said to the students, “Had you let me finish my introduction, you would have learned that I planned to postpone the quiz and do a simulation today instead.” The students’ reactions were mixed. Many turned to Mack accusingly. Some of the students who voted for the quiz seemed regretful. Others did not. The students who had not done well were angry. I think they had been angry to begin with and now were even more justified. I went on to explain, although perhaps to ears deafened by their own indignation and emotions, that a democratic classroom does not always mean everything happens by majority rule. There is a place for authority in the classroom and they usurped mine. I referred to our class compact hanging on the door and asked them, rhetorically, if what we just did served the ends of our agreement. Before

they left I asked them to write me a note on their quiz to tell me what role they played at the beginning of class and what they thought of the outcome.

I went down to lunch and told my coworkers about the class that voted to take a quiz. They would go down in history! But I continued to reflect on what really happened in my period four that day. Why did I decide not to fight the students? I had everything ready for the simulation. What if I had simply quieted the class and explained the full agenda? Why did I let the students' energy carry the class forward? What did they learn about democracy as a result of this situation? What did they learn about themselves and each other? Perhaps they learned more than they would have from my human nature simulation. I eventually did implement that lesson after I let the implications of their majority rule sink in for a little while.

After finally participating in the human nature simulation where students had to make decisions in a group by choosing "X" or "O" to win as individuals or to win as a group, I asked them to reflect on how they played the game and what this taught them about human nature. They had three philosophies from which to draw: 1.) Hobbes who believes that life without government is nasty and short and that humans are generally selfish; 2.) Rousseau who believes that humans are innocent "noble savages" and it is society that corrupts them; and 3.) Locke who believes that humans are blank slates and shaped by their surroundings.

Mack describes his participation in the simulation as follows:

[I played like] Rousseau b/c he said that everyone's good and society makes them bad. That's what I did. My group was good and everyone did "X" and I was the society and did "O." My group was Locke b/c they were all good and stayed that way by agreeing w/ each other & doing "X." Civic education is taught by someone & can change their decision. I changed my groups' decision & benefited from it. (Mack)

In addition to Brain, ten other students from the class participated in two or more conversations throughout the school year. Below are brief descriptions of the students from my own perspective as well as their own self-descriptions including how they describe their participation in the human nature simulation.

Whitney. Whitney is a quiet, reflective and friendly young woman. She is coded as an “on-level” student. She is half black and half Caucasian. In sixth and seventh grade she received special education services but is now no longer coded. She struggled throughout the year on objective tests and always comes in for extra help before and after assessments to go over what she does not understand. Whitney describes herself below.

Some facts about me... I'm shy around people but very outgoing in front of my close friends. My interests are biking and getting together with friends. I am a visual learner. My favorite quote is by James Dean, "Dream as if you'll live forever. Live as if you'll die today." I also like this one by him too, "The gratification comes in the doing, not in the results." (Whitney, Email Correspondence, September 2005)

I played the game like Rousseau because I picked randomly all the time. My other teammates picked the same way to get more points. They were more like Hobbes. [This activity] was an act of civic education because you learned who was greedy or nice. For example greedy people would choose the same letter X or O and nice people would choose random. (Whitney)

Jay. I got to know Jay better than any other student this year. I was in almost weekly contact with his mother due to his behavior and absences. Jay excels in sports, but does not make every team. He does work, but has horrendous handwriting. He is smart and quick but reaches for excuses to fail or to require extra help, extra time, and extra effort on the teacher's part. He sniffs out weakness in others and points it out to draw attention away from himself. He gets out of his seat at least five times a class.

He is deliberately mean to other students, especially boys like Fletcher who make themselves vulnerable. Jay accepts support and guidance and is not afraid to say, “I need help.” It is often hard to hear this plea, however, through the sometimes hateful speech. I make exceptions for him with regard to organization. My method for organizing notes and work in social studies, that most students follow, does not work for him. He accepted a binder I gave him and gladly uses it instead of the standard spiral. He does not mind being different but is usually more preoccupied with getting out of doing work. Jay describes himself in the following way.

I am friendly and have a good sense of humor. I am impulsive and impatient at times which does interfere with my learning. I learn better by teacher lectures rather than reading the material on my own. I do have a good memory which helps me remember the important facts. I enjoy participating in simulations such as the Mock (congressional hearing). I like working with partners better than large groups. As you know my interests are SPORTS. Anything dealing with sports holds my interest. (Especially basketball!) I am a team player. (Jay, Email Correspondence, September 2005)

In describing his participation in the simulation Jay states:

Hobbes-because I would always put down “O”... (Illegible writing). We learned how a society always has an outsider. (Jay)

Sara. Sara moved here this year from Bolivia. She is friends with Whitney and made other friends quickly as a newcomer. She, like Whitney, comes in at “interact” time for extra studying, but also just to talk to me and support her friends who are studying as well. Her academic and writing skills have improved immensely since the beginning of the year. She is sensitive, gentle and confident.

I am a good student but I also enjoy many other things. I swim a lot, I can’t stay out of the water. I also sing (I’m not that good) but it’s fun, I like reading anything but science fiction, and am more interested in events that really happened. My study habits would be to make a summary and memorize it, or make flash cards. Sometimes I will make my own quiz and take it. I learn better when it’s out of the ordinary, when you interact with games it makes

the information stick to you. I love helping and try to do it as much as possible with my friends when they have problems or teachers ☺. Because I am Hispanic, family is very important to me and we are very close. My goal in life is to live it to the most since you only get one chance. (Sara, Email Correspondence, September 2005)

I placed “X’s” all the time meaning I played the Rousseau, but Jay was cheating and thinking only of himself playing the Hobbes way. (Sara)

Sam. Sam is from a military family who recently moved from Germany where he attended school on the American military base. Sam is precocious and has a strong sense of self, which includes his religion and half German half Chinese background. His interests are in books, books, books, fantasy, Magic the Gathering, Pokeman, and Yu Gi Oh. He carried around a tennis ball can for two weeks and used it to hold his homework. He is extremely disorganized, but all of his work is complete and on time. His typed work is neat, creative and filled with funny quips, hidden jokes and editorializing. He writes down very little, participates in class discussions like a disinterested sage and gladly welcomes others to go to battle with him over any issue. He is an instigator. He put gum on Fletcher’s chair because he thought Fletcher had taken his pencil. He is like that little dog that antagonizes the bigger dog until he gets hurt. Sam claims to have played the game like Locke. He was on a team whom he “tricked” several times and scored points at their expense.

It showed that is real life we are all evil, sadistic, back-stabbing trolls (with the exception of Roman Catholics.) (Sam)

Jamilla. Jamilla is a petite Iranian girl full of spunk and gumption. She fearlessly puts herself out for everyone to take note and does not care when others criticize her actions or beliefs. She is a leader and likes to use her power to argue her points without relent. She is the first to volunteer to help a teacher or a fellow

classmate and the first to offer feedback, advice, criticism or support to anyone who asks, or does not ask for it. Jamilla describes herself as follows.

I like to think of myself as a nice, caring, considerate, hyper, fun, energetic, humorous person. Hopefully, others see me this way. I have dark brown hair and light to dark brown eyes. I am Persian. I like dresses, skirts, the whole girly-girl thing. (Jamilla, Email Correspondence, September 2005)

I was more like Rousseau because I believe when we came up with a plan for the group we should all stay committed. Sam was Hobbes because he wanted to pick the “O.” [He] wanted to stand out. [This] shows how people are or behave on the topic of government. And how different people “play” the government. (Jamilla)

Claire. Claire is a beautiful, elegant, graceful blonde who at first glance looks as composed as if participating in a high tea. You cannot picture her in the lunchroom with all the other eighth grade students. But when she is engaged in an activity or a topic where she has an opinion, she is animated and excited. Her broad smile and easy laughter betray a fun-loving, confident teenager. She has many friends and appears to get along with many different groups of students as well as her teachers.

Claire’s self-description follows.

I am a very accepting person. I am open to other's ideas, but am not afraid to voice my own opinions which I feel so strongly about. Traveling is one of my many interests and I think it has made me so accepting towards others. Being well traveled has helped me excel not only as a person but as a student.

In addition, I believe I am a well rounded kid. Playing the violin has opened my mind to all different styles of music. I also play field hockey, basketball, and I intend to start softball next spring. Sports are a good way for me to not only stay fit but to clear my mind of everything that is going on in my busy life.

Of my academic interests, world studies is at the top of my list (and I'm not just saying that because you were my teacher). I am fascinated by politics; learning about the history of the country this past year really suited me. I don't particularly celebrate everything that is going on in the world today but I believe that it is very important to be educated about it all.

In conclusion, I value knowledge, kindness, family, friends and smiles. I have been told many times that "the sky is the limit" but I agree very strongly with this quote- "To most people, the sky is the limit. To those who love aviation, the sky is home." (Claire, Email Correspondence, September 2005)

I was most like Locke's quote because I did not really care either way and I just went along and didn't argue with my group. Some of my other group members played like Hobbes because while the rest of us were trying to work for the common good, some group members took advantage of us and looked for ways to benefit himself. This was an example of civic education because we were able to –in a game –learn how you and others react in a situation. Some people thought of only themselves and were greedy, others thought about the group as a whole. (Claire)

Kate. Kate is an extremely bright girl who does very little homework. In many instances she is able to sit and listen and absorb information and rely on her own background knowledge to do well on tests. She reads two newspapers a day and watches the news nightly. She is a voracious reader and often will perk up and add to a class discussion only to go back to her latest book in between her contributions. Her favorite quotation is, "Shoot for the moon, and even if you miss, you'll still be among the stars." She participates in political discussions at home and her mother reports that she understands just as much about politics as any adult she knows. Kate usually gets the big picture long before the rest of her classmates. Her reflection on the human nature simulation demonstrates this ability.

I picked all "O's." I think this could be Rousseau. The game was called "Win as Much as you Can" so that's what I tried to do. I think my classmates were like Locke b/c each of their decisions were influenced by their group interpretations. This taught us about human nature which helps us to understand society. (Kate)

Amanda. Amanda is a talented soccer, basketball and softball player with sun-streaked light brown hair, freckles and blue eyes. She is one of only two girls in the eighth grade who made the school teams in all three sports. She claims soccer to be

her passion. Amanda often enters the classroom and seeks me out right away to tell me about her latest game or what she learned from doing her current event assignment the night before. Her peers admire her for her athletic skills as well as her academic abilities. She describes herself below.

Well, I obviously love to play soccer, and you know that. I try and make all of my friends happy, and I love to be around all of them. Especially my soccer team, I can't be around them enough! I am really more a visual learner. I like to be able to visualize what I learned when I am studying for a quiz or a test. It helps me remember it better. And I think I will send you a poem that we wrote in Mrs. Bank's class.

I am Amanda S.
 I wonder if I could ever play college soccer.
 I hear my parents cheering me on when I am on the field.
 I see my whole future ahead of me.
 I want to make everybody happy.
 I am athletic and caring.

I pretend to be an all-star soccer player.
 I feel a wonderful rush when I am on the field playing soccer.
 I touch my mom's heart when I give her something special.
 I worry I won't meet the goals that I had set for myself.
 I cry when I think about when my first pony died.
 I am athletic and caring.

I understand that no one can do everything correctly.
 I say that practice makes perfect.
 I dream about my future.
 I try to succeed in school.
 I hope that I can go further with soccer.
 I am athletic and caring. (Amanda, Email Correspondence, September 2005)

I was more like Locke's philosophy. That is because my group and I all picked at random. I think most of the class was more like Hobbes' philosophy. That is because they were all greedy and wanted to win the Jellybeans. [I learned] how people manipulate other people into what they want them to do. Not everyone in the world is nice. Some people might try to take advantage of you in life...so watch out. (Amanda)

Kelly. Kelly is a classic overachiever. She is one of the five Asian students in the class and is friends with a wide variety of students. When an assignment calls for

a paragraph response, Kelly turns in two pages. She volunteers outside of school and talks openly about her parents' high expectations of her. She always seeks to do what is "right." Her teachers like her motivation and open personality.

Personally, I think I am an out-going, ambitious, funny person who will ask questions when confused about something. I am a hard-working person who can be eager, active/hyper, helpful, and nervous. Some school-related subjects which interest me include math, biology, chemistry, British history, and American history. Other various hobbies are art, cooking, sewing, and creating websites. In class, I found the things that helped me the most were all the charts (organization), current events (see why material in class was important), games (jelly bean game), and review sheets for unit tests. Our textbook was easy to understand and very straight forward. Also, when I study for a test, I just try to memorize and understand the facts so that I can start writing BCRs/ECRs immediately without too much time spent being hesitant. I also listen in class as much as possible. My favorite book is either Harry Potter or the Da Vinci Code .

My favorite short story is the one about a soldier who thinks he has so much power because he can drop a bomb anywhere on this town: the church, a house, or a field. He decides to drop the bomb on the field to spare lives. Instead, he discovers that the children were hiding in the field. Unfortunately, I forget the title. (I am sorry that this description is a little long. I tend to overwrite.) (Kelly, Email Correspondence, September 2005)

At first I tried to benefit my team as a whole. Then after Alix started to gain more points, we were all influenced to gain more points for each person. I think I was Rousseau b/c I was nice at first but I was influenced by my peers. My teammates played like Hobbes. [I learned] human nature, what makes a person greedy, how people react to gaining things for a group or a person, a person's character, how someone influences you, how to play the "game of life." (Kelly)

Bobby. Bobby is an "on-level" student who receives academic support. He is happy, gentle, and laughs easily. He likes to interact with teachers and talk about ideas, current events, and history. Often in class Bobby multitasks, getting his notebook organized while listening to the lesson. He seldom completes work on time but near the end of each marking quarter ends up turning in the work that matters most for his grade. He did not fill out a card after the human nature simulation.

Another time, when asked to respond to the prompt: “What would you do to change the world,” Bobby replied,

A bad life is better than no life. Think of what you have and not what you don't. (Bobby)

Bobby describes himself in the following way.

This is funny that you asked me what is my favorite quote, because I made my own. But it's not really a quote. "One day while in my brother's car I was looking down at a quarter and I said, when I was little I thought wow this coin is big and worth a lot. But now that I grown up I see it isn't, because life is becoming more expensive."

I like sports like paintball, soccer and football. My 2nd favorite class was your class because how easy you make the homework look (explained it well). The only reason why your class was my 2nd favorite is because my 1st was Related Studies, because I did my Homework and I remember you trying to take it away. But you should have just taken the people that didn't use their time. (Bobby, Email Correspondence, September 2005)

Fletcher. I was concerned about the discipline of a few students who sometimes had the ability to get others off task. There is Fletcher who says everything that comes into his head. He is a smart, sensitive, deep thinker with almost no social acumen. I sometimes believe he knows the reactions his comments and behaviors will bring and chooses to act anyway for the attention. I know he and his mother are going through a rough time, with his father in Texas. Fletcher needs attention. He has a wonderful sense of humor and finds humor where others do not. His laugh is something that could be on TV. It is infectious. He starts laughing and others have to laugh with him. Then he cannot stop. When I asked him for a self-description he simply replied:

Make sure they know I am fiercely independent. (Fletcher, Email Correspondence, August, 2006)

Fletcher was absent during the human nature simulation. The text from Fletcher I include is from a draft of a speech he wrote for the Simulated Congressional Hearing. He wrote this after being sick and missing over a week of school.

In every day actions we use the past to tell where we go. If we had a large breakfast, we will most likely have a small lunch. These types of techniques were used to frame the Constitution. If something didn't work, like government not based on its governing peoples, they took that part of government out or fixed it to make it better... All in all, the best way to make the future is the past. Past good things will be put in again and past bad things will be changed or dropped. (Fletcher)

In addition to the students described above, several other students including Alix, Bernie, Joy, and Kofi are included in this research through their written reflections.

Engaging the Curriculum

In Montgomery County Public Schools, the curriculum for eighth grade social studies takes students on a journey through American History from right before the American Revolution, 1763, to the end of the Reconstruction Era after the Civil War in 1877. The written curriculum is divided into four units, each one designed to last one full marking period. My "Recommendations for Success" hand-out I developed for the students includes the names of the these units and the historical time periods they cover, as designed by the county. They are:

Unit 8.1 Democracy: Political System of the People 1763-1783
Unit 8.2 Creating a National Political System and Culture 1783-1815
Unit 8.3 Expanding Geography Challenges Sectional Economies 1815-1850
Unit 8.4 A Nation Divided and Rebuilt 1850-1877
Culminating Activity: Simulated Congressional Hearing (See Appendix E)

The county's curriculum. This year, the county provided teachers with a written curriculum for units 8.1 and 8.4 and outlines for units 8.2 and 8.3. During the course of my research with my students, they were engaged in units 8.3 and 8.4 as well as the simulated congressional hearing. In conversation and written reflection, however, students referred back to experiences they had in all four units as well as the simulated hearing. The scope and sequence of this new curriculum was not much different from how teachers had been teaching American History for the last five years, but the orientation to the curriculum had changed. Each unit took on a lens such as political systems, culture, or economics, through which the historical content was taught. The county introduced principles of political systems, economics, geography, and culture that were to serve as the “big ideas” the historical events would reinforce. Further, as described earlier, the written curriculum was constructed with a “past-present” orientation in which each unit was to be introduced thematically with current events and examples, then tied to the particular period of American history and reconnected at the end of the unit with the present once more.

Frost's curriculum. As an eighth grade social studies team, there were several lessons we all coordinated together for the benefit of all the students. One of the lessons was the Mayflower Compact Simulation described earlier. We used this as a way to introduce history pertinent to the development of American Democracy while allowing students to experience democracy for themselves as they crafted their own class compacts. The students in period four drafted the following compact on the fifth day of school.

In the name of Ms. Paoletti's period four class, we name this paper our class compact. In this compact we have rights, rules, responsibilities, and the

support of our class to follow.

As our rights, we are allowed to speak our own opinions, yet with this comes responsibility. If you are to speak an opinion, you must take full responsibility, if what you say is directly offensive to others. These [sic] rights and responsibilities duo leads to another right of ours. Freedom of expression. You may express your opinion in anyway, [sic] as long as it is not harmful or obstructive. The responsibility to this right is if you do become harmful or destructive in any way the class in a democracy has the right to decide your punishment. Ms. Paoletti has the right to pass or deny our vote. All of this lead[s] to the rules of our class.

One of the rules is that everyone **must** listen to each-other without any disruptions. The second rule is no one is allowed to be judged by his or her opinions on certain topics. Also, by our class's basic democracy, let it be known that every student's opinion is taken in same consideration as anyone else's. Finally, leading to another rule, no harm (**in any matter**) may come to or from the person who has spoken an opinion.

Moving on to public services, one of the main responsibilities is that everyone **must** help make a group decision. Also, the form of decision making **will** and **must** be democratic, as in every vote counts. The decisions that we make must be made for the common good of the class and the common good of Ms. Paoletti.

Proceeding to the topic of our loyalty to Ms. Paoletti, our loyalty is shown in many ways. Such as, our decisions will not only be made for the common good of the class, but also for the common good of Ms. Paoletti. Also, our land, our loyalty, and respect are under the name of Ms. Paoletti.

Lastly, but not least, our support (of the) economic system. We will connect taxes to homework. So to help our class economy everyone must do his or her homework.

These are the rules, rights, responsibilities, and the support of our class. This is our class compact. To anyone who signs this compact, you **must** follow what it reads.

We... the people of Ms. Paoletti's period four class all agree to the compact and will sign our names to it. (Period Four Class Compact, September 2004)

Another lesson we added into the written curriculum ourselves was the tax simulation in which students were charged ten cents a paper due to "budget cuts." Not paying would affect their grade. We all conducted the simulation on the same day and

encouraged students to play along for everyone's benefit even after they found out it was not real. This led to a sit-in at lunch, a march around the school, several petitions and a day where everyone in the eighth grade wing knew what the students learned in social studies.

Between the curriculum guide lesson suggestions and our own collaborative efforts, the year progressed with a mix of reading and writing lessons, games to learn about the Constitution, plays about the Constitutional Convention, a formal debate on the federalists and anti-federalists arguments, creating magazine covers to portray shared American values, creating postcards to show regional differences before the civil war, close reads of the reconstruction amendments and bi-monthly current events that students read and wrote about, often connecting them to the social studies principles for that unit or essential questions such as "How do governments balance individual rights and the common good?"

Most of the lessons mentioned were pedagogical decisions we as a team made or I as an individual made for my students. They were in addition to or in place of the lesson suggestions in the written curriculum. For some units, I followed the guide more closely. For others I decided other methods of instruction better suited the needs of my students and engaged them accordingly. It was a back and forth kind of process, and different than in prior years when we had no written guide.

The simulated congressional hearing curriculum. Perhaps the most profound pedagogical decision we made was to continue to hold the Simulated Congressional Hearing. This would be our fifth year. This activity is actually a month long process where students form small groups within each class and become experts in one of six

topics related to their study of American History, the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. Students research their topic, first drawing from their own resources from the curriculum during the year. Then, they write a four minute speech which they present as expert testimony to a simulated congressional panel composed of state legislators, attorneys, judges, social studies teachers, administrators, college students, and other community members. I designed the assignments and pedagogical format for this aspect of the curriculum. I give the students a weekly timeline of goals and deadlines. As the weeks progress, my requirements become fewer as students take over the process themselves. Ultimately, they are responsible for completing their four-minute expert testimony and preparing research for the follow-up questions by the simulated congressional hearing date. I employ a gradual release of responsibility strategy as is reflected in the changing nature of the “Student Assignments” I give them (see appendix F).

We were able to give the county final exam a month early, which accounts for much of the stress we felt “getting through” the written curriculum, so that students’ last experience in eighth grade social studies was the simulated hearings. In our fifth year of coordinating and implementing this culminating activity for our students, we have truly refined it. We had students in each class vote for their captains who then in a “secret” convention chose their teams with the common good of the whole class in mind (see appendix G). Because we turned over so much power to the students, once we gave out a few initial guidelines and facilitated students moving from one phase of preparation to the next, the students themselves took over the rest. They gave each other deadlines, feedback, peer pressure, criticism, encouragement, and validation. As

will be explored subsequently, this culminating activity is a large part of the students' lived experience of civic education.

The assessed curriculum. Finally, this year was also the first year the students would take a county-wide mid-term and final exam. In the past, if we did not get to the building of the canals, or the different plans of reconstruction, it was no big deal. Now it was because there were questions on the final exam students would need to know. It was a frenetic rush before each final to make sure we had "covered" everything and to give students thorough review outlines. We encouraged them to look up and re-read topics we knew we had not gone into as much depth. Because we thought it would be anti-climatic for students to take such an exam after spending a month on the simulated hearing, we chose to give it before the hearing preparations began.

I think back to the week we spent on the formal debate or our discussions of students' rights versus their constitutional rights. This was a rich curriculum, yet out of 35 questions there was only one that addressed each of these topics. I could have "taught" them these answers in one day. Yet the two weeks were memorable for the students. This inconsistency between what I thought was important for students to know and be able to do, and the type of experiences they should be having in a social studies classroom and what was deemed important enough to assess, and HOW it was assessed caused a great tension in my pedagogy this year. I explore this tension below.

The teacher's curriculum. Having introduced the students of my period four and provided anecdotes to elucidate the essence of the class as a whole, perhaps it is

best to now turn to my role in the classroom and in the learning experiences of the students in period four this school year.

As mentioned earlier, this school year was unique in that for the first time in five years, teachers of eighth grade social studies had a written curriculum to guide their curricular and pedagogical decisions. Up until this year we had been provided an outline of the course content, which included MSDE content standards and a suggested scope and sequencing of the curriculum. It had been the job of my fellow eighth grade teachers and myself to interpret this rather broad and brief document to devise our own collaboratively written curriculum for us to implement with our own students. Even with this collaboration, there was still immense room for teacher autonomy and the classes of the four teachers at our school resembled, at times, separate islands of understanding, while at other times, a more cohesive whole team.

This ebb and flow of collaboration, autonomy, co-planning, and self-adjusting was the norm. We created some assessments in collaboration and others on our own. We agreed on start and stop dates for different units and gave ourselves and each other a few weeks of flexibility around these times. It was challenging when a new teacher joined our group, since there was no formally written curriculum guide to help with orientation to the curriculum. What do you say to a teacher who needs to learn the curricular approach when what you do emanates from your being? Say “watch me?” We did our best to bring new teachers into our collaborative circle and bombarded them with our own self-created lessons and resources. But it was also refreshing to have so much freedom to create written curriculum with only our students in mind and continue to adjust it even more for each class we taught. We

were monitored very loosely as our supervisors knew we were “doing the best we could” without a formally written guide. We observed each other frequently and offered feedback. We were empowered to take risks and share successes and failures with each other freely. The Mayflower Compact simulation was one such risk I took and shared with my colleagues who then adopted it themselves after watching me implement it with my students. They even used my same candle lanterns, wave sound machine and navy curtains. What does it mean to adopt someone else’s ideas? Did this help them think differently about what they did?

The Fog of the Vinyl Binder

With the new written curriculum came many changes for the 2004-2005 school year. By all accounts, it was a mixed blessing. For the first time in five there were lessons, resources, worksheets, and primary and secondary sources already provided for teachers to use in implementing the written curriculum. The way the guide was written still left room for teachers to interpret the curriculum and make pedagogical decisions about what was best for their students, but it was still different. I reflected on this difference at one point,

I have been teaching through a fog created by the vinyl binder. I spent a good part of my spring break reading over the guide, creating overheads and worksheets to go along with the suggested lessons, deciding what to teach and what to skip in order to complete the unit in time for our SCH preparation, xeroxing, etc. And although I have taught the Civil War many years in a row now, it is different this time. The binder is in the way. I am following it because I have never done the unit real justice. But just as I am seeing the students learn, and I will know for sure after I assess them tomorrow, I do not feel like I am **in teaching** with my students. It is them, the binder, then me. I move in and out of teaching with them. There are moments when my teaching emanates from my being, but far fewer than last year when most of the curriculum was a transaction between me and my students. And often a transformation! But now I make a pit stop at the binder. Do my kids notice? I do. By fourth or fifth period I can move beyond it. But my unlucky periods

one and two. I see them through the binder. What can teachers new to the curriculum do? (My Reflection, April 2005)

Curriculum-as-plan. I turn to Aoki (2005a) to help sort through this phenomenon I have described, this “teaching through the fog of the vinyl binder.”

Aoki names this practice as “curriculum-as-plan.” He states:

In curriculum-as-plan are the works of curriculum planners, usually selected teachers from the field, under the direction of some ministry official often designated as the curriculum director.... As works of people, inevitably they are imbued with the planners’ orientations to the world, which inevitably include their own interests and assumptions about ways of knowing and about how teachers and students are to be understood. (p. 160)

Yes! This describes me! I was a selected teacher from the field asked to write curriculum with someone else’s vision, assumptions, and epistemologies in mind. I would marvel at the pre-prepared lessons and recognize the work I had done at the direction of the curriculum supervisor, but in implementing it in my own classroom, I could not even recognize my own teaching. As Aoki (2005a) further states, “If the planners regard teachers as essentially installers of the curriculum, implementing assumes an instrumental flavor. ... Teachers are ‘trained’ and in becoming trained, they become effective in trained ways of ‘doing’” (p. 160).

Indeed, not only had I participated in these trainings, I helped the curriculum supervisors facilitate the trainings. I remember trying to imagine for myself how this new curriculum-as-plan would play itself out in my own classroom. I naturally assumed I would make it my own, and my curriculum with my students would just be somewhat enhanced by these new materials. I was not prepared for the fog.

Curriculum-as-lived-experience. Aoki (2005a) names another approach, “curriculum-as-lived-experience” (p. 160). This is the curriculum I mourn as our new

written curriculum has put a psychic distance between me and my students. But the curriculum-as-lived-experience is what it is, because it is lived by the teacher and students at any given moment in the classroom. But I continue to reflect on my use of the vinyl binder:

I am counting the days until this curriculum is finished and the real curriculum starts. But the whole year should be “real curriculum.” Not just the simulated hearing. Do students know when the teacher is not in the mix with them? Today I told two of my classes about the simulated hearing and how we would soon choose captains and form teams. I wanted to get them excited on purpose. I want them talking about social studies, leadership, teamwork, each other, their class and everything else that goes with this exciting time. I gave them a taste. It is as if I feel like the vinyl curriculum is not real civic education nor is it real social studies. Although, most would look at my instruction and see that it is social studies. Traditional social studies indeed. But that is not my definition of social studies. I need to bring the students into the social studies so that it is real. I go back to what Sara and Mack said about interacting. How much interaction have the students done these last two weeks? This guide directs teachers to use more direct instruction than I am used to. It really does something to speed it up. It really is a faster delivery of information than the constructivist approach I am used to. But at what expense? Do students know the difference? Does it make a difference to them in their civic education? Some of my students’ responses would seem to indicate this. I must stay focused on the students as I muddle through the rest of the binder so that I may return to the teaching and learning that is from the core of my being, not the vinyl binder. (My reflection, April 2005)

Aoki (2005a) speaks to this feeling of fidelity to the written curriculum that teachers may feel. He states:

Miss O struggles with mundane curriculum questions: What shall I teach tomorrow? How shall I teach? ...Miss O knows that an abstraction that has distanced but “accountable” relevance for her exists, a formalized curriculum, which has instituted legitimacy. She knows that as an institutionalized teacher, she is accountable for what and how she teaches, but she also knows that the ministry’s curriculum-as-plan assumes a fiction of sameness throughout the whole province, and that this fiction is possible only by wresting out the unique. (p. 161)

And so it is the accountability that keeps me returning to the vinyl binder because for the first time ever, our school system requires that all eighth graders take a county-

developed assessment. We also have to submit the students' scores to the curriculum office for item analysis purposes. But was not the curriculum-as-lived-experience legitimate without a formalized curriculum guide? Curriculum is valid because it is the lived experiences of those participating in it. To claim that it is only validated by standards, measures, and objectives set from outside the classroom is to say that the lifeworlds of those involved, the teachers and the students, are not legitimate. Thus I turn a corner and recognize that the curriculum-as lived-experience for myself and my students this year has been shaped by the vinyl binder, perhaps more than I imagined it would be, but that which transpired in the classroom is nonetheless, our curriculum.

Dwelling within the Tension

Meanwhile, I continue to straddle two worlds, the world of curriculum-as-plan, and the world of curriculum-as-lived-experience. Aoki (2005a) describes this as “dwelling in the zone of between” (p. 161). As he explains:

So in this way Miss O indwells between two horizons—the horizon of the curriculum-as-plan as she understands it and the horizon of the curriculum-as-lived-experience with her pupils. Both of these call on Miss O and make their claims on her. She is asked to give meaning to both simultaneously. This is the tensionality within which Miss O dwells as a teacher. And she knows that inevitably the quality of life lived within the tensionality depends much on the quality of the pedagogic being that she *is*. (p. 161)

As with Miss O, I, too, dwell within this tension and resolve that ultimately the experience of this tension will be shaped by my pedagogic intentions.

A Return to Teaching as a Mode of Being

The entire school year was not taught through the fog of the vinyl binder. Indeed, as the conversations between students and myself reveal, sound civic education was alive and well. Further, even at the times when I felt most trapped by

the binder I found ways to escape and regain my footing with teaching as a mode of being, not just a mode of doing. The following is a description of a lesson I did with my students, not long after I lamented about the prevalence of the teacher-centered lessons in the guide.

I'm back! I was in teaching, in curriculum, in communion with my students. It was divine. Mini-debates. Students reading, talking, writing, choosing groups, making decisions and forming opinions based on what they learned, even the apathetic students. They were all in. It was amazing what a difference teaching from my own curriculum made in my day, my students' reactions to their learning, the whole day.

What part of today makes it civic education? We debated the *Dred Scott* case. As soon as the kids read the word "debate" on the board, they got excited. What is it about debate, even just the word, let alone the action, that brings out this reaction in students? Seeing the word on the board and knowing what they would soon be required to do, the students couldn't wait to read and research and talk. Can I maintain this momentum through the rest of the unit? (My reflection, April 2005)

I still remember this lesson vividly. I had decided to teach the case differently than the guide had recommended. It was no surprise to me that the students were so engaged. In fact, many students in conversations with me had already mentioned the idea of debate being central to their learning. It is surely a theme I will explore in much detail as something basic to civic education. What was more profound in the moment, however, was my pull toward the positive side of the tensionality. As Aoki (2005a) states:

...To be alive is to live in tension. ...This tensionality in her pedagogical situation is a mode of being a teacher. A mode that could be oppressive and depressive, marked by despair and hopelessness, and at other times, challenging and stimulating, evoking hopefulness for venturing forth. (p. 162)

Indeed, this and other days in my classroom like this one with my students keep me pressing forward with hopefulness.

Allowing Civic Education to Rest upon Itself

I am reminded of Heidegger's (1971) statement regarding turning toward the phenomenon while letting it be at the same time. As mentioned earlier, he states, "We ought to turn toward the being, think about it in regard to its being, but by means of this thinking at the same time let it rest upon itself in its very own being" (p. 31). The phenomenon of civic education in my classroom, for these students, at this time is what it is. In conducting my research I have had to turn toward my students and the curriculum-as-lived-experience, while at the same time stepping back to allow it to "rest upon itself in its very own being." It is not the same lived curriculum as last year, just as period one does not experience the same curriculum as period four.

Despite the influence and sometimes fog of the vinyl binder, the tensionality created by the written curriculum and the lived curriculum is not something to be overcome but rather a desired space within which to dwell. Similar to what Aoki (2005a) states, I, too, turned toward the curriculum-as-lived-experience to see what I could see and learn what I could learn about my students' experiences, giving every day a fresh interpretive stance from last year, not only during the simulated hearing, but during the entire school year. It is now time to move the focus away from my lived experience with the curriculum as I return to my initial question, **What is the lived experience of civic education for middle school students?**

I'd Rather Learn

I have now begun my research in earnest. I have called upon the existential philosophies of Husserl, Heidegger, Gadamer, and Casey. I have relied upon van Manen's structure for conducting hermeneutic phenomenological research and am

now ready to begin the interpretive process that will take my pedagogy and understanding of the nature of civic education to the next level.

As mentioned previously, teachers most naturally engage in action sensitive pedagogy when they move in close to their students to witness their learning, then move away and reflect on their next pedagogic decision. As I continue my journey I am preoccupied with such questions as: Do students in civic education know they are in civic education? Do the students have a sense of place in the classroom, in the school, in the larger society? How does their classroom experience in civic education shape their sense of citizenship in society? It is with these and other questions in mind that I await the commencement of my interpretation of themes in earnest.

Just as I began this research with a poem, I turn to one now to illustrate the urgency with which I anticipate my phenomenological renderings. In *You Shall Above All Things* by e. e. cummings, the last stanza reads:

I'd rather learn from one bird how to sing
Than teach ten thousand stars how not to dance
(2003, p. 143)

I came across this poem at a time in my teaching career when I needed a way to understand my actions. I had decided that after over three years of team-teaching with a special educator that our children deserved better than what we were giving them. I challenged the decisions we had made in the past and pushed for a better way of addressing their needs. We had “courageous conversation” after “courageous conversation” and I stuck to my guns. The students deserved better and we were capable of giving it to them. Similarly, one reason why phenomenology spoke to me as the methodology for my research is because the practical interest speaks to the

right thing to do. Where else but in civic education is justice, equality, and other democratic ideals more present?

I tried to explain to others why now I suddenly felt compelled to act at this time. Why not last year? Why not just ride out the status quo? I found this poem and the last two lines sung to me as no other poem had. Is it not better to teach one child the right way than twenty the wrong way? And really, when teaching is at its best, when it is really teaching, the teacher is as much the learner as the student is. This stanza spoke to me as well because of the parallel it makes between teaching and learning and art. I seek to uncover the art within civic education.

Goldberg (1993) states we should “stay with our first thoughts, that raw energy that comes from the bottom of the mind” (p. 92). She also says, “Poetry is always there, waiting for you to dip into it, just as the breath is always there...waiting for us to notice it. No, not even waiting. Just there” (p. 92). There is so much poetry in everyday life. Sometimes, when I know I have been fully present, the beauty of life overwhelms me. I look forward with great anticipation to what I have to learn from my students, so that in the future, I and other educators may learn from them how to sing.

CHAPTER FOUR:

THE CORPOREALITY OF A CIVIL BODY POLITIC

As I have elucidated in previous chapters, the social studies classroom is the place where civic education resides. Civic education resides elsewhere as well, but for this study I examine student experiences within the context of the social studies classroom, specifically, my eighth grade class. I ask, **What are the lived experiences of students in civic education?** I therefore begin by trying to get underneath my students' prior experiences in social studies.

On the first day of school as a homework assignment, I ask students to respond to the following prompt:

Drawing from your own experiences and background knowledge, explain what social studies is and what it means to be a student in social studies. What do you expect to know and be able to do by studying social studies? Be specific, elaborate and use examples from your own experiences.

As a teacher, their responses give me insight on their writing abilities, felicity of expression, as well as their pre-conceptions of social studies. Now as a researcher, I turn to their lived language to understand more fully what social studies, and thus civic education, had been like for my students in previous years.

Many students experience social studies through the four existentials that van Manen (2003) identifies. Social studies is lived space: "We learn about the geography of many countries." For many, it is also lived time: "Social studies is the study of history ranging from the Aztecs to the recent events such as 9/11." Still, other students have traditionally experienced social studies as lived relation: "It teaches about culture, human life, and human interaction with each other." In this first

question of the school year, students have already begun to identify what experiences have shaped their understanding of social studies up to this point in their lives.

This chapter explores the fourth existential, the lived body or corporeality of civic education and its relation to temporality, or the experience of lived time. These prominent themes emerge as students describe their experiences in civic education. The role of the body, and more importantly, the importance of the chance to “embody” one’s learning in civic education cannot be overemphasized. As Branson (2003) reminds us:

Some scholars claim that knowledge of the values and principles of democracy may be the most significant component of education for democratic citizenship, because when democratic norms are well understood they may have a kind of “grip on the mind” that makes them operate at a deeply internalized if not unconscious level. (p. 5)

I take this notion one step further and suggest that civic education establishes not only a “grip on the mind” but also a grip on the body. When students embody their learning in civic education, they become the democratic values about which they are learning. Just as teachers in civic education may transform and become *teachers as civic education*, students who embody their civic education become actors for social justice, equality, and commitment in society.

As far back as the ancient Greeks, humans have contemplated the role of the body in the larger society. Plato (380 BC) in his famous *Republic*, for example, draws the analogy of a physical illness having the same effect of the ills that could be caused by an uneducated polis in a democracy. In Hobbes’ (1651) *Leviathan*, the front cover alone, with the ruler-king composed of hundreds of smaller people shows a visual

depiction of his theory of the connection between body and society. The people *are* the society and as such, so their bodies make up the ruling body, the Leviathan.

As mentioned in chapter three, we started the year simulating the voyage of the *Mayflower* and students drafted their own version of the Mayflower Compact. As such, we created a social contract within the classroom. In the 1620 Mayflower Compact we find the reference to the “civil body politic:”

To covenant and combine ourselves together into a civil Body Politick, for our better Ordering and Preservation... (Mayflower Compact, 1620, as posted on www.law.ou.edu/hist/mayflow.htm)

In calling for the formation of a civil body politic, this first example of democracy in the new world calls to mind the fact that people are physically together in a society. The analogy of the body to society has its roots as far back as the ancient Greeks and Romans. Hale (2003), for example, notes:

Plato characterizes the highest good as a peaceful, friendly state, like a healthy body that does not require medical attention. The organic nature of the state is specifically enunciated by Aristotle: “Thus the state is by nature clearly prior to the family and the individual... for example, if the whole body be destroyed, there will be no foot or hand...” (*Politics* 1253a). Society, therefore, is a creation of nature, not of man; man's greatest fulfillment comes from being a part of the *polis*. (p. 69)

What parts of the body are analogous to the features of a civil society? When students describe their experiences in the classroom as emanating from their body, how does this help us understand their lived experience of civic education? What connections are they making to the larger civil society, to each other, to their own bodies as they bodily experience their learning? As Todes (2001) states:

Our body also plays a fundamental role in our impersonal sense of social identification with “fellow-citizens” whom we may never have met. ...The irrepressible metaphor for society as the “*body politic*” (as in Plato, Aristotle, St. Thomas, Hobbes, Hegel, Spencer) bears some witness that the features of civil society may reflect those of our individual body. (p. 3)

It is with these thoughts and questions in mind that I return to the social studies classroom to uncover the lived language of the students who have combined themselves in a civil body politic for the purposes of civic education.

Every Body in the Classroom

Our own body is in the world as the heart is in the organism: it keeps the visible spectacle constantly alive, it breathes life into it and sustains it inwardly, and with it forms a system. (Merleau-Ponty, 1945/2005, p. 235)

As Merleau-Ponty suggests, we are always bodily in the world. Students are present in our classrooms physically, as well as intellectually and emotionally. Classrooms are designed to hold a certain number of desks, chairs, tables and books, but who is to say that the classroom is designed with the physical beings, the students and teachers who will occupy it, in mind? As Casey (1993) explains, the mere physical presence of the students and teachers in their pedagogical moment serve to transform what is merely a space into a place.

This body has everything to do with the transformation of a mere *site* into a dwelling *place*. Indeed, *bodies build places*. Such building is not just a matter of literal fabrication but occurs through inhabiting and even by traveling between already built places. (Casey, 1993, p. 116)

As a teacher arranges her room at the beginning of the year for incoming students, she imagines the bodies that will soon occupy the chairs and desks. How will the students move throughout the room? What will it mean to them to be seated physically next to someone else: a friend, an acquaintance, a stranger? The site of the classroom will transform into the place of learning and activity once the students' bodies inhabit it. What will happen to these bodies in the classroom that will quicken

their heartbeats or create physical responses such as perspiration, lethargy, hunger or thirst?

Before turning to the students' lived language of their corporeal experience in civic education, I pause to contemplate why it is essential for students to awaken to civic issues in a bodily way. How does this strengthen their place as a member of the civil body politic? The themes I explore open up new ways to understand students' experiences in civic education as bodily involvement in their learning. The essence of lived body, however, goes beyond the acknowledgement of the physicality of their doing and being in civic education. Embodiment lends a much deeper meaning to the students' experiences. Csordas (1999) explains:

It is when we begin to think of the body as being-in-the-world that we find ourselves no longer interested in the body per se, but in embodiment as an existential condition. In other words, we are not studying the body per se, neither are we studying embodiment, but studying culture and self in terms of embodiment... Thus, to work in a "paradigm of embodiment" (Csordas 1990) is not to study anything new or different, but to address familiar topics...from a different standpoint. (p. 147)

Thus the uncovering of the students' experiences of lived body serves as a conduit through which we can more fully examine how students are civically in the world, and how civic education shapes their being-in-the-world. Ultimately, the students' corporeal experience informs their decisions as citizens. To study embodiment does not simply mean to attune to the students' use of idiomatic phrases and references to the body. Rather, how does their use of such language help me understand the "twinge in the gut" they experience when recalling their lived experiences in civic education (Csordas, 1999, p. 149)?

As a researcher attuned to the students lived body experiences, I am struck by Berman's question:

History gets written with the mind holding the pen. What would it look like, what would it read like, if it got written with the body holding the pen? (as cited in Csordas, 1999, p. 149)

If I take up this type of question with regard to in civic education, what may I find is essential to the students' lived experience? This chapter takes us on a journey through the physical and civil body of the classroom, as well as makes connections to what it means to embody one's civic education.

Off the Top of the Head

As Merleau-Ponty (1945/2005) asserts, we do not just take up space, we inhabit it. Sartre (1943/1995) claims, "I exist in my body" (p. 378). Middle school students exist in their bodies in the classroom and experience their learning bodily. What is essential in civic education as related to their lived body? One place to start is at the top of the body, the head. Some students claim that they experience their learning as if "off the tops of (their) heads," or within their heads.

Layers of civic education. As related to civic engagement, the students, as part of their simulated congressional hearing preparation must be ready to answer follow-up questions from the judges after they deliver their prepared testimony. To do this, the students spend a large portion of their time researching historical events, current issues and constitutional examples that relate to their topic. Bobby's group, for example, testifies on the role of political parties, and as such, needs to be able to speak about the impact of political parties on our democratic government and

opportunities provided for people to participate. Bobby describes what it is like to be able to engage in such conversations, with each other and with the judges. He states:

Well, I have all my stuff ready. I guess it is just there are these follow-up questions they (his group members) have to do and ...they can come up with it within their heads like at the last minute. ...Like when you have your speech ready.... (Bobby)

Bobby references the part of the body where thinking takes place, the head.

What does it mean to answer off the top of one's head? This idiomatic phrase conjures the image of knowledge piled up in layers ready to be peeled off. The knowledge is ready and waiting for the right question. But the student is not aware of it and can only access it when the right question is asked. How does thinking "off the top of one's head" contribute to the experience of civic education?

Although public speaking, conversations and discussions may take place in other classes than social studies, the conversations centered around constitutional issues and ideas of one's citizenship and role in our democracy make this activity civic education. When students look outside of their own knowledge base and research historical and current events to apply to our constitutional principles and then engage in conversation around this store of knowledge, they experience civic education.

In Bobby's case, for example, the conversations that are peeled off in layers off the top of his head include those about the negative and positive effects of political parties in our government, as well as the role of the Supreme Court in protecting people's rights. One of the questions to which Bobby and his group must respond "off the top of their heads" is, "Do you think the Supreme Court should have

the power to declare an act of Congress unconstitutional?" In response, his teammate states:

I believe that the Supreme Court should have the power to say that an act of the Congress is unconstitutional. Since the Congress has the power to make laws, they have a good amount of power. But, since the Supreme Court has the power to tell whether or not this law is good, if the Congress makes a bad law then the Supreme Court should have the power to say that their act is unconstitutional... If the law does not protect human rights then that means the Congress' act is unconstitutional.

Being able to access this knowledge, off the top of one's head, serves the purposes of civic education in that Bobby and his team are able to recognize and name times when the government must intervene to protect human rights. Outside of the classroom, after the simulated hearing, when Bobby sees or hears about an abuse of human rights, perhaps he will be able to speak up (off the top of his head) to protect his and others' rights. Speaking "off the top of one's head" implies a lived meaning waiting to be accessed when faced with a situation that calls forth such a bodily response.

Free of calculation. According to the *Free Idiomatic Dictionary*, "off the top of my head" means "from quick recollection, or as an approximation; without research or calculation" (<http://www.thefreedictionary.com/>). This kind of thinking does not call for the effort, however, that Bobby has described he and his team have given their project, and yet it is still an instance "free of calculation." Perhaps when one learns something at this depth, their new knowledge is experienced as if it did not require any effort to call it forth. Perhaps there is also a movement from the head to the heart, as moral claims of rightness are made in the body. A quick response comes from a sense of commitment to what is "right" action.

Perhaps later, outside the social studies classroom, Bobby's knowledge of political parties and his experience speaking off the top of his head about it will lead him to take "right" actions and join a political party, vote, and engage in conversations with other citizens about the political topics he came across during his research. It is this type of civic engagement that civic education programs hope are the result of their efforts. If citizens can speak "off the top of their heads" on a topic, this indicates a physical connection and ownership of the civic knowledge and disposition and perhaps they are more likely to maintain their civic engagement.

Forced to be free. The second part of the definition of "thinking off the top of my head" is that it is a phrase used "when giving quick and approximate answers to questions, to indicate that a response is not necessarily accurate" (<http://www.thefreedictionary.com/>). This type of thinking with which Bobby seems so comfortable perhaps relinquishes him and his team of the burden of being accurate. They can approximate the answer and therefore may feel freer to take risks in how they respond. Does Bobby experience this kind of learning as a sense of freedom? How is the experience of this freedom an aspect of civil society?

I find connections back to the premise of the civil body politic. Rousseau (1763/1997) discusses the tension between submitting to the general will of a civil body politic and the maintenance of freedom. He states:

Whoever refuses to obey the general will shall be forced to obey it by the whole body politic, which means nothing else but that he will be forced to be free. (Rousseau, 1763/1997, no pagination)

I am drawn to the notion that one can be "forced to be free" within a social contract. This implies that the will of the majority is always working toward the common good and by exerting its power on the individual citizens. How is this dynamic at play in

the social studies classroom? Can students engaged in civic education force each other to be free?

I think about discourse in a democracy compared to other forms of government. Are we freer to approximate knowledge in a democracy? Furthermore, how does the rest of his body respond when one is free to approximate knowledge and not expected to be fully accurate? Perhaps this is when learning takes place, in the space created “off the top of one’s head” where one is permitted to take risks and make mistakes. And yet, what is the responsibility for “right” thinking that one justifies when the quickness of the moment has passed?

Long, vague memories. Fletcher, too, experiences his learning from the top of his head, but in a different way, as he reflects on why he remembers certain lessons over others.

When you do that, it is always memorable if you ask me a specific question that shows off the work. You remember it because [you] actually do it but when you’re thinking of it just off the top of your head, those like long memories, vague memories, you know, happy times, and happy days that stick out when you look back. (Fletcher)

Fletcher describes his experience as something he remembers because he actually has done something to anchor this knowledge. How does his doing connect with what he remembers “off the top of his head?” Fletcher’s experience of being bodily involved is a happy one that he remembers fondly. His doing, connecting with his learning, is a joyous association he recalls with pleasure. His experience has moved from his bodily action and found a home in his memory. Things he remembers off the top of his head elicit in him the memories of what his body was doing during his learning. One can imagine the grin that spreads across his face as he recollects his

experiences of participating in a game that involves winning candy! Memories such as these, that appear as if “off the top of one’s head,” are unique to the individual. Fletcher, in connecting his memories with his doing, experiences the lessons and remembers them the way he does because he was bodily involved. Others may have been bodily involved in a different way, or not at all.

I ask Fletcher to name some of these experiences that led to his “long vague memories” in civic education. He recalls:

I remember a specific time when I definitely felt like a citizen in school. It was a unit all about economics. You learned about how to make a business. At the end of the unit, you have a thing where you have a market place. And before that you have to set up the market place. You have to set up the country and say a couple rules about it. You make your flag. Then you have a president and vice-president. It is like a community and each classroom was a community... Anyway, I felt like a citizen because we voted on stuff like we got to vote on type of flags and it was really cool. It was fun and I felt like a member of something, and I worked hard to make it. (Fletcher)

Fletcher’s take-away from this unit is not an inert set of facts, but rather a feeling of membership and belonging. Civic education experienced this way allows Fletcher to “feel like a citizen” because he was called to be physically involved in his learning.

Merleau-Ponty (1945/2005) deepens our understanding of this experience:

How can we ever have believed what we saw with our eyes what we in fact grasped through an introspection of the mind; how is it that the world does not present itself to us perfectly explicit; why is it displayed only gradually and never ‘in its entirety’? (p. 241)

Fletcher’s memories of certain civic education experiences in class are perhaps grasped through “an introspection of the mind.” His “long, vague memories” that come to him are part of his world that does not present itself explicitly and in its entirety. Just as I, the teacher, have different memories of the same lesson, i.e., what my pedagogical intentions were, the noise volume, the flow of the lesson, I do not

have the entire picture of the experiences. It, too, is a long vague memory for me based on my own introspection. For example, I remember one lesson in which the students had to conduct a mini-debate on the *Dred Scott* (1854) case. I was disappointed that the students, after being so actively involved in the debate, working with each other to find arguments to make their case and sparring back and forth with each other, still wanted me to “give them the answer” to the debate. Who was right, they wanted to know and they waited for me to fill out the “answers” on the overhead. I walked away from the lesson feeling like we missed the whole point of debating. The students, however, had a different perspective. Mack explains why he wants the teacher to write the “answers” on the overhead:

It definitely helps because then you see what you didn't get and if you didn't get it that is what you need to look over. It may not be fun, but it gets the job done. You remember the topic by doing the physical activity and then you get everything that is necessary by doing the overhead so you get the whole package by doing both. (Mack)

Mack and I had different “long vague memories” of this particular civic education experience. My disappointment as a teacher was only a small part of the total experience as the students had their own experience despite their need to get information from me at the end. How does this tension between the physical doing of civic education and the desire to “get it right” at the end of the day relate to students' civic behavior outside of school?

No one has the experience in their memories in its entirety, including myself. This would be impossible. It is Merleau-Ponty (1945/2005) who makes the connection between what we perceive and how our bodies are connected to that endeavor. Returning to the idiomatic phrase that both Bobby and Fletcher use,

Fletcher's recollection of the experience off the top of his head, is absent of calculation, and perhaps accuracy, when compared to the totality of the experience.

Civil society is itself absent of calculation and accuracy. People come together in sometimes very unpredictable ways. Each citizen's experience is unique. Just as every student and I, as their teacher, experience the same lesson differently, each citizen has his/her own unique experience in a given societal situation. A legislator passing law has one intention. Its impact, however, differs on each citizen, rendering a multitude of experiences of the same law.

Stuck in the head. Jay's experience of learning in civic education is a variation on the use of the head in learning. He remembers because it is "stuck" in his head. Jay explains how he learned during the Simulated Hearing preparation.

This type of learning was very good because I learned about my topic researching and reading my speech so many times it got stuck in my head. What got stuck in my head was the responsibilities of a good citizen. (Jay)

Jay, in contrast to Fletcher and Bobby, names the head as the place where the knowledge got "stuck." For Bobby and Fletcher, the knowledge and memories rested there but came out when elicited. For Jay, the knowledge is also in his head, but he portrays a more permanent, less fluid arrangement. He describes his learning of civic education as something that is stuck in his head. Is he able to access it the way Fletcher and Bobby describe? Jay, too, connects his doing, "researching and reading so many times," with his learning. Because Jay does not experience his learning as if off the top of the head, but rather "stuck" in the head, perhaps his recollections are more tied to accuracy and calculation than those of Fletcher and Bobby. Is one type of learning more valid than another? Does Jay feel the same sense of freedom, of

approximation that Fletcher and Bobby may experience in being able to answer off the top of their heads?

I turn to Jay's performance in the simulated congressional hearing. As he states in our conversation, the responsibilities of good citizens are what "stuck in his head." In their prepared testimony, he and his team assert:

In order to be a 'good' citizen, you should be informed by keeping up with current events. Moreover, a citizen in a democracy should be an active participant in society. This includes voting, cleaning the environment, doing various community services. Plus, a good citizen should be respectful of other's rights and their own. Lastly, a citizen has the right to attempt to change the law, but must obey the current law until it is actually changed. (Written testimony, unit 6)

Thus, for Jay, his experience of civic education seems to be a cementing of knowledge of good citizenship. From his experiences in the classroom, Jay now embodies good citizenship as someone who will "keep up with current events," participate in community services, and someday vote. In the follow-up questioning round of the simulated hearing, Jay demonstrates this civic-mindedness when he responds to the judge's question by explaining how young people can get involved in government. Jay later reflects:

They asked us a question on how a young person can get involved with voting and I said you guys involved us here [referring to the judges in the simulated hearing]. Also I stayed up watching the news... and the Rock the Vote on MTV... That was a good question and I gave great answers. (Jay)

Casey (1993) names the body as the place wherein memories are stored. He states, "The things of memory *remain with me*, within me. They occupy interior (and doubtless also neurological) places.... I remain *with them* as well by returning to them in diverse acts of remembering" (p. 129). This type of remembering may be what Jay experiences as he describes the knowledge that is now "stuck in his head," knowledge

of what it means to be a good citizen. His memories of the simulated hearing, his preparation for it and the confidence he felt answering the judges' questions occupy interior places in his body, and he may remain with them when he is called to remember them. This "bearing in mind" or as Casey (1993) names it, "bearing in body" (p. 129) speaks to the lived body experience of civic education. When Jay turns 18 and can vote or when he is presented with an opportunity to participate in community service, his experiences with the simulated hearing that have "stuck in his head" perhaps will prompt him to act in a bodily way; to go to the voting polls, take out the recycling, engage in a political discussion, or join a protest.

To the Bottom of the Feet

But the head is not the only place where memories and civic knowledge may be stored in the body. Moving from the very top of the body to the bottom, students name their experience in civic education, particularly during the follow-up questioning during the Simulated Congressional Hearing, as one of learning to "think on their feet."

We can't use exactly current events like all your research you did like for the follow-up questions because they might not ask those specific questions so it was really hard because you had to think on your feet. (Kelly)

During the follow-up questions I found out that I was good at thinking on my feet. When asked hard questions that I hadn't rehearsed I was quick at coming up with an answer, giving an example, and knowing when I start rambling and it is time to let someone else answer. (Kate)

One part of the hearing that taught me something I didn't know was the follow-up questions. I learned how important it is to be able to think on my feet. This was significant for me because I never really had the chance or the need to do this. I will remember this in the future because it is so important to be able to do this and I will need it many times throughout my life. (Brandon)

Not exactly current events. In their participation in debates and the Simulated Hearing, students had to “think on their feet.” What does it mean to be able to do this? The students seem to experience this in a few ways. Kelly’s experience relates to the idea of not knowing, but not knowing you know until challenged. Kelly experiences this aspect of civic education as she forms answers to the judges’ questions about the unveiling of Deep Throat’s identity. As she states, she prepared for the hearing by learning about current events, but she knew that the judges could ask her anything. One such question from the judges was:

This week the identity of Deep Throat, a very high-ranking official in the F.B.I., was revealed. Should he be prosecuted for violating confidentiality or does his freedom of speech protect him?

Kelly replies:

I agree he should be prosecuted because he was supposed to remain confidential. Just like how in school if you try to publish something with freedom of the press, you can still get in trouble for violating the honor code or school rules. (Kelly)

What aspect of her citizenship does Kelly experience as she formulates answers to the judge’s questions for which she did not directly prepare? Kelly actively connects a current event, about which she knows little and admits to having to think about on her feet, with her knowledge of her first amendment rights and their limitations.

Returning to Westheimer and Kahn’s (2004) theory of three types of citizenship, perhaps Kelly is more apt to participate in her society since she has been called to think on her feet. In their model, the second type of citizen, those who participate, may be encouraged based on her experience of civic education in the simulated hearing. I imagine someone jumping up at the sound of a question and once up, not returning to a seated stance. Instead, Kelly is mobile and active in her community,

having had the chance to think on her feet. Kelly, in forming opinions and ideas about current events such as the revealing of the identity of Deep Throat, experiences civic education as a value engagement. Now that she has been afforded the opportunity to think on her feet about these and other issues, might she act in society in a more thoughtful, conscious way?

Clarifying on foot. In several cases, the students recognize the phenomenon of thinking on their feet as a positive experience. Brandon knows he “will need it many times throughout my life.” Kelly recognizes the importance of being able to “think on her feet.” Kate found out she was “good at thinking on her feet” when the judges ask her to clarify her understanding of her rights.

Judge: What is the difference between natural rights and the rights given up in forming a social compact?

Kate: There is not much difference. You have to give up some liberties and property to make sure most of it is protected.

Judge: But isn't property a natural right?

Kate: If you didn't give up some of it, you would be at risk of losing all of it.

Judge: Where does the risk come from?

Kate answers previous judges' questions by restating and elaborating on the nature of a social compact, a concept she had researched and included in her prepared testimony. But as the judges press her, she is forced to think on her feet, beyond what she had explicitly prepared.

This experience is significant in civic education because it is exactly the experience active citizens are faced with in society. As Jay and his team assert in their prepared testimony, good citizens stay informed on current events. Students who are

able to think on their feet might become citizens who think on their feet, in conversations with other citizens and in deciding to take action when they witness injustices. In “thinking on their feet” students make new connections between ideas, and thus arrive at new understandings and dispositions, which they carry with them out into society. In this way, moving beyond the metaphor, students can come to embody their learning.

In this light, the students’ ability to think on their feet in civic education taps into thoughts they were not aware they had. It is only after the experience that they become aware of what was in their hearts and minds. Just as other students describe their experiences as speaking off the top of their heads, these students who think on their feet are pulling from deep within to access and create knowledge, while they are in the midst of their actions. Before their fellow classmates in debates, and before judges in the simulated hearing, students are constructing new understandings of what it means to live in a civil society from their storehouse of information, experiences, and beliefs. They actively construct knowledge through their bodily action.

Deliberating on their feet. I am picturing the students during their Simulated Hearing. They are seated across from the judges at a red, white, and blue adorned table with their four other teammates. Their hands are folded on their folders which now conceal the speech they just presented. They wait for the first follow-up question from the judges. They have nothing in front of them from which to draw except the entirety of their experience preparing for this moment. At the end of the judge’s question the first student begins to answer. He remains seated as he does so and yet, because this is a question he has never heard until this moment, he is thinking on his

feet as he answers for the first time. I hear Mack, for example, responding to a question he had not before considered.

Judge: Are there any examples of current events that show that the President today has too much power?

Mack: Oh yes! I mean, the whole Social Security thing. The President is just trying to do what he wants and not really listening to citizens who want to keep it. I think he has way too much control over something so important and there needs to be more checks on his powers...

As a result of this experience, Mack now has made new connections about issues that affect citizens such as the powers of the president. These new connections he may now act on in society. Will he carry on this conversation with his parents at home? Will he perk up when he hears related news articles about social security? Reflecting back to Gutman's (1999) notion of democracy education, the goal is to encourage deliberative, thoughtful citizenship. Mack, having thought on his feet is now better able to act in deliberate thoughtful ways. The democratic ideal of balance of power has tightened its "grip on the mind" or body as Mack makes judgments on the president's powers.

Called to that which is essential. Heidegger (1993b) states:

In order to be capable of thinking, we need to learn it. What is learning? Man learns when he disposes everything he does so that it answers to whatever addresses him as essential. We learn to think by giving heed to what there is to think about. (p. 370)

Students in civic education thinking on their feet, thinking in the classroom, thinking in society seek to answer that which is essential. I am reminded of the *essential questions* we use in the "curriculum-as-plan" to frame the intent of the course on American history. I choose the essential questions for the year: "How do governments balance individual rights and the common good?" I also choose

questions for the various units such as: “What is effective government?” “Why do people challenge established authority?” “What is the role of government during times of war?” and “How does a country unify?” How do my choices of what is essential speak to the students? As we seek answers to these questions together during class through various modes of inquiry, students in civic education have the chance to internalize such questions and carry them into society where they “dispose everything so that it answers to whatever addresses [them] as essential.”

In light of Heidegger’s question, “What is called thinking,” I imagine allowing my students to form their own essential questions to guide them through their journey of the curriculum. How different the curriculum-as-lived is when the students themselves ponder what is essential to themselves and are pushed “to think by giving heed to what there is to think about.” In class conversations, usually the ones that develop outside the scope of the “curriculum-as-plan,” students are able to do this. In my teaching I strive to make the space for those types of opportunities to be more of the norm rather than the exception. I reconnect with Heidegger’s (1993b) notion of “letting learn” here as he states, “If the relation between the teacher and the learners is genuine, ...there is never a place in it for the know-it-all or the authoritative sway of the official” (p. 380). Civic education should do just this; allow for letting learn. A *teacher as civic education* must rethink his or her role in the classroom to step aside and allow students to be called into thinking by that which they deem essential. A *teacher as civic education* recognizes the tension in which they dwell as they allow space for students to put forth their own essential questions in light of what the teacher has deemed essential. Once outside the classroom, students might then be

more inclined to act on their learning as it has affected them at a core (corporeal) level.

Although “thinking on your feet” may occur in other classrooms in different contexts, as certainly thinking itself [hopefully] does, this type of learning is essential to civic education because of how it shapes who the student is outside of the classroom. Kate, for example, can now participate more confidently in conversations about social, political and economic issues that affect her life. When her values are challenged by events and interactions outside of the classroom, she now has a lived experience from which to draw to find the strength and body memory to think on her feet and act in a civilly responsive way.

Heidegger (1993b) further ponders, “What is it that calls us, as it were, commands us to think? What is it that calls us into thinking?” (p. 383). Civic education allows students such as Kate, attending to their experiences in the classroom, to be called into thinking outside of the classroom. Kate describes how her experiences in civic education shape who she is outside of the classroom.

My learning experiences weren't limited to that. For instance when we learned about how the environment affected people's lives and where they lived, we also learned that [it] often played a role in determining people's college choices and careers. After that we were given the opportunity to speculate about which colleges and careers would suit us. ... I learned more about life in world studies than I had ever imagined. I finally understood that if you don't learn from the past you will be doomed to make the same mistakes. (Kate)

Just making stuff up. How is thinking off the top of one's head similar to and different from thinking on one's feet? The idiomatic dictionary defines thinking on your feet as “to think and react quickly, especially in a situation where things are happening very fast” (<http://idioms.thefreedictionary.com/>). To “think off the top of

one's head" is similar to "thinking on one's feet: in that both call for an immediate, un-premeditated response, wherein students access and construct knowledge in the moment. Amanda, for example, admits the following while thinking on her feet:

They asked us questions about Deep Throat and none of us knew anything about that topic. It was really funny because we were all just making stuff up about it. But the judges must have liked it because in their feedback they said that we were very good at thinking on our feet. So they realized that we didn't know what it was about, but they liked how we handled it. (Amanda)

Amanda and her team seem to experience the space and freedom implied by speaking off the top of their head because "none of us knew anything about that topic."

Amanda and her teammates, although claiming to have "made stuff up," were actually engaging in values clarification. As they contemplate the tensions between loyalty to one's government, rule of law, and personal and public responsibility, Amanda and her teammates take the information provided by the judges about the revelation of Deep Throat's identity, his role in government and his actions during the Watergate scandal, and form opinions based on their own sense of justice. Amanda, for example, although claiming to "just make stuff up," actually responds:

I think he is protected by freedom of speech now that he has come forward. He is no longer in the F.B.I. and he thought his information would help in some way. He should not be prosecuted. (Amanda)

Thus, thinking on one's feet and off the top of one's head, as students experience in civic education, allow them the opportunity to be "called into thinking," as Heidegger (1993b) would say. This opportunity is essential for citizens so that they may experience that which calls them into thinking and that which they find essential so they may act on it outside of the classroom in society.

Civic Education in Time

Inextricably tied to one's corporeal experience is that of lived time. For how else can one experience time but through the body? Thus essential in the students' experience of lived body in civic education is their experience of temporality. One need only remember that a substantial part of social studies education is dedicated to the learning of history. Indeed the study of how students understand time in history is the subject of many scholars' work (see for example Stahl, Hynd, Britton, McNish, & Bosquet, 1996; VanSledright, 2002; and Wineburg, 2006). This study, however, turns the question of time around and explores how students' experience of lived time shapes their experience in civic education.

To begin, the two experiences of speaking off the top of your head and thinking on your feet are both aspects of extemporaneous speech. I find an apt connection with and within this term. Turning to the etymology of extemporaneous, one finds the Latin root *ex tempore* meaning "offhand, in accordance with (the needs of) the moment" (Barnhart, 1988, p. 360). When students are called on to speak extemporaneously, they are asked to fulfill a need arising in that particular moment such as in answering a judge's question or responding in the middle of a debate. Breaking the word down even further, we find the prefix "ex" means out or outside. *Tempo*, the root of the word, leads to the Italian literal meaning of "time" (Barnhart, 1988, p. 1123). Thus when students respond in extemporaneous ways such as thinking on their feet or off the tops of their heads, they are responding "outside of time." This is a contrast to Heidegger's (1993a) idea of being "in time." He states:

The Being of Dasein finds its meaning in temporality. But temporality is at the same time the condition of the possibility of historicity as a temporal mode of

being of Dasein itself, regardless of whether and how it is a being “in time.”
(p. 63)

In other words, our existence finds its meaning in our experience of lived time.

Students answering extemporaneously or “outside of time,” reaffirm their own existence as they experience a moment frozen in time. Students may experience a tension as they recognize their moment outside of time while being inside time as well. The tension of time is omnipresent in the social studies as the study of history calls students to go “outside of time” as they study our past. Students must suspend their present outlook and perspective in order to understand as fully as possible the past.

Civic education as experience of our past. How is this experience of being “outside of time” essential to the experience of civic education? Many students experience not just history, but social studies and civic education as a study of the past. With regard to one’s past, Heidegger (1993a) explains, “Dasein ‘is’ its past in the manner of its Being which, roughly expressed, actually ‘occurs’ out of its future” (p. 63). A study of the past, for students in civic education, may serve to enhance their own existence in the future. What is it like to learn about the past in civic education? Certainly in most of the students’ definitions of the social studies, the study of history is an integral part. Whitney and Joy, for example, both identify social studies as the place to learn history.

Social studies is about learning about history. For instance, [you] learn about different wars, and about different lifestyles. Last year in world studies I learned about the Aztec and the Incas. (Whitney)

Social studies is a class in which students like me learn history. Being a student in social studies means that in the near future, I will know more information about what has happened before me. I expect to know many

things by the end of the year. I expect to know more about the World wars, about the presidents before Bush, and about many other things. (Joy)

Additionally, students in my social studies class also have a sense of the utility of studying the past. It is a “way to make sure the past is never forgotten,” as Mack notes.

I believe that social studies is exactly what it is said to be. I think it is talking about things (social) that have occurred in past times. Things such as politics, countries and their issues or problems with other countries and many other things such as ancient Africa, different religions and many more. I believe social studies is a way to make sure that the past is never forgotten about and a way to help improve our society today by explaining and discussing different things from our history. (Mack)

Mack sees the study of history within the social studies as a vital way to improve society in the future. Kate takes it one step further in reflecting on her past experiences in social studies class. First, she reflects on the many connections she makes between history and other curricula.

Social studies is a class in which students learn about the past and current events happening in the world. This course is highly important in any curriculum. ...For example, in sixth grade we learned about ancient history. During the beginning of the year we learned about the history and culture of the Greeks. We talked about many important battles, places and Gods which would later be a critical part of our English unit on Greek mythology. (Kate)

In the study of history within the social studies, she also sees social studies as a chance to be able to link the past to the present.

This was when I first realized that social studies is a chance to learn about the past and connect it to the present. I learned more about life in world studies than I had ever imagined. Before middle school I dreaded the thought of Social Studies. I thought it was rather pointless learning about things that happened long ago. After completing sixth and seventh grade I realized I was wrong. I finally understood that if you don't learn from the past you will be doomed to make the same mistakes. (Kate)

Both Mack and Kate seem to call forth the utility of learning history beyond just knowing facts. As Van Sledright (1997) notes, many students hold the perspective that the purpose of studying history is to learn from the past. Van Sledright states: “Students in their own ways invoke George Santayana and his famous rationale for studying history—that those who fail to learn the lessons of the past are condemned to repeat them” (p. 530). I find, in fact, many similarities between Van Sledright’s (1997) findings in students’ rationales for learning history and my students’ previous experiences in social studies. For example, students in Van Sledright’s (1997) study claim various reasons for studying history such as “to know everything,” and as a way to make conversation with their families (p. 536). These and other themes ring true for the students’ previous experiences in social studies. As mentioned previously, however, history is but one aspect of the social studies, and as such, this study seeks to make the larger connection between the students’ experiences in social studies class and civic education.

Civic education outside of time. As previously stated, *extemporaneous* can be understood as meaning “out of time” or “outside of time.” How does the learning of history “outside of time” add to the students’ experience of civic education? Scholars in the field such as those mentioned previously, among others, seek to understand students’ sense of historicity. This certainly relates to and is an integral part of civic education. There are persistent themes and essential questions throughout history such as “When is war justified?” and “What is effective government?” Students’ understanding of past events certainly shapes their understanding and ability to act in

the world they live in today. When students learn history in social studies, what can teachers do to bring them “inside” of time?

Perhaps students have a feeling that if they do not respond quickly enough, if their ideas are not called forth from their layers of knowledge in a timely way, then they will be “out of time.” What if students fail to access their knowledge in time? Remembering what it was like to answer the judges’ questions in the simulated hearing, Claire describes her experience as being “frozen.”

I was kind of like frozen there. It was really like “Oh we don’t have an answer to this.” But I was thinking about the current event that was still fresh in my mind. I said, “Oh that has something to do with immigration and other cultures in our country,” and I said I can tie that to voting and all the stuff we actually know more about. (Claire)

Claire experiences a moment of being frozen. Perhaps for her, time stood still until she became unfrozen by the knowledge that she was able to connect to the judge’s question. What was her sense of time during this extemporaneous speaking? Turning to another form of the root word “tempo,” temporal, borrowed from old French may mean “lasting only for a time, temporary” (Barnhart, 1988, p. 1123). Did Claire sense that she would soon be “out of time” if she did not respond? Or was she able to access her learning because she knew that even if she did not respond accurately, she knew this state of frozenness was only temporary.

Once Claire was un-frozen, she was able to make connections between the issue the judges wished to discuss, immigration, and “all the stuff we actually know more about.” What was this “stuff?” Looking back to her prepared testimony, Claire experiences civic education as an “unfreezing” of knowledge about the significance of voting and voting rights in America. That she was able to think on her feet and

answer the judges' questions about immigrants' right to vote afforded Claire and her team the opportunity to deepen their understanding of this essential aspect of democratic government. This "unfreezing" is a constitutional moment, and in this moment the ideas of "good" citizenship reaffirm their grip in Claire's being.

In their prepared testimony Claire and her group cite the 14th amendments and state:

This statement itself defines national and state citizenship along with what the government cannot do to deprive certain rights from a citizen without [due] process. (Written testimony, unit 6)

In this way, the connection between due process of law and citizens' rights as protected by the government become "unfrozen" as Claire makes the connection between immigrants' rights and this vital part of the Constitution. Claire may take this experience of an "unfreezing" and be able to take action to support the issues such as immigration reform as a citizen outside of the classroom. Her civic virtue becomes "unfrozen" because of the connections she has made in her civic education.

The future of civic education. Students' experience of temporality, that is, lived time, in civic education extends in many directions. The study of history within civic education necessarily includes learning about the past, an aspect of civic education many students mention as being central to their experience. Further, phenomenology seeks to get underneath what the students are experiencing as they are present in the classroom with each other and the teacher. Civic education also has many links to the future as students experience it as something they take with them into the future.

Social studies and civic education need to have a utilitarian purpose. Students want to be able to use what they learn in the future, as they express through their writing:

Being a social studies student means learning many things to help you in the future. (Austin)

Social studies will help open up things in the future such as jobs. (Bernie)

I also expect to be able to apply the information that I learned in eighth grade to the future. ...For example, when I stayed at the castle of Samuel de Champlain, I used the data from fifth grade about him to appreciate the castle's unique past. (Kelly)

How does thinking about the future utility of a subject affect how one learns it? If students did not believe they would use this information in the future, would their experience of civic education and social studies be different? Less meaningful?

Jardine, Clifford, and Friesen (2003) posit:

Because so little of what they learn outside the school has any place *inside* the classroom, many discount what they learn each day about how to function at work, in shops, and with each other. They can no longer remember a time when they learned things without textbooks, lectures, worksheets, and tests—nor imagine how school might even be otherwise. (p. 93)

Basic to civic education is the necessity for it to be connected with life outside the classroom. Conversely, life outside of school must have its place inside the classroom. Civic education is exactly this connection. When the students' experiences in the classroom inform and shape their behaviors, attitudes, dispositions and habits outside the classroom, that is civic education. Helping one to find a job or to appreciate a part of our world history, as the students share in their reflections, allows students to embody civic education. As Jardine et al. (2003) claim, however, this is not the norm for education today. Schools miss the opportunity to engage students in

civic ways more often than not. Even in the social studies class, the home of civic education, students far too frequently experience the disconnect Jardine et al. (2003) describe. This issue is explored further in chapter six.

Civic education about to be. Several of the students use the word “future” to describe what social studies and civic education is to them. What is their sense of time and place in the classroom based on this understanding of their experience of social studies? In turning to the roots of the word “future” one finds the 1380 origin of the word connects directly back to the Latin “*futurus*,” meaning “about to be” (Barnhart, 1988, p. 416). This understanding of “future” gives new meaning to the students’ experiences in that perhaps they experience civic education as a sense of what is about to be. Students can anticipate that their learning will lead them to something yet undefined and unknown. In this way, students may experience their understanding of *themselves* as “about to be.” In a class traditionally devoted to learning about the past, it is an interesting juxtaposition that students experience their education as something that helps them “about to be.”

How does the learning of history and other aspects of civic education situate students for this kind of learning? O’Donohue (1999) explains:

To be human is to belong. ...The word “belonging” holds together the two fundamental aspects of life: Being and Longing, the longing of our Being and the being of our Longing. (p. 2)

Students look to the social studies as a chance to explore that which is “about to be.” In the same way, entering into the social studies, and thus civic education, can be experienced as a “longing” for this chance to be. Furthermore, within the learning of

history, Freire (1998) intimates the importance of role of the teacher in this learning.

He saliently suggests:

The teacher who thinks “correctly” transmits to students the beauty of our way of existing in the world as historical beings, capable of intervening in and knowing this world. Historical as we are, our knowledge of the world has historicity....And that knowledge, when newly produced, replaces what before was new but is now old and ready to be surpassed by the coming of a new dawn. Therefore, it is as necessary to be immersed in existing knowledge as it is to be open and capable of producing something that does not yet exist. (p. 35)

Students are on the verge of being, just as the knowledge they produce while immersed in civic education is on the horizon.

A further relationship between the students’ temporal experience and how they experience civic education is *currere* itself. A reminder of how Pinar (2004) defines it, “*Currere* seeks to understand the contribution academic studies make to one’s understanding of his or her life (and vice versa), and how both are imbricated in society, politics, and culture” (p. 36). In civic education, students are engaged in curriculum that takes them into the past, seeking connections to their present so that they make act in the future. In *currere*, one explores the regressive, analytic, progressive and synthetic temporal “moments.” As Pinar (2004) so aptly asks, “How is the future present in the past, the past in the future, and the present in both?” I turn this question to my students engaged in civic education and ponder what else the *teacher as civic education* can do to strengthen the temporal connections students make. Furthermore, Pinar (2004) states, “The point of *currere* is an intensified engagement with daily life” (p. 37). Is this not one of the ultimate goals of civic education itself?

Before leaving the temporal nature of civic education, I find at least one more connection to Heidegger (1993a) who states:

Temporal here means as much as being “in time”... The fact remains that time in the sense of “being in time” serves as a criterion for separating the regions of Being. (p. 61)

Whether students experience moments of being “frozen in time,” speak extemporaneously on civic education topics “outside of time,” or experience history as a chance to “go back in time,” they are all still “in time” together in the social studies classroom. As such, students’ beings are strengthened through their experiences in civic education in that they may further come to define who they are and who they might be-come “in time” as students and as citizens, as they experience civic education bodily. When students embody civic education, they come to understand that their time is now. They are combined into a “civil body politic” for present purposes which draw on their past while at the same time portending the future.

Stand and Deliver

As stated earlier, Casey (1993) claims “bodies build places.” It is for human bodies that buildings are constructed and these buildings are built for bodies to be able to stand up. Students in civic education have their own sense of what it means to stand up, in and out of the classroom. When asked to recall an experience in civic education, Jamilla shares:

When we had the simulation that we had to pay tax for the paper, that really showed how you could stand up for your rights and how if you did try, it could be changed. And how some people stood in with the government or the king and others just protested and got their rights. (Jamilla)

Jamilla describes a time when students spontaneously decided to protest a fake tax the eighth grade teachers levied so they could experience on an emotional level the injustice similar to what the colonists may have felt leading to the revolution. It was an unpremeditated move on the part of the students to protest by physically leaving the classroom and “standing up” for their rights. Some students showed their discontent by forming and signing petitions. But Jamilla connects protecting her rights with physically standing up for them by joining in the more active protest. Several of her classmates actually stood up and left the classroom marching down the hall chanting against the “tax.” In contrast, those who did not want to protest, still “stood in.” Instead, they remained in the classroom. She explains how she connects her experience in “standing up” during the simulation with a real-life situation outside of the social studies class.

It’s kind of like when we did the simulation with the tax you kind of saw how you could stand up for your rights and things like that so when in one of my classes, Mr. B, he always says things when he doesn’t know he is saying it. So it’s a student’s right (see I have read my Rights and Responsibilities book) it’s a student’s right that you can stand up and a teacher can’t say anything rude or offending about you. So I stood up for that and I thought that kind of goes with the simulation because you learn how to stand up for yourself and what to do in those cases. (Jamilla)

A Republic of Many Voices

Was it the physical act of standing up during the simulation that allowed Jamilla to stand up for herself in other cases in other classrooms? If so, this connection is not limited to classroom behavior. As she continues to describe, Jamilla finds herself standing up for her rights at home as well.

At home my brother he goes to college and he’ll come home on the weekends and he usually tries to get me in trouble... So whenever he does play a prank on me, and I know it is a prank, I’ll use different proofs of evidence like

things we had in the debate and make compelling arguments and say like I have the right to... I have the right to...I have the right to... I have the right to stand up for myself. And even though my brother is 19, he still has to hear my point of view and my parents have to still live under a democratic family.
(Jamilla)

Jamilla takes a stand in her own family and consequently finds her voice. Finding one's voice is an essential aspect of civic education, especially emancipatory civic education. Ayers (2004) asserts that allowing students to find their voice is essential to teaching toward freedom. He states:

The first commitment a teacher teaching toward freedom makes is a pledge to take the side of the student... A second, closely linked commitment is to create a space where a republic of many voices might come to life... (p. 69)

In this light, Jamilla has been afforded the opportunity through her experience in civic education to allow her voice to come to life, not only in the classroom, but also at home within her family community. It is through her voice that she has come to embody her civic education. Outside the classroom, Jamilla acts upon her sense of justice she experiences inside the classroom.

Ayers (2004) continues to describe the "republic of many voices":

The freedom teacher vows to build an environment where human beings can face one another authentically and without masks, a place of invitation, fascination, interest, and promise. (p. 69)

This environment that Ayers (2004) describes is the classroom space essential to civic education. Through the simulation, Jamilla is able to face her fellow classmates authentically, and as a result, finds her voice, which allows her to stand up for her rights and express her views. In this "republic of many voices" the students who occupy the physical space in the classroom find their voices, and as a result support each other as they feel compelled to take a stand. Jamilla, learning about her rights

and responsibilities was able to use her voice to take a stand. She has a chance now to embody the third type of citizenship Westheimer and Kahne (2004) describe, which is the “Justice-oriented Citizen.” Through questioning and discussion, civic education can allow Jamilla to discover and attempt to change the inequities and injustices she sees that exist. As an eighth grader, these situations confront her in school and at home with her family. Having experienced this in the republic of the classroom, Jamilla is now equipped to act the same way in the larger democratic republic in society.

Civic education stands. What does the physical act of standing do to transform students’ learning? As one of the etymological roots of “stand” is “place” or “position” (Barnhart, 1988, p. 1059), perhaps standing up for one’s rights gives students a new sense of their place or position in the classroom, families or in society. From their elevated position, do students feel a greater sense of power, of claim to a place in society or in the classroom? When they stand, does their physical action automatically transform their self-perception? And referring back to Casey, how does the students’ act of standing up add to the transformation of the *site* of the classroom to a *place*? As place is an etymological root of the word stand, perhaps students taking a stand means creating a place for themselves, a place in the classroom, a place in society.

Jamilla’s descriptions bring me to a poem by D. H. Lawrence (1929):

Stand Up!

Stand up, but not for Jesus!
It's a little late for that.
Stand up for justice and a jolly life.
I'll hold your hat.

Stand up, stand up for justice,
 ye swindled little blokes!
 Stand up and do some punching,
 give 'em a few hard pokes.

Stand up for jolly justice
 you haven't got much to lose:
 a job you don't like and a scanty chance
 for a dreary little booze.

Stand up for something different,
 and have a little fun
 fighting for something worth fighting for
 before you've done.

Stand up for a new arrangement
 for a chance of life all round,
 for freedom, and the fun of living
 bust in, and hold the ground! (no pagination)

Does Jamilla have the sense of standing up for “something different?” When she experiences injustice at the hands of her teachers or other family members, she pictures “something different” and acts in pursuance of that end. In her retelling of these experiences, she was almost gleeful, able to share her triumph over those who would hold her down and take away her rights. Her rights as a student in different classes, as well as her rights as a member of her family, are “worth fighting for” and therefore she stands up for them.

Stand up, sit down, fight, fight, fight! What else can teachers do as instruments of civic education to allow other students to feel the same sense of urgency and efficacy that Jamilla experiences in standing up for her rights? As the last stanza of the poem implies, standing up for justice or a “new arrangement” is standing up for “a chance of life all around.” Where would our society be if it were not for those who did stand up in the face of adversity? One only need to turn to the

1950's and 1960's Civil Rights Movements for examples of men and women such as Martin Luther King Jr. and Rosa Parks who stood up for their rights and who fought for “new arrangements” and a “chance of life.” Ironically, many of these heroes actually sat down for their rights at segregated lunch counters and on buses.

What life does Jamilla envision as she stands up, sometimes to her own peril, for her rights in the face of adults who control her classroom experiences, grades and social opportunities? Jamilla sees these risks and still feels supported to take them by “standing up.”

One of the things that I learned from being in the system is that you should never allow the teacher or any authority power push you down. Like if they say you do something that is wrong, you need to stand up. I think a lot of the students don't know that. And it happens and when it happens you say, “I should have done this or that.” So I was thinking of Mack actually and so in tenth grade he may realize Ms. Paoletti was really authoritarian for keeping him after school or after class. You know he would be like, “I should have done something.” You should have to know before hand and I think that was what happened to all of us. I think students don't realize authoritarian power until later. (Jamilla)

Jamilla seems to be invoking the last line of Lawrence's (1929) poem that students need to “bust in, and hold the ground!” She explains that students do not always recognize the authoritarian power over them and therefore do not act at the time. It may only be later that they realize that they should have “stood up” for their rights, “for freedom, for fun all around.”

Jamilla uses the term “authoritarian power” to describe the power-over she and other students experience at times at the hands of the teacher. What is the difference between authority and power? As a teacher, my pedagogical decisions are authorized because they are decisions made for the common good of the class and “from the heart” (Palmer, 1998, p. 33). When I have reverted (regretfully) to coercive

measures, these are times when I have exerted power, not authority. Jamilla seems to be referring to taking a stand against the coercive power that teachers have over students, including an example of my power-over. The nature of power versus authority is further explored in chapter five.

Chance of life all around. Returning to the previous poem, imagine a pedagogy for a “chance of life all around.” What implications does this have for teachers and students as they work together in a classroom for civic education? This idea certainly speaks to the emancipatory interest in civic education. Jamilla, in her own words, is stating that students need to recognize their oppressors and learn how to speak out and act out against injustice. To Jamilla and her classmates, injustice comes in the form of teachers, parents, and older siblings infringing upon their rights, as they understand them. Civic education has allowed Jamilla and her classmates to experience and embody their rights, as well as practice “taking a stand” in their defense. But civic education must fulfill the larger goals of society. It is the hope of civic educators that the students’ sense of injustice transcends infringement of their own rights alone. What else in our society is unjust? Our government’s economic policies? The unequal distribution of wealth? Our involvement in Iraq? Laws protecting or prohibiting gay marriage? How can students embody their civic education and continue to seek social justice?

This question recalls the third type of citizen Westheimer and Kahn (2004) describe, the “Justice-oriented Citizen.” This type of citizen recognizes and fights to change the system and structures in our society that perpetuate injustice. Civic education that promotes this action includes questioning and challenging the system

and its structures. Jamilla certainly reacts to the effects of injustices she experiences, but does she seek out their causes? Chapter six explores how civic education can be taken to the next level to promote this form of citizenship.

Looking back to her first experience “standing up” for her rights we remember that she is afforded the chance to stand up physically during a simulation. How does the act of physically standing up affect the students’ understanding of what it means to stand up for their rights, for “jolly justice” for freedom? As Casey (1993) notes:

The mere fact that we *stand up* in buildings represents another dimension of dwelling-as-residing. Although we sit and recline, we stand upon entering and leaving and sometimes during our entire stay (stay and stand are etymological cousins). In a built place, we continually *take a stand*... (p. 117)

Jamilla’s opportunity to take a stand in class may have resulted in a deepening of her sense of dwelling-as-residing in the classroom. This may in turn forge a stronger connection between herself and her classmates. Did she notice who took a stand with her? What connections did she feel to those who stood with her? Casey (1993) goes on to state:

When human beings stand in rooms, they are especially sensitive to their height, which echoes their own uprightness as beings. ...Moreover, to be upright signifies self-assertion and ambitious reaching up and out...just as it connotes moral forthrightness... (p. 117)

Perhaps Jamilla and her fellow classmates experienced this sense of moral forthrightness and self-assertion. They certainly were asserting their rights in their actions and in their words, and the physical act of standing gave form to their intentions. Jamilla and her classmates were morally and physically “reaching up and out.” Pertaining to the question of civic education, is this not what we hope all citizens experience in their society? Thus to have the opportunity to “stand up” in the

classroom may foster students' embodiment of such civic education ideals of self-assertion and moral forthrightness.

As the poem calls to mind, standing up in civic education may yield the chance for students to fight “for a chance of life all round.” In thinking about earlier definitions and purposes of civic education, is this not what the ultimate aim is? We are teaching students to interact with each other so that when they leave the classroom they have a semblance of what it may mean to act in civil ways outside in society. A democratic society is nothing without the people acting in support of the common good. Jamilla's and others' opportunities to stand up in the classroom may serve to arm them with the experiences necessary to take stands outside of the classroom to serve larger societal needs.

Dwelling in civic education. Finally, as Jamilla and her classmates experience civic education by taking a stand, and thus as physically dwelling beings, this gives an even deeper understanding of what they experience in civic education. Heidegger (1971) states, “Dwelling, however, is *the basic character* of Being in keeping with which mortals exist” (p. 158). Students physically dwell within a space together in their experience of civic education. This dwelling reinforces their Being. Jamilla and her classmates were afforded opportunities to stand up and “take a stand” in civic education that reinforces their Beings as citizens of the class.

Casey (1993) further states:

The power a place such as a mere room possesses determines not only *where* I am in the limited sense of cartographic location but *how* I am together with others (i.e., how I commingle and communicate with them) and even *who* we shall become together. The “how” and the “who” are intimately tied to the “where.” (p. 23)

Students' sense of place as something they learn or something they experience is tied to their lived relation. Who are they in the classroom, at this time within these four walls? Who are they to each other? As students expect to learn about place when they enter a social studies classroom, perhaps they are more open to the possibilities of exploring *who* they are in that place as well, as who they may become. This, too, calls on the *teacher as civic education* to attend to the classroom as a place where students may explore how they communicate and “commingle” as well as who they may become. This sense of lived relation is explored further in chapter five.

I Actually Do Know

Other students tell of their experiences of standing up for their beliefs. Kate, in particular, links her learning in social studies class with her ability to make her own decisions about her views.

I think it's good to know about the government and how it was formed and different views of political parties and stuff because now more than ever with the war in Iraq and gay marriages and all, there's a lot of different viewpoints out there. And grown-ups tend to think that kids don't really think about that kind of stuff and what they say isn't really important. But when you learn how to defend, to make compelling arguments in world studies you can kind of stand up for yourself and say hey I actually do know what's going on and I actually can make my own decisions about what I think is right and wrong.
(Kate)

Does Kate embody her civic education experience differently than Jamilla? Kate likens taking a stand to making her own decisions about what is right and wrong. As Lawrence (1929) states in his poem, “Stand up and do some punching, give 'em a few hard pokes.” Maybe Kate felt a sense of “poking holes” in her parent's arguments or views in light of her own understandings she developed in class. Once again, we find a bodily experience within the act of standing up for one's views. Standing up is not

the action alone, but what one does when one stands up is the important thing. For example, Kate's experience of making her own decisions happens after she stands up, just as Jamilla's naming of the authoritarian power-over happens after she stands up. What huge implications for pedagogy. How often do teachers allow, let alone, ask students to stand up in class? I find myself asking students to sit down far more often than asking them to stand up. And yet, students still associate this idiomatic phrase with freedom, moral decision-making, and justice. When students are compelled to take a stand on their own, their physical beings are brought into the experience of civic education and civic-minded action in a more authentic way.

Standing for Oneself

Fletcher takes a stand in a different way. He relates a time when his classmates did not believe he would follow through on his part of the group process in preparing for the Simulated Congressional Hearing. He explains why he was motivated to do extra work for the benefit of his group.

I could take it [the prepared testimony], I could bring it home and bring a new one in and say 'hey I made a few changes.' I could do that but I was hoping I could do something sooner, yes, but I still have opportunities to get back on the highway. Because this is what I am standing for. I am "unit two" and this is what I am supposed to do. It is what I need to do. ... It is what I need to know. I have to do it. I think I have to do it more for myself to know that I have trust and stuff that everybody knows. (Fletcher)

Fletcher's experience of standing in civic education has to do with naming a place or position for himself to be in relation to his group members. Referring back to the etymological root of "stand" we remember that it is a synonym for position. Fletcher experiences a disparity between his "standing" in his group and what he knew he was capable of contributing. By doing the extra work, he hoped to improve his standing or

position in his group. “This is what I am standing for. I am unit two.” Fletcher seeks to become the whole of his unit, his team. He wants his teammates to see that despite his absence, he is as much a part of the group as they are. He is “taking a stand” in order to prove (or im-prove) his standing in the group.

Moving beyond the mere physical action of standing (which Fletcher did often during class and especially during the simulated hearing preparation), I find evidence of Fletcher embodying his civic education. He asserts, “I am unit two.” What does this mean for Fletcher? His testimony is about the principles of good government described in the Declaration of Independence and their relevance today. In it he asserts:

The first and most important rule of good government is “All men are created equal, that they are endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness.” ... Good government protects its people at all times and can be adjusted... Good government also has the ideas of Rule of law. Rule of law is when everyone in a society has the same rights and laws to follow. (Written testimony, Unit 2)

For Fletcher to take a stand and embody the ideals of good government, he is adding to the democratic culture by helping uphold rule of law. His “stand” is that the most important purpose of government is to protect natural rights and to promote equality. In standing for Unit Two in class, Fletcher stands for these ideals outside of class.

Furthermore, Fletcher, in “taking a stand” and embodying the goals of his group, seeks to enrich his Being. As a member of the class and his team he dwells with his classmates who depend on him for their success, not just in their performance in the Simulated hearing, or for a grade, but also, as Fletcher puts it, to share the “stuff everybody knows.” Fletcher experiences his citizenship in the classroom as something for which he has to fight to prove his worthiness. Outside of

the classroom, perhaps he will approach his citizenship in the same way. Fletcher will remember what it was like to “stand for” something and be able to re-embodiment the experience to “stand for” something important in his community.

The Nerve of Civic Education

As stated earlier, students experience their civic education as a bodily experience. In their own words, they have “worked to the bone,” been “frozen,” and felt “butterflies in their stomach” and their “heart beating.” How does the physical body shape the experience of education? Merleau-Ponty (1945/2005) states:

I have no means of knowing the human body other than that of living it, which means taking up on my own account the drama which is being played out in it. I am my body, at least wholly to the extent that I possess experience, and yet at the same time my body is as it were a ‘natural’ subject, a provisional sketch of my total being. (p. 231)

Students are total beings in the classroom, and as such, respond in a whole way to their environment. Just as Merleau-Ponty (1945/2005) argues against the separation of thought and body, so too, teachers cannot ignore the physicality of their students as they seek to engage them. One of my pedagogical instincts is to ask Fletcher and others to “take a seat” for the sake of order, but this command runs counter to the students’ needs to be involved physically in their learning process, even if their own physicality is sometimes a distraction from their own and others’ learning. For, in addition to experiencing civic education in their heads and feet, and as a way to take a stand, students also experience civic education at the core of their being. Many students, in fact, experience civic education in their nerves.

Many students describe their experiences in civic education as being affected by their nerves. For example, in his description of what it was like to take the MCPS Semester Assessment, Mack remembers that his experience was,

Nerve-racking because you're just sitting there and soon as you get a question, that you know is way far back it's just like no way you're going to get it. And you just sit and that gets you going and you just start thinking you're not going to get any of them right and that is what messes you up the whole time. Then, you get to the ECR, [writing prompt] and there is a question you barely know anything about because it is from three weeks ago, and even though you might have gone over it in a unit review, you're done. (Mack)

Mack's experience of sitting for the semester exam is a bodily experience. It racks his nerves to be put through such an ordeal. What does it mean that an experience was nerve racking? Looking to the etymology of "nerve" one finds a 1385 definition of "sinew" whose original definition means "the figurative sense of strength, vigor" (Barnhart, 1988, p. 700). Taken thusly, references to one's nerves may mean an experience in strength. Mack experienced a "nerve racking." His strength in his performance on the assessment was racked or affected. He did not feel up to his usual vigor. "It's just like no way you're going to get it...and that is what messes you up the whole time." Mack found the experience of standardized assessment one that negatively affected his strength.

Labeling in Civic Education

Sam, too, felt a negative impact on his strength and vigor while receiving feedback from judges at the Simulated Hearing.

The only real part of [the simulated hearing] that was nerve-racking is when they were giving us feedback because one of the judges talked with me for like two minutes about label-slapping because I used the words conservative and liberal in the speech. (Sam)

Just as Mack experienced a weakening in his performance on the assessment, Sam also seems to have experienced a reduction in his strength in the hands of the judge and his negative feedback on Sam's performance. Interestingly, both of the instances in which the students' nerves or strength was negatively impacted were under circumstances where the student was being evaluated or judged. This brings to mind the question of how being judged, assessed, evaluated, or graded shapes the experience of civic education. Perhaps as one embodies one's civic education, the experience of being judged or assessed strikes at one's core. It is their being at stake, not just their performance.

Sam is "judged" on his prepared testimony when he seemingly politicizes the issues he and his team present. His testimony, which responds to a question about natural rights theory and the purposes of government, states:

Currently in the Senate there is a filibuster because liberals want to keep some conservative judges appointed by president Bush from being confirmed. This is an example of our liberty being protected. Senators are trying to do what they feel is best to make sure judges are impartial and do not unfairly try people. I feel it is important for our government to protect us like that.
(Written testimony, Unit 1)

In researching and preparing their testimonies, the students are challenged to not only include historical and current events, but to also draw out the constitutionality of issues as well as state their opinion. It is these opinions and connections that judges seek to uncover when they question the students after their prepared testimony. They attempt to "test the depths of their knowledge" as stated in the Simulated Congressional Hearing Judges' preparation video.

In Sam's case, he and his team form opinions about the current situation facing the government of nominating and approving supreme court judges, and their

testimony reflects their opinion on the process as it unfolded for them. In labeling the senators and judges as “liberal” and “conservative,” he drew the attention and perhaps ire of the community members whose views may have been different from Sam’s team’s. Might the judge have asked instead, what are your meanings attached to these labels? In whose interests do both sides seek to protect?

Shedding light on this issue, Westheimer and Kahne (2004) assert that educating for democracy is inherently a political issue. They state:

Educators, policymakers, politicians and community activists alike pursue dozens of agendas for change under the banner of furthering democracy. The nature of their underlying beliefs, however, differ. (p. 237)

Were the judges disappointed with Sam and his team’s opinion? Their opinion as stated in their testimony reflects one view of the relationship between liberals and conservatives in our government and how rights should be protected through Constitutional processes such as the debate over and confirmation of Supreme Court judges. Even if Sam’s views opposed those held by the judges, it was through his experience of civic education that he is able to form such opinions. The political nature of civic education is discussed further in chapter six.

Nerves Increase

Bernie, too, experiences an impact on his nerves as he listens to the critique of the judges after their presentation in the Simulated Hearing.

The actual event of the simulated hearing taught me a lot about speaking in front of a panel of judges. It is much, much different from when we were practicing in the room a week before. There are definitely more nerves there, when you know you are going to be negatively critiqued at least a little bit, no matter how good your presentation was. Also for my group at least, the nerves increased because we were going last, sitting and waiting, watching all the other groups give their presentations. (Bernie, SCH Reflection)

Bernie states, “There are definitely more nerves there.” Does this mean that he was aware of his “relative strength” against the critiques of the judges? Perhaps he and his group were bodily aware of the strengths and weaknesses of their presentation in light of the feedback they received from the judge. He also states that “the nerves increased” as they waited to present. Was this an act of “getting up the nerve,” or was it an experience of a perceived weakening of one’s strength?

To connect back to the essential aspects of civic education, what kind of nerve do we hope our citizens will have? Does it not take nerve to take a stand on an unpopular issue? Does it not take nerve to participate in a demonstration or rally? The nerve of civic education may feed into Westheimer and Kahne’s (2004) “Participatory Citizen” and, perhaps more importantly, their “Social-Justice Oriented Citizen.” Certainly it takes nerve to seek out injustice and work for change.

Full of Strength

Some students experience other aspects of civic education with their nerves as well. For example, in preparing for a formal debate and answering follow-up questions from the judges during the Simulated Hearings, many students describe being nervous.

[In preparing for a debate] There is also pressure and like the people who got to ask questions forgot to ask a really important question which would have given us more points to win so it was like you were nervous. (Sara)

At first I was kind of nervous so I let other people talk first. We had this signal thing like Jamilla...but that didn’t work after a while. So I tried to talk on like every question. I told them like try to listen to what I was saying because they could build off of it because in debates in class if I don’t know about anything like you can listen to other people saying and just build off of that. (Kelly)

I did not think I [could] really be nervous but I guess I was. But it was fine for me because I was one of the two people that talked. I mean they asked us questions that are hard but it was pretty easy in the end. (Jay)

In this form of the word “nerve,” nervous implies a different experience than other students may have had being “nerve-racked.” Being nervous, or “containing nerves” can be understood as an experience of being filled with strength and vigor (Barnhart, 1988, p. 700). Sara even compares striving for more points to win the debate with being nervous. Did she experience an increase in strength as she awaited the questions from her teammates?

Nerves run throughout the entire body. Impulses cross synapses and jump between nerve endings as vital information is communicated to different parts of the body. What information was being transmitted through the students’ bodies as they awaited their turns to present, or the judges’ unknown questions? And this rapid firing of neurons, did it give the students a sense of strength? Were they able to recognize their “nervousness” as a fortification of strength and vigor?

Shared Activities

The simulated hearing, formal debate, and other classroom simulations were experiences students had where they interacted with one another. The students’ experience of lived relation is explored in chapter five. An interesting twist on their experience of nerves, however, lies within the fact that they are a part of a shared experience. As Hewitt (2005) states:

Shared activities stimulate, organize, and direct individuals’ senses, attention, and motion. Shared activities provoke thought and incite emotion necessary for personal—and social—growth... In short, shared activities are organs of intelligence. They form the central nerves whereby the individual not only develops specific tendencies to act, but more or less realizes his or her

inherent connection to others as an indispensable condition for nourishing personal growth. (p. 121)

The students participation in a common experience, or as Hewitt (2005) names it “shared activity,” is part of a social system that allows them to grow in their citizenship. For as students “develop specific tendencies,” their sense of their place in the classroom, community, and world is formed. The shared activities form the vehicle through which students experience civic education, through the “central nerves.”

A Civil Body Politic at Hand

The most salient aspect of the students’ civic education was their bodily experience of civic education as “hands-on.” Dewey (1916/2006) discusses the role of the hand in education as he states:

The lips and vocal organs, and the hands, have to be used to reproduce in speech and writing what has been stowed away. The senses are then regarded as a kind of mysterious conduit through which information is conducted from the external world into the mind; they are spoken of as gateways and avenues of knowledge. (p. 89)

The hands are “gateways and avenues” of knowledge. Dewey does not posit that knowledge is acquired only through the eyes and ears, but rather through all the senses. The hands as well as the other senses bring the outside world into the mind.

Conversely, Dewey (1897/2004) states:

The muscles of eye, hand, and vocal organs accordingly have to be trained to act as pipes for carrying knowledge back out of the mind into external action. For it happens that using the muscles repeatedly in the same way fixes in them an automatic tendency to repeat. (p. 89)

In this way, the hand, eyes, and voice are used to transport knowledge from the mind into external action. This action is what creates habits in “an automatic tendency to

repeat.” Civic educators are concerned with how students form certain “habits of mind.” These habits include civic virtue, volunteerism, critical thinking, and other civic-minded actions necessary to maintain a democratic republic.

Civic Education Handed Over

What role does the hand play in teaching and learning and in civic education? I begin with the written curriculum “in hand.” I change and modify the curriculum-as-plan to meet the needs of my students in each class. I “hand out” papers. The students have “handouts” from the curriculum guide or that I have created. Students “raise their hands” to indicate their willingness to participate in classroom activities. They “handwrite” their responses to different tasks. Students then “hand in” their work to be checked and graded. These are some of the mundane aspects of almost every classroom. Students, however, do not refer to these uses of the hand when they remember their experiences in civic education. Instead, they describe their learning as “hands-on.”

Before turning to the lived language of the students, it is important to clarify what is meant by “hands-on” activities. All too often, critics of child-centered pedagogical practices claim that students are engaged in activities that have little if any connection to true learning. This assumption runs counter to the Deweyian notion of what it means for students to be engaged in hands-on activities. D. Breault (2005), reflecting on Dewey’s understanding of the necessity for students to be actively engaged in their learning, states:

Entertaining activities and *intellectually engaging* activities were not synonymous. ...[There are] critical prerequisites for the kind of active learning Dewey described throughout his work: thoughtful planning, solid understanding of the subject matter, a willingness to experience ambiguity in the learning context, and a relationship of mutual trust between the teacher and the students. (p. 19)

It is this kind of hands-on experience that students in civic education have. For example, in describing their preparation for and participation in the Simulated Congressional Hearing, many students refer to a hands-on mode of learning.

This type of learning was totally different from the other types because it was more hands-on. The students were allowed to be more independent and the teacher trusted the students to work without her constantly watching over us. (Joy)

This type of learning was much different than what we have learned in the past, with lessons, lectures, and videos. I like this type of learning better. It is more hands on—basically, the teacher stepped out of the way a little and we (the captains) were in rule. It was a lot of fun. (Jamilla)

I did not learn anything new about the government during the process of working on the simulated congressional hearing itself (that knowledge came at the beginning of the year), but was able to put into my own words, and translate from others what it meant to me. I found it ...to have been pretty hands-on. (Sam)

The type of learning involved in this process is the best kind. It is hands-on. You have to find the information yourself, instead of listening to a teacher's lecture. It makes learning more fun, and definitely more interesting. Most teachers may not notice when students are interested (because they're usually not), but during this process, we were. (Bernie)

Hands-on learning is learning of “the best kind.” It is a time when “the teacher steps out of the way” and students are “allowed to be more independent and the teacher trusts the students.” These descriptions imply a transfer of power and ownership from the hands of the teacher to the hands of the students. When students experience their learning as hands-on, they are “handed-over” this power and allowed to make decisions for themselves. Teachers “step aside” and invite students to have a

hand in their education. This evokes an image of a teacher physically stepping aside with the sweep of their hands as they make way for the students to enter into their own learning. In describing hands-on active learning, one must be careful, however, and heed Dewey's caution that "mere activity does not constitute experience" (as cited in Schubert, 2005, p. 12). Rather, it is in the reflection on one's activity where the transformation to a growth experience takes place.

Heidegger (1993b) explains that when teachers allow for *letting learn*, their pedagogy "often produces the impression that we really learn nothing from him, if by 'learning' we now automatically understand merely the procurement of useful information" (p. 380). This speaks to the students' perceptions of the teacher "not teaching" during the simulated hearing preparation or during other hands-on activities. Dewey asks:

Why is it, in spite of the fact that teaching by pouring in, learning by passive absorption, are universally condemned, that they are still so entrenched in practice? That teaching is not an affair of 'telling' and being told, but an active and constructive process almost as generally violated in practice as conceded in theory. (as cited in D. Breault, 2005, p. 18)

Indeed, as student after student relays their experience of civic education and reflects upon the times when they are most active in their own learning, Dewey's decades old question is even more relevant today than ever! In chapter six I explore the issue of antiquated beliefs about pedagogy and why they persist.

A Hand in Teaching

Furthermore, as D. Breault (2005) interpreting Dewey explains, just as the students experience a sense of their teacher's trust in them, so too, the students have to trust the teacher to enter into this hands-on arena. I picture the teacher extending a

hand and helping the students cross a border or boundary, where students are not always permitted to go: the place of authority or authorship in their education. The students are now the teachers. They now have a hand in their own learning. As Jamilla and Kelly reflect, this type of learning they re-member.

Kelly: Because when you actually find your research you're like oh, I found that out. When you teach us we kind of forget after a while.

Jamilla: It is hands-on like, you are...

Kelly: You are the teacher

Jamilla: Teachers always remember the activities they are going to plan because they first read it, they first understand it, they teach themselves then they teach students.

Thus, Kelly and Jamilla see their hands-on involvement in their education as not just learning but an act of teaching as well. They connect the act of teaching themselves with re-membling because they “had a hand” in finding the information. I think about my role as teacher when students are engaged in hands-on activities. I circulate throughout the room between and among students. I listen and observe as students work with each other to facilitate their own and each other's learning. A student asks a question. Is there a definitive answer? I am reluctant to name a “right” answer for them. I try to leave them with a question, a way for them to continue their own “handy work” of uncovering and constructing the knowledge for themselves. I leave them with a hand turned upward.

A Hand Turned Upward

I continue to ask what the choice of the term “hands-on” means for civic education. What is the role of the hand in civic education? The poem, *A Hand*, by Jane Hirshfield (2001) may help to elucidate this connection.

A Hand

A hand is not four fingers and a thumb.

Nor is it palm and knuckles,
not ligaments or the fat's yellow pillow,
not tendons, star of the wristbone, meander of veins.

A hand is not the thick thatch of its lines
with their infinite dramas,
nor what it has written,
not on the page,
not on the ecstatic body.

Nor is the hand its meadows of holding, of shaping—
not sponge of rising yeast-bread,
not rotor pin's smoothness,
not ink.

The maple's green hands do not cup
the proliferant rain.
What empties itself falls into the place that is open.

A hand turned upward holds only a single, transparent question.

Unanswerable, humming like bees, it rises, swarms, departs.
(<http://www.poets.org/viewmedia.php/prmMID/19011>)

As the poem implies the hand is not the flesh and bone, nor is it the products which it helps to shape. Similarly, the essence of the hands-on experience for students in civic education is not in the materials they actually use, nor the physical labor of using their hands. Rather, it is in the opening of possibilities this experience allows. The students may turn to me for guidance and “answers” as I meander through the classroom. My response has to be that of a hand turned upward. I leave the students with a question. Many students savor this opportunity. Other students feel anxious when the answers are not readily “at hand.”

Presence-at-Hand

In discussion of the essence of being, Heidegger (1993a) explains:

Legein itself or *noein*—the simple apprehension of something at hand in its pure being at hand...has the Temporal structure of a pure “making present” of something. Beings, which show themselves in and for this making present and which are understood as beings proper, are accordingly interpreted with regard to the present; that is to say they are conceived as presence (*ousia*). (p. 70)

As students work in hands-on ways in civic education, they are becoming more present to their learning, to each other and to themselves. As students experience their classmates and their own presence in this authentic way, they are able to transform from a passive recipient of civic education to an active participant in civic education, and thus in society. Hands-on experiences, in making civic education more present to the students, roots the students in the present, while drawing upon the past. Thus rooted together and experiencing civic education in this hands-on presenting way, students come together in the presence of each other in their civil body politic.

Readiness-to-Hand

Another aspect of the hand Heidegger (1962) refers to is “readiness-to-hand” or *zuhanden*. By this, he means involvement. He relates this to one’s Being-in-the-world, stating:

Dasein, in its familiarity with significance, is the ontical condition for the possibility of discovering entities which are encountered in a world with involvement (readiness-to-hand) as their kind of Being, and which can make themselves known as they are in themselves. (p. 120)

Students experience “readiness-to-hand,” or involvement in civic education when they work in hands-on ways with each other. The opportunity for this involvement allows students the chance to assert their being to one another and come more authentically into themselves. Indeed, just as students’ presence may be reaffirmed by working together in this way, the chance to work in a hands-on way also affords students the opportunity to reaffirm their involvement. The experience of involvement is a vital aspect of civic education, As future citizens, we want our students to experience this sense of commitment to one another and their community. Thus the lived body experience of civic education is inextricably tied to that of lived relation which is explored further in chapter five.

The Question at Hand

How does hands-on learning, with its “unanswerable” question, a hand turned upward, influence the student? Will they take this experience outside of the classroom and act as citizens in ways that demonstrate an openness to possibilities? Are they more willing to dwell within the questions, not beholden to the “right” answers? The hand turned upward allows the free exchange of ideas and views; “humming like bees, it rises, swarms, departs.” So, too, does the classroom sound like humming bees as students are engaged in hands-on work. Questions shoot back and forth between students like bees. Bodies are in motion. Students are in and out of their seats moving to talk to each other to reach their hands out for more resources, to ask and answer each other’s questions. I think about the physicality of citizenship itself. Societies come to be through the physical organization and interaction of the people. Much like in the classroom, people must work “hand-in-hand” with one another and with their

government for democracy to work. They must “have a hand” in politics for their voice to be heard and for democracy to be truly a “government of the people.” “Swarms” of people protest, gather for rallies, meet in town halls, show up at polling places, and turn out at charitable events. The same “swarms” are active in the classroom.

A Hand in Voting

What role does the hand play in how students acquire civic knowledge when they act in civic-minded ways? I now turn to more of the students’ text to see how they perceive the use of their hands in their education.

When asked to describe a time when they experienced civic education some students shared “hands-on” activities in which they had participated. For example, Kelly remembers a time when she voted.

When we got to vote, it was like really kind of refreshing in a way because teachers usually choose who is going to be in charge of stuff and when we got to vote, it was really like in the hands of the students to decide who they really thought was going to be the best captain. Sometimes students just chose who they really think would be best for their group. (Kelly)

Kelly experiences this aspect of democracy as something that was “in the hands of the students.” What does putting decisions in the hands of the students do to shape their experience of civic education? Kelly states that it was refreshing to be “handed” this responsibility from the teacher. She feels a certain level of comfort in making this decision along with her classmates, believing that sometimes students make the best decisions about team partners. This implies an attunement to the “civil body politic” that is the social studies classroom. For students to feel that they may make sound judgments for the benefit of the whole class also implies a connectedness between

and among all the students. Will this same feeling of connectedness and efficacy follow Kelly outside of the classroom and into society? Will she take it into her own hands to vote in national, state and local elections?

What does it mean to be a member of a civil body politic? The pilgrims on the Mayflower combined to form a civil body politic for “better order and preservation.” Because not all the passengers on the ship were familiar to each other, they decided to come to an agreement with one another to organize their efforts and protect their rights. As such, they moved from being strangers to each other to fellow citizens combined for a common cause. Students in the same way make up a civil body politic in that they are among friends and strangers in the classroom. The *teacher as civic education* seeks to transform the classroom into a place wherein students feel a sense of obligation toward one another. John Locke (1620/2006) theorizes on this obligation as humans enter into a social contract with one another.

And thus every man [sic], by consenting with others to make one body politic under one government, puts himself under an obligation, to every one of that society... (sec. 97)

When students experience democracy in the classroom, through voting, protecting and defending theirs and each other’s rights, and taking on responsibilities, they move from being strangers to citizens of the classroom as they reinforce their coming together in a civil body politic. As Kelly describes, voting for leaders for the Simulated Hearing was refreshing as it allowed for further development of the class’s civil body politic. Kelly and her classmates have a hand in their education through voting, and this too reinforces their physical involvement in their class.

A Hand in the “Game”

In conversation, both Sara and Mack refer to making their learning in civic education “fun” or turning it into a “game.”

Mack: Notes. In class. And they’re like open your textbook to da-da-da-da-da and do the definitions of this and this and it’s like are you serious. I mean there might be a few people who are interested in it. But it’s more like if you had turned it into a game we would have gotten so much more out of it and we would have learned so much more from it.

Sara: If teachers just make it into an experience it can be really fun and hands-on and relates to you.

Mack: For example, if you brought in a basketball and we threw it back and forth about like a debate or something, that would be something we would remember.

While Mack’s idea of passing a ball around to review is something that could occur in any class, in civic education, there is the aspect of gaming. I find an intriguing connection between the experience of civic education and game theory. Game theory, according to Osborne (2004), helps us to understand

...Situations in which decision-makers interact. A game in the everyday sense—“a competitive activity in which players contend with each other according to a set of rules”, in the words of a dictionary—is an example of such a situation, but the scope of game theory is very much larger. (p. 1)

Game theory studies a person’s choices of optimal behavior when costs and benefits of each choice are not fixed, but depend on the choices of others.

I work with my students to help them discuss and work toward demonstrating civic virtue. Through simulations and games such as the “Jelly Bean Game” and “Win as Much as You Can” in which students must decide between supporting the common good and making decisions for their own individual gain, we continually link historical and current events to the essential question of how government

balances individual rights and the common good. Students experience first-hand such decision-making, and thus are able to experience in a bodily way the emotions and moral and ethical tensions that may go with demonstrating civic virtue. Game theory studies such decision-making.

The experience of civic education as a game, therefore, uncovers a new layer of understanding. Civic education as a game allows students to examine their own moral and ethical decisions in light of the common good. When students participate in the “Jelly Bean Game,” or “Win as Much as You Can,” they are challenged to make decisions that will benefit the common good. In the context of hands-on civic education, students have to be willing to give up points or candy in order to benefit the whole class. As citizens they will be challenged to make the same kind of decisions to benefit their families, communities, and society. Will they give up their time, taxes or powers to support the goals of the common good in society? When they are faced with such decisions, might their hands-on civic education experiences allow them to remember the values analysis experiences they had as they played games in civic education? They can move from students playing games to citizens acting in society.

Playing One’s Hand: To Act As If

Furthermore, for students to experience their learning as play or as a game brings to light another aspect of freedom. As Gadamer (1960/2003) suggests, when one “plays” with one’s possibilities,

He still has the freedom to decide one way or the other, for one or the other possibility. On the other hand, this freedom is not without danger. ...If for the sake of enjoying his own freedom of decision, someone avoids making decisions or plays with possibilities that he is not seriously envisaging and

which, therefore, offer no risk that he will choose them and thereby limit himself, we say he is only “playing with life.” (p. 106)

Thus, it is necessary in civic education for students to move beyond the game and be ready to make decisions in freedom between real possibilities. Approached another way, I recall Dewey who emphasizes the difference between activity and experience. To move the students’ involvement in hands-on activities to true experience requires reflection. As Schubert (2005) explains, “Play... can transform education from activity to experience, because inherent in it is a continuous recreating of oneself in a sociocultural context” (p. 15). Thus, drawing on both Gadamer and Dewey, play is essential in hands-on learning as it affords students the chance to further imbed themselves in their culture and society. Free to take risks while at play, students make decisions in a “simplified environment” which allows them to reaffirm their Being-in-the-world. Giroux (1980) puts it another way, stating:

Students should be educated to display civic courage, i.e., the willingness to act *as if* they were living in a democratic society. (p. 357)

Remembering through the Hands

Picking up on Mack’s connection between participating in a “hands-on” activity and his ability to remember what he learned, I turn now to what it means to remember in civic education. What does the choice of the word “remember” in connection to “hands-on” activities mean about the students’ experiences in the classroom?

Casey (2000) asserts, “Body memory alludes to memory that is intrinsic to the body, to its own ways of remembering: how we remember in and by and through the

body” (p. 147). In remembering through the hands, students experience their civic education in a way that only the body can know. Casey (2000) continues:

The difference is manifest in the noticeable discrepancy between recollecting our body as in a given situation—representing ourselves as engaged bodily in that situation—and *being* in the situation itself again and feeling it through our body. (p. 147)

In remembering through the body, students have a chance to enact their whole being once again. They are not simply recalling facts or even memories of what they did in class, but rather, students are calling into play their whole beings. In a way, to remember in civic education, or rather to *re-member* can be experienced as a chance for students to re-enter the civil body politic and upon their re-entry, re-affirm their *place* in it.

Remembering in debate. The idea of remembering an experience in civic education was present in many of Mack’s descriptions. For example, in explaining why he prefers a larger debate to a smaller debate he states:

Oh, because it is always is better when there is more to beat like... the feeling is better when you win and those are the kinds of things you remember. Like I said before, whenever you win something or whenever it is hands-on directly or physically involved in it that is when you actually remember what we are talking about. (Mack)

Gadamer (1989/1960) reminds us:

Memory must be formed; for memory is not memory for anything and everything. One has a memory for some things, and not for others; one wants to preserve one thing in memory and banish another. (p. 16)

I think of Mack and his experience in the debate as hands-on. “Memory must be formed.” Mack is physically forming memory through his bodily experience in the debate. In doing so, perhaps he chooses to “preserve one thing in memory” because more of his total being has been called forth. Mack remembers what it was like to

compete against his fellow classmates, hoping to prevail in a debate. He remembers working to research and prepare arguments supported by historical facts. He remembers constitutional principles and laws to defend why Dred Scott should have been given his freedom. He remembers moving throughout the room, interacting with his fellow classmates and handling different sources of information. He remembers physically moving the desks to form the debating tables. He remembers standing while he made his points and responded to his opponents.

But what does it truly mean to remember? The word remember itself comes from the 13th century old French *rememberer* or “call to mind” which is further derived from *re* meaning “again” and *memorai*, to be mindful of” (Barnhart, 1988, p. 909). To again be mindful of something perhaps links back to the experience of re-entering the civil body politic, as students are *re-minded* of their role, responsibility and rights as a member of society.

Whole-body member-ship. This member-ship is whole-body and one finds connections back to early political philosophers’ notions of a civil body politic. Students experiencing civic education through their bodies comprises the civil body politic of the classroom. As Hale (2003) reminds us, “Seneca says that as it is unnatural for the hands to destroy the feet, so the need for harmony, love, and mutual protection causes mankind [sic] to protect individuals” (p. 69). Furthermore, there is no society without the physical people. Restating Parker’s (2003) claim:

It is citizens who walk the paths to the public squares and, by walking them, *create* them. There, struggling to absorb as well as express, to listen as well as to be heard, they strive to communicate across their differences, recognizing them and joining them with deliberation. This is how publics come to be. Citizens, then, balance the need to enjoy private liberties with the obligation to create a public realm, specifically to create policy decisions about how we

will be with one another and what problems we will solve together and how.
(p. 11)

Publics and communities come to be by the physical joining of people together. In civic education, students approximate the experiences of deliberating for the common good, balancing their liberties and the obligations to the public, and problem-solving together. They are physical members of the group and, thus, their mere membership creates the civil body politic.

Civic Education as Habit

In light of my pre-eminent question of what is the nature of the lived experience of civic education, I now ask what civic habits do students form as they use their hands in civic education? In theorizing about body memory, Casey (2000) states, “The activity of the past, in short, resides in its habitual enactment in the present. This means that the habitual is far from passive in character” (p. 150). As such, the corporeal nature of civic education can be experienced as something that forms a habit. Casey (2000) goes on to explain:

Hexis, the Greek root of “habit,” connotes a state of character for which we are responsible, especially in its formative phases. In fact, the early stages of the creation of anything habitual—whether it be character or virtue, or body memories themselves—are definitive for establishing the form that will continually be re-enacted. (p. 150)

In the students’ experiences of participating in their civic education through hands-on engagement, they have an opportunity to “continually re-enact” their body memories of civic education. In this way, the corporal nature of civic education is vital in influencing students’ behaviors as citizens outside of the classroom. Thus the hands-on aspect of civic education, including the Simulated Hearings, debates, games, and other simulations that the students remember and identify as examples of

their experiences in civic education, serves to help them form the habits that they will take with them into society.

This notion of how habits are formed is essential to the experience of civic education as one examines the many ways in which citizenship is conceptualized. Giroux (1980), Gutman (1999), Parker (2003), Westheimer and Kahne (2004), as well as others provide different models of ideal citizenship. Giroux (1980) argues for emancipatory citizenship education in which he challenges teachers to stimulate students' "passions, imaginations, and intellects so that they will be moved to challenge the social, political, and economic forces that weight so heavily on their lives" (p. 357). Gutman (1999) proposes that an adequate civic education must cultivate the skills and virtues of deliberative citizenship. Parker (2003) advocates for "non-idiotic" citizenship and calls on civic education to encourage students to think about the broader community. Westheimer and Kahne (2004) posit that there are three types of citizens encouraged by different civic education programs, including the personally responsible citizen, participant citizen, and citizen for social justice.

Reliable Actors in the World

In light of these and the many other models of civic education and citizenship, I ask how the students' bodily experiences shape the type of citizen they might become. Casey (2000) states:

To be habitual is to have or hold one's being-in-the-world in certain ways, i.e., those determined precisely by one's settled dispositions to act in particular patterns. The presence of these dispositions means that our habitual actions help to constitute us as reliable actors in the world—to be counted on by others as well as to count on ourselves. (p. 150)

Civic education has the potential to encourage certain habits in students. As citizens in a democracy, we need to be able to count on our fellow citizens to uphold the law, respect rights, speak out against injustice and participate in democratic processes such as elections. Students participating in civic education through their whole bodies have a chance to form such habits. They become “reliable actors” in our society, and it is incumbent upon *teachers as civic education* to be mindful of the habits they encourage in their students. Students, having experienced civic education through their lived body experience, hold their “being-in-the-world” in a certain way that is shaped by their physical experience in the classroom. As Merleau-Ponty (1945/2005) posits:

We shall need to reawaken our experience of the world as it appears to us in so far as we are in the world through our body, and in so far as we perceive the world with our body. (p. 239)

Finally, as I began this chapter with Dewey’s notion of our physicality in education, I turn now to the inescapable connection between the corporal nature of civic education and the experience of lived relation with a final thought from Dewey (1897/2004) who states:

I believe that the individual who is to be educated is a social individual and that society is an organic union of individuals. If we eliminate the social factor from the child we are left only with an abstraction; if we eliminate the individual factor from society, we are left only with an inert and lifeless mass. (p. 2)

In the next chapter I address this social aspect of civic education through the existential dimension of lived relation.

CHAPTER FIVE:
INTER-ACTING WITH THE OTHER IN CIVIC EDUCATION

Experiencing the Other

Humans are physical beings who live lives that are inescapably structured in terms of dependence on other humans and on the environment in which they live. ...Humans are physical beings who live enmeshed in relationships of interdependence. (Groenhout, 2004, p. 10)

Inextricably tied to the students' experience in civic education is their relationality. Van Manen (2003) explains this as the experience of the "lived other" (p. 105). Just as students are bodily present in the classroom, so, too, are they present in relation with each other. Further, their physical presence is inherently linked to their relation with others.

In this chapter I explore the nature of students' interactions with one another as they dwell together in civic education. Beyond the teacher's pedagogical intentions with regard to student interaction in civic education, how do the students organize and interact amongst themselves? In what manner does this shared experience shape the type of citizen the students become outside of the classroom? How does their experience of lived relation influence their experience in civic education and shape who they are and who they may become as citizens?

As hinted at and referred to in chapter four, connected to the students' corporeal experience is their experience of lived relation. One cannot experience membership in a civil body politic without committing to a life lived with others. As van Manen (2003) reminds us, "As we meet the other, we approach them in a corporeal way: through a handshake or by gaining an impression of the other in the way that he or she is physically present to us" (pp. 104-105). Further, the existential

experience of lived other allows persons to see beyond themselves, an exercise essential in any organized society. Van Manen clarifies, “As we meet the other we are able to develop a conversational relation which allows us to transcend our *selves*” (p. 105). Indeed, what meaning does society have without our relationship to others? Are not humans combined in society for the purpose of forming bonds with others? Democratic governments fulfill their purposes of protecting rights, establishing justice, securing liberty, and promoting rule of law for the sake of all others who have given them the power to do so. This is the inherent nature of the social contract.

In the social studies classroom, the experience of lived other or lived relation is an essential aspect of civic education. Through the teacher’s pedagogical decisions to allow for interaction between and among students, students may deepen their sense of their experience of the lived other. The students’ experience of their lived relationship with their teacher, too, serves to transform their civic education. Van Manen (2003) explains, “In this lived relation the child experiences a fundamental sense of support and security that ultimately allows him or her to become a mature and independent person” (p. 106).

In civic education, students yearn for this lived experience, for as van Manen (2003) explains:

In a larger existential sense human beings have searched in this experience of the other, the communal, the social for a sense of purpose in life, meaningfulness, grounds for living... (p. 105)

In this chapter I explore the students’ experience in civic education as it relates to their lived relation to the other and myself, their teacher. It is through their interaction with one another and their teacher that students’ experience of

relationality is manifest. To open up this aspect of the phenomenon, I begin by exploring what it means to interact in civic education.

Shared Interests

In his famous *Democracy and Education*, Dewey (1916/2004) makes a case for the importance of human interaction in a democracy:

Lack of the free and equitable intercourse which springs from a variety of shared interests makes intellectual stimulation unbalanced. Diversity of stimulation means novelty, and novelty means challenge to thought. (p. 54)

This challenge to thought is pivotal in a democracy, for without it, as Dewey (1916/2004) claims, we are no more than mere slaves. In the classroom, diversity of stimulation is essential in civic education. Without the opportunities to interact with one another, thereby engaging in novel situations and thoughts, students are left having to accept another's (usually the teacher's) purposes for their own education.

Citing Plato, Dewey defines a slave as “one who accepts from another the purposes which control his conduct. This condition obtains even where there is no slavery in the legal sense. It is found wherever men are engaged in activity which is socially serviceable, but whose service they do not understand and have no personal interest in” (Dewey, 1916/2004). It is with these ideas in mind I turn to the classroom and get behind the students' experiences in civic education as they interact with one another.

“Interact”

The bell rings signaling the end of the second class of the day. Students begin to stream out of classrooms and fill the halls in a matter of seconds. For many students, this is their favorite time of the day: “Interact.” A twenty-minute block of time where students can pick where they want to go; the gym to play basketball, outside to expel energy, the cafeteria to socialize, or different teachers' classrooms to meet up with friends, re-take quizzes, get academic

help, or just find a quiet place to read. Just like before and after every class, students have but four minutes to choose their destination and get to it. For many, there is an extra step involved of locating their friends and deciding the best place to spend these treasured 20 minutes. The second bell rings and many students are sent running for their choice of classrooms. Those who are caught in the hallway are “rounded up” by administrators and security personnel and disciplined with detentions.

There has been ongoing discussion in our leadership council about the purpose and utility of “Interact.” Many teachers want to do away with it and use the time for more instruction throughout the day. Other teachers value this time with the students who come to see them regularly or as necessary for extra help.

I myself look around my room during “Interact” and see students together whom I did not realize even knew each other. Two boys from different class periods I teach play cards in one corner. An ESOL student reviews the questions he missed on our last quiz. Five girls chat about the party they went to over the weekend and another student shows me pictures of her new puppy. Why would teachers want to take away such valuable time? (My reflection, March 2005)

In conversation and in written reflection, all throughout the students’ comments are references to their ability to “interact” with each other in civic education. Many of the experiences in civic education they recall as memorable, favorable, effective and illustrative, are times when they have “worked in groups,” debated each other, “had to trust” each other to complete a goal, “felt pressure” because they were working with their peers, or “learned to cooperate” with one another. All of these experiences highlight the interactive nature of the students’ experiences in civic education.

Planned Interaction

Several students mention that the experience they consider most meaningful in civic education provides them with a chance to interact. They feel they are “actually a part of it.” I reflect back to the “curriculum-as-plan” and the pedagogical decisions I make as the teacher. In allowing students the opportunity to interact with one another

in civic education, students' experience of the lived relationship with one another is reinforced. In the social studies classroom, it is the nature of the students' interactions with each other over social issues such as equality, rights, governmental power, historical issues, and essential questions that make their experience one of civic education.

Further reflection upon my pedagogical decisions and the students' descriptions of their experiences in civic education leads me to understand that my "interactive" curriculum-as-plan is but one aspect of the students' total experience. That which happens between and among students beyond the curriculum-as-plan and my pedagogical intentions is what makes the true interaction that students experience and savor, thus adding to their lived relation with one another.

Inter-Acting in Civic Education

I now continue with some of the lived language of the students as they describe times when they have learned something in social studies connected to civic education. Almost immediately, students recall instances of when they were able to interact with each other in social studies class.

I think the debate was a really good thing because we really were under the pressure and you learn to come up with things that can help you and support like your opinion and it's great, like when you interact and make like a game. It's not only "listen and write down," you are actually part of it, and you can think of a problem where that can help you and you can imagine what you did. (Sara)

Yeah, kind of like what Sara said, she said the word interact. You interact with other people to receive new points or different solutions to different things. (Jamilla)

And you can make new friends by interacting with each person. (Whitney)

Beginning with the students' experiences, there is a common theme of interaction. "When you interact...you are actually part of it;" students can make new friends by "interacting with each person;" and interaction can help students "receive new points of view." These students' immediate responses point to the social nature of learning.

Furthermore, Jamilla and Claire both name this aspect of their learning as a significant difference between learning in social studies and learning in other content areas.

With (social) studies it's kind of like you can either know a lot about it and still have a lot a fun or know nothing about it and learn a lot and still have a lot of fun. Because every year in social studies they've always had something to try to help kids understand more whether it's like poster projects or simulations just to get kids in groups to learn and interact together more so they can actually have more fun while learning. And I think that is the biggest difference because when we do projects in other classes you're never doing it as a group like science or English or math. You know, it's never as a group, it's by yourself. You have to learn by yourself and that I guess that is harder because you don't have anyone to lean on if you don't understand. (Jamilla)

This past month we have been able to learn in such a unique and memorable way. Interacting with peers in the way that we were able to these past few weeks has just been so great and so much fun. This experience has been so different than the usual tasks we are asked to do for (social) studies. First of all we were able to work in a group for an entire month instead of always working for individual success. We learned to rely on others. (Claire)

Already, the students' text reveals multiple layers of understandings of what it means to interact in civic education. Before exploring any further, however, I turn to the word "interact" itself to find what its origins may tell us about the nature of the students' experiences.

Driven Together

The term “interact” is best understood etymologically by taking the prefix and the root separately. “Inter,” borrowed from Latin, entering English in the 1400’s, is a prefix meaning “together, one with the other; between, among” (Barnhart, 1988, p. 535). In this way, we begin to picture the students “together” in a classroom or “between and among” each other in pedagogical situations. But while they are physically present together, the root of the word elicits the nature of their togetherness. “Act” is taken “from Latin *actus* a doing, and *actum* a thing done, both from *agere*, to set in motion, drive” (Barnhart, 1988, p. 10). Thus combined, to interact means “to do a thing together,” or more evocative, “to be set in motion with one another” or “to be driven together.”

How does this understanding of the word serve to get underneath the students’ experiences of inter-acting with one another? Jamilla mentions the opportunity to lean on her classmates as necessary through her inter-action with them. Claire, too, mentions learning to rely on her peers. Sara feels actually “a part of it” because of her inter-action with her classmates in a debate. This lived language does not let the experience go with just being grouped together physically. Rather, the students seem to experience a sense of the other, an obligation to their peers, as well as a chance to draw strength from their peers. They are set in motion together and their actions are inextricably linked to the actions of the other. This relationship, however, pre-existed the opportunity the students had to inter-act. As Groenhout (2004) explains:

Human existence is fundamentally relational. ...To be human is to find myself already in relationships I do not define or control with others who, while like me in their humanity, are fundamentally other than me. (p. 80)

Students inter-acting in this regard are not entering into a whole new construct. By nature of their human existence, they are already in relation with the “Other.” Civic education in this way has given them the opportunity to inter-act with the Other in a way that other curricula may not. Levinas (1972/2006) would also suggest that the students’ desire to be “set in motion together” arises from “The Desire for Others—sociality” (p. 29).

How does the opportunity to inter-act strengthen the sense students have of the Other? First, I clarify what Levinas and other existential philosophers mean by the Other. Wild (2004) explains:

The other person as he comes before me in a face to face encounter is not an *alter ego*, another self with different properties and accidents but in all essential respects like me. ...He is far from me and other than myself, a stranger, and I cannot be sure of what this strangeness may conceal. (in Levinas, 1961/2004, p. 13)

In other words, to experience the “Other” is to experience all that is not ourselves. Levinas (1972/2006) explains that while we may be empathetic toward the Other, we can never fully know the Other. He clarifies: “The uniqueness of the Ego is the fact that no one can answer in my stead” (p. 33). In a curriculum that is to serve the ends of encouraging an informed, active, and compassionate citizenry, how valuable is this opportunity for students to inter-act? They can never become the Other, but in inter-acting with them, they are called to fulfill the innate responsibility humans have for the Other. As Levinas (1961/2004) further states, “Having the idea of infinity, is discourse, specified as an ethical relation” (p. 80). Through inter-action, students experience the infinity, and as such, enter into an ethical relationship with the Other. From this, there is no turning back.

Grounded in the Other

When I ask the students about civic education, their responses quickly speak to the times when they participate in “hands-on” activities, work in groups, and take active roles in the classroom. Here we find a synthesis of the students’ corporeality and relationality within their experience of civic education. Kofi and Claire, for example, describe their civic education experience:

The simulated congressional hearing [is civic education]... because it gave us a jump-start on good debating skills and opened our eyes to our rights and responsibilities. The way you chose groups also made it a great experience because we had to work with people we weren't comfortable with sometimes and over the duration of preparing for the hearing, we learned to deal with each other as common citizens of your class. (Kofi)

This [simulated congressional hearing] not only helped us understand our social studies topics better, but taught us to work efficiently with other people and to work around other's strengths and weaknesses. Hands-on activities used in civic education allowed us to put ourselves in real life situations, or at least helped us to relate social studies/history to our own lives. When students can personally relate to something, they remember and understand better, which is why civic education is such an effective teaching method. (Claire)

Assumed inter-action. Another interesting turn of the students’ inter-action may be gleaned from an alternate meaning of the prefix “inter,” which from the Latin “in” + *terra*, earth, means to “put in the earth, bury” (<http://www.etymonline.com/>). I picture students feeling a stronger sense of “grounding” and connectedness to the earth, or their world which they inhabit, when they are inter-acting with each other. By “putting in the earth” something they are doing, they are cementing their experience in time, space and in relation to each other.

Further, interpreted this way, inter-action can be experienced as a strengthening of one’s Being. Heidegger (1957/1969) states, “But Being, since the beginning of Western thought, has been interpreted as the ground in which every

being as such is grounded” (p. 32). Heidegger explains that to experience authentic belonging, we must move away from representational thinking by “springing.”

Thus a spring is needed in order to experience authentically the belonging together of man and Being. This spring is the abruptness of the unabridged entry into that belonging which alone can grant a toward-each-other of man and Being, and thus the constellation of the two. (p. 33)

Through their inter-action with one another, students “spring” away from representational thinking, which so often prevails in education, and thus experience their Being authentically. Thus, civic education, through the inter-action it affords, strengthens students’ sense of belonging. Through this strengthening, students may then feel a sense of abrupt entry into their society and their community to “spring into action.”

Inter-acting in wisdom. The students’ experiences of inter-acting with one another as a way of grounding or “putting into the earth” their experiences is one of seeking wisdom. Aoki (2005b) describes Miss O’s process of releasing the ego as the teacher acknowledges her responsibility to the Other: her students. The teacher leads not so that her students will follow but so that students may be and become. Aoki (2005b) asks, “Is this pedagogic leading a pedagogic wisdom that comes to thoughtful teachers who, in the midst of their practice of teaching, listen with care to the voice of the silent other? ...It is indeed wisdom Miss O seeks” (p. 212).

As I lead students to form groups, inter-acting with each other, they have a chance to live in wisdom. As Aoki (2005b) explains, the Chinese have a character meaning “a wise leader” whose etymological roots are related to human, humility, humor, and humus. The Chinese character for “wise leader,” or *sei-jin*, (賢君) taking in all these words means:

A person who indwelling with others, stands between heaven and earth, listening to the silence, and who, upon hearing the word, allows it to speak to others so others may follow. (Aoki, 2005b, p. 214)

In allowing my students to inter-act with one an-Other, with the Other, I assume a position of indwelling and “stand between heaven and earth” as I listen. Thus the experience of inter-acting in civic education is one of seeking wisdom. Students are grounded or “put into earth” as they reach for heaven and the wisdom they seek there. Thus, my role as teacher is inextricably linked to the students’ experience of inter-acting in civic education. It is my attunement to the Other that affords them this opportunity. And in that students are learning from the Other, they too, play the role of the wise leader, or *sei-jin*.

Inter-acting with the Other. Levinas (1972/2006) declares that we are already in relation to each other. This phenomenon is inescapable. It is interesting that when asked to recall times when they have learned in civic education, students are drawn to instances where their relationship to each other was exposed, challenged and strengthened. Jamilla, for example, seeks to “lean” on her fellow classmates when given a chance to help her understand. She seems to assume a relationship between herself and her peers that pre-exists the teacher’s decision to create the opportunity for inter-action. Claire, too, “learned to rely on others” through her inter-action. This desire to reach out to the Other, or “sociality” as Levinas (1972/2006) would name it, is fundamental to human existence (p. 29). He states:

The relation with Others challenges me, empties me of myself and keeps on emptying me by showing me ever new resources. ...The Desire for Others that we feel in the most common social experience is fundamental movement, pure transport, absolute orientation, sense. (Levinas, 1972/2006, pp. 29-30)

In this light, the students' lived relationship with one another is a process of renewal. When Jamilla states, "You interact with other people to receive new points or different solutions to different things," did she experience a sense of emptying and renewal at the hands of her relation with her peers? And what sense of responsibility does she, in turn, feel toward her fellow classmates? In other words, who is Jamilla on the other side of this inter-action? How does her lived experience of her relationship to the Other transform her? Do she and her peers both experience a renewal? I further ask, is this renewal maintained or temporary? Once outside the classroom will Jamilla and her classmate remain open to each other? If that which takes place in the social studies classroom is civic education, then it is what it is. But civic education has a moral responsibility beyond the classroom. Does the opportunity to inter-act in the classroom reinforce the "Desire for Others" of which Levinas (1972/2006) speaks?

Civic Education and Desire for the Other

Levinas' (1972/2006) concept of sociality is explained as "Desire for the Other." Levinas (1961/2004) explains the Desire for the Other as a process of releasing the ego. In *Totality and Infinity*, Levinas (1961/2004) describes "totality" as the supremacy of the ego over the Other. Viewing the world and Others from our own egocentric vantage points, we "stand over" the Other and subjugate them. We are not aware of the Other's differences, nor do we respect or Desire them. Levinas (1961/2004) explains, "The substitution of men for one another, the primal disrespect, makes possible exploitation itself" (p. 298).

The other end of the coin is "infinity." In Levinas' theory we are not limited to totality, as infinity is the desirable condition. In infinity, one does not view the Other

through one's own egocentric lens. Instead, infinity is a state of being in which one accepts and desires all that the Other represents. Further, the moral claim of infinity comes when we are face to face with the Other. As Levinas (1961/2004) states, "To have the idea of infinity it is necessary to exist as separated" (p. 79). The separation creates a relation between "the same" and "the other." As such, "The conjecture of the same and the other, in which even their verbal proximity is maintained, is the direct and full face welcome of the other by me" (Levinas, 1961/1969, p. 80).

Levinas (1961/2004) explains the Desire for the infinite as "A Desire perfectly disinterested—goodness." He continues:

But Desire and goodness concretely presuppose a relationship in which the Desirable arrests the "negativity" of the I that holds sway in the Same—puts an end to power and emprise. This is positively produced as the possession of a world I can bestow as a gift on the Other—that is, as a presence before a face. (p. 50)

If inter-action is an inherent part of civic education, then who is to define the nature of that inter-action? Kelly, Jamilla, and others had to learn how to be with their classmates. Their sociality is not defined by curriculum-as-plan, or even the long-term goal of preparing for the simulated hearing; rather, their sociality or Desire for the Other is already present. It pre-exists the activities of the simulated hearing preparation. The classroom and my organizational structure of the class time is merely the vehicle through which the students experience the Other. Civic education is an experience of whom one is in relation to the Other. Kelly and Jamilla's experience of civic education in these instances is one of competing with their classmates' and possibly their own Desire for the Other.

Face-to-Face with the Other in Civic Education

As mentioned previously, in preparation for the Simulated Congressional Hearing, students are chosen to work in groups within each class. In each class, students vote for team captains. In most classes, I choose the six students with the highest number of votes and announce them as captains. In some cases, when the votes are close, I announce seven or eight and allow students to team up as co-captains. In period four, I choose seven of the eight highest scoring students to announce as captains. One student, whom I do not choose, but who had a number of votes from her peers, did not follow through on assignments regularly and was frequently absent. In retrospect, I question whether I should have allowed majority rule to prevail and not substitute my own judgment for the judgment of my students. I believe, in the end, that the qualities that I saw in her as a teacher would have put her group at a disadvantage, despite the natural intellectual ability I knew she had. It was interesting, however, to note that her peers still regard her as worthy of the leadership role, despite the characteristics that I as a teacher think would interfere with such responsibilities. As Sara and Kate explain it, the opportunities to interact allow them to get to know their peers to make such decisions. When asked how they make their decisions as to whom to vote for, they explain:

I think it was important for people not to be afraid to say this is what you need to do and you need to have it done and not just be like well just get it done when you can and work from there. You need to be forceful and to get people to get things done. (Sara)

I ask Sara and Kate how they knew their peers possess these qualities. Kate responds:

We have worked with them for a whole year in class. Because in this class we have done a lot of interacting, and we have done many groups and we kind of know about each other. (Kate)

After the students voted for their captains, they also signed up for three of the six possible topics about which they would become experts. I reminded the students that all six teams needed to be balanced, as they were still competing and operating as a whole class. Below, I reflect on the process I witness in my classes this year.

The captains chose their teams today. Periods one and five did it in one period. Period four came in at lunch to finish. Mack said every time I came out I “messed them up.” I knew what he meant. They had gotten into a groove deciding how to pick teams and I came and questioned them. He also had a pretty good team and was afraid I would mess it up. The other captains, Claire, Alix, Amy, Jamilla, Junhee, and Kelly all listened to me. Mack... argued with everything I said.

At times the sheer volume of their energy is overwhelming. I shush them and temper them. I have to remember that even in the most democratic places there is a place for authority. I author this process. The students give me that power by submitting to my timeline and organizational suggestions. But my authority is fluid. Near the end my decisions are more like suggestions. The kids take over. (My Reflection, May 2, 2005)

Relating back to Aoki's (2005b) questions of what it means to lead pedagogically, I seek a place for my authority within the students' experience of civic education. In authorizing the process that allows students to inter-act with the Other, I strive to de-center my ego as I allow students to assume authorship for their learning experience in civic education. The students trust my pedagogical wisdom and therefore complete the assignments I lay out for them as a path to preparation and success in the simulated hearings. As students assume more and more responsibility, they create the work for themselves and for each Other, and my ego is more and more de-centered. And yet, in the end, it is still I who must assign a grade. How does one “grade” an experience? How does one reduce down the experience of the Other to a percentage to be bubbled on a scantron form?

The captains announce to the whole class their teams and their topics, thus marking the official start of the simulated hearing preparation. Once in groups for the simulated hearing preparation, the students' experience of civic education takes on a new form. It is in these groups that the students engage in conversation with the Other. It is in groups that the students come face-to-face with the Other. It is when they are combined in this way, they may inter-act and experience their being and belonging. It is in these groups that students experience tension and live within this tensionality as they are pulled to meet the moral obligations of the Other.

In Conversation with the Other

Students experience civic education in the social studies as something that would help them join in on conversations.

This (social studies) is useful because if for example someone starts a conversation over a war and you are completely lost, it's kind of embarrassing but if you know you can continue the conversation. (Sara)

To be a student in the (social studies) class is very interesting because you can use the information in future to have conversations that actually are interesting and not stupid. (Alex B.)

To me social studies is mentally innovative. For example, ...we learned about the churches. This summer my sister was talking with my Grandpa they were discussing politics and they started talking about the old church. At that point I understood the conversation so I could join in. This makes social studies mentally innovative because I had never had a discussion like that. Second, social studies means interaction, like the time when...we had a project. For two weeks me and my partner discussed and questioned each other and expanded our knowledge. If you don't call that interaction, what *is* interaction. (Fletcher)

I will be able to do such things as go to history museums and understand what they are talking about by studying social studies. For example, if I were to get into a conversation about Pearl Harbor, I would be able to express how I feel about it. (Joy)

As students of social studies, young citizens want to avoid embarrassment and “feeling stupid.” How is their experience of civic education linked to their abilities outside of the classroom to understand what others are talking about? What does it mean to students to be able to “join in the conversation?” Teachers may look at this understanding of social studies as a way to imagine their class environment. Curriculum as conversation seems to open many possibilities for both students and teachers. Curriculum *for* conversation gives it another turn as well.

In a discipline where debates, discussions, and dialogue between and among students and teachers usually abound, it is an interesting turn to think of the curriculum as spurring conversation. Li (2002) makes an interesting contrast between discussion and conversation. She states that discussions in a classroom usually follow a few rules such as focusing on a central topic, relating to information already learned, and being moderated by the teacher who has pre-determined the educational outcomes for the discussion. In contrast, Li (2002) explains:

Conversations do not necessarily rely on these strategic properties. The emphasis in conversation seems to be more on personal meanings, shared atmosphere, feelings, emotions, and other relational elements. (p. 89)

Although Fletcher uses the terms discussion and conversation interchangeably, other students refer to the opportunity to have conversations outside of the classroom that social studies affords them. This brings to light the type of disposition that civic education seeks to encourage. Conservative advocates for a more history-centered education would, perhaps, liken this aspect of civic education, this shared knowledge that allows the students to have conversations with others about important current and historical events, as the “civic glue” that holds our country together. Thus civic

education in the classroom can serve as a way for students to make personal meaning of their world outside of the classroom. The problem with this notion, however, is how one defines “civic glue.” Who authorizes the ideals and beliefs that serve as this glue? Is “civic glue” being used for an agenda of “sameness?” The political challenges this notion presents are taken up further in chapter six.

As important as conversation in a democracy is, it is not for the purpose of creating a “civic glue” that students should be afforded opportunities to be in conversation. What does it mean to be in conversation with the Other? Levinas (1961/2004) explains:

To approach the Other in conversation is to welcome his expression, in which at each instant he overflows the idea a thought would carry away from it. It is therefore to receive from the Other beyond the capacity of the I, which means exactly: to have the idea of infinity. But this also means: to be taught. (p. 51)

Understood this way, conversation is not a uniting “civic glue,” a transmission of universal truths about our country’s history, as conservative advocates would suggest. Rather, conversation with the Other is an experience of infinity. Conversation with the Other is to let oneself be taught. It is to be open to all possibilities that are not oneself. In a diverse country such as ours, the experience of civic education must allow students to experience the Other in conversation. Students come away with possibilities and a reinforcement of the ethical relation to the Other, thus reinforcing dispositions essential in a democracy.

The students’ descriptions of curriculum as conversation also serve to illuminate other implications for pedagogy and curriculum development. What kind of professional development is necessary for teachers of the social studies to learn how to allow for conversation within their classrooms? As I have engaged in this

research, I myself have been more aware of the times when conversation has emerged within the “curriculum-as-plan.” It takes an attentiveness to *currere* to recognize how such conversations might develop. *Currere*, defined by Pinar et al. (2000) is a focus on “the educational experience of the individual as reported by the individual” (p. 414). Dwelling within the tensionality between my “curriculum-as-plan” and the “curriculum-as-lived,” I have had to choose deliberately to allow the conversation to continue rather than cutting it off for the sake of the time and curriculum-pacing factors. I explore suggestions for how this research may serve to transform teachers’ pedagogy in chapter six.

A falling into. Related to conversation in social studies, some students also pinpoint another aspect of some of the students’ views on social studies, that is, the ability to express one’s opinion.

This year I am looking forward to further expanding my knowledge in the subject and learning how to apply this to my life. I am also looking forward to having a chance to share my opinion with other students in class and during the simulated congressional hearing. (Kate)

I also think it is a class where it is easy to have an opinion. (Ryan)

I hope that I will be able to speak out about something without making it up or just using info from the news. (Brandon)

Do students in other disciplines experience their education as one that will enable them to “speak out?” What does it mean for students to be able to “share” or “have” an opinion, and how is the experience of civic education related to this? What is basic to civic education in the social studies classroom that gives students this opportunity of voice? Going back to Li’s (2002) explanation of the nature of

conversation, is it through structured discussion or natural conversation that students feel like they have a voice or where it is “easy to have an opinion?”

Li (2002) states:

Good teachers also know when to let go of control, such as when meaningful learning is taking place. To teach is to let learn. Indeed what makes the classroom conversation so unique and interesting a phenomenon is that unlike the more common and structured classroom discussions, conversations are very difficult, if not impossible to plan, predict or manage. (pp. 91-92)

It is almost as if students expect to experience “falling into” conversation during social studies class. Or, as Gadamer (1960/2003) explains:

We say that we “conduct” a conversation, but the more genuine a conversation is, the less its conduct lies within the will of either partner. Thus a genuine conversation is never the one that we wanted to conduct. Rather it is generally more correct to say that we fall into conversation. (p. 383)

I think back to the simulation that was postponed in light of the students’ insistence on taking a quiz and the ensuing conversation that followed. I think of all the conversations that take place through the month of simulated hearing preparation. These occurrences of *letting learn* within the social studies classroom are vital in civic education as the conversations centered around social and political issues allow students to experience Desire for the Other.

An ethical relation. Finally, Li (2002) elucidates the nature of conversation one step further in stating, “Conversations appear to direct the focus on the relational sphere itself, rather than on some external topic or issue lying outside of the relation. In a sense the conversational relation becomes its own topic” (p. 92). It is here we find connection to students’ understandings of the nature of social studies, and thus civic education, and their lived experiences that speak to their experiences of lived relation with one another. And although in other classes there may be discussion of a

topic such as the theme in a novel, a scientific discovery, or a mathematical principle, it is the conversation centered around war, peace, justice, freedom, human nature, and other such topics that make conversations in the social studies civic education. In allowing for conversation, civic education changes the nature of how students relate to one an-Other and others outside of the classroom.

Levinas (1961/2004) states:

The relation with the Other, or Conversation, is ...an ethical relation; but inasmuch as it is welcomed this conversation is a teaching...[I]t comes from the exterior and brings me more than I contain. (p. 51)

Through the conversations with one an-Other, students are part of an ethical relation. It is this ethical relation that is vital in a thriving democracy. Without our sense of responsibility to the Other, the democracy will not prevail. In the social studies class, students experience civic education in conversation with the Other so that outside in society they may bring with them the new understanding of the Other.

Learning the Other

With some students' experiences, working in a group allows them to learn more about their classmates, the Other. In both Mack and Jamilla's cases, the positive experience of working with the Other comes as a pleasant surprise.

We do a lot of things in here that are in groups. And sometimes you may group us up and you may get with someone that you didn't want to be with. Then they may end up better than anyone you could have picked in the class cuz (sic) you actually found something out about them that like was useful when you did the work. (Mack)

Also, some people understand it more than others so when you are in groups it's like you have help, so it kind of makes it easier to do something so if you don't understand something. Some people in the beginning might think that some people can't do this or can't do that but you realize that they can. That's what I thought of Mack and then he was in my group and I realized he was actually pretty smart. (Jamilla)

Mack “actually found something out about them that was useful,” and Jamilla “realized he was actually pretty smart.” Jamilla, Mack and other students learned about the Other while in conversation about civic issues such as voting trends, powers of the president and purposes of government. In learning the Other, students are engaging in civic education as it allows them to be open to Levinas’ (1961/2004) idea of infinity. Infinity is necessary in civic education for students to be able to look beyond themselves and the “I” and act, based on their ethical relation to the Other.

We are in society together. As such, Groenhout (2004) asserts that separation is not the fundamental aspect of human existence that some political philosophers such as Hobbes claim it to be. She claims that humans naturally want to reach out to one an-Other in a trusting way. Perhaps being in a group affords this opportunity to rediscover this element of human nature that may have been lost. Groenhout (2004) states:

If humans are innately loving, then at a fundamental level connection is more primary than separation. Humans start from a response of reaching out in trust toward others and given love will naturally return it, though both of these tendencies can be destroyed. (p. 55)

A Pedagogy of Autonomy

Following up on the notion of human’s nature to trust, some students seem to experience this very element as they work in together in civic education. Mack, for example, sees the group formation as a sign of the teachers’ trust in the students.

I think when we do group stuff we learn more. Not only about the people we are doing it with but we sort of focus more on what we’re doing because it sort of makes us think that, okay if she can trust us that probably means she’s going to ask us about it later since she wasn’t here to ask us while we were doing it so let’s really pay attention and get the stuff done. (Mack)

Sara, too, picks up on this aspect of being allowed to work in a group with Others.

You feel like the teacher trusts you and you feel the need to impress, to show that you can. The teacher has given you this chance and you can show her...
(Sara)

What is it about the group and the inter-action with the Other that enables Brain and Sara to feel the teachers' trust in them and their peers? I refer back to van Manen's (2003) description of the lived relation between a teacher and student:

In this lived relation the child experiences a fundamental sense of support and security that ultimately allows him or her to become a mature and independent person. And in this lived relation the child experiences the adult's confidence and trust without which it is difficult to make something of oneself. (p. 106)

Indeed, there is great importance in how the *teacher as civic education* relates to his or her students. It is the lived relationship between teacher and student that allows for students to grow. Sara describes it as a "chance" to "show that you can." Mack explains later that being allowed to work in a group without the direct control of the teacher, he and his classmates are allowed to "just be in a group." I "let (them) go for the day." He goes on to describe what that was like when he and his classmates were in the computer lab to research powers of the president.

[In the] computer lab, I like research in those kinds of places. I like getting in the class [to] just be in a group. You let us go for the day. We just get whatever needs to be done we just get it done instead of sitting there and learning about someone. (Mack)

The computer lab is just the particular place where Mack and his classmates could "just be." As Heidegger (1957/1969) states, "Today, the computer calculates thousands of relationships in one second. Despite their technical uses, they are inessential" (p. 41). Indeed, it is not the actual use of the computers to conduct his

research on the powers of the president that Mack relishes, it is the opportunity to “just be” with the Other.

What does it mean for students to “just be” with the Other? How does this shape their experience of civic education? This pedagogical decision has immense implications for the formation of trust between students and teacher, as well as a reinforcement of belonging for the students. Admittedly, allowing students to work in groups takes longer and requires more organization and patience on the part of the teacher, and sometimes students. Yet Heidegger (1957/1969) makes the case for our need to connect with one an-Other. He states:

“[T]o belong” means as much as to be assigned and placed into the order of a “together,” established in the unity of a manifold, combined into the unity of a system, mediated by the unifying center of authoritative synthesis. Philosophy represents this as nexus and connexio, the necessary connection of the one with the other. (p. 29)

Once again, connecting back to civic education, the environment and opportunity created that allows for this formation of trust enables students to experience their relation to the Other as they will need to in the larger society. Democracies thrive on the ability of the citizens to connect with one another. Without this feeling of connectedness, citizens withdraw and do not find a personal stake in their government or community. Frantzich (2006) describes this as the phenomenon of “limited commitment.” Civic education must allow students the opportunity to make such human connections. By embodying these connections in the classroom, students may take their newly formed dispositions out into society.

Furthermore, Freire (1998) states:

Autonomy is a process of becoming oneself, a process of maturing, of becoming to be. It does not happen on a given date. In this sense, a pedagogy

of autonomy should be centered on experiences that stimulate decision-making and responsibility, in other words, on experiences that respect freedom. (p. 98)

The simulated hearing preparation and other such instructional activities exemplify a pedagogy of freedom. Mack and his group are allowed to “just be.” They know what their goal is and are given the freedom to make their own decisions and take personal responsibility. When students say they are independent of the teacher, or that the teacher “did not teach,” what they are really saying is that they experienced freedom. This experience or respect for freedom, as Freire (1998) calls it, is a pedagogy of autonomy. The *teacher as civic education* must orient oneself toward the students with this pedagogical stance in mind so that students may experience freedom. Students may then embody this experience of freedom and transform their being-in-the world.

Belonging with One An-Other

O’Donohue (1999) complements Groenhout’s (2004) claim regarding our desire to connect. Just as Groenhout (2004) claims that a theory of human nature that emphasizes our separateness is inadequate, O’Donohue (1999) maintains that our human nature is to experience our freedom through our separation, which in turn reinforces our sense of belonging. He eloquently states:

The wonder of being a human is the freedom offered to you through your separation and distance from every other person and thing. You should love your freedom to the full, because it is such a unique and temporary gift. (O’Donohue, 1999, p. 5)

In other words, our separateness is part of our human nature, and as humans we should take advantage of it. He goes on to explain, however, that this same separateness should serve to create our sense of belonging in the world as well.

When your way of belonging in the world is truthful to your nature and your dreams, your heart finds contentment and your soul finds stillness. ...The shelter of belonging empowers you; it confirms in you a stillness and sureness of heart. You are able to endure external pressure and confusion; you are sure of the ground on which you stand. (O'Donohue, 1999, p. 5)

In this light, do students like Mack and Sara, find a “shelter of belonging” that the freedom of working in a group affords them and which “confirms stillness and sureness of heart?” Remembering back to Jamilla’s experience of taking a stand with her classmates during the tax simulation, it would seem true that the essence of belonging to a group enables her and others to “endure external pressure and confusion.” In this light, students working alone would not experience this liberation or full realization of their sense of belonging. In civic education, when students belong in a way that emulates real-life societal organizations, students approximate their citizenship. I also think back to Fletcher who was not sure of his belongingness in his group, due to his absences. He did not experience the sureness or stillness of heart that perhaps others did.

The Freedom to Be-Long

Freedom as a “unique and temporary gift” is an interesting insight as well. It implies a gravitation toward a social world in which humans belong to each other and are beholden to one another for common purposes. Bobby recognizes the social aspect of his civic education in this way:

Well the question that you gave, when you are researching it, every single time you research it, you answer so that is what you learn. But there is sometimes a bad thing of groups and working together. [If] one person doesn’t do their part of the work, the whole group is affected. (Bobby)

Bobby's sense of belonging to his group is that his actions affect others, and vice versa. What is Bobby's sense of belonging that leads him to this understanding? As O'Donohue (1999) explains:

To be human is to belong. ...The word "belonging" holds together the two fundamental aspects of life: Being and Longing, the longing of our Being and the being of our Longing. (p. 2)

As students work in groups, they can feel a sense of be-longing. According to O'Donohue (1999) this urge is primal in all people. We long to realize our full Being in the presence of others. In a group of their peers, students learn from the Other and themselves. Bobby learns that in order to be-long he had to do work so as to not negatively affect the whole group. He longs for the group's acceptance and recognizes that he along with his teammates have a responsibility to each Other.

Students' In-Dependence

This responsibility to each other within the group setting also plays itself out in a transfer of dependence on the teacher to a dependence on each other. Just as some students working in groups establish a sense of trust between the teacher and students, it also seems to create a dependence between and among the students themselves. When asked what it is like to work together during the simulated hearing preparation, both Claire and Sam mention this dependence on their peers.

We didn't depend on you so much because we had a group to depend on and we were not by ourselves but we have four other people that we were with and not just you. (Amanda)

I don't think we depended on you much as we would have been in normal class. We are way more independent and we would be able to come in, it was like we are self-motivated. Ms. Paoletti is there if we need her. It was pretty much we were on our own. (Claire)

Amanda recognizes a transfer of dependence from the teacher to her classmates in her group; “We had a group to depend on.” Likewise, Claire experiences a shift from dependence on the teacher to an experience of in-dependence. It is here I choose to pause and explore further the students’ experiences of dependence and independence.

Being-because-of. In searching the etymological roots of “dependent” one finds a 1410 meaning of “be conditioned on, be because of” (Barnhart, 1988, p. 266). Connecting this back to Claire and Sam’s descriptions of their experience of depending on their peers, one can interpret their dependence on each other as a way of “being-because-of.” In other words, in a typical class, students experience their Being as the teacher draws it out. In the group construction, students are because of their peers. Their Being is shaped by their peers. What a departure from the typical teacher-directed classroom! Students in-dependent of the teacher, then, are free to experience their identity through their lived relation to their peers.

An experience of difference. Heidegger (1969) gives us another way of understanding the students’ experience of being in-dependent. As students are experiencing their identity through their peers, they are “being-because-of” their peers’ differences. Heidegger (1969) states:

Whenever we come to the place to which we were supposedly first bringing difference along as an alleged contribution, we always find that Being and beings in their difference are already there. (p. 62)

Heidegger (1969) describes the freedom to choose to notice difference or pass right over it. When we are confronted with difference, the proper stance is face-to-face. Students in civic education in-dependent of the teacher experience their Being in relation to their differences as they inter-act face-to-face with the Other.

In –dependence vs. control. Sam, too, has a sense of this in-dependence and the effect it has on his learning in civic education, although he cautions against too much in-dependence.

I think too much independence is pretty much where you're left without anyone else to work with, no one like to give you direction. I think if there is no one getting direction on anything whatsoever, you know, there is no one to work with—you're pretty much lost. (Sam)

In Sam's experience there is such a thing as too much in-dependence. He recognizes a need for being able to work with his peers and get direction. In this light, Sam favors the opportunity to "be-because- of" someone else. He goes on, however, to describe how he experiences the balance between in-dependence and control.

And I think not enough individuality is like saying okay you write that about the government but this is what you have to say about it. You need enough freedom to write what you want to say and have or need the amount of time to, you know, get research together, type up what you want to say and be able to answer questions. I noticed that we were able to do a lot on our own and a lot of research and thinking, and writing on our own. I think that was a good thing because it wasn't controlled. It was structured but just structured enough so that we understood what we were doing and we did it. (Sam)

Sam's experience of working in a group for the simulated hearing was one of in-dependence, but not too much that it was "falling apart." Sam seems to experience his "Being-because-of" his peers as a sense of maintaining his wholeness, while at the same time maintaining his individuality. This struggle is an essential element of American democracy. I think back to the essential question I ask throughout the year of how governments balance individual rights and the common good. Do Sam and others experience a shifting balance between their individual needs, rights, freedoms and the common good of the group? As they continue to develop their "Being

because of' the group, are they more attuned as individuals or toward the common good of the whole group?

Sam gets at this notion as he continues to describe what it was like to work together with his peers. He intimates the dangers of too much structure.

Structure is always nice definitely, especially in classes like science and math where you know they get guidelines you have to follow. You don't really have choice. Like one plus one you know, is two and something like that. I think in classes like English and world studies were pretty much like your opinion and your imagination. I think it's pretty much to have freedom. The more structurization [sic] you know, up to a point, is just strangling the imagination or creative process or ...your opinion. (Sam)

Sam's reflections point to a fine line between too much freedom and too much structure. He sees that too much structure could "strangle the imagination or creative process or...your opinion." It is in this desire for freedom and in-dependence that the Desire for the Other can be felt as Levinas (1972/2006) states: "The Desire for Others arises in a being who lacks nothing or, more exactly, arises beyond all that could be lacking or satisfying to him" (p. 29). Perhaps Sam's experience of civic education, in seeking the right balance between in-dependence and dependence was one of self-fulfillment.

The teacher moves aside. The tension students may experience between one's in-dependence and dependence is intriguing and reminds me of the tensionality I experience in implementing the curriculum-as-plan. I, too, vacillate between dependence on the curriculum-as-plan and in-dependence for the sake of my students' needs. In examining the students' experiences of tensionality, Aoki (2005a) again may speak to this aspect of the phenomenon:

...To be alive is to live in tension. ...This tensionality in her pedagogical situation is a mode of being a teacher. A mode that could be oppressive and

depressive, marked by despair and hopelessness, and at other times, challenging and stimulating, evoking hopefulness for venturing forth. (p. 162)

In this place of tension erupts a “pedagogical situation” in that students are learning from each other. There has been a shift in dependence on the teacher to a state of independence on one another. This mode of Being with the Other can, indeed, vacillate between being “oppressive and depressive” and “challenging and stimulating” as Aoki (2005a) describes. This experience is not limited to that of the classroom teacher when in civic education students have begun to authorize their own learning.

Most interesting, perhaps, is that the tension they experience is at the hands of their peers and at their own hands. Many students perceive this as a time when the “teacher did not teach,” or the teacher “let us go.” In other words, it is a shift in control, of authority and authorship from the teacher to the students. As I reflect at the time:

I am fading into the background of their learning, of their experience....At this point, I think my work with my students becomes more authentic. I am giving them feedback on their writing, ideas, stances, positions. In reading their writing not for a grade but for their ideas, what they mean, how they will support them, why they have them, I feel like I know my students in a way that other forms of teaching do not allow. When students have to write for a grade it is different. But here they are writing in order to convince others, in a real-life setting. There is more at stake. It is not just a grade at stake. In fact, there is no grade at stake. What is at stake for these students is themselves. They are writing and defending themselves.

What does this do to students? How is this civic education? How does this kind of work change their relationship to themselves? To each other? To society? To the teacher?

It is such an amazing thing to see students move on without you. There are still some students asking about grades and points. But even in my special education class I have students who have taken complete control over their work.

The tide is turning. After the rehearsals next week it will turn again. Each turning brings a greater sense of urgency in the students. And a greater sense of autonomy. And a greater position... (My reflection, May 21, 2005)

How do students experience this shift in control and authority? I remember thinking at the time, it almost seems like the students “moved on without me,” but knew that when they needed me I would be there. There is another interesting juxtaposition in the written directions I give the students every week and the sense of freedom and authority they feel. I painstakingly write out calendars, outlines and timetables to guide their progress, (see appendix F). Some of these have due dates and points assigned for completing various stages of the preparation. As the weeks progress, however, there are fewer and fewer points assigned to the students’ work. By the last two weeks of preparation only about five out of 120 students ask about their grades for different assignments. The captains, their peers, now have the authority to assign work and establish timetables for their teams.

Additionally, the students’ need for me, when it occurs, takes on a sense of urgency. This is reflected in emails I receive at 10:00 at night, asking me to edit a paragraph from their speech, or when first thing in class an editor from a group pleads for help in editing their speech down to the four-minute requirement. The experience of a transfer of authority from teacher to student is an essential aspect of civic education in that as citizens, students are and will be expected to make thoughtful, informed, conscientious decisions: whom to vote for, whether to speak out against an injustice, when to make their voice heard, and when to remain silent. In author-izing their own process and learning in the educational setting within the social studies classroom, they are approximating this essential civic skill.

Students in control. Students themselves recognize the value in this aspect of their experience. For example, as Amy reflects:

This experience was incredible for so many reasons, mainly because it was different from any other social studies project. This project involved students taking over and leading our class and specific units. We had so much control over how well each did in the hearing, which is why it made it so special to us. Plus, this project involved weeks of preparation, so we took the hearing very seriously and wanted all of our hard work to pay off. (Amy)

As Amy's reflection suggests, due to their opportunity to "take over," the students begin to see a real connection between their own work and their ultimate performance in the hearing. "We had so much control over how we did in the hearing." As Jamilla, too, experiences, with this handing over of authority came an experience of control.

The fact that we, as the students, got to take control of the project, the whole project. It gives you a kind of responsibility with a bit of fun into the school year. I think the best part was is that you knew that the students were in control. (Jamilla)

I learned a lot of things about myself and my teammates over the course of this month. I learned that it is not always easier to work in a group. I also learned that I am more of a leader than a follower. For me, I like to be in the driver's seat, to be in charge of the way things go. I did not know this about myself to (sic) now. (Bernie)

If students value such opportunities to learn from each other rather than directly from the teacher, what does this imply about the relationship between the teacher and the students in civic education?

Teaching Without Teaching

With this question in mind, I turn to bell hooks (1994) to continue to explore my role in my relationship with my students in civic education. Although she speaks of her experiences as a professor teaching undergraduates, I find resonance in her

ideas as she describes why teachers are reluctant to give up control in their classrooms. In *Teaching to Transgress*, hooks (1994) states:

Fear of losing control in the classroom often leads individual professors to fall into a conventional teaching pattern wherein power is used destructively. It is this fear that leads to collective professorial investment in bourgeois decorum as a means of maintaining a fixed notion of order, of ensuring that the teacher will have absolute authority. (p. 188)

I think about my students' perceptions of my direct or indirect actions during the times when they have opportunities to work in groups, to learn from each other, and to inter-act. They know that I am still there in the room with them. Even during the long stretches of time during the simulated hearing preparation when I do not directly instruct the students, they know that I am there for them if needed. Sometimes it is to get a student back on task for the sake of the group. Other times it is to clarify a concept with a group who has been researching a topic together. But what I remember most vividly about the times when students have opportunities to work together in groups is how they would start without me. One area of control I am most reluctant to cede is in starting the class. Don't they need to hear from me about what they need to get done for the day? Where they might find information? What is coming next? Most times the students listen politely if a little impatiently, waiting for me to finish so they can resume their inter-acting and their state of in-dependence with each other.

In watching this transformation over the course of the school year, and most intensely over the course of the month when the students are engaged in the simulated hearing preparation, I relish what I see in the classroom, while at the same time recognizing a mild level of discomfort from time to time as I did not have direct "control" over the educational outcomes of my students' experiences. As Amy's

reflection suggests, however, the students are ready to meet the challenge. “We had so much control over how well each did in the hearing, which is why it made it so special to us” (Amy).

Looking back to hooks (1994), I ask why *does* a teacher need to maintain absolute authority in the classroom? Why have we been conditioned to believe that teachers must do this in order to be effective? And often, as Palmer (1998) suggests, teachers wield the all-mighty grade as the ultimate use of power over the students.

Authority is granted to people who are perceived as authoring their own words, their own actions, their own lives, rather than playing a scripted role at great remove from their own hearts. When teachers depend on coercive powers of law or technique, they have no authority at all. (p. 33)

I think about the many times I have claimed that if I could, I would choose not to grade the students on any aspect of their simulated hearing work, or any of their work throughout the year for that matter. But the structure of schooling and the behavioral theories of rewards and punishments to which the students have been so accustomed, create a situation in which I do use grades to facilitate their learning. I admit I even use them as a motivator, and in as few cases as possible, as a threat to students who would otherwise not do their work and threaten the success of their group. Authority and control, however, are not synonymous. It is when I wield control that I am most uncomfortable. As I reflect at the time, however, I still recognize that there is a place for my authority in the classroom at this time.

I have to remember that even in the most democratic places there is a place for authority. I author this process. The students give me that power by submitting to my timeline and organizational suggestions. But my authority is fluid. Near the end my decisions are more suggestions. The kids take over. (My Reflection, May 2, 2005)

Perhaps this fluidity that I experience with my students in civic education, as Palmer (1998) suggests, comes when I am teaching from my core, from within:

I am painfully aware of the times in my own teaching when I lose touch with my inner teacher and therefore with my own authority. In those times I try to gain power by barricading myself behind the podium and my status while wielding the threat of grades. But when my teaching is authorized by the teacher within me, I need neither weapons nor armor to teach. (p. 33)

The tensionality I experience as a result of the interplay of power and authority in the classroom is a salient aspect of the students' experience of civic education. For their experience of my power and authority shapes their sense of Being and Belonging.

In Tensionality, Intentionality

I think about this tensionality that I experience as I move in and out of “control” of the class and remember back to the tensionality I experience as I move in and out of authentic pedagogy with my students. This tensionality between teaching from my being, and therefore with true authority, and the times when I have had to “barricade myself behind...my status,” as Palmer (1998) phrases it, is a tension in which I dwell throughout the school year. I recognize that the times in which my students experience their own control over their learning are also times when I am “authorized by the teacher within me.”

I think of this time as not only dwelling within the tensionality, but also dwelling *with intentionality*. I am able to relinquish power and control to my students and hand them over the process so that they may take their own learning in hand. It is my intention that they do this, and because this pedagogical move comes from who I am as a teacher within, I am still teaching with authority. As Palmer (1998) states:

Authority comes as I reclaim my identity and integrity, remembering my selfhood and my sense of vocation. Then teaching can come from the depths

of my own truth—and the truth that is within my students has a chance to respond in kind. (p. 33)

Certainly I find connections between my students' experiences in my classroom in civic education and my own sense of my authority in the classroom, as has been discussed earlier. Students' experience of authority is essential in civic education for as citizens in a democracy, they authorize the processes and use of power by the government. As such, I continue to turn to my students' experiences as they have described them and explore the role of power, control, and authority in civic education.

Control, Command and Corruption

Many students use the term “control” in describing how they experience their work with the Other and in-dependent of the teacher. Just as some students like Amy experience a sense of the students' control over the outcomes of their work together, other students experience a tension in trying to “control” their group members. For example, Jamilla, as a captain, relays her struggle to lead her team during the simulated hearing.

I have changed because I really see how hard it is to control people. You have to tell them you have power from the beginning or else they just won't listen to you and you won't be able to be in command of them. (Jamilla)

Kelly too, also a captain, finds it challenging in this regard.

The journey in the position of captain was filled with obstacles ranging from unwilling students to confusing communication. For example, scolding or forcing my teammates would not have successfully made my peers thoroughly finish their work since those of “lower” rank deserve to be treated equally and respectfully. Thus, as a leader, I controlled my friends' fate in many ways such as choosing teams and assigning roles and could easily have been “corrupted” by yelling at them or embarrassing them. (Kelly)

Claire has a similar revelation as well. After the simulated hearing she reflects:

As I enter high school and society, I will remember that when acting as a leader, you are responsible for “controlling” your group. But it is also very essential to gain respect from your team members or whomever you are working with. (Claire)

All three captains struggle with a changing sense of control in their role as captain of their team. Jamilla experiences a growing need for power in order to “be in command of” her team. Kelly learns that she “controlled [her] friends’ fate” and, therefore, seeks to wield her power carefully so as to show them respect. She even quotes the movie Spider Man and states, “In the words of Tobey Maguire in Spider Man, ‘With great power comes great responsibility.’” Claire recognizes that while controlling her team she also had to “gain respect.”

Ironically, the students turn to a word evocative of power-over relationships, the very ones they describe they loathe. It is as if students take on the personae of the aggressors, those who have controlled them in the past, even while recognizing the lack of respect such power-over relationships have. It may almost be inevitable, however, that students turn to this mode of being when given the chance, as they have been participants, even subjects, in the authoritarian structure of the school, and family.

The circle of authority. There is more to this notion, however, than just the simple exercise one one’s authority over another. Jamilla suggests:

I think authority is just like a circle. The teachers have all the authority but over the teachers is Dr. Jones. Over Dr. Jones [are] the people working in Montgomery County, Maryland and then it goes on to the whole nation. And it can go on. The president has more authority. He really does because his decisions affect the citizens ...what is best for them. So basically the same thing happens. (Jamilla)

Here Jamilla recognizes the role of legitimate authority one may have over another, “His decisions affect the citizens...what is best for them.” She deepens her understanding, however, by explaining how authority in a democracy is circular. She continues:

I think the citizens have authority over the president. Some of the examples from my speech I used in the mock [simulated hearing] were in the Declaration. It said that if the government abuses its power that didn't agree with the people, they have the right to abolish and alter it. And I think that is what the president thinks about anytime he makes decision. So it is like a constant authority circle in motion. It is like the people over the president but under the president is the nation, the state, counties, the teachers and so on. (Jamilla)

Jamilla's sense of the circular nature of authority in society has interesting implications for pedagogy. What if teachers imagined their authority as circular, wherein the students have the right to “abolish and alter” decisions that are not in the best interest of the students? Few teachers would ever agree to such relinquishing of power, nor is our current structure of schooling set up for such a relationship to exist meaningfully. If an experience of democracy is one of fluid authority between the government and the governed, however, then perhaps schools should be modeled more closely after such an ideal.

The uncontrollable stuff of desire. Despite the negative connotation of the word “control,” I liken this sense of power, control and responsibility to what the curriculum allows students to imagine themselves to be. As Ellsworth (1997) explains in *Teaching Positions: Difference, Pedagogy, and the Power of Address*, much of education seeks to minimize or eliminate the difference between a curriculum and what students understand. But when teachers change their fundamental mode of

address toward their students, these ends are no longer desirable. As Ellsworth (1997) conjectures:

What if...a student's relationship to a curriculum is a messy and unpredictable event that constantly exceeds both understanding and misunderstanding? This perspective does not circulate very widely in the field of education. Nevertheless, like a student's reading of a movie, her reading of a curriculum constantly and inevitably passes through the uncontrollable stuff of desire, fear, horror, pleasure, power, anxiety, fantasy, and the unthinkable. (p. 46)

Ellsworth (1997) continues to state that this variability in a reading of a curriculum is exactly what teachers try to "prevent, foreclose, deny, ignore, close down" (p. 46).

It is this exact phenomenon, however, that allows for Jamilla, Kelly and others to experience control, power, authority, frustration, and triumph. In allowing the students to authorize the process of team and captain selection, as well as the group preparation process, Jamilla, Kelly, Claire, other captains, and their teammates experience moments of "desire, fear, horror, pleasure, power, anxiety, fantasy, and the unthinkable." These lived experiences, at the hands of the Other, strengthen their lived experience of the Other.

Authorizing their own process. I return to my pedagogical in-tensions and intentions and remember that as the students experience their own sense of control, I have to reposition myself in relation to them to allow this to happen. Some students recognize this, such as Claire and Amanda. As mentioned before, Claire has a sense that "Ms. Paoletti is there if we need her. It was pretty much we were on our own." Amanda, too, recognizes my intentions to allow the students to authorize their own process.

I think when we walk in the class, we already know we will work on simulated hearing and we know you will not be teaching us the lesson. But if

we still have questions we know we can still go to you and then you will set us back on the right track again. (Amanda)

Once again, students experience working in-dependently of the teacher, and instead, experience a sense that they are “on their own,” but still with one another.

Co-Operating in Civic Education

Students in civic education, as they work in groups during the simulated hearing and throughout the year, experience a strong sense of cooperation. This element seems inextricably linked to the experience of civic education. As Rohan describes, working in a group brought out his cooperative nature.

One part of this process that worked for me was working with a group. It was great working with a group which ended up showing another side of me which is being cooperative. Working with a group was nice because even if I messed up on a couple of things there was [sic] people around me who supported me and helped me make my work better. (Rohan)

Not only did Rohan grow in his cooperation with his group members, but he also recognized that they, in turn, helped him improve as a student. Is this sense of cooperation an essential element in civic education? Cooperation is one of the dispositions civic educators and curriculum theorists conjecture needs to be developed in our youth through civic education. Furthermore, contemplating the process and the ends of democracy as discussed earlier, cooperation appears to be a vital element in civil society. Brandon’s experience highlights this notion. He states:

Working with a group like we did was very different. I think it was a good experience and we learned that in order for things to work you need to cooperate with everyone even if they were being difficult. I also learned that you need a strong group leader that really leads the group and doesn’t just tell them what to do. I discovered this when our group was having trouble getting along and the captain just said stop and then he left to print the speech. Last is that even if one person is not cooperating you need to find a way to get him into the group and work with everyone else even if it means you need to get the teacher to tell the kid to tuck in his shirt. (Brandon)

Brandon learned that “in order for things to work you need to cooperate;” the group process and dynamic within the classroom appears to be an essential aspect of civic education. Brandon also suggests that it is one’s duty to pull everyone in even if they are not cooperating. In this way, civic education is experienced as a tolerance for the outliers. In all aspects of civil society there are varying levels of citizen participation and non-participation. Some citizens choose not to vote or follow national, state or local events. Some citizens actually work against the common good. Groups like the Ku Klux Klan, and the Black Panthers may choose goals not in line with the common good of the whole society, but their rights are protected. Individuals may exhibit selfish but lawful behaviors. What do we do in society about those who choose not to participate or cooperate? What should we do? From his work in his group, Brandon experiences the need for good leadership to settle disputes and rally those more reluctant members for the good of the whole. He works with an “outlier,” and instead of mere tolerance, makes steps to pull his classmate into fuller membership. Is this not an appropriate goal of civic education?

Tolerance and Co-Operation

Underlying Brandon’s experience of cooperation is that of tolerance. To paraphrase Vogt (1997), tolerance is putting up with something you do not like. It involves support for rights and liberties of other individuals and groups whom one dislikes, disapproves of, disagrees with, or finds threatening. Tolerance involves refraining from acting. Was Jay’s behavior tolerated for the good of the group?

In the beginning, as you saw, my classmates were complaining about me and everything and I wasn’t getting along. As time went by I was able to

cooperate with them. I was already doing well with Kofi. I wasn't doing well with other people. But at the end we worked together and it worked out. (Jay)

Claire, who is Jay's captain, describes her experience working with Jay similarly.

I first thought Jay had nothing, but when he actually put his mind to something he can come up with ideas. I saw a transition because in the beginning he was like "I don't care if you're my boss, I don't like that..." But over time we got him to kind of participate. Towards the end he was participating way more. I respected him more at the end. It was like he wasn't like this some months ago and I think he showed more respect toward the whole thing. (Claire)

I ask her why she thinks Jay is able to make this transition within the group. Claire replies:

I think we just kind of pushed him enough that he kind of got it. It wasn't just like something to blow off, you know. So I think that over time he realized that 'I can't blow off this thing the whole time. You know I've got to put some effort towards it.' And he did. (Claire)

Did Claire have to "refrain from acting fully" on Jay's indifference in order to pull him into the group? Claire definitely demonstrated tolerance for Jay, but she went beyond tolerance. Tolerance is a minimum standard for how one approaches and experiences the Other. Should not civic education move beyond tolerance of the Other and promote students to be open to the infinity of the Other?

Claire seems to experience infinity, in Levinas (1961/2004) terms, as she learns what Jay has to offer the group. Jay admits that he behaved differently in simulated hearing preparation than in other group activities.

It was a little different because we really didn't work in group projects this year. I mean most group projects that I am a part of, I let them do the work. But this one, I did the work instead. You had to when everybody was assigned something you have to look up that topic. (Jay)

Jay implies that the nature of the work is what spurred him to cooperate with his team. He admits that it was aggravating when his group members yelled at him, but

Claire and his other teammates experienced his coming into co-operation with his team as a sign of respect for the group and their goals.

Political philosopher Will Harris (2005) theorizes that in a democracy, how we treat the “outliers” is as important as how we treat those within the community. He argues that in a democracy, autonomy and participation are not completely compatible. The right to be treated differently and the right to be treated the same are often in conflict. At the end of the day, no citizen is expendable. In the same vein, no student in the classroom is expendable, and how the teacher treats those students who would remain outside the group, or how that teacher allows others to treat those students, ultimately shapes the nature of the democracy.

Jay demands to be treated differently. What I try to accomplish all year, and fail to do, (get Jay to respect his classmates and participate fully and cooperatively), his peers were able to do in one month. This is a citizen moment, according to Harris (2005), when Claire and her group not just through tolerance, but by also being open to Infinity of the Other, were able to pull Jay into their cooperative group for the betterment of the whole class. It is a moment that I as a teacher have not been able to achieve myself.

Civic Education as an Experience of Freedom

Because students are learning civic education in America, in a democracy, they also connect their experiences in the classroom with such governmental forms and the rights that go along with them. There is no doubt that under a different governmental structure their experiences of civic education would be very different.

Several students connect their experiences in social studies with democracy, rights and freedoms.

First of all [being a student in social studies] means that I will learn about our land and different governments and what they mean. (Jay)

By the end of this year I hope to be able to do things like explain what democracy is all about. (Brandon)

Learning about these things, helps us to appreciate all the rights and freedom we have today. We have our army to thank for that. ...Another reason why we study social studies is because we learn more about ourselves, the way we live, and our government. This helps us to understand many more things in the world. (Amanda)

Also take into consideration that when we're all forty, we won't need to know about people like Aaron Burr. What we we'll need to know is the rights we have and how to respect other cultures. (Alix)

Generally you need to know a country's history and a little bit about others as well, maybe some politics and world history. (Sara)

At this point I ask what do my students know about rights and democracy, governments and politics? A number of these students and their parents come from countries that are not democratic. How does their prior experience with democratic ideals shape their experiences in a social studies classroom? How is the experience of civic education influenced by the students' experience of their rights inside and outside of the classroom?

The "Say" of Civic Education

With regard to their rights and freedoms, students in civic education are very quick to name democratic moments when they have had a chance to vote or had a "say" in decision-making. Fletcher, for example, recounts an experience in civic education and claims, "I felt like a citizen because we voted on stuff, like we got to vote on types of flags and it was really cool." In the anonymous surveys students

completed after the simulated hearing, many students stated they like the way the captains are chosen: “It was like a democracy (the voting);” “It was like a true democracy and we voted;” and “Everyone had a fair vote.”

In reflecting on the making of their class compact, many students also associate democracy with freedom of speech and “having a say.”

The democratic part of making the compact is that everyone got a say in what went into it. (Bernie)

I felt like our class had a say in something. I am glad we got to choose our own rules and sign on it if we agreed. (Brandon)

The democratic part of this compact was that everyone had a say in making it and everyone’s opinion was listened to. (Rohan)

One aspect that was democratic was freedom of speech. We were allowed to say whatever we wanted and everyone else had to pay attention. (Andrew)

Students were also quick to point out when they felt like their voice was not heard.

What I did not think was right was when the people up front would talk about one of the rules—freedom of speech, but still they denied a student’s right of speech limiting it to three times only. What type of “government” would this class have if things like those happen? (Sara)

What does it mean to “have a say” in class or in society? Heidegger (1962) claims that “saying” is an assertion of one’s selfhood. When students “have a say” they often begin with “I think...” In fact, “I think” riddles their written work when I ask students to draw conclusions or state opinions about issues and events in social studies. They find it challenging to have their say without stating “I think.” Heidegger (1961) further explains, “In saying ‘I’, Dasein expresses itself as Being-in-the-world” (p. 368). When students desire to “have a say,” or give voice to their thoughts as “I think,” they reaffirm their existence. Heidegger (1961), however, claims, “What expresses itself in the ‘I’ is that Self which, proximally and for the

most part, I am *not* authentically” (p. 368). In other words, to state “I think” and to have a say, students are striving toward something they are not—yet. If students embody their thoughts, however, the “I think” is implicit, and left unstated. As Heidegger (1961) states, “One *is* that with which one is concerned” (p. 368).

In civic education, the importance of allowing students to “have a say” cannot be overemphasized. It is only through the practice of using their voices, testing their beliefs and thoughts out on each other in the classroom environment, that students will eventually come to embody them. When students can have a say, they become open to new possible ways of Being-in-the-world.

Furthermore, as Harris (2005) asserts, “Democracy is giving reasons when we use authority. It is a Constitutional moment” (personal communication). He suggests that allowing students to “have a say” within the structure of the democratic classroom shows respect for their democratic intelligence.

Constitutional Moments

Relating back to the experience of lived relation, students come into the social studies expecting to learn about their rights and freedoms and other aspects of democracy. They experience democracy as a time when they have had opportunities to “have a say” in decisions through voting, choosing rules, signing class compacts, and electing captains to lead them. How do these opportunities transform students?

Will Harris (2005) asserts that these opportunities are “Constitutional” moments in the classroom. He suggests that when students have an opportunity to voice their opinions on issues, *teachers as civic education* should probe students to explore what fundamental underlying values are behind their views. He encourages

teachers to broaden the discussion to include what the student's vision of the country based on these ideas about rights and freedoms is.

I think back to the numerous conversations and discussions that take place during structured and unstructured times in the classroom and the myriad topics that come up such as gay marriage. Harris (2005) suggests that some students may be gay or not, and their opinion is influenced by this. But their opinion on the issue is not what is important. Instead, teachers should turn the conversation around to "how should we all relate to each other?" What should be the higher moral rule for us? In other words, the issue over which students have "a say" or voice their opinion is merely the vehicle for exploring our own lived relationship. Harris (2005) argues that at the end of the day, what is really important is not who is for or against the death penalty, gay marriage, or abortion, nor is it important who was voted to be a captain or the outcome of a debate. Rather, at the end of the day, we are all still here. It is our moral imperative as a democratic society to preserve all and preserve the one. Teachers as civic education need to be attuned and open to these opportunities to bring the conversation around to this point.

"Hi" in the Hallways: Toward New Dispositions

As students in civic education experience their relationality, that is their lived relation with the Other, through their inter-action and co-operation with one another, in-dependent of the teacher and dependent on one an-Other, one way their actions are manifest is their behavior toward each other outside of the classroom. Many students describe times when they see their classmates in the hallways outside of the classroom and how their relationship with each other has transformed. Several

students, in separate conversations, describe what it is like when they see their classmates in the hallway between classes and the interactions that ensue due to the changed nature of their relationship inside the classroom. Sam, Jamilla, and Amanda all name this aspect of the phenomenon one of “saying ‘Hi’ in the hallway.”

(Did your relationship with your classmates change?) Definitely. Some people I didn’t really know I did know better so I have to say it improved a little bit. For one, I know some people I never talked to before. Sometimes I just say hi in the hallway and in the classroom too and we talk a bit. (Sam)

I think before, Joy and I were just acquaintances. We’d see each other. But we literally say “hi” now when we see each other in the hall. We stop and start talking to each other so we got closer. (Jamilla)

First I liked everyone who was in my group before. But then my friendship with them grew because I would spend more time with them. Like when I see one of them in the hallway I say hi when normally I wouldn’t. I was spending so much time with them and I have more to talk about with them. Like Jessie. I was friends with her before but now I am even better friends with her. Like she’s in my gym class and we would talk about the mock congressional hearing like all the time. So I think that just brought me closer to other people in the class. (Amanda)

I cannot help but return to Levinas (1961/2004) to try to find meaning in this aspect of the students’ lived experience of civic education. He states:

It is only in approaching the Other that I attend to myself. This does not mean that my existence is constituted in the thought of the others. (p. 178)

Students pass each other in the hall and recognize in the Other a shared experience wrought within the walls of the social studies classroom. Do they acknowledge each other? One student chooses to say “hi” in the hallway. What does this mean? Levinas (1961/2004) further states:

The face I welcome makes me pass from phenomenon to being in another sense: in discourse I expose myself to the questioning of the Other, and this urgency of the response—acuteness of the present—engenders me for responsibility; as responsible I am brought to my final reality. (p. 178)

A Final Reality

In forging new relationships with the Other, students are brought into sharper reality with themselves. When students decide to turn to and attune to the Other, a classmate with whom they have formed a relationship beyond the walls of the classroom, they choose infinity. This is what civic education should strive to achieve: to not only allow, but encourage students to be open to infinity. With such dispositions, students outside in society act in morally and ethically responsive ways towards their fellow citizens.

A Simplified Environment

Saying “Hi” in the hallway, is an action we witness (or do not witness) countless times throughout our day as teachers. A mundane, seemingly innocuous action, and yet, wrought with phenomenological implications. How often do I, as a teacher, witness this simple action without realizing its phenomenological implications? Indeed, I now attend to my students’ behavior toward the Other with new eyes. It is in the simplified environment of the school where students make manifest their transformation in their lived relation to the Other. Dewey (1916/2004) understands and values the social nature of learning. He states:

A being whose activities are associated with others has a social environment. What he does and what he can do depend upon the expectations, demands, approvals, and condemnations of others. A being connected with other beings cannot perform his own activities without taking the activities of others into account. (p. 11)

Thus, as beings, our actions are connected to one another. Dewey (1916/2004) names the school as the place where students learn how their actions affect each other and

what it means to be a part of a society or community. One of the primary purposes of schools in a democracy, according to Dewey (1916/2004) is, to

Provide a simplified environment. It selects the features which are fairly fundamental and capable of being responded to by the young. Then it establishes a progressive order, using the factors first acquired as means of gaining insight into what is more complicated. (p. 16)

Furthermore, in school, even the learning of language portends a shared experience.

Dewey (1916/2004) explains:

The bare fact that language consists of sounds which are mutually intelligible is enough of itself to show that its meaning depends upon connection with a shared experience. (p. 13)

The experience of civic education, then, is one of learning about the impact of one's actions on the larger society or community. As a "simplified environment," schools allow students to interact with one another and create shared experiences. In the social studies classroom, where the instruction is focused on history, culture, economics, geography and political systems, students "gain insight into what is more complicated" about being a citizen in a democracy.

I now continue on to my final chapter to try to reveal the insights that I have gained from this journey through the lived experience of civic education. What else may we learn about the "simplified environment" the school offers for civic education that can inform policy, pedagogy and practice?

CHAPTER SIX:

CIVIC EDUCATION: A CURRICULUM YET UN-NAMED

A Return to the Phenomenon

What is this naming? Does it merely deck out the imaginable familiar objects and events...with rods of a language? No. This naming does not hand out titles, it does not apply terms, but it calls into the word. The naming calls. Calling brings closer what it calls. (Heidegger, 1971, p. 196)

This study has endeavored to get behind the phenomenon of civic education for middle school students and to “bring closer what it calls.” As I conducted my research with my own students, I had multiple means of accessing their experiences from classroom recordings and observations, written reflections and other writing samples, as well as individual and group conversations. For my part, I had to bracket my own pre-conceptions of civic education continually, especially with regard to my “curriculum-as-plan.” Juxtaposed against the students’ experiences are my own pedagogical intentions. In listening to students tell of their experiences, I could not help think back to the original intent of the lessons in which they had participated. The students’ ultimate experience is often very different from what I name as the goal for those pedagogical situations. As phenomenology relies on reflection, it has been long after these lessons that I have understood my students’ experiences first named. Lying somewhere between or behind the “curriculum-as-plan” and the “curriculum-as-lived” (Aoki, 2005) is the essence of civic education for these middle school students.

The phenomenologist does not present the reader with a conclusive argument or with a determinate set of ideas, essences, or insights. Instead, he or she aims to be allusive by orienting the reader reflectively to that region of lived experience where the phenomenon dwells in recognizable form. (van Manen, 2002, p. 238)

In this chapter I strive to bring to light the whole of civic education as it is experienced by my students, while bringing forth pedagogical insights for *teachers as civic education*. I encourage the reader to view my ideas as starting points for conversations to consider the nature of civic education in our schools today and how these insights might help shape policy and pedagogy.

As Jardine et al. (2003) frame it, educators must return to the “basics” in education. Their understanding of the “basics” is not the “reactionary school reform” notion, nor is it the “critique or defenses of ‘liberal’ or ‘progressivist’ education” (pp. 2-3). Rather, they offer a “more generous, more rigorous, more difficult, and more pleasurable image of what *the basics* might mean,” while taking a hermeneutic approach to understanding of the basics in education (p. 3). In doing this they ask questions such as:

What might seem most important to us? How might we talk differently? How might we act differently? What new or ancient roles might we envisage for ourselves and our children in the teaching and learning and understanding of the disciplines that have been entrusted to us in schools? What, in fact, might “understanding” mean, given this alternate image of “the basics”? (p. 3)

Thus, with these questions in mind, I use this chapter to put forward a final series of namings of what is “basic” to civic education in hopes of illuminating the un-named. Before doing so, however, I return to my students, whose lived experiences have informed these namings.

A Return to My Students

As I state earlier, in today’s American education system, civic education is inextricably tied to the social studies class. Although civic education may (and should) reside in other classes, outside the school, in the home, on the street, etc., this

study's focus has been on civic education as it manifests itself in the context of the social studies classroom in a diverse upper-middle class suburban Washington D.C. middle school. The experiences of these students are unique to this group, yet at the same time, may speak to the fundamental nature of the phenomenon of civic education.

Throughout this study I often have asked myself if these would be the experiences of students who were not as used to voicing their opinions, who were not upper-middle class, who, for the most part, did not already come from a place of privilege in society. I think about the students I taught some years ago in a large, urban high school in Baltimore with an 87% African-American student population. How different would the selection process, subsequent conversations, and thematizing have been with such a different student population? What would their experiences in civic education have been?

Certainly the lived experience of civic education would be different for students in communities without the economic advantages that the majority of my students enjoy. Furthermore, Frost is a school that succeeds. Despite my disdain for measures such as adequate yearly progress (AYP) mandated by federal policies such as NCLB, the fact that all subgroups in our school have made AYP has allowed me and my fellow teachers the relative freedom to work creatively with our students.

This experience of freedom which has enabled the curriculum-as-lived to develop the may not have been present in a school like the one in Baltimore or even in a neighboring middle school less than twenty minutes away. Drawing from a lower tax base, and faced with more economic diversity and disparity, this middle school

did not make AYP this year, and is now being monitored. As a teacher at this school, I may have been less apt to take the risks I did and make the pedagogical decisions I made, thus shaping the curriculum-as-lived in a much different fashion.

I recognize, then, that the experiences of my students are largely due to my access to resources, experience of autonomy, and freedom to take risks. And yet, even as I ponder the possible directions this research could have taken me, and may still take others who read this study, I am convinced that there are some experiences that are basic to civic education. Furthermore, civic education is still always possible even in the most blighted areas. In fact, civic education is the very vehicle through which students may strive to overcome such economic obstacles. *Teachers as civic education* have an even greater moral responsibility in such settings.

My students arouse my goodness. Becoming a new mother since I began this study, I am in continual awe of the transformation and change my infant son has undergone in such a short time. Reinforcing the idea of Infinity and my moral obligation to the Other, my son's Otherness speaks to me persistently. I remember around the third month when he began reaching out and touched my face for the first time. I learned that he was just beginning to realize that he was his own self, not just a mere extension of me. Conversely, as I strive to understand myself in this new role as mother, I come to understand that my son is not simply a flesh and blood reflection of myself, nor is he simply an extension of myself. He is his own unique person. If I am truly open to him, he is Infinity.

So, too, I have come to understand that my students are not simple extensions or reflections of myself or my teaching. I continually must bracket my ego and come

to experience my students, the Other, as an opportunity to experience Infinity. In doing this I may take heed as Levinas (1961/2004) states:

The being that expresses itself imposes itself...without my being able to be deaf to that appeal. Thus in expression the being that imposes itself does not limit but promotes my freedom, by arousing my goodness. (p. 200)

Suspending the fire. I started this research journey with a poem. “Fire” was the metaphor that helped illuminate the journey for me as I wrote my way into the phenomenon of civic education. I cannot help but notice that the metaphor that guided my understanding of the phenomenon did not hold the same meaning for the students who took this journey with me. I still find building a fire to be an apt analogy for what it means to be a teacher as civic education. I think about the lived language of my students and the layers of understanding their lived experience descriptions reveal. Certainly, “lighting a fire” under their feet, or big ideas being “illuminated by fire” still hold meaning in the students’ experiences. Fire, however, is my analogy for gaining entry into this study. I return to the analogy later when I discuss my own transformation and make suggestions for what it means to be a teacher as civic education.

Facing the abyss. Just as Ellsworth (1997) states that teaching is a “suspended performance in the sense that it is never completed or finished” (p. 158), so, too, is civic education. In this light I imagine civic education to be as Ellsworth (1997) further describes:

Teaching is suspended also in the sense that no matter how we try or how good our intentions, both I and the other must perform our lives somewhere along a rickety bridge. Neither of us ever crosses to one side or the other. ...Rather on this bridge, teaching might come to mean something more like standing nearby another as we both face the abyss, and getting curious about

what suspended performances each of us might make so that each of our passions for learning might be entertained here. (pp. 158-159)

Civic education is standing together with students and facing the abyss. The *teacher as civic education* stands with the students. Teachers not only bear witness to the students' transformation, but allow themselves to be transformed in the process. With this thought I turn to an anonymous poem that may better serve to encapsulate students' experiences in civic education.

The Teacher
said to the students:
"Come to the edge,"
They replied: "We might fall."

The teacher again said:
"Come to the edge,"
And they responded:
"It's too high."

"Come to the edge,"
The teacher demanded

And they came
and the teacher pushed them
and they flew.

I now ponder what my students have taught me about new lines of flight one may take in civic education.

New Lines of Flight In Civic Education

We always have to develop new lines of flight—lines of flight (becomings) that allow, however, contingently, briefly, or momentarily for us to soar like a bird or slither horizontally, silently like a snake weaving our way amid the constant reconfigurations, co-optations, and movements of the brand-name corporate order. (Reynolds, 2004, p. 31)

I have learned from the students that what they learn has very little to do with my curriculum-as-plan. They learn from my actions and my dispositions in the

classroom and toward them more than from any vinyl binder, handout, or colorful chart. How I relate to my students, how I portray justice, equality, freedom, civic virtue, responsibility, and the like, is more important than any conceptual construct of “How government works.” The students’ own experience in democracy in the classroom *is* their civic education. Thus as I consider what my study has taught me about the lived nature of civic education, I return to my students’ experiences to try to name what civic education is.

Civic Education Is...

Recently I had the opportunity to testify before the Maryland Senate Committee on Education, Health and Environmental Affairs in support of a bill that would create a task force to study civic education in Maryland schools. I was asked to testify as a teacher who works actively to engage students in civic education and to share the challenges teachers face in doing so in schools today due to lack of time and resources and the devaluing of social studies in the wake of the *No Child Left Behind Policy* (NCLB). Among the panel of which I was a part was a representative from the Maryland Department of Education (MSDE), a political scientist from the U.S. Naval Academy, a federal judge and Ted McConnell, Director of the National Campaign for Civic Education from the Center for Civic education’s Washington, D.C. office. After our testimony and the ensuing questions and feedback from the committee, our group adjourned and reflected on the larger issues surrounding civic education in America as we enjoyed a late and leisurely lunch.

...Un-Named

Ted raises the question of why social studies teachers do not call what they do “civic education.” We teach “social studies,” and within the social studies we teach history, law, economics, geography, political science and other social sciences. Civic education, he claims, is all of the “social studies” disciplines taken together for the purpose of developing citizen competency. Yet, why do we not call it civic education? Students in civic education may be unaware that that is what they are experiencing. Indeed, it was only after several conversations over the course of the semester that a few of my students began using the term “civic education” to describe their experiences in the social studies.

...Yet not un-known. As the discussion over lunch continues, I find myself thinking back to the many conversations with my students and how I needed to define civic education for them before I could ask questions about their experiences. I use the two terms, “social studies” and “civic education,” interchangeably throughout the conversations so that students, who demonstrate that they know what social studies is, would understand what I was asking them to describe. My first group conversation exemplifies this curriculum of the un-named.

Donna: As you all know, my research is about civic education. And recently in class when I asked you all if you knew what civic education is or to answer a question about civic education you all said, ‘what’s that?’

Mack: No clue.

Donna: No clue. What is that? Well, here is how I define civic education. Civic education is anything that takes place in a social studies classroom, because the purpose of social studies is for students to learn how to be in a society. How to **be** in a society. How to act, how to empower yourself, how to exercise your rights, how to make decisions. All the things you have to do to

life. Things like registering to vote, voting, recycling, being informed on issues. ...That is what social studies class is for.

Today, as I revisit my own understandings what civic education is, I marvel at how differently I understand the nature of civic education. I enter the question of what it means to be in civic education with new eyes. Dis/placing my earlier assertion that anything that happens in a social studies classroom is civic education, I have learned from my students that this is not necessarily true. As Sara reminds me,

We *don't* remember the date when we opened our books to page nine and wrote down the notes. We remember the day we did the debate and we concentrated more. We remember more. It sticks in our unconsciousness, the information that we had because we were into it.

The lived experience of civic education is inherently corporeal and relational. Thus the times when my curriculum-as-plan has allowed for the *currere* to develop in which students are bodily engaged with their learning and one another, are times of civic education.

Taking the phenomenon of naming further, van Manen (2002) states:

When I phenomenologically write this word, "friend" then a strange thing happens. The word "friend" now gazes back at me, reminding me that it is only a word. As soon as I wrote or pronounced this word, the meaning that I aimed to bring into presence has already dropped away, absented itself. ...In the act of naming we cannot help but kill the things that we name. (p. 239)

Is the same true for civic education? When I name what the students experience as such. Does that actually "kill" the thing itself? At times during the research I question that if the students do not know they are engaged in civic education, is it really civic education? Students are always well aware of what they do in social studies class, what they learn, what their experiences are. As I place civic education within the context of the social studies class, it is sufficient that they could describe their

experiences within the classroom, even if they could not define civic education as I could. As a group of civic education scholars, specialists, policy makers and educators, even we could not define it exactly as it is manifest in our schools today. How could I expect 8th graders to do so? Given this, I still believe their experiences in the social studies classroom are indeed the “stuff” of civic education. True civic education, however, varies from classroom to classroom, from teacher to teacher, even when teachers use the same curriculum-as-plan. For it is the teacher’s orientation to the curriculum and his/her attentiveness to the curriculum-as-lived, that shapes the students’ experiences in civic education.

...*Yet a corporeal and relational synthesis.* After the students complete their ninth-grade year of high school, I ask them if they can now identify civic education. Specifically, I ask them, “How was the simulated congressional hearing and other hands-on activities examples of civic education?”

The Simulated Hearing and other hands-on activities were civic education because the students are active... Plus, the activities like the jelly bean game allow students to see the important concept of human nature in their own social setting... The [simulated] hearing definitely let us study US history more carefully. We researched court cases and laws and the Constitution. The hearing forced us to really analyze our government and thus resulted in greater interest in the topic. These activities are civic education because they give students the valuable opportunity to have a new point of view on the subject. They stop seeing the material as just a student, but as if they are embedded in history - seeing how events occurred, how the colonies fought for independence, how court cases made a strong impact. (Kelly)

Doing things like the mock congressional hearing and other hands-on activities are examples of civic education. This is because they are more free... More importantly is the way the kids interact. The way they interact is much like they would in civic education. There would most definitely be groups that form with leaders... The Mock Congressional hearing is also a really good activity to show civic education because these activities are really the only way to get students to teach themselves without having limitations other than getting the project done. (Fletcher)

Kelly and Fletcher's descriptions reveal a synthesis of the existential experiences of lived body and lived relation. They describe "hands-on" activities, where they can "interact" and are "more free." I pause on Kelly's claim that civic education "give[s] students the valuable opportunity to have a new point of view on the subject. They stop seeing the material as a just student, but as if they are embedded in history." This truly is what is meant by embodied civic education. I am reminded of what Csordas (1999) explains is a paradigm of embodiment:

[It] is not to study anything new or different, but to address familiar topics—healing, emotion, gender, or power—from a different standpoint. (p. 147)

"Embedded in history," as Kelly names it, is a way to experience civic education not as a mere representation of ideas, but as a way of "being-in-the-world." In civic education, students have the opportunity to awaken to visceral reactions to events, such as the American Revolution and slavery in America, ideas such as Manifest Destiny, civic virtue, and representative democracy, and concepts such as freedom, inequality, franchise, and justice. It is these visceral or bodily reactions that shape the students' impulses as citizens.

...*And thus un-valued.* Branson (2001), in her speech before the 40th Annual Conference of the California Council for the Social Studies laments that social studies is largely being ignored by policy-makers, educational assessment groups, and school systems alike. Despite widespread agreement by the American public in Gallup polls that "'Educating young people for responsible citizenship' should be the primary goal of our schools," resounding evidence to the contrary prevails (Branson, 2001, p. 1). The Social studies, for example, are not part of the criteria for assessing a school's

achievement in the 2001 *Quality Counts* report. As mentioned previously, NCLB mandates testing in reading, math, and science, but not in social studies. Branson (2001) also offers other evidence such as within current assessment policies stating:

At present, almost all states assess mathematics and language arts/reading. About two-thirds of the states assess writing and science. Less than half assess social studies, and the number actually declined by three states in the year 2000. (p. 2)

These facts resonate with my own experience in my middle school where in the year this research study was conducted, special education support was withdrawn from the social studies in grades seven and eight in order to give more support to mathematics classes. Consequently, students' Individualized Education Plans (IEP) were re-written so that support in social studies was excluded. When pressed to explain his decision, the principal admitted that social studies was not a priority since it was not assessed and did not count toward our school's measure of adequate yearly progress (AYP) goals. Branson (2001) explains this mindset:

Much as we lament an emphasis on testing as opposed to an emphasis on learning, the truth is that the subjects tested are those deemed most essential. Parents, the public and policymakers form judgments about the needs and worth of teachers and of a school based on test scores. If the social studies are not tested, their importance is likely to be called into question. (p. 2)

This has indeed been my experience and a source of great consternation as a teacher of social studies. I put partial blame on the conservative advocates of "civics" and history education in perpetuating the practice and (mis) conception of social studies as a class where students need to memorize inert facts and trivia about our country's history and governmental processes. This reduces the social studies down to what Freire (1998) calls the "banking system" of education, where students are assumed to be empty vessels waiting for knowledge to be poured in by the teacher. In no other

discipline is this epistemology more damaging than in the social studies. The social studies, above all other disciplines, needs to be viewed by policy-makers, curriculum specialists, school leaders, and teachers as *the one* place where civic education resides, and as such, *the one* place students can count on to *experience* their citizenship in the “simplified environment” Dewey describes.

It is the students’ experiences in the social studies that speak to this claim. As Jamilla and Sara reflect:

Every year in social studies they’ve always had something to try to like help kids understand more whether it’s like poster projects or simulations just to get kids in groups to learn and interact together more. ...And I think that is the biggest difference because when we do projects in other classes you’re never doing it as a group like science or English or math, you know it’s never as a group, it’s by yourself, you have to learn by yourself and that I guess that is harder because you don’t have anyone to lean on if you don’t understand. (Jamilla)

Math, you’re not prepared to have fun. Neither English and science. Social studies can always surprise you. It can be historical like good books but it can also be hands-on and it’s very interactive. (Sara)

In the social studies, through inter-action in a simplified environment, students approximate democracy and their civic responsibilities.

...Inherently Political

I continue to reflect back on Ted’s question at lunch about the politics of naming. Why do social studies teacher not call what they do civic education? With this question the conversation turns to the political nature of naming ideologies. I think of Apple (2001) who states:

One of the most important objects of the rightist agendas is changing our common-sense, altering the meanings of the most basic categories, the key words we employ to understand the social and educational world and our place in it. (p. 9)

Indeed, one need only think of the title of the Bush administration's *No Child Left Behind* act to experience the immense power that comes in naming. Perhaps "civics" education has a more conservative connotation than does "social studies" which has become more of a liberal moniker. I am reminded of Sam's testimony at the simulated hearing and the judges' admonishment for him to be careful with his labeling of groups of people.

That the school curriculum, and certainly civic education curriculum, is contested terrain is not surprising, nor is it a new phenomenon. One can even look at the college level debates surrounding the traditional canon to get a sense of the "label-slapping" of which Sam was accused. As Evans (2006) states, "Despite ever-changing curricular fashions, a set of competing interest groups is a relatively constant feature of the social studies arena" (p. 317). Evans (2006) identifies five different competing camps with regard to the curriculum in the social studies as described below:

1. Traditional historians who support history and the almighty text as the core of the social studies class with emphasis on content acquisition and chronology.
2. The social scientists who emphasize a "structure-of-the-disciplines" approach.
3. Proponents of the social efficiency approach who apply "standardized techniques from business and industry to schooling" to more directly prepare students for specific roles in society.
4. Social meliorists who, based on the teachings of Dewey, strive to develop students' reflective thinking skills and focus on issues-related curriculum with emphasis on social problems.
5. Social reconstructionists who are critical pedagogues who "cast social studies in schools in a lead role in the transformation of American society." (p. 317)

Evans (2006) emphasizes that there are others who break down the interest groups differently. And while one group's ideology may be prevalent in our school curriculum at a given time, the others do not fall away, but rather take a back seat for the meantime. All camps project their vision of "a preferred future" (Evans, 2006, p. 318). Finally, just as the social studies wars reflect divisions in the nation's culture, the social studies teachers' perspectives on the competing camps speak to their own epistemology and orientation toward the curriculum. I examine the conservative agenda below as I contend that a *teacher as civic education*, by nature, must maintain a different orientation to the curriculum.

...*Not Traditional History*

Conservative policy-makers and advocates of the traditional history approach to social studies have long decried the lack of civic knowledge of our young citizens. For example, Neal and Martin (2000) very eloquently open their report entitled *Losing America's Memory* with the following paragraph:

Who are we? What is our past? Upon what principles was American Democracy founded? And how can we sustain them? These are questions that have inspired, motivated, perplexed from the beginning. And they are questions which still elude our full understanding. Yet they underscore a belief that a shared understanding, a shared knowledge, of the nation's past unifies a people and ensures a common civic identity. Indeed, the American system is uniquely premised on the need for an educated citizenry. Embarking on the experiment of a democratic republic, the Founders viewed public education as central to the ability to sustain a participatory form of government. "If a nation expects to be ignorant and free," Thomas Jefferson said, "it expects what never was and never will be." (p. 1)

Indeed, they are correct. American citizens need to be far more educated than they presently are if they are to take full advantage of the freedoms our democratic republic ensures. Neal and Martin (2000) believe that our country suffers from a

“collective amnesia” and a “profound historical illiteracy” (p. 2). To prove this, the American Council of Trustees and Alumni (ACTA) decided to test seniors at the nation’s “best” colleges and universities about what they know and do not know about the history of their country. Employing the Roper Organization, the Center for Survey Research and Analysis at the University of Connecticut, ACTA surveyed college seniors at the top 55 liberal arts colleges and research universities including the Ivy League, University of Virginia, Williams College, Connecticut College, and other top ranked schools.

Many of the questions were taken from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) tests. The questions focused on U.S. history and included content that ranged from who the second president of the United States was to when the Battle of the Bulge was fought to authors of famous quotations and speeches such as the Gettysburg address. The authors argue that based on the results of their phone survey of 556 college seniors, our nation is in a state of historical amnesia. They blame the universities for our society’s lack of historical knowledge as evidenced by their survey. The overall results of their survey indicate that 81% of the seniors polled received a D or F on their 34-item oral test. Results from other tests such as the NAEP test administered to elementary, middle and high school students, also indicate a decline in historical knowledge among high school seniors. (See, for example, http://www.edweek.org/ew/ew_printstory.cfm?slug=36naep.h12) Questions must be posed as to what such measures reveal. Neal and Martin’s (2000) study, although meticulously conducted, represents a very superficial sense of historical knowledge. As my research on the lived experience of civic education

uncovers, much of what has meaning to students in their social studies class cannot be “measured” or even understood through such empirical methodologies.

What is worth knowing? To assess the authors’ arguments and ascertain the extent to which they make a valid point about the impact of the lack of historical knowledge of today’s youth, one must first examine the historical “knowledge” these questions actually test. An informal assessment of the questions in this survey, some of which were taken from the NAEP exam, reveals that of 34 questions, 22 of them were at the knowledge level of Bloom’s taxonomy. These questions require students to regurgitate dates, names, and terms matched up to definitions. For example, question 30 asks: “Who was the president of the United States at the beginning of the Korean War?” The remaining 12 questions appear to be at the comprehension level such as question 8: “The purpose of the authors of ‘The Federalists’ papers was to: (answer) Gain ratification of the U.S. Constitution.” Lacking from this survey were any questions at the analysis, application, synthesis or evaluation levels. I question the restraints that the format of the questions, multiple choice, and the oral administration may have provided. At the same time, however, one could suggest that Neal and Martin, as well as other critics of history education and the social studies found what they were looking for. Their “test” asked students inert facts and details of American history. In no instance did the authors attempt to probe further college seniors’ understanding of our American political system, principles of democracy or civic responsibility. Nor did they attempt to engage the respondents in conversation about essential questions, persistent themes or issues facing the country and world today. This type of knowledge requires an in-depth understanding of our

history and citizenship in a democracy beyond dates, names, and quotations, and is the type of knowledge responsible citizens should have.

A mere backdrop. Standing in stark contrast to the lived experiences of students in civic education as I have sought to uncover in this research, one could surmise that a student who passes a test such as that administered by Neal and Martin, may still not fit the description of an active, informed and critical citizen. For, I believe my study reveals that the historical content of a social studies course is but a mere backdrop for the students to experience civic education. It is simply the vehicle through which students may come to embody civic education in the “simplified environment” of the classroom and the inter-action necessary for developing citizenship. This contrast begs the question: Does simple knowledge of historical facts translate into civic engagement? Most civic education programs are based on the premise that it takes much more than memorization of historical facts to ensure an informed and active citizenry. That is why the majority of civic education programs such as *We the People...* include performance assessments, community outreach, hands-on learning, simulations, and service learning. Yet, no aspect of any type of current testing, including NAEP itself, is able to assess students’ knowledge or application of these elements of civic engagement.

...Calling for a New Kind of Research

The essential flaw in using such empirical methods as the NAEP test as well as any standardized test to measure individual student achievement in civic education is best expressed by Hyslop-Margison, Hamalian, and Anderson (2006) who explain, “The confusion is caused by applying the experimental method borrowed from

science to evaluate human behavior against a set of non-empirical normative concepts and assumptions” (p. 399). The assumption that high scores on a test indicate high achievement is especially false with regard to civic education, particularly in light of the goals of civic education. For, how can empirical standardized tests truly measure a student’s attitude, disposition, and commitment to society? How can it measure civic virtue, or one’s bodily engagement or moral stance toward the Other?

Well-funded, reputable empirical studies such as the IEA Civic Education Study conclude:

Civic education courses should be participative, interactive, related to life in school and community, conducted in a non-authoritarian environment, and cognizant of diversity. (Amadeo, Torney-Purta, Lehmann, Husfeldt & Nikolova, 2002, as cited in Hyslop-Margison et al., 2006, p. 403)

Hyslop-Margison et al. (2006) claim, however, that such conclusions are simply analytic propositions of civic education itself. In other words:

Quite clearly, participation, interaction, non-authoritarian relationships with community, and an awareness of diversity are fundamental characteristics of democratic citizenship. The best practices identified by these case studies are anterior to the conducted research, then, and simply represent analytic connections between a generally accepted concept of citizenship and recommendations for civic education. (p. 403)

My research has sought to uncover students’ experiences in civic education, and as such, has had as its goal to bring forth the voices of students as they describe what civic education is like for them. As I return to van Manen (2003), who reminds me of what it means to engage in hermeneutic phenomenology, I revisit the idea of a theory of the unique:

Theory of the unique starts with a single case, searches for the universal qualities, and returns to the single case. The educational theorist, as pedagogue, symbolically leaves the child—in reflective thought—to be with

the child in a real way, to know what is appropriate for this child or these children, here and now. (p. 150)

Thus my research has allowed me to uncover the layers of meaning of student experiences in civic education, explore themes that emerged and return to the students in front of me with a new understanding of their experiences. I now return to my students with an enlightened understanding of their lived experience in civic education within the social studies classroom. This new understanding informs my pedagogy and guides my decision-making as I face the Other, my students, on a daily basis in the sacred space of the classroom.

...Beyond the “3 P’s”.

I call for a reconceptualization of the social studies as a class that “looks at things large” (Greene, 1995, p. 16). R. Breault (2005) points out the prevailing notion of education for democratic citizenship of the “3 P’s,” that is “Be productive (get a job), be patriotic (say the Pledge of Allegiance), and participate (vote)” (p. 113). He further notes:

Even in some of the better curricula, democratic citizenship is something you learn *about* so you can participate later in life... If democracy is practiced at all in the classroom, it is usually in the form of voting on choices determined by the teacher or maybe developing classroom rules together. While the latter is not a bad idea, it focuses on society’s role in controlling its citizens rather than on releasing their potential. (R. Breault, 2005, p. 113)

In contrast, Dewey calls for democratic citizenship education to be a “dynamic process.” He states, “The conception of education as a social process and function has no definite meaning until we define the kind of society we have in mind” (as cited in R. Breault, 2005, p. 113). This notion is commensurate with Greene’s idea of “looking at things large.” Teachers, especially the *teacher as civic education*, must

ask themselves: what kind of society do we want for ourselves and our children? This, in turn, should guide our curricular choices and pedagogical decisions. This research, as shown in chapters four and five, demonstrates how students yearn for interaction and bodily involvement in their education. As pedagogues, we should want that same yearning for citizens. Citizens who urgently want to take part in society and be physically and relationally attuned to the needs of the Other and their be-longing in the community are the kind of citizens that Dewey and other progressives envisioned as a result of education for democratic citizenship. Thus, this research speaks to the need to transform the current “schooling” system in favor of one that first and foremost values and promotes *experience* above all else.

I think back to the conservative critiques of social studies education in light of student performance on NAEP, Gallup Polls, and other standardized objective assessments. I believe that no such assessment can ever adequately measure the *experiences* students have in civic education that ultimately transform and shape who they become as citizens. Experience itself should be the ultimate goal of civic education. As Dewey explains in *Art as Experience*, “An experience is making meaning of any dimension of one’s life so that it connects with who we are and have been with who we are striving to become” (as cited in Schubert, 2005, p. 13). Furthermore, In *Democracy and Education* (1916/2006), Dewey contrasts traditional schooling with his progressive vision for education.

In the traditional schemes of education, subject matter means so much material to be studied. Various branches of study represent so many independent branches, each having its principles of arrangement complete within itself. History is one such group of facts; algebra another; geography another, and so on till we have run through the entire curriculum. Having a

ready-made existence on their own account, their relation to mind is exhausted in what they furnish it to acquire. (no pagination)

Dewey contrasts this intellectual knowledge to experience:

Children learn about persons by finding out what responsive activities these persons exact and what these persons will do in reply to the children's activities. And the combination of what things do to us (not in impressing qualities on a passive mind) in modifying our actions, furthering some of them and resisting and checking others, and what we can do to them in producing new changes constitutes experience. (no pagination)

He takes up the argument that just because one learns of something through experience this does not preclude intellectual knowledge. What traditional schooling does not acknowledge nor allow for is the creation of knowledge, or constructivism. Through experience, students construct knowledge. In civic education, students construct knowledge of concepts such as justice, freedom, and equality through their experience of them. Jamilla, Mack, and my other students' voices still resound in my head as they describe how they were awakened to their sense of civic education through their participation in debates, the tax simulation, games such as "Win as Much as You Can," and in their preparation and competition in the simulated hearing. Thus, the "banking system," or as Dewey describes, "impressing qualities on a passive mind," is completely inadequate in civic education.

In light of what my research reveals, I add another layer and suggest that civic education should be studied as a lived experience. In other words, once the students have participated in activities allowing them to experience aspects of citizenship in a democracy, they must then reflect on these experiences and what they mean on a deeper level. There are some instances in the curriculum-as-plan where students are asked to reflect on their learning, but seldom is there a place in the curriculum for

students to reflect on the meaning of their lived experience as it relates to aspects of democracy. Thus, I envision a phenomenological approach to civic education. In this era of high-stakes testing and the over-emphasis on “coverage” of the content, transforming the curriculum-as-plan to a phenomenological approach is a bold move. For now, *teachers as civic education* must carve out this *space* themselves so that the curriculum-as-lived becomes the *place* for students to experience democracy and actively reflect on those experiences and what they mean for their citizenship in a democracy.

...A Curriculum of Faith

A teacher as civic education must embody and model a democratic life.

Teachers first enact this with their students. Novak (2005) explains:

A democratic way of living requires that teachers and students engage in a “doing with” relationship. The lived experience of this “doing with” relationship communicates the message that “we are all in this together.” (p. 116)

Thus, the *teacher as civic education* participates bodily in the curriculum and is in-relation to the Other, their students, just as they expect their students to be. Lest there be criticism that the *teacher as civic education* forsakes the content of the social studies class, Novak (2005) reminds us, “The role means having a solid grasp of what you are teaching and the creative possibilities that exist in connecting subject matter with individual student interests and abilities” (p. 116). Branson (2003) puts it another way:

Students learn when teachers know their stuff. “Knowing their stuff” not only means that teachers know, love and keep abreast of their field, it also means that teachers command a repertoire of instructional strategies that engage their students and foster their acquisition of knowledge and skills. (p. 12)

Furthermore, the *teacher as civic education* must have the “artistic desire and competence to bring them together in vitally enhancing ways” (Novak, 2005, p. 116).

To experience one’s being this way as a teacher takes a leap of faith. The *teacher as civic education* is not an easy role to assume. The teacher must have faith in his or her own democratic sensibilities, as well as those of his or her students. Novak (2005) explains, “A working faith in human nature is a stance from which a teacher operates” (p. 116). This perhaps is the single most daunting obstacle in civic education. American education has not proven to trust the democratic competencies of neither its teachers nor its students. As a teacher who has helped write the very assessment that is supposed to measure students’ achievement in social studies, I have dwelled and continue to dwell within the tension of trusting the curriculum-as-plan, and trusting my own instincts.

Prescriptive curriculum guides, high-stakes testing, bell schedules, fragmentation of the curriculum, and prison-like organization of the school building and school day all speak to a resounding distrust of both teachers’ and students’ own sensibilities. If we are going to rescue civic education from such distrust, the *teacher as civic education* must be willing to take a risk. It is teachers who must stand up for the voice of students within the school. I have done this and continue to live *intentionally, in-tentionality* as I support students who stand up for their rights against teachers who unknowingly violate them with group punishments and unfair grading practices. I am the voice for students who want to know the first step in creating change within the school system for a longer lunch period, or in choosing a different novel to read in their English class. Many times I support the students in the face of

teachers with whom I interact on a professional and social level. I dwell in the tension this creates for me as I straddle two worlds: one in which I am a *teacher as civic education* and another in which I am an instructional leader in an authoritarian system. Reclaiming my earlier call for an emancipatory civic education, I restate that the *teacher as civic education* must be ready to face the challenges that come with modeling democratic living. Novak (2005) artfully summarizes:

Connecting the school to the larger outside world, this working faith in human nature means that teachers also attend to the societal resources, strategies, and commitments that make this way of life available to all. A commitment to a democratic way of life is not easy and is never finished. (p. 117)

...*Em-bodied*

Civic education as lived body relies on the notion that we are all bodily in this world. The body is to the civil society as the heart is to a living organism. It defines the essential nature of our experiences as a citizen. Referring back to Merleau-Ponty (1945/2005):

Our own body is in the world as the heart is in the organism: it keeps the visible spectacle constantly alive, it breathes life into it and sustains it inwardly, and with it forms a system. (p. 235)

In other words, there is no civil society without the body. As such, and as the students have revealed through their naming of the phenomenon, civic education is essentially a bodily experience.

Teachers cannot deny the impact of the students' physicality within the classroom. Students experience civic education thinking on their feet, through their hands, and all throughout their nerves. They will experience their learning through their bodies whether teachers intentionally engage them physically or not. It is

therefore incumbent upon teachers of civic education to attend to this aspect of their students' learning. As Livingston (2004) states:

This idea—that flesh, in the form of the body, is a medium to be acted on—seems to suggest that flesh in its corporeal form preexists language. Foucault's theory that the body is cloaked until marked by language is analogous to the hoary philosopher's question, "If a tree falls in the forest, yet no one is there to hear it fall, does it make a sound?" Foucault's answer, when applied to the body, is no. According to Foucault, the body does not exist as matter until marked by language. (p. 41)

Just as Foucault suggests the body in civic education is "cloaked" until "marked by language," how can *teachers as civic education* provide the space for students to bodily engage with the world of social studies such that they are marked by language? Teachers need to give students an opportunity to develop language to name what they do when they are in civic education. In this way, students can take in civic education as a whole body experience. When students have engaged in civic education in this way, they can then name that which is essential to them. In my own teaching, I have posed essential questions that are important to myself as a *teacher as civic education*. Students interact with these questions through our "Current Events" assignment in which they seek out articles about events that speak to them and connect them with the larger questions of social studies and civic education. Another step this research has taken me is to allow students to develop their own essential questions instead of only attending to mine. This will further reinforce students' embodiment of their civic education.

...Questioning that which is Essential

In my previous chapter I explore how students are called into learning and pursue that which they believe is essential. I raise the notion that students in civic

education need more opportunities to do so. Students should be afforded the chance to discover that which is essential to themselves. I take another turn and question that which has been called essential: essential knowledge, essential questions. These decisions carry with them political, cultural and even moral implications. Who decides what is essential for students to know and be able to do in civic education?

I imagine a curriculum-as-plan that allows teachers to provide students with the opportunity to decide that which is essential to question, know and be able to do in a democracy. To do this, students will need to have experiences in justice, equality, liberty, authority, safety, and order. From these experiences students can begin to form their understandings of democracy and democratic citizenship. From this basis of “knowledge,” students can be called into learning. “That which is essential” will speak to them as a result of their lived experience of the very democratic ideals we want them to understand.

A chance to name. At the reunion conversation, a conversation I had with ten of the students at the beginning of their ninth-grade year, I ask students to explain what they mean by “hands-on” activities, the term they used so often to express their engagement in civic education. Jamilla, Claire and Kelly have similar definitions for this type of learning.

Hands-on is you doing it, not the teacher. You’re doing the activity to learn, not the teacher. (Jamilla)

I guess it’s anything you are doing and not the teacher. (Claire)

Anything you are doing that is independent. Like the Mock [simulated hearing]. Interactive. Like, working with your classmates, talking, discussing. (Kelly)

It was Bernie, however who explains:

When we did the activity that's what they told us what to call it... Performing the work yourself—that's what the teacher told us it was. (Bernie)

What if instead of teachers naming the phenomenon for the students, students are asked to describe what the activity of working with their classmates, in-dependent of the teacher, was like for them? As I did this throughout my research, in reflection on the *currere*, I sought to create more opportunities for students to work in-dependent of myself. Indeed, the understandings I gained from the students' descriptions of their work in civic education guided how I organized the simulated hearing preparation. Since this research study has ended, I have changed the way I name things for the sake of the students. I use the lived language that emerged from our conversations to describe to my new students how we will engage in the curriculum. For example, I understand now that to describe a learning situation as “hands-on” or “interactive” carries more phenomenological meaning for students than does “group problem-solving” or “partner work,” terms I have used in the past. How much more would teachers learn about their students if they are allowed to name their own experiences, especially those that engage them physically, socially, emotionally, and intellectually. Clifford and Freisen (2003) query:

What can happen in schools when teachers take seriously the power and the right of children to name and to shape their experience of the world? And what does imaginative engagement have to do with that power and right? (p. 94)

The naming of experience belongs to those who experience it. In modern American education, we have taken away this right from students and teachers. Clifford and Friesen (2003) declare it is not only a power but a **right** of the student to name and thus shape their experiences. The *teacher as civic education* not only allows but urges

students to do just that. In extending the authority to the students to name their experiences, they in turn, may take ownership of their learning and subsequent transformation. Reconsideration of the authority dynamic opens the door to new possibilities for student-teacher relationships, pedagogy, curriculum development and policy.

I think back to the tension I experience dwelling between the two worlds of curriculum-as-plan and the curriculum-as-lived. So much of what is planned, written, published and disseminated by school systems and curriculum specialists lacks the bodily component of the educational experience. Indeed, it is difficult to convey in writing in a way that allows a teacher to read and understand how and why to engage students bodily. In a social studies curriculum, where facts, timelines, people, and events dominate the content of the curriculum, it is much easier to present the curriculum-as-plan as a series of stories to deliver for students to remember.

Even when curriculum-as-plan suggests allowing students to experience their education physically through role-plays, debates, simulations, or group activities, what cannot be put down in words are the students' reactions to their physicality in the classroom. No lesson plan would say, "As students debate, they will have a whole-body experience. Given this, ask students to..."

Teacher as civic education embodied. Working within the construct (or confines) of a curriculum-as-plan, teachers need to be able to step away from the vinyl binder and "just look" at the students. In MCPS, educational leaders use the term "look-fors" to indicate what they hope to see as they observe student and teacher behavior in the classroom. At Frost, we even have a triplicate form that lists some of

these elements of “skillful” teaching to make it easier for department chairs, team leaders and administrators to name what they see in the classes they observe. Some of the “look-fors” include posted objectives, student participation, “provisioning” of materials, and teachers checking for understanding. Having this list of “look-fors” certainly can be helpful in accomplishing the daunting task of observing and analyzing teachers and completing the narrative write-up that must follow.

In the habit of looking *for* something, however, what is often missed by educational leaders are those aspects of classroom actions that speak to the essential nature of the students’ experiences in that classroom. In writing my way into this phenomenon, I have uncovered facets of my students’ learning that have never been “looked-for” by an outside observer, nor described in any evaluation of my teaching or students’ learning. It takes a decision to go in and *just look*, as I have sought to do through this study, without the goal of quantifying or boiling down to a checklist what one sees, in order to begin to unveil that which is basic to civic education within the social studies classroom.

The *teacher as civic education* must think to look with new eyes at their students so that may attend fully to their learning in civic education. What the teacher may then uncover is the lived body experience of civic education. For referring back to Csordas (1999), embodiment is not just attending to the body. Rather, “To work in a ‘paradigm of embodiment’ (Csordas 1990) is not to study anything new or different, but to address familiar topics...from a different standpoint” (p. 147). Thus the *teacher as civic education* understands the experiences of his or her students from an embodied perspective.

The curriculum-as-plan might include suggestions to help teachers do this. Or perhaps, teachers should be encouraged to move away from the plan to be more present to the students. This would allow reflection questions to emerge for teachers to be more responsive to students' lived engagement. Often, the curriculum-as-plan suggests reflection questions for the students to make sense of their own learning. A curriculum guide could certainly turn this process on the teachers themselves to help them "just look" and see how their students come to embody their civic education. What new understandings about essential questions, concepts of democracy, and ideals of justice, liberty, etc. are being brought out through the students' lived experiences? In a discipline where coverage of the content for the sake of high-stakes tests reigns supreme, asking teachers to take this time to engage in *currere* with their students is no small request. As this study has shown, however, the meaning of student experiences in civic education does not lie in a score on a standardized assessment, or coverage of the content in a textbook. Rather, it lies in how students are actively creating culture by awakening bodily to their sense of citizenship in a democracy. I cannot imagine a more important process to which social studies teachers should attend.

Embodied on the way to the classroom. The bodily nature of education in general, calls for reform at the college and University level. The hope is not in a federal education policy change, a new administration, or state-level waivers for NCLB testing requirements. The ultimate hope is in the teachers themselves. No matter what shape the curriculum-as-plan takes, what high-stakes tests lie at the end of the school year, or what new state or federal legislation deems as essential to learn,

teachers, and specifically social studies teachers can teach in ways that enable students to embody their civic education. In doing so, civic education can begin to serve the ends of society and help students become active, informed and empowered members of our democratic society. Below I discuss more specifically how this research calls for a new teacher education.

...Calling for a New Craft

The research of Van Sledright (2002), Wineburg (2001) and others have transformed the way teachers may approach the teaching of history, as it has named the way in which students may learn history not just as a set of inert facts, but rather as an historical investigator. Asking questions such as, “How do [students] make meaning from complex historical documents?” and “How do they navigate between images of the past learned in the home and those encountered in school?” their research transforms the way teachers understand the learning of history (Wineburg, p. viii). Indeed, my own history instruction has changed as a product of taking a class with Dr. Van Sledright and learning by “doing history” with my students first-hand. There is a craft, a method to “doing” history so that students may experience it as a multi-leveled construct as opposed to a definitive narrative. There is a way to “read” history, which goes beyond simply plowing through the almighty textbook. Students must question the reliability, bias, and corroboration of sources of history to construct a narrative based on their own historical investigations.

In the same way, civic education must have a craft. Civic education is not “civics” education, the conservative notion that dictates that students need to memorize governmental organization and processes as well as historical facts about

our nation's past. There is no craft to the social studies teacher inherent to civic education in this case. The craft of the *teacher as civic education* begins with the teacher herself. My students' experiences in civic education speak to this notion because this study has been as much about my teaching as it has been about their learning. This is an inescapable fact. Later, I explore what this fact has meant for this research study. Presently, however, I suggest how civic education may begin to form its own craft.

A call for a new course. I imagine a methods course in civic education that begins with the teacher examining his or her own epistemologies. If social studies teachers are to be *teachers as civic education* they must first come face-to-face with their own experiences in civic education. In Maxine Greene's description of her use of autobiography, she explains that its use in education is beyond the self-indulgent. She states:

If I can make present the shapes and structures of a perceived world, even though they have been layered over with many rational meanings over time, I believe my own past will appear in altered ways and that my presently lived life –and, I would like to say, teaching –will become more grounded, more pungent, and less susceptible to logical rationalization, not to speak of rational instrumentality. (as cited in Miller, 1998, p. 148)

In examining our past as if for the first time, and, as Greene (1973) encourages, “taking a stranger's vantage point on everyday reality” (p. 267), what we are doing is taking ourselves back to the natural attitude, or *epoché*, as described by Husserl (1931/1967). In examining our past as if for the first time, free of conceptual entrapments, we liberate ourselves to re-imagine our present. We carry with us the past in our present, as we have experienced it. If we, as Greene (1998) suggests,

“make present the shapes and structures” so that our “past appears in altered ways,” we can shake the bonds that have thus directed our present actions and live in a present less bound by rationalization and more open to possibilities. Prospective social studies teachers need to revisit their past learning experiences and approach them as if for the first time, to get underneath their own experiences in social studies. From this, they can experience their current learning and future teaching in a new way, “more pungent, more grounded.”

Next, the social studies methods course would engage prospective teachers in role-plays, simulations, debates, conversations, and values-clarification exercises. Students would then reflect on their experiences during these classroom activities and probe implications of them for justice, equality, participation, rule of law, order, security, liberty and other connections to democratic citizenship. For prospective social studies teachers to become *teacher as civic education*, they, too, need a chance to embody their civic education as well as reflect on their lived relation to the Other. These experiences will serve as the basis for forming their orientation toward the curriculum-as-plan. The teaching of civic education is not inherently present in every social studies classroom. It takes an attunement by the teacher to make the classroom the site of civic education. Thus, the goal of methods courses for social studies teacher would be to guide prospective teachers to become teachers *as civic education*. By engaging in conversations with one another and the professor about the implications of such experiences for students in the classroom, prospective *teachers as civic education* can make content connections to US History, World History and other “social studies” classes.

Keep teachers from falling off.

Every course should be taught differently, as if it were the only course that defined the difference, for the student, between catching hold and falling off. (*Integrity in the College Curriculum*, 1985, p. 32)

Freire (1998) speaks to the need for better teacher preparation if education is to serve the ends of supporting democratic citizenship. He argues for teacher education programs rooted in the ethics that are inherent in educational practice. He states:

Teacher preparation should never be reduced to a form of training. Rather, teacher preparation should go beyond the technical preparation of teachers and be rooted in the ethical formation both of selves and of history. (p. 23)

Furthermore, the *teacher as civic education* has an even larger moral responsibility as it is such teachers who, in turn, bring forth civic life to their students in a “simplified environment.” It is in the “simplified environment” of the social studies classroom where students have the opportunity to embody their civic knowledge. Branson (2003) speaks to the need for students to embody their civic education:

Some scholars claim that knowledge of the values and principles of democracy may be the most significant component of education for democratic citizenship, because when democratic norms are well understood they may have a kind of “grip on the mind” that makes them operate at a deeply internalized if not unconscious level. (p. 5)

...In Relation

Taken with lived body, lived relation is an essential element of the experience of civic education for middle school students. It encompasses the ultimate aims of civic education in that relationality gets at the heart of what it means to be human and to live among one another in an organized society or community. This is the other

aspect of civic education within the social studies classroom that gets missed in light of the “look-fors.”

I turn back to the students’ experience of inter-acting with each other, recalling one etymological turn of the word so many of them chose to use. Interaction as “putting in the earth.” Civic education in this vein takes on a groundedness. I imagine civic education serving the purposes of allowing students to put down roots in their communities and feel a sense of *inter*-ment in their society. This feeling of groundedness in one’s community is the type of disposition that many civic education scholars such as Frantzich (2006), Gutman (1999), Parker (2003), and others claim is essential in a democracy. From this *inter*-ment students may develop the civic virtue that civic education scholars and political philosophers explain is necessary for the perpetuation of a republican form of government. Branson (2003) takes it a step further and asserts:

A citizen who understands the essential tenets of democracy is more likely to recognize that he has a shared interest, a collective interest that may sometimes contradict or override his own individual preferences. (p. 4)

Lived non-relation. So often civic education literature and research focuses on creating young adults who are active in their communities and society at large. We want to encourage citizens who vote, attend town meetings, volunteer, recycle and participate in other such activities. What no one mentions is that it is the right of a citizen to not participate. As Harris (2005) explains, so often we focus on a citizen’s right to participate that we forget that we also have the right to withdraw from society. We bemoan our appalling voter turnout records, and celebrities such as Madonna and P-Diddy go on MTV to convince the youth to vote. One of P-Diddy’s

commercials even commands, “Vote or Die.” In classrooms across America teachers communicate the message to students that non-participation and inaction go against democratic ideals and contributes to the breakdown of classical republicanism.

Yet, the other side our moral responsibility to the Other is our duty to protect the right to be left alone. As classroom teachers, we have all experienced times when students did not want to participate, join a group, or work with other students. Sometimes I even ask for a vote on an issue or a class decision and see students who decide to not even raise their hand. This decision of non-action, according to Harris (2005) is just as much a part of civic life as is action. As true as this is, this turning-away-from the Other, or abdication of our moral responsibility to the Other is destructive in a democracy. As teachers we must contemplate how we treat those students who choose to remain outside the community of the classroom, who choose non-inter-action, and who deny their moral responsibility to the Other. We must seek to “light their fire” so they may too feel part of the larger community. I revisit the “fire” analogy later. As Harris (2005) claims, at the end of the day, we are all still here together occupying the same space, at the same time.

A Relation of Paradox. Ellsworth (1997) frames this issue as one of the paradoxes of democracy and democratic education. She asks:

If “what” democracy “is” and how it is achieved and practiced must remain indeterminate (as in, open to criticism and even antagonism, open to citizen input and revision, open to historical and cultural change), then how can anyone claim to have found the logic or the educational practices (such as dialogue) which lead to or support democracy? Once someone defines or tries to determine classroom democracy or prescribe democratic classroom practices, those practices are no longer democratic. (pp. 110-111)

Indeed, as mentioned previously, it takes a leap of faith in human nature truly to allow for democratic citizenship education. Well-intentioned teachers, myself included, feign democracy by staging class votes on decisions, the outcome of which either way still meet the ends already determined by the teacher. The structure of schooling, despite Student Government Associations, Student Members of the Board of Education, and the encouragement of Professional Learning Communities, is still very much authoritarian. Within the relative freedom of the classroom, teachers and students in civic education dwell within the tension that learning civic education in an authoritarian setting brings. This research has opened my eyes even more to this tension. Later I discuss the shape my own dwelling in this tensionality takes.

Goodman (2005) decries that the liberal and conservative battles over education reform these days are but two sides to the same coin. We are not going to make progress in education until schools are no longer viewed as serving utilitarian purposes to meet the demands of the marketplace. Instead, what is called for is truly progressive reform. Instead of marketplace rationale-driven quick-fixes such as “limiting our notion of education to scores students receive on a single, standardized test...the emphasis on phonics, math, and other technical knowledge over more substantive study in the social sciences and humanities... and initiating a national curriculum,” (Goodman, 2005, p. 138) those with the power to shape school reform need to turn the question of the purpose of education on its head. Goodman asserts that instead of asking how schools can better prepare students to get jobs or to compete with other cultures, truly progressive reform asks, instead, how we might make our *country* more democratic. This conversation should take place at the

university and college level among education department members. As well, every person involved in education from the superintendents of school systems, to the board of education, to the curriculum specialists, to the school-based administrators, school leadership teams and classroom teachers should have these conversations.

Conversation centered around making our country more democratic may ask questions such as:

How might schools be funded? What might schools look like if instead of merely trying to raise children's test scores on a single, standardized test that is often given in an atmosphere of anxiety and fear, schools were dedicated to creating educational experiences that would help students become thoughtful, caring, and active participants in the creation of a more democratic culture. (Goodman, 2005, p. 138)

It is in the moments of *letting learn* when students are inter-acting with the Other, experiencing infinity (Levinas, 1961/2004), and bodily attuned to their work and their fellow classmates that civic education and the ethical ends of education for democratic citizenship are alive and well in the classroom.

...More than "Civic Glue"

I encourage conservative, liberal, and progressive policy makers to continue to the conversation about how we should teach civic education, the social studies and history. What should it be called? What should be its focus? Are we losing too much of our "collective heritage" if we name the course social studies? Are we being too exclusive if we take a more narrow history education or "civics" education approach? These are questions that are highly contestable and will never be agreed upon by policy-makers and educators. But the point is to **have** such complex conversations. The conversation must continue and *that* the conversation is taking place in the public arena is what is important.

To be sure, there are some “facts” about our republican democracy that students can learn. Take George Washington, for example. He was the general for the Continental Army during the American Revolution. He owned slaves. As President, he sent 15,000 troops to put down a rebellion of several dozen farmers over the whiskey tax (Boorstin & Kelley, 2002). These are facts historians have uncovered through valued historical research. These and other similar facts are the “civic glue” of which conservative advocates of “civics” education and traditional history education speak. And yet, these facts truly are not the “civic glue” that “covenant and combines” one citizen to another.

Given these “facts” about George Washington, how does one interpret his leadership? What moral conflicts did he face in making these decisions? How would our country’s history be different had he chosen otherwise? If he had given up his slaves? Insisted on their emancipation at the Constitutional Convention? Not enforced role of law during the infancy of the Constitution and allowed the farmers to get away with their rebellion? What do Washington’s decisions teach us about human nature, power, leadership, and citizenship? Where do we find examples of these conflicts in our lives today? How should our present government handle such conflicts? The answers to these and other such questions are as infinite and varied as the students and teachers engaging in conversation around them. It is the *conversation* that is the “civic glue.” The *teacher as civic education* promotes such conversation, and in fact, makes it central to their purpose for education.

...*A Calling into Conversation*

Civic education must begin with the teacher asking him or herself, “What is my vision for our republican democracy? What is my hope for these children and their future?” With these questions in mind or “in body” the *teacher as civic education* may approach students with transparency. The *teacher as civic education* is moved by what he or she believes is essential, driven by that which calls forth teaching in this way. The *teacher as civic education* begins the year by opening the space in the classroom for students to engage in conversation about what strikes them as essential. What calls to these students that a *teacher as civic education* invites?

The *teacher as civic education* understands that the content of the course, the curriculum-as-plan or the written curriculum (indeed the contents of the vinyl binder) are merely the backdrop, the vehicle through which teacher and students will engage in conversations and create “curriculum-as-lived.”

Arendt (1968) very eloquently states:

Education is the point at which we decide whether we love the world enough to assume responsibility for it and by the same token save it from that ruin which, except for renewal, except for the coming of the new and the young, would be inevitable. And education, too, is where we decide whether we love our children enough not to expel them from our world and leave them to their own devices, nor to strike from their hands their chance of undertaking something new, something unforeseen by us, but to prepare them in advance for the task of renewing a common world. (as cited in Ayers, 2004, p. 20)

If as teachers we truly love our world and our children, we must always bear them in mind and “in body” with everything we do. The *teacher as civic education* begins the year in conversation with the students.

As I continue to explore the broader implications of the research journey, I call to mind a conversation I had with some of my current students.

“Ms. Paoletti! I watched the State of the Union last night,” Ira says with pride.

“That’s great,” I begin, until Roy interjects,

“I did too! It was long!”

“What did you learn,” I ask Ira and Roy.

“I learned that Bush didn’t really say anything new. I mean his ideas all seemed the same as what’s been going on, like in Iraq,” Ira said.

“It was long,” Roy repeated, “and I missed all of my favorite shows.”

“Bush mispronounced more words,” Mary chimed in.

“And the democrats didn’t stand and clap every time. My mom says he’s been lucky to have a Republican Congress all this time,” Adam adds.

“Hey!” Ira adds, “I saw Alito, the new justice, too!”

“Yes, he was just confirmed. What do you think of the new justice,” I ask?

And so the conversation continues. The students continue to talk about what shows they missed and how many words Bush mispronounced. I hear them stating facts or perhaps repeating what they heard from political pundits and their parents about the speech. Juxtaposed against the students’ continuing conversation as the bell rings and they exit the room together, are my own thoughts and questions such as if when Ira saw Justice Alito he remembered learning how justices are nominated by the president and confirmed by the senate. We had played a game a few weeks ago to learn about these checks and balances. I also wondered if Roy remembers *why* his favorite shows were interrupted by the Constitutional requirement of giving a State of the Union address or if he saw the politics involved in the appointment process.

Reaching out toward and back from life. Even as I witness and take part in the conversation and more so later as I reflect on it, I continually question what my students experience in civic education. I turn to Pinar (2004) who suggests that curriculum itself can be experienced as a “complicated conversation.” He laments the prevalent nature of conversation in schools today in which he claims, “Teachers are forced to ‘instruct’ students to mime others’ (i.e. textbook authors’) conversations,

ensuring that countless classrooms re filled with forms of ventriloquism rather than intellectual exploration, wonder and awe” (p. 186). He further asks:

Why are teachers not permitted, indeed, encouraged, to show students that academic knowledge is not self-contained, that it often reaches out toward and back from life as human beings live it. Why is not the school curriculum a provocation for students to reflect on and to think about themselves and the world they will inherit? (pp. 186-187)

Indeed, these are questions I ask of civic education. The impromptu conversation that emerges as the bell rings at the end of class allows students to practice speaking about national events. While it does not develop into a full conversation, discussion or debate of issues or ideas, it is an opportunity for students to approximate adult civic literacy. The students are so proud that they had something to say about the State of the Union address. Some obviously are repeating what their parents may have said. Others actually picked up on the larger ideas that emerged from the speech. Still others maintain a personal connection to the Constitutional event because it disrupts their normal daily routine. Does this conversation allow them to think about themselves and their place in the world they will inherit?

Curriculum as conversation is the point itself. I think back to Lynn Cheney’s (2001) assertion that we need a “civic glue” to unite us as a country and a culture. Her assertion of what serves as a civic glue is different from what I have come to uncover in my research, and what I believe as an emancipatory civic education teacher.

Referring back, Cheney (2001) states:

Knowledge of the ideas that have molded us and the ideals that have mattered to us function as a kind of civic glue. Our history and literature give us symbols to share; they help us all, no matter how diverse our backgrounds, feel part of a common undertaking. (as cited in Neal & Martin, 2000, p. 1)

In contrast to the curriculum Cheney envisions, students have experienced and expect to experience civic education as conversation. They look for the opportunity to be able to “form opinions,” “share opinions,” and “participate in conversations” with their peers and adults. Students look to social studies and civic education to be able to do this.

We don’t remember. One of the most profound statements my students made was Sara’s comment about what she re-members (and hence what she forgets) in social studies.

You asked us why we remember this. Because we *don’t* remember the date when we opened our books to page nine and wrote down the notes. We remember the day we did the debate and we concentrated more. We remember more. It sticks in our unconscious, the information that we had because we were into it. (Sara)

The “civic glue,” which Cheney and others seek, is not found in the memorization and recitation of facts, events, timelines and presidencies. Rather, the civic glue which can serve to “covenant and combine” citizens is found in the times when students are afforded the opportunity to have conversations, inter-act with one another and approximate real world civic actions. This is the civic glue that “sticks in our unconscious” as Sara names it.

Pinar (2004) continues to frame curriculum as a “complicated conversation” by stating:

The *educational* point of the public school curriculum is *understanding*, understanding the relations among academic knowledge, the state of society, the process of self-formation, and the character of the historical moment in the processes of self-formation, and the character of the historical moment in which we live, in which others have lived, and in which our descendents will some day live. It is understanding that informs the ethical obligation to care for ourselves and our fellow human beings, that enables us to think and act with intelligence, sensitivity, and courage in both the public sphere—as

citizens aspiring to establish a democratic society—and the private sphere, as individuals committed to other individuals. (p. 187)

This is the “civic glue” necessary in a democracy, an ethical obligation to care for our fellow human beings as Pinar frames it, or our moral obligation in face of the Other as Levinas (1972/2006) suggests. Curriculum experienced as conversation is the thing itself.

I wholeheartedly reject the notion that the future of civic education is in “civics” education, the rote learning of governmental processes and procedures or in traditional history education. Civic education is alive within the social studies, the site of the convergence of law, economics, history, geography, and culture, where conversations take place around essential questions such as “How does a country unify after war?” and “How should government balance protecting liberty while providing safety and order for its citizens?” and where students are bodily engaged in their learning and shaping of their being.

Complicated conversation. The social studies classroom is the ideal place for this conversation. While conservatives and liberals argue over the contested terrain of curriculum, what they are missing is that no matter what orientation the curriculum-as-plan has, the teacher has ultimate influence over the curriculum-as-lived. It is in the actual classrooms when students voice conservative or liberal opinions on issues such as abortion, war, gay rights, religion, and presidential power that teachers may *let learn* and allow students the space and time for conversation. A curriculum-as-plan is always written from one orientation or another. Even if it is, however, in the hands of the *teacher as civic education* the biases are made transparent so that the political nature of different issues is made available to students for conversation. Nor

do students have to choose one viewpoint over another. What civic education is and can do in the right hands is allow students the space and time to have these conversations. These are the same conversations the students mention in their reflections at the beginning of the year that help them participate in the larger society. These are the conversations that allow them opportunities to approximate real-life situations. These are the same conversations from which teachers can learn from their students and make pedagogical decision that are sensitive and responsive to the needs of the students themselves.

The Simulated Congressional Hearing is but one example of a lived curriculum that allows for students to have these conversations. Through their research and inter-action with each other students are experiencing the “civic glue” that will bind them to their society and to each other. The “civic glue” is their embodiment of democratic experiences in civic education and their experiences of lived relationships. They are learning about issues and forming opinions. In the actual performance they are having conversations with “real adults” about “real-life” issues. True civic education calls for more of these opportunities. Perhaps those emeshed in the curriculum wars would fair better if their focus were not only on the *political* nature of the curriculum, but also on the *lived* nature of the curriculum. When students experience inter-action and approximations, and have to take and defend a viewpoint, how does it transform them? Who are they on the other side of that experience, and what does that say for their sense of who they are as a citizen in a republican democracy?

...Temporary yet Permanent

One disheartening although informative turn this research took was realizing the transient nature of civic education. As I sat down with my ten former students several months into the next school year, our conversation reveals that while the students re-member many aspects of their experiences from the year before, interacting, working with each other, making new friends, many of the social transformations were not permanent. In conversation with my former students two facets of this transience emerged. The first was the nature of the instruction they received once at the high school. The second was the nature of their relationship to one another after leaving my social studies class.

Continual persistence of a poor pedagogy. One resounding admission from my students was that once in high school, the predominant method teachers used in their social studies classes was the lecture method. Students in on-level, honors, Advanced Placement, and Humanities (an honors-level signature program at the high school) all experienced much more traditional instruction that allowed for less interaction than they had had in their middle school experience. Most students describe their current social studies as largely consisting of taking notes from a teacher's lecture, copying notes from the overhead, reading and taking notes from their texts and taking quizzes and tests. I ask the students what they thought about this difference between their middle school education and what they were experiencing in high school.

Sometimes you just want to get out of that box where the teacher is like "sit down, do the work, do the class work and get out." We just want to have fun. (Jamilla)

I think high school should be more like middle school. Structured like as in more activities. (Bernie)

By the time you're a senior they are preparing you for college and you're not going to have fun activities. (Claire)

Our teacher writes and dictates the notes at the same time and he goes so fast that you don't have time to actually listen to what he is saying. And every once in a blue moon he will print the notes out for us but it really just sucks the fun out of it. (Bernie)

Ironically, even in middle and elementary school, many social studies teachers state they prefer to use student-centered teaching methods. But according to a study by Leming, Ellington, and Schug (2006), while 67% of social studies teachers indicated a preference for student-centered methods, 90% of teachers indicated using teacher-centered methods in their most recent lesson.

What does this difference in learning opportunities do for the students' experiences in civic education? And what can explain such a change from the way students are taught in middle school to the way they are taught in high school? Despite advances in curriculum theory and innovative pedagogical strategies, why has there been a persistence of the type of pedagogical practices my students describe? Cuban (1993) refers to new curriculum theories as hurricanes, that while capable of razing whole towns and "tossing up 20-foot waves," leave the ocean floor unruffled and calm (p. 2). In other words, the curriculum "hurricanes" seem to leave classroom pedagogical practices relatively untouched. He offers several reasons for this, including the overall organizational structure of the school into separate subjects, graded classrooms, bell schedules and building-wide rules, which in turn force teachers to strive for efficiency. I have lost count of the number of times teachers have described their use of the lecture method as "the best way to get through" all the

material the quickest way possible. With high-stakes tests looming at the end of each semester, anything but teacher-centered pedagogical practices would be the most “efficient and convenient use of the teacher’s time—a valuable and scarce resource—to cover the mandated content” (Cuban, 1993, p. 18).

We teach what we learn. Cuban (1993) also suggests that teacher-centered pedagogical practices persist due to the nature of the teachers’ own educational experiences. If they learn the content through such models, they are more bound to replicate them in their own classrooms. This once again opens the call for curricular reform at the college level in teacher preparation programs. Cuban (1993) also suggests that as schools are instruments of the larger economic structure, they are duly influenced by movements such as rational management and the efficiency movement. This, as Cuban (1982) argues, contributes to teachers being reduced to technicians “with little control over the setting of goals, curriculum, how schools are organized, and other decisions” (p. 38). He argues that as schools were used as instruments of social control, this put the high schools in the position to produce obedience, conformity and passivity, all characteristics necessary for graduating students to fill various positions in a working class society. This vision of the democratic purpose of schooling is far different from Dewey’s “Embryonic Democracy.” Yet, this poor pedagogy persists even in the best of high schools, a pedagogy where the head is separate from the body. As Clifford and Friesen (2003) state:

There is too little that links children, young people and their teachers to the voices of the past, with the world we inhabit together, or with the possibility of the future. Schools are, so to speak, “from the neck up” sorts of places that

divorce children and teachers from their bodies, from their feelings and intuitions, from their experiences and from each other. (p. 103)

As Bernie claims, this type of experience, “really just sucks the fun out of it.” Or, as

Ferneding (2004) explains:

This, in the case of educational reform, the discourse of technological determinism submerges and/or distorts traditional democratic ideals. Maxine Greene (1995) asserted that the dominant reform discourse that projects an instrumental rationalist perspective has effectively narrowed our social imagination. She described this condition as “seeing schools small” and as embodied in the practices of focusing on test scores, accountability measures, and “assumes the schools’ main mission is to meet national economic and technical needs...while it screens out the faces and gestures of individuals” (p.9). (p. 58)

Precisely what is missing from students’ experiences in high school and in civic education in general is the attention to the “faces and gestures of individuals.”

That was last year. The second aspect of transience that emerged from my students’ conversation in November was how their relationships with each other changed during their time in my class but did not remain permanent once they entered the high school. As Bernie notes:

When we came to this class last year I only remember knowing two or three people, maybe. And by the time we got out of this class at the end of 8th grade, basically our whole class knew each other and we could talk to each other and we were all basically friends by the end of the year because we were working together. We weren’t just sitting at our desk writing and not talking. Just by these hands-on activities you can talk to them and get to know them and email and talk about the assignment. (Bernie)

Fletcher recalls the experience of inter-acting with his peers and the be-longing he experienced as part of the class. He states that by the end of the year he and his classmates “were all basically friends.” But in another instance he admits, “For a lot of people that only existed while we were in class” (Bernie). Jamilla speaks of a similar experience.

In a lot groups who didn't know each other, they got along a lot better and they talked to each other more in the halls and they'd be like "Hey what's up?" And I sit next to Ryan in science and he still doesn't talk to me. And if I remind him of it he's not like proud of it. He's like "okay..." I didn't see the change in my group. I know we worked better as a group overall after a while and we got better as we depended on each other. But now everyone really forgot about it. It's like "I worked with you last year but that was last year so get away." (Jamilla)

Kofi, too, experiences things "going back to normal" as if their time and their lived relation in the social studies classroom was suspended in a vacuum:

Everything went back to normal because everyone expected everyone else to talk, to be the first one to talk to them. This has brought a lot of people closer together but not close enough. People still thought, "I've never talked to this person. I don't think I'm going to have to talk to them any more." (Kofi)

The students' reflections on their experience in civic education at this point raise the question of whether a curriculum can overcome developmental, adolescent, and social barriers that prevent students from sustaining their relation to each Other. The "Hi" in the hallway that was so much an outward sign of the transformations that were taking place in the classroom seem to all but have evaporated for the students once the year ended and they move on to high school.

Calling for a hurricane. This aspect of the phenomenon speaks to the need for reform in civic education. The students' experiences in 8th grade were too isolated and singular for them to have been able to sustain their new relations outside the classroom and beyond the school year. Civic education must reside within *every* classroom in every grade level, especially in the social studies classroom. Is this not what our Founders envisioned? Is this not what Dewey envisioned? Until this level of reform takes place, *teachers as civic education* must continue to make hurricanes in their own classroom in the optimistic hope that at some point, in some way, the

transformations in their students will be manifest outside the classroom. Perhaps as well, the teacher next door, or down the hall or at the next grade level will begin to feel the effects of the transformation of the students and seek ways to become a *teacher as civic education* themselves.

...New Dis/positions

All along I have cited civic education theorists, policy makers, and teachers who argue that civic education should help students develop the appropriate dispositions for a democratic society. What is a disposition? A dis/position implies that one must be knocked off of ones position of comfort in order to learn how to act, in order to feel the fire and the urgency to act. I use this opportunity to explore the possibility that while the students' relationships with each other may have been temporary, perhaps their civic education has allowed their dispositions toward each other and society to remain altered. For example, even while Kofi admits to being reluctant to maintain any new relationships he may have developed, he does reflect that his civic education helped him learn to relate to new people.

We were put with people we didn't choose. You were forced to learn to work with people you didn't know and learned to relate. You had to rely on them. Now it's easier to work with other people that you just meet in high school. Easier to work with other people you don't know. (Kofi)

Kelly experiences a transference of the relational skills she honed during her preparation in the "mock" (simulated hearing) and her work with others in new situations.

They worked well individually. But when you put them together it was really hard because they all had different ideas. The skills you learn in "mock" you can use in other situations. Like you have to work around different schedules. (Kelly)

I turn to Reynolds (2004) to elucidate the implications of changing student dispositions.

We always have to develop new lines of flight—lines of flight (becomings) that allow, however, contingently, briefly, or momentarily for us to soar like a bird or slither horizontally, silently like a snake weaving our way amid the constant reconfigurations, co-optations, and movements of the brand-name corporate order. (p. 31)

I imagine that civic education, as it was experienced by the students in my class, allowed students to develop new lines of flight, whether it was to “soar like a bird or slither horizontally.” Even if students return to their “normal” modes flight, they at least had a chance, even if only temporarily, to embody different ways of being. These are new ways of being students can pick up at different times throughout the rest of their lives.

Although the students’ new “becomings” may seem to have been temporary, their dispositions have changed permanently. Civic education affords students the chance to form these new dispositions. Policy-makers, curriculum writers and teachers alike would benefit from further research in how students’ dispositions are shaped through their lived experiences in the classroom as they are engaged in civic education. As Reynolds (2004) explains, “Dis/positioned research is an attempt to soar vertically. It is an attempt to get out, move through the middle, without roads, remaining undefined or defining” (p. 17).

...Opening New Ways Of Being

Modes of address open up possibilities for imagining new ways of being. As Ellsworth (1997) asks, who does the curriculum think these students are? A transformative civic education curriculum allows students to imagine what is

possible. I think back to the tax simulation. Mack mentions his involvement in that lesson every time we speak. Who was he in that moment? He was able to imagine himself as someone different than the enacting of the curriculum otherwise would have allowed. As Ellsworth (1997) explains,

Maybe they [teachers] are hits because of the who that they are offering students to imagine themselves as being and enacting. ...Maybe they are hits because this difference in address—this address change—moves its audience from a place they don't want to be anymore to a place they want to try out for a while. (pp. 40-41)

Returning to the Fire: Teacher *as* Civic Education

As I read over my earlier understandings of civic education, I am surprised simultaneously how many of my views remain the same, and yet how far I have come in my understanding of the true essence of civic education. For example, in chapter two I explore what it means to release one's ego as a teacher in the face of one's students. I suggest that teachers must be attuned to that which goes on after them. I am reminded of Murray's (1998) statement:

As a parent and teacher, (one has) to leave the ego and fix on the something that goes on after you. (as cited in Bradbeer, 1998, p. 83)

In researching with my students, I experienced the release of my ego and giving over authority to my students. Before starting this research I queried if this giving over was necessary in civic education. The students' naming of their lived experiences in civic education as one of working in-dependent of the teacher, in-dependence on one another exemplifies this release of ego I suggested was necessary. And yet, I myself would not have been able to name it as the students did. Nor did I truly understand what it was like for them to work in civic education this way. My understanding of

the implications of such pedagogical decisions, however, has been fortified by this research experience.

Teacher as Civic Education to Others

As I have sought to maintain a steadfast focus on the phenomenon of civic education for middle school students, my being has been transformed. As a result, my orientation toward those around me has changed as well. Returning to van Manen (2003) who suggests that in conducting research for action sensitive pedagogy one must maintain a strong and oriented relation, I cannot help but to recognize how my relationships with my teaching colleagues have changed. Through this journey I have become *teacher as civic education*. In chapter one I explored how teachers may orient themselves from different pre-positions. I have rested on the claim that a *teacher as civic education* fulfills the moral claim for which civic education calls. I think of the many conversations I have had during this time with my 8th grade counterpart teachers. Just recently, in fact, the teacher with whom I share a classroom shared with me how she changed her lesson plan from the year before to allow for more student interaction with the concepts we are teaching.

I notice that you let your students inter-act more than I do. You introduce some big ideas, then you give them some resources and let them play around with it for a while. I want to do more of that. Last year, it was like I was doing the whole lesson. But I see your students inter-acting with each other more around the same material. (Ms. H., personal communication)

It is fortuitous that we share a classroom, for we both have the opportunity to see each other teach. We have daily conversations with one another in the five minutes of passing time between classes about pedagogy and curriculum. The difference she notes in our teaching styles, however, speaks to my overall transformation as a result

of this research study, as well as my orientation toward the curriculum and the students.

Embodying my role of *teacher as civic education*, every decision I make is guided by my new understandings of the lived experience of civic education for middle school students. I turn back to Schubert (1986) who encourages me to “Live as if your life were a curriculum for others and balance that principle by realizing that every life you meet could be a curriculum for you if you perceive with sufficient perspective” (p. 423). Since I have become a *teacher as civic education* I strive to be a curriculum for others while maintaining an openness to the Other, whether it be my students, fellow teachers, or my own children.

A Phenomenological Calling

We only know what we know through the basis of our own lived experiences. A phenomenological approach to social studies and civic education capitalizes on this idea. Something about hermeneutic phenomenology called to me when I had to decide which methodology to employ in my research. I was attracted to its rigor in uncovering the essence of lived experiences as well as its elegance in interpreting them. This rigor, however, is not the traditional sense, but rather as Reynolds and Webber explain:

We have to fight with love, with passion, in order to demonstrate that what we are proposing is absolutely rigorous. We have, in doing so, to demonstrate that rigor is not synonymous with authoritarianism, that rigor does not mean “rigidity.” Rigor lives with freedom, needs freedom. I cannot understand how it is possible to be rigorous without being creative. (p. 7)

I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge that phenomenology has transformed me as a being-in-the-world and a teacher-in-the-classroom. The students

in this study were taught by a teacher with a phenomenological orientation. Would the students' experiences in civic education have been the same had I not entered into this study with a phenomenological orientation? I venture that some experiences are basic to civic education, such as those I illuminated through this study. My attunement and involvement in *currere*, however, shaped the students' experiences in civic education. The teacher with I share a room may have uncovered like themes in civic education experiences for her students. Her discoveries, however, would have been shaped by the experience of *currere* in which she and her students engaged. Thus, I understand that this study was as much a study of my teaching as it was of my students' learning.

Choosing to Dwell in the Tension

I have chosen to dwell within the tension of being a teacher as civic education within a largely authoritarian schooling system. What this research study has allowed me to do is to be-come more comfortable within that tension. I no longer run from it, try to avoid or deny it. Rather, I look it right in the face. This year, two years after beginning this research study, as I faced my new students the first week of school we confronted the tension together. The students, as they did in my research class, participated in the Mayflower Simulation. As a result of my pedagogical decisions, and our participation in *currere*, they experienced authority, power, anarchy and democracy and created their own class compact. As it came down to the end, I told the students the ship had almost "reached land" and we had to finish the compact before we could "disembark" and begin our lives in the new world of 8th grade US history. In one class, however, the students and I had not yet reconciled our final

compact with one another. The students questioned why the ship had to land, when we were not yet finished. I began to explain that we had a lot to learn and needed to get started. One student remarked that the compact was not really democratic as I had the ultimate authority anyway. We discussed this openly as a class. Then, rather than try to bring closure to the issue and narrow the students' choices down to a vote, I allowed the conversation to continue, and continue it did for two more weeks. We remained on the boat exploring the relationships between power, authority, and democracy, each day coming a little closer to landfall. We dwelled together in the tension. Some students reveled in it. Others were clearly uncomfortable. In my other classes, we had finished the compacts in due time and had moved on in the "curriculum-as-plan."

Now, two months later, although the curriculum-as-lived varied wildly from class to class, all of my classes are at relatively the same place in the curriculum-as-plan. I lived with the tension this created for myself as a teacher, who in a very practical sense, is responsible for teaching the students the curriculum-as-plan and making sure they learn enough to do well on the county mandated assessments. I recognize these are very real aspects of my job as a social studies teacher, as they are for most social studies teachers. As a *teacher as civic education*, I continually will have to straddle the two worlds of curriculum-as-plan and curriculum-as-lived. I accept that my role of *teacher as civic education* I will always lead me to dwell intentionally, intentionally.

Attending to the Spaces in the Fire

As mentioned previously, I began this journey with a poem by Brown (2003) entitled “Fire.” I return now to the poem that served as my original metaphor for gaining entry into the phenomenon:

“Fire”

What makes a fire burn
is space between the logs,
a breathing space.

In this exploration of the lived experience of civic education, I have been afforded a breathing space to get underneath the essence of the phenomenon. I have learned that it is in the intersection of the curriculum-as-plan and the curriculum-as-lived where my students’ experiences in civic education lie. It is the *currere* in which we are engaged that holds meaning for the students.

Too much of a good thing,
too many logs
packed in too tight
can douse the flames
almost as surely
as a pail of water would.

I recognize that to be a *teacher as civic education* means that my job is never complete. There will always be more to do; always more I could have done any given moment in the classroom, any given class period, any given year. Yet trying to do it all is not possible, nor even preferable. What I, or any *teacher as civic education*, can do is to be a curriculum for my students by embodying the very essence of the democratic ideals we hope students will come to embody themselves.

So building fires
requires attention
to the spaces in between

as much as to the wood.

I have learned that it is within these spaces between, above and beyond my curriculum-as-plan that students experience civic education, through their corporeal and relational involvement in their learning. Be-coming a *teacher as civic education* I am ever mindful to allow for these spaces and to tend them as dearly as I would the written curriculum.

When we are able to build
open spaces
in the same way
we have learned to pile on the logs,
then we can come to see how
it is fuel, and absence of fuel
together that make fire possible.

I have noticed that the times when I was most engaged in my phenomenological writing were the times when I was most attuned to the moral obligations of a *teacher as civic education*. In other words, I was able to maintain a focus on my ethical responsibility to the Other more fully when I was fully oriented to the phenomenon through my research and writing. This aspect of my transformation suggests that *teachers as civic education* should be encouraged to engage in such reflective practices while teaching. The work of Henderson and Hawethorne (2000), as well as others, address this very notion.

We need only to lay a log
lightly from time to time.
A fire
grows
simply because the space is there,
with openings
in which the flame
that knows just how it wants to burn
can find its way.
(Brown, 2003, p. 89)

Finally, as much as any researcher wants to break new ground and transform the very field in which they are working, I recognize that this study is but a beginning. As the poem suggests, “We need only to lay a log lightly from time to time.” While I still experience a sense of urgency and a “fire in my belly” to change the way we view our calling to educate our youth for democratic citizenship, I simultaneously understand that I must balance this urgency with an attentiveness to the very children in front of me, experiencing civic education presently. The history of humankind tells us that once fire was discovered we have sought for ways to keep it going. It sustains life. In a democracy, so too does civic education. As a *teacher as civic education* I continue on my journey, attending to the spaces within the fire, among and between the logs so that the flames of civic education may become ever more illuminating.

APPENDIX A: A REQUEST FOR PARENTAL PERMISSION TO HAVE STUDENTS PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY

June 1, 2004

Dear Parents,

I request permission to engage in a research study with your son or daughter. I am a doctoral student in the Department of Education Policy and Leadership at the University of Maryland College Park, MD. I anticipate receiving permission to conduct this study in my classroom from Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) pending my final proposal hearing in August 2004.

The purpose of this study is to explore and understand what it is like for middle school students to be engaged in civic education. As I try to understand their experiences, I engage them in a series of learning experiences within the MCPS curriculum related to civic education.

Your child's participation will require nothing in addition to regular class obligations. Through the course of the semester students will participate in discussions, simulations, role-plays, reading and writing activities and reflections as part of the normal course of 8th grade social studies curriculum. I seek permission to collect data from students during pre-determined times throughout the course of the year.

For my research, the class will proceed as usual while I tape-record selected class sessions related to civic education. These recordings will be transcribed to preserve the integrity and completeness of the experience. All transcripts and written responses will be held in the strictest confidence. These transcripts and written responses will be examined in a quest for some thematic connection. Any student whose comments I use in my research will be given a pseudonym.

At some point, I will ask for a few individuals to conduct conversational interviews with me. These interviews will take place after school. These students, self-selected, will need an additional permission form in order to participate.

Each student's experiences are unique. Information obtained in this research study may provide a deeper understanding about the experience of civic education. When my research is complete, a summary of results will be made available to you and the students.

The curriculum taught in all four sections of my social studies classes will be the same, as directed by MCPS and the content standards developed by the Maryland State Department of Education. I will collect data in one of these four sections. Approximately thirty students will be involved in the class-wide collection of data. The section I choose for data collection will be determined at the beginning of the year. Your child's grade will in no way be impacted by participation or non-participation in this study. If for any reason you do not want your son or daughter to participate in this study, please indicate on the enclosed form.

Thank you for your consideration. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any further questions.

Sincerely,

Donna Paoletti Phillips,
Social Studies Resource Teacher
301-279-3949
Donna.Paoletti@fc.mcps.k12.md.us

Dr. Francine Hultgren, Advisor
University of Maryland 301-405-4562

**APPENDIX A (CONTINUED): A REQUEST FOR PARENTAL PERMISSION
TO HAVE STUDENTS PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY**

CLASS PARTICIPATION

This form only need be returned **if you do not** want your son or daughter to potentially be included in the research study conducted as described in the accompanying letter or if you have further questions.

Parents of students enrolled in the experimental section will be notified at the beginning of the school year and invited to an informational meeting.

Parent/Guardian's Name _____

Child's Name _____

_____ I do not wish my son or daughter to be considered for the research study.

_____ I have the following questions/concerns about the research study.

Please contact me for a follow-up response at (Phone) _____

(Email) _____

Please return this form, if necessary, via mail or fax to 301-279-3956 no later than July 6, 2004.

**APPENDIX B: INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH STUDY-
CLASS PARTICIPATION**

October 30, 2004

Dear Student,

I invite you to engage in a research study with me that explores your experience of civic education. I am doctoral student in the department of Education Policy and Leadership at the University of Maryland College Park, MD.

The purpose of this study is to understand what it is like for middle school students to be engaged in civic education in the social studies classroom. As I seek to understand this experience, I will record selected class sessions when you participate in role-plays, class discussions and simulations including the Simulated Congressional Hearing. I will also keep copies of your historical writing and reflections you turn in throughout the course of the year. At some point, I will need to have three conversational interviews with a few volunteers. These conversations will be conducted outside of class time and also will be recorded and transcribed. Any comments you make or reflections you write will be used anonymously. You will not be identified by name in the published findings. After the research is complete, I will share the results with you.

This study will make an important contribution to understanding student experiences in civic education. I look forward to working with you throughout the year in this exciting endeavor. If you would like to participate in the conversational interviews, please let me know so I can set up times for those sessions.

Sincerely,

Ms. Donna Paoletti Phillips
Social Studies Department
Robert Frost Middle School

**APPENDIX B (CONTINUED): STUDENT CONSENT FORM FOR
CLASSROOM PARTICIPATION**

Initials: _____ Date: _____

Page 1 of 2

Identification of Project/ Title	FUELING THE FIRE: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL EXPLORATION OF STUDENT EXPERIENCES IN CIVIC EDUCATION
Statement of Age of Subject	I state that I am not yet 18 years of age and wish to participate in a program of research being conducted by Donna Paoletti Phillips in the department of Education Policy and Leadership at the University of Maryland College Park.
Purpose	I understand the purpose of this research is to study the experiences of middle school students engaged in civic education in the social studies classroom.
Procedures	I understand that the class sessions when my classmates and I participate in civic education related activities will be tape-recorded for transcription later. This recording will occur during designated class activities including discussions, simulations, role-plays including the Simulated Congressional Hearing, and presentations. I also understand that my written reflections about my learning in general may be used. Additionally, I understand that I may volunteer to participate in three individual conversational interviews. These conversations will take place after school and last for approximately one hour. The conversations will be about my experience as a student engaged in civic education in the classroom.
Confidentiality	I understand that my name will not be used in any public documents or oral presentations. A pseudonym will be used instead. I understand that data I provide will be grouped with data others provide for reporting and presentation purposes.
Risks	I understand that there are no foreseeable risks to participating in this study.
Benefits, Freedom to Withdraw	I understand that this research is not designed to help me personally, but the researcher hopes to learn more about students' experiences in civic education in order to inform educational practice. I understand that I have the right to withdraw without penalty at any time.

Initials: _____ Date: _____
Page 2 of 2

**To Contact
Graduate
Researcher**

Donna Paoletti Phillips
7412 Setting Sun Way
Columbia, MD 21046
Donna_Paoletti@fc.mcps.k12.md.us
(W) 301-279-3949
(H) 410-381-2903

**To Contact
Faculty
Advisor**

Dr. Francine Hultgren
Department of Education Policy and Leadership
University of Maryland
College Park, MD 20742
fh14@umail.umd.edu
301-405-4562

**To Contact
Institutional
Review Board**

*If you have questions about your rights as a research subject or wish to report a research-related injury, please contact:
Institutional Review Board Office, University of Maryland,
College Park, MD 20742; (email) irb@deans.umd.edu; (phone) 301-405-4212*

**Name of
Participant:**

**Signature of
Participant:**

_____ Date: _____

APPENDIX C: PARENT CONSENT FORM FOR CLASSROOM PARTICIPATION

Initials: _____ Date: _____
Page 1 of 2

Identification of Project/ Title	FUELING THE FIRE: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL EXPLORATION OF STUDENT EXPEREINCES IN CIVIC EDUCATION
Statement of Age of Subject	I state that my son or daughter is in good physical health, and wishes to participate in a program of research being conducted by Donna Paoletti Phillips in the department of Education Policy and Leadership at the University of Maryland College Park.
Purpose	I understand the purpose of this research is to study the experiences of middle school students engaged in civic education in the social studies classroom.
Procedures	I understand that the class sessions when my child and his/her classmates participate in civic education related activities will be tape-recorded for transcription later. This recording will occur during designated class activities including discussions, simulations, role-plays including the Simulated Congressional Hearing, and presentations. I also understand that my child's written reflections about their learning in general may be used. Additionally, I understand that my child may volunteer to participate in three individual conversational interviews. These conversations will take place after school and last for approximately one hour. The conversations will be about his/her experience as a student engaged in civic education in the classroom.
Confidentiality	I understand that my child's name will not be used in any public documents or oral presentations. A pseudonym will be used instead. I understand that data will be grouped with data others provide for reporting and presentation purposes.
Risks	I understand that there are no foreseeable risks to participating in this study.
Benefits, Freedom to Withdraw	I understand that this research is not designed to help my child personally, but the researcher hopes to learn more about students' experiences in civic education in order to inform educational practice. I understand that my child may withdraw without penalty at any time.

Initials: _____ Date: _____
 Page 2 of 2

**To Contact
 Graduate
 Researcher**

Donna Paoletti Phillips
 7412 Setting Sun Way
 Columbia, MD 21046
Donna_Paoletti@fc.mcps.k12.md.us
 (W) 301-279-3949
 (H) 410-381-2903

**To Contact
 Faculty
 Advisor**

Dr. Francine Hultgren
 Department of Education Policy and Leadership
 University of Maryland
 College Park, MD 20742
fh14@umail.umd.edu
 301-405-4562

**To Contact
 Institutional
 Review Board**

*If you have questions about your child's rights as a research subject or wish to report a research-related injury, please contact: **Institutional Review Board Office, University of Maryland, College Park, MD 20742; (email) irb@deans.umd.edu; (phone) 301-405-4212***

**Name of
 Participant:**

**Signature of
 Participant's
 Parent:**

_____ Date: _____

**APPENDIX D: PARENT AND STUDENT CONSENT FOR RESEARCH
STUDY-
INDIVIDUAL PARTICIPATION**

October 30, 2004

Dear Parents,

As previously mentioned, I am doctoral student in the department of Education Policy and Leadership at the University of Maryland College Park, MD and am conducting research at Robert Frost Middle School. The nature of my study involves exploring the lived experiences of students engaged in civic education, in my regular classroom teaching.

As I seek to understand this experience, I will record selected class sessions when students participate in role-plays, class discussions and simulations including the Simulated Congressional Hearing. In addition to the information gathered during our class sessions, I need to conduct conversational interviews with a few students. During these conversations, students will discuss their experiences as participants in civic education related activities in the classroom. The conversations will be tape-recorded and transcribed just like the class sessions. All comments will be dealt with in the strictest confidence. At no time will students be identified by name if their comments are cited in my study. After the research is complete, I will share the results with you.

This study will make an important contribution to understanding student experiences in civic education. I look forward to working with your son or daughter throughout the year in this exciting endeavor.

Please consent to permitting your son or daughter to converse with me after school during pre-arranged times to be determined by his or her and my schedule.

I understand that these sessions will last approximately one hour and if necessary, my child can take the activity bus home.

Student Signature _____ Date _____

Parent Signature _____ Date _____

Thank you for your cooperation.
Sincerely,

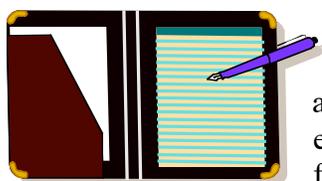
Ms. Donna Paoletti Phillips
Social Studies Department
Robert Frost Middle School

APPENDIX E: CLASS RECOMMENDATIONS

Ms. Paoletti Phillips' Recommendations for Success 2004-2005 American History

Welcome to 8th grade American History. This will be a year unlike any other. We begin the year by examining the essential question “*How do societies balance individual rights and the common good?*” As a class, our understanding of how societies work begins with our experience in the classroom with each other. We will create a class social compact to serve as an agreement between you and me and between you and your fellow classmates.

The following are more specific classroom policies.



1. **Interactive Notebooks:** All students will keep an interactive notebook. Details for how this will be set up and used will follow. Your notebook and its organization are essential to your success in this class. You will need the following supplies by _____

to set up and maintain your notebook.

- ✓ 1 **Spiral** notebook with **at least 120 pages, 11x8.5**
- ✓ Adhesive tabs or Post-its
- ✓ Two different colors of highlighters
- ✓ 5 glue sticks per semester (minimum)
- ✓ Clear tape
- ✓ Scissors



****You will need your spiral EVERY DAY in class. Make it part of your daily routine to bring it along with your supplies for its maintenance.****

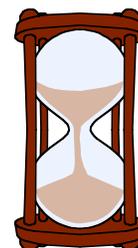


3. **Current Events:** As students of social studies you will actively make connections between the past and present. As such, we will seek to relate the history we learn to events in our everyday lives. Current Event write-ups will go in your notebook on the left side unless other directions are given. You may use magazines, newspapers or journals. Some current event assignments will have specific criteria and others will be free choice. They will be due the **1st and 15th of each month.**



4. **Grades:** Grading for this course will follow MCPS and Frost Policy.

5. **Timeliness.** Because of the amount of background information students will need to acquire to meet the standards for this course, late work is strongly discouraged. *Due Dates* and *Deadlines* for all assignments will be announced and posted. I expect students to take responsibility for their learning and achievement and to make sure all work is turned in on time.



6. Textbooks: Creating America, one of the texts for this course, will be kept at home and used regularly. The text assignments include reading and writing assignments to help you process the new information. These assignments are to help you gain background knowledge on the events and issues we will discuss further in class. You are responsible for all information assigned from the textbook.



7. Constitutional Journal: Throughout the year, you will be asked to reflect on your learning and respond to different questions about American history, the constitution, citizenship, your rights, and other relevant topics. We will set up the journals together in the back of your spirals. I will read and respond to your entries throughout the year.

8. Participation: To actively co-construct knowledge about American History and what it means to live in a democracy, I expect you to actively and critically participate in discussions, simulations, games, role-plays, reading, writing, and reflection. Your engagement during class will determine the quality of your learning. I demonstrate respect for students and expect you demonstrate respect for yourself, for me and your peers.

9. Our Curriculum:

Unit 8.1 Democracy: Political System of the People 1763-1783

Unit 8.2 Creating a National Political System and Culture 1783-1815

Unit 8.3 Expanding Geography Challenges Sectional Economies 1815-1850

Unit 8.4 A Nation Divided and Rebuilt 1850-1877

*** Simulated Congressional Hearing***



10. Simulated Congressional Hearing: As a culminating performance activity, you will be participating in a *Simulated Congressional Hearing*. You will be part of an expert group who will testify for a panel of community leaders and answer follow-up questions on some aspect of American Constitutional History. This is an exciting project that the entire 8th grade is involved in as well as members of Congress, the General Assembly, attorneys, professors, and other community leaders. You will receive more information as we prepare for this exciting event.

11. Communication: I check my email regularly and encourage you to email me with any questions or concerns as they arise throughout the year.

Donna_Paoletti@fc.mcps.k12.md.us

I am excited to begin our journey through American History. With mutual respect and enthusiasm, we can all make this a successful and memorable year.

Student _____

Parent _____

Date _____

Date _____

APPENDIX F: SIMULATED CONGRESSIONAL HEARING PREPARATION
 Simulated Congressional Hearing Preparation
 Week 392

It all begins now!

Thursday, May 5

- Introduction to Simulated Congressional Hearing
- Discuss unit with teams
- Begin reading and outlining unit.
- H.W:** Read and outline your unit (All Students)

Friday, May 6

- Continue reading and outlining unit.
- Begin writing individual rough drafts of speech
 - Use your spiral, “We the People...” unit packet and unit notes
- H.W:** Work on Rough draft of speech (All students)

Monday, May 9

- Continue writing individual rough drafts of speech
 - Use your spiral, “We the People...” unit packet and unit notes
 - Must be TYPED
- H.W:** Finish Rough draft of speech (All students)

Tuesday, May 10

- All rough drafts due!!! (**Must be typed!!! No exceptions**)**15 points
- Print 2 copies;** one for Ms. Pao, one for your writer.
- In class:**
 - Take turns reading rough drafts
 - **Choose roles**
 - Discuss and decide what needs to be researched for the next draft of the speech
- HW:** Start research/writing of next draft

Wednesday, May 11 –Friday, May 13

Computer lab

Research and writing speech (Specific tasks to follow.)

** As an option, you may always email your papers to Ms. Paoletti to print, or bring it in on a disk, CD, flash drive, etc.

May 2005

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
2	3	4	5 Read and outline unit	6 Begin rough draft of speech
9 Finish rough draft of speech	10 Rough drafts due: 2 Copies, TYPED!	11 Computer Lab	12 Computer Lab	13 Computer Lab

Simulated Congressional Hearing Preparation Week 2

Tuesday, May 10

- All rough drafts due!!! (**Must be typed!!! No exceptions**).....15 Pts
- Print 2 copies; one for Ms. Pao, one for your writer.
- Read speeches out loud and discuss good parts
- Writer begins to compile speech
- Researchers/Editors answer non-speech unit questions (A.K.A. “Unit Questions”)

Wednesday, May 11- Friday, May 13 (Computer Lab, 254)

Writers: Compile the rough draft speeches from all group members. Due Thursday.....15 Pts

Researchers:

Find at least **three** pieces of supporting information to use in your speech. Base your decisions of what to research on discussions with your team, unit questions, and feedback from Ms. Pao.

- Examples: Relevant Court Case, Quotation, Current Event example, historical event, etc.

1. Print the actual reference.
2. Use the form in the “Hand Out” folder.
3. Attach to the reference a write-up of the specific piece of information you would use for your speech and your explanation or elaboration on it. (See Sample)
4. Turn in one copy to Ms. Pao and 1 copy to your editors **as you finish each one**.
5. Due Friday.....15 Pts

Editors

Same as above but you only need **1** piece of research with a write-up.....5 Pts

- Begin editing:
- Take home the 2nd draft from the writer and the research from the researchers.
- Edit the speech by checking for grammar, style, accuracy, repetition, etc.
- Add in the examples, quotes, cases, current events etc. from the researchers, where appropriate.
- Print two copies and email it to Ms. Paoletti before school Friday**10 Pts

Friday, May 13

- **Researchers:** All research due: One copy to Ms. Pao, One copy to editor..... 15 Pts
- **Writers:** All unit questions due 15 Pts
- **Editors:** 3rd draft of speech due+Research. Print Copies for MS. Pao and all group members.....15 Pts

May 2005

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
9 Finish rough draft of speech	10 Rough drafts due: 2 Copies typed!	11 Computer Lab (Writer’s draft due)	12 Computer Lab (Writer’s draft deadline)	13 Computer Lab (Research & Editor’s due)
16 Continue answering unit questions. (Non-speech questions) Editor or writer continue with edits	17 TBD	18 TBD	19 TBD	20 TBD

Simulated Congressional Hearing Preparation
Week 3

Monday, May 16-Wednesday, May 18

- Team Review of Speech
- **Homework:**
 - Writer/Editor: Edit speech for length, style, add any additional supporting evidence
 - Simplify the language.
 - Work on how to quote sources in oral presentations.
 - Use Rubric to evaluate your speech
 - Researchers: Begin research and notes for Unit questions (Questions not in your speech)

Unit Questions due Wednesday, May 18.

Next draft of speech due Wednesday, May 18

Thursday, May 19-Friday, May 20

- **All:** Begin reading speech and editing for time.
- **Next Editor:** Continue editing speech with research if necessary, refine language, timing, etc.
- **All:** Begin answering follow-up questions.
 - Divide up speaking roles (See hand-out)
 - Researchers prepare answers to follow-up questions.
 - Find current events, cases law, historical examples etc. to support your answers.
 - Have your parents/friends quiz you with them.
 - *The more practice you get with these, the more confident you will in front of the judges.*

All Follow-Up Questions due Monday, May 23.

Reminders: Email Ms. Pao at any time by 10:00m PM for feedback on your speech. Practice, practice, practice!!!

Simulated Congressional Hearing Preparation
Week 4

May 25th **Geometry** High School Assessment

May 27th **Algebra** High School Assessment

Monday, May 23, 2005

- Practice Speech
 - Editor make semi-final edits tonight
 - Practice emphasis on important points, eye contact, PROJECTION, enunciation, etc.
 - Bring in 6 copies tomorrow
- Practice Follow-Ups
 - Continue to prepare answers to follow-up questions.
 - Designate who will answer first on each question if the judges ask it.
 - **Homework:**
 - Find current events, cases law, historical examples etc. to support your answers to follow-ups.
 - Have your parents quiz you with them.
 - *The more practice you get with these, the more confident you will in front of the judges.*

Tuesday, May 24-Thursday, May 26

- Team “Mock” Hearings
- All students give feedback
- Teams make edits and changes as they receive feedback and see other groups present
- **Homework:**
 - TBD by Captains

Friday, May 27

- **FOLLOW-UP QUESTION CHALLENGE GAME**
- **Captains:** Email Ms. Pao with team update by Monday 5:00 PM
 - Progress of team, concerns, questions, edits, etc.
- **Editor/Writer:** Penultimate version of speech due by Tuesday, May 31
30 Points
- **Researchers:** Outside research (5 each) for follow-up questions due Tuesday
30 Points

Reminders: Email Ms. Pao at any time by 10:00m PM for feedback on your speech. Practice, practice, practice!!!

Simulated Congressional Hearing Preparation
Week 4.5

Monday, May 30: Memorial Day: No School

- Relax, rest up, practice follow-up questions and part of your speech

Tuesday, May 31:

- Final Practices
- Speeches Due
- Practice follow-up questions and part of your speech
- Email and call teammates to practice, encourage

Wednesday, June 1:

- Last minute details, schedule, dress code, etc .
- HW:
 - Watch the news
 - Pick out your clothes
 - Eat a healthy dinner
 - Get a good night's sleep ☺

Thursday, June 2:

SIMULATED CONGRESSIONAL HEARING!!!

APPENDIX G: SIMULATED CONGRESSIONAL HEARING CONVENTION

Simulated Congressional Hearing Convention

(A.K.A. How do we pick our teams?)

1. **Choose your units!** Work it out with your fellow captains.
2. **Choose a co-captain.** Pick someone reliable with whom you get along well. This person should compliment your strengths and weaknesses.
3. **Choose your teams** using the class lists, my recommendations, and the units your classmates signed up for.
4. Try to pick students who have signed up for your unit. But **team dynamics** are **very important** and in certain cases students may not get their top choice of unit.
5. Be sure **all teams** have **at least one** of the following types of students:
 - a. **Speaker/ Risk-taker.** Someone who is good at answering questions and can help the team by answering on the spot while others get their ideas ready.
 - b. **Writer.** This student needs strong writing skills, creative and clever use of language. They need to know how to incorporate multiple sources of information into the speech. My recommendations will help with this.
 - c. **Researcher.** These students are good at finding current events, court cases, quotes and other background information for the speech and the team's general knowledge.
 - d. **Cheerleader.** Someone who has a positive attitude, gets along well with the other team members, and can help the team through any disagreements or stressful times.

Keep in mind that you, as a captain, may fulfill one or more of these roles. You all have many of these qualities already. That is why your classmates thought so highly of you to choose you as a captain. Your goal is to pick teams that are balanced. It is conceivable that your friend(s) may be on your team. But remember the ultimate goal is for the **class** to have **6 strong teams**.

This is a starting point. As you all prepare and present, **all students will research, write, edit, speak and answer questions.** But ultimately you want a group where different students can use their strengths to help the team.

It is important to remember that **my comments** to you as well as **your discussions** with each other as you choose your teams are **confidential**. This is your first test as a captain. Please maintain the integrity of the job you were elected to do as well as the integrity of the Simulated Congressional Hearing.

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