

Civic Engagement and Nursing Education

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Significant declines in indicators of civic behavior identify Americans' decreased connectedness to each other, their communities, and participation in the process of government and solving problems together. Universities across the United States are working to revitalize college students' involvement in the processes of democracy. This move to increase students' engagement in their communities and nation has implications for nursing education and the profession. Nurse educators are advised to use experiential learning to teach skills of civic engagement, political advocacy, and policymaking and to be role models and mentors to foster the growth of nurse citizens in the profession. **Key words:** *civic engagement, moral ethical learning, nursing education, policy advocacy, political education, service-learning*

NURSING STUDENTS enter an undergraduate policy class and, regardless of age, at least one third of them do not regularly vote or have never registered to vote. A nurse colleague who contested for a state legislative position in a US state says more than 40% of the nurses in her legislative district did not vote on Election Day. Conversations overheard at nursing conferences, when politics becomes part of a discussion, often quickly polarize, resulting in the formation of 2 groups—those very interested or involved and those who want to “just stay out of it.”

Unfortunately, these 3 situations from nursing represent what is happening on a larger scale across the United States when it comes to citizens' experiences of living the process of democracy in their everyday lives and communities. An important report *Amer-*

ica's Civic Health Index: Broken Engagement identified 40 civic health indicators for the nation.¹ These indicators include giving and volunteering, connecting to civic and religious groups, political participation and expression, connecting to others, trusting other people, and more. Each of the indicators shows significant declines over the past 30 years, with only slight recovery in a few areas since 1999. Numerous reports identify similar concerns and trends documenting Americans' decreased (1) connectedness to each other and their communities, (2) participation in the process of government, and (3) togetherness in problem solving.^{2–4}

Why is civic engagement of any concern to nursing and nurse educators? Why should we care whether nursing students and graduates are civic-minded or involved in the communities in which they work and live? Why is political engagement also important?

Nursing is commonly viewed by society as a practice discipline, with a traditional focus on taking care of hospitalized, ill patients.⁵ Yet, in today's world, nurses must be prepared to act as civically engaged, political, and policy advocates for health.^{6,7} A traditional view of nursing is juxtaposed against the demands upon nurses in current workplaces. Nurses must be critical thinkers; they must manage time and resources wisely, and

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keep abreast of physiologic, pharmacologic, and technologic changes. In addition, they should also be caring, nurturing, and assertive patient advocates. Today's nurses are required to do and be all these things and more to help people remain healthy. Increased attention to global health priorities, access, and cost of healthcare means that nurses need to play more prominent roles in promoting health for all. Nursing's focus must shift from predominantly caring for patients during short-term episodes of illness to ongoing participation in assisting groups of people to become healthier.⁷ Experiences in civic engagement and specific educational preparation in political knowledge and the skills of policymaking are needed. There is an increasingly important role for nurse citizens in today's society.⁸

An important movement is taking place in universities across the United States to revitalize the involvement of college students in the processes of democracy. This move to increase students' civic engagement in their communities and nation has implications for nursing education and the profession. In this article, I will discuss (1) civic engagement, including its moral dimensions; (2) nursing values and literature related to civic engagement; (3) changes in civic engagement in the United States and why there is a problem; (4) how higher education is responding to engage students; and (5) how nurse educators can incorporate civic engagement into nursing education.

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION

What is civic engagement? Numerous leaders and groups in education are working to bring civic engagement to center stage in universities in the United States. Scholars and leaders in the field have defined civic engagement as follows:

Civic engagement means working to make a difference in the civic life of our communities and developing the combination of knowledge, skills, values and motivation to make that difference. It means promoting the quality of life in a com-

munity, through both political and nonpolitical processes.^{3(pvi)}

The goals for civic learning as described by Colby et al² fall into 4 spheres: personal integrity, social conscience, civic involvement, and political engagement. Personal integrity includes the ability to see oneself as a member of a larger society. This involves development of the traits of honesty, integrity, and willingness to take personal responsibility to act and be accountable for one's actions. Social conscience extends beyond the personal to the development of compassion and concern for the welfare of others and a willingness to work together with a community on concerns. Civic involvement involves the understanding of communities, their problems and assets, the diversity within them, and the understanding of how to work together. Political engagement is broadly defined to include influencing social and political systems using leadership skills, being involved in democratic and advocacy processes, participating in policymaking, and political expression through traditional and/or nontraditional activities. To accomplish these goals, students need to develop leadership abilities, communicate well, problem-solve, achieve common goals, and do so while demonstrating respect, understanding, and sensitivity for others.

Adapting these concepts to nursing, the 4 spheres can be envisioned as embedded in the discipline of nursing with the points of overlap defining civic engagement. Civic engagement for nursing is the integration of skills and values of civic engagement from the 4 spheres and enactment of the nurse citizen's role (Fig 1.)

The moral dimensions of civic engagement

Education about civic engagement includes both moral and civic components.² To consider this, however, one must understand what is meant by moral education. Achieving the goals of civic education as described earlier requires both affective and cognitive education. Moral education is centered on

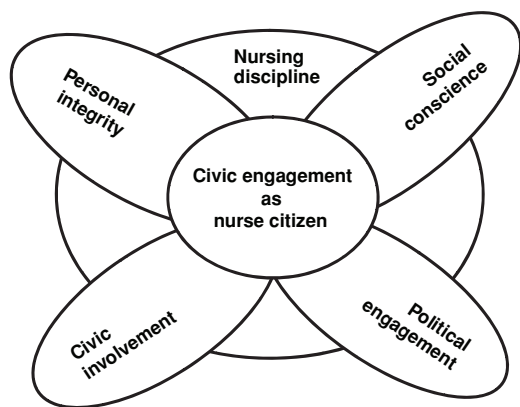


Figure 1. Civic engagement model for nursing.

how one ought to act or "teaching a conception of right behavior."⁹ One might ask, "Whose morals? Whose values?" In reality, most universities have values identified in mission statements, goals, and honor codes. These values include those common to educational and scholarly missions of institutions such as academic honesty, truthfulness, and intellectual freedom. Other moral and civic values consistent with the nature and traditions of universities are mutual respect, open-mindedness, willingness to listen, consideration of others' ideas, tolerance of differences, concern for the rights and welfare of others, recognition of one's societal obligations, and critical debate about social issues. These are not a prescribed laundry list of values but meant to suggest types that could be included in moral and ethical education in civic engagement.^{2,3} Nursing's *Code of Ethics*¹⁰ for the profession and philosophies for educational programs identify specific values and professional standards for professionals and students to follow. These values are consistent with those desired for civic engagement education.

Colby et al² presented their study of 12 universities and an in-depth analysis of how each university provided moral and civic education. Consistent across the 12 were the strong, explicit statements of values intended as central goals of education for their undergraduate and graduate students. Many of these values included respect, mutual tolerance,

commitment to listening and talking with others, concerns for the rights of individuals and communities, awareness that one is part of a larger whole, and development of a pattern of critical self-reflection. Evidence of the fostering and teaching of these values was found in all levels of the universities, from administration to individual courses, from departmental policies to extracurricular and programmatic events. Commitment to civic engagement was a central part of what these universities were about.

Explicit versus hidden values education

Some concerns about moral and civic education have been expressed by those who fear that students will be indoctrinated by a given stance or viewpoint. The study by Colby et al² showed greater freedom to speak and resistance to indoctrination in the universities where moral and civic values were made explicit. Because emphasis is on the stated values, students learn and practice skills of questioning, critical reasoning, and debate, and resist ideas being forced upon them.

Increasing students' civic engagement is closely connected to the overall goal of liberal education in higher education. Many educators see the process of democracy and education as interlinked. Dewey said, "A democracy is more than a form of government; it is primarily a mode of associated living, of conjoint communicated experience."^{11(p5)} Colby et al² and Ehrlich³ advocate that the role and duty of higher education is to participate in both the moral and civic education of graduates. Boyer¹² argued that higher education has been part of the problem, contributing to rising levels of disengagement in civic life by young people rather than working toward solutions. He noted an increasing focus on individualistic achievement, not only on students' academic goals but also on university research missions. He proposed a commitment by universities and faculty to the "scholarship of engagement," which means directing the scholarly and practical connection and resources of faculty and universities to

the social, civic, and ethical problems of communities and nations. While all in higher education may not agree on the components of civic education and how it is best achieved, there is a general consensus that its aims are "...the preparation of student[s] for lives that provide personal satisfaction and promote the common good."^{2(p24)}

Education is never value free or value neutral.^{13,14} The positivist empiricist model that has been upheld as dominant not only in society but also in higher education has been criticized by many as lacking in its promotion of context-free and "objective" study.^{2,13,14} But schools have always promoted hidden or "underground" curricula, which consciously or unconsciously promote attitudes about students and to students.^{15(p27)} Hidden curricula determine many of the practices that "have always been done that way" without serious critique or interrogation. These include grading structures, admission policies, and norms guiding student-faculty relationships.

When students see values, hidden or otherwise, emphasizing individualism and competition, they tend to adopt those practices.² Sullivan describes *instrumental individualism* as the default program of operation of higher education today.^{16(p21)} In his words, the "...academy exists to research, disseminate knowledge and skills as tools for economic development and upward mobility of individuals."^{16(p21)} He goes on to say that the larger considerations of the current social, political, or moral purposes of education have not been explicated or have only been considered in light of their contributions or lack of the same to corporate business needs in America. A result of allowing hidden curricula to go unexamined and not overtly reconsidering higher education's moral purpose is that this ethic of instrumental individualism has pervaded society through students, alumni, and corporate leaders (who are themselves graduates of the US institutions). Graduates from professional fields, in which I would include nursing, have come to define themselves more for the market value of their skills than for the knowledge and

functions they provide for the community. Increasing levels of specialization and hierarchical dominance exist. In nursing, for example, I have for years heard conversations among peers and students making comparisons between intensive care, emergency department, and community health nurses. Invariably, the conversation comes back to "worth" defined in terms of salary and technical skills, and the community health nurse is seldom seen as the "highest valued" professional in those conversations.

Colby et al² and Ehrlich³ argue that educational institutions and faculty can avoid what they call "illegitimate indoctrination" if universities make values explicit at the outset when providing moral and civic education.^{2(p15)} They recognize that careful attention is needed to build environments that encourage open-minded consideration of multiple discourses and solutions to social issues (which always involve moral issues) where fundamental values may conflict.

Nursing values and education

Nurse educators are not only educating students to achieve the goals of liberal education but also to become members of a profession. The American Nurses Association's *Code of Ethics and Nursing's Social Policy Statement* (2nd ed) document the social contract for nurses to participate in making changes in the healthcare system and to promote citizens' abilities to achieve good health.^{10,17} Ballou's excellent analysis verified these social contracts with society.¹⁸ The International Council of Nurses *Code of Ethics for Nurses* specifies nurses' global responsibility to work to ensure "the health and social needs" of people, particularly the most vulnerable ones.^{19(p4)} The International Council of Nurses document is explicit in merging the roles of healthcare professional and citizen in its call to action.

The ethic of advocacy for nursing requires nurses to have strong skills in the processes of civic engagement, which include policy-making and political advocacy.⁶ Policy advocacy is the use of one's expertise, knowledge,

values, influence, power, and position to influence the process of change, decision making, and allocation of resources in the political and policymaking arena.

Why be concerned about nursing students' knowledge and skills as civically engaged members of society who can act as political and policy advocates? Mounting evidence shows that real change in people's health is largely driven by social determinants of health.^{20,21} In the historic *Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion*, healthcare professionals were called to act as health advocates and mediators to impact changes in political, economic, sociocultural, environmental, and behavioral realms.²⁰ The *Jakarta Declaration* reiterated these principles of the *Ottawa Charter* charging healthcare professionals including nurses to continue the strategies of building "healthy public policy" and "strengthening community action."²¹(para11) In this document, the prerequisites for health included "peace, shelter, education, social security, social relations, food, income, the empowerment of women, a stable ecosystem, sustainable resource use, social justice, respect for human rights, and equity."^(para5) Other examples of these determinants include obtaining access to healthcare for oneself and one's children, work opportunities, cost of living, and income inequities.⁷ Inequities⁶ in access to healthcare and health outcomes exist in many countries with solutions occurring at local, state, and national levels through community conversations, policymaking, and political action. For nurses to participate in improving conditions that lead to health for individuals, groups, and populations, they need to know how to participate effectively in these civic activities that include political and policymaking dialogues and processes.^{6,7,22} They need to learn the skills and value of participation while in their nursing education programs.

Nursing literature and civic engagement

Two areas in the nursing literature were seen as especially pertinent to civic engage-

ment: volunteerism, and politics and policymaking (viewed as a single area) in nursing. These were reviewed for their connection to civic engagement.

Volunteering is an important part of nurses' living an ethic of service to others. Personal accounts of volunteering described benefits of increased awareness of multicultural needs and ways of life,²³ broadened perspectives of health and illness and ways to practice nursing,²⁴ and, most significantly, opportunities to help others.²⁵ These accounts also demonstrated opportunities to achieve career goals.

Recent research on volunteering by nurses focused on determining whether inactive or retired nurses would volunteer for disaster preparedness activities²⁶ or helping care for the medically uninsured.²⁷ Researchers in one study²⁶ of inactive nurses in Vermont found that 27% would volunteer whereas 64% would not because of age (mean age 69 years), health reasons, or caregiving responsibilities for others. In a descriptive study on volunteering,²⁷ researchers described elements and benefits of volunteering by nurses and physicians working with uninsured people attending a free clinic. One unexpected benefit for these professionals was that working with uninsured people changed their own perceptions of needs and issues related to lack of access.

Most of the literature about nursing students and volunteering was related to service learning (SL). SL is a learning pedagogy designed in collaboration with community partners consisting of service and deliberative reflective components.^{28,29} The pedagogy of SL will be discussed in more detail later in this article; however, it is probably due to the structured, deliberate reflection (and it being widely researched) that benefits beyond those demonstrated in traditional volunteering have been seen. In SL, students are enrolled in elective or required classes with experiences requiring "volunteering" or service in organizations or communities. Outcomes attributed to SL in the literature include personal growth, increased commitment to

service, meeting needs of vulnerable and uninsured people in communities and diversity, and teamwork.³⁰⁻³² The primary purposes for SL's early use in nursing often focused on students' academic and personal growth and partnership needs and opportunities in communities.³³

Increasingly, SL in nursing has been used to help students make civic and political connections in their learning. Seifer clearly identified SL as "essential for preparing the next generation of nurses for their roles as clinicians, health advocates and civic leaders."^{28(p431)} In a pilot study of RN to BSN and graduate students ($n = 14$), Nokes et al found students' civic engagement scores significantly improved from pre- to post-course experiences.³³ Olsan et al conducted a descriptive qualitative study of nursing students in an undergraduate professional issues course with the goal of discovering the meaning of an SL partnership experience for a group of 5 students.³⁴ These researchers found the SL experience to be an empowering situation, which promoted the formation of nursing political personas, shaping roles, identities, and relationships for policy work. Redman and Clark detail how SL and social justice are used as a curricular framework for teaching a 1-credit course.³² The goals of the course are for students to increase personal and professional civic responsibility for solving social justice problems.

Volunteerism is clearly important to nurses as a way to "make a difference." This limited review revealed mostly anecdotal accounts of the meaning of volunteering. More recent research was embedded in current socioeconomic contexts of the nursing shortage and healthcare funding challenges targeting ways to care for the uninsured using least cost and identifying personnel for disaster preparedness. What was not apparent in the literature were overarching connections or motivations of the volunteers to work toward solving the larger issues in society. In the SL "volunteer" experiences for students (some elective, some required), many benefits were documented for students in the personal in-

tegrity, social conscience, and civic involvement spheres of civic engagement. Recent literature has documented more explicit inclusion of political processes and civic engagement as components of SL, strengthening the political engagement sphere in students' education.

There is little doubt that nursing's history and literature have called for nurses to have more effective political and policy-making skills.³⁵⁻³⁷ Many are concerned that nurses are increasingly apathetic toward political advocacy.^{6,7,38} What is apparent from a review of the literature is that nursing's ability or inability to participate in politics and policymaking is a global concern.³⁹ The emphasis in the nursing literature to date has been on nursing's political and policymaking skills specifically rather than on the broader focus of nursing and civic engagement.

Articles detail conceptual models describing nursing's stages of political development⁴⁰ and models for nurses' political involvement.³⁸ White proposed the addition of Sociopolitical Knowing as the fifth pattern of knowing to Carper's and Jacob-Kramer and Chinn's models of nursing ways of knowing.⁴¹ She defines this as the "wherein" that broader context in which all other patterns of knowing are embedded.^(para43)

The literature is replete with articles documenting the "how to's" of political processes and why nurses should participate as political advocates.^{35,36} Information about why nurses have not participated in political processes has included lack of knowledge, gender issues, discomfort with power, time, and organizational issues but not civic disengagement. Ballou posited that nursing's scope of practice may now be changing and old social contracts for political advocacy need to be revisited, or that elite nursing leaders need to reframe political work to be in keeping with reality seen by staff nurses.¹⁸ Falk-Rafael countered because "nurses practice at the intersection of public policy and personal lives; they are, therefore, ideally situated and morally obligated to include sociopolitical advocacy in their practice."^{6(p222)}

Nursing education has repeatedly been called on to provide or increase education and practice for students to gain effective political advocacy and policymaking skills.⁴² Leaders have called for greater emphasis on policymaking and politics in nursing education programs at undergraduate^{22,43} and graduate levels.^{44,45} Russell and Fawcett detail revisions to their conceptual model of *Nursing and Health Policy*.⁴⁶ In this article, they describe how the model is used to guide curriculum for the University of Massachusetts PhD in nursing program. In addition, they illustrate how scholarly work can be framed using the model and cited examples of work being done by students and nurses using the model. This illustrates what Cohen et al called *Stage 4* of the development of nursing's political identity.⁴⁰ Health policy is fully integrated into curricula; leadership development is promoted along with leading the way in research development, analysis, and evidence production.

Moccia presented a "policy development trajectory" for graduate nursing students learning about politics and policy.^{47(p74)} She described the process as an upward continuum consisting of active processes of informing, acting, involving, developing, and sustaining. Specific experiential strategies were suggested to aid students' learning development.

There has been limited research into nursing students' learning about politics and policymaking; however, these few studies provide insight into student nurses' beliefs and values associated with political advocacy. Rains and Barton-Kriese, in a qualitative study comparing baccalaureate nursing students' political competence with that of political science students, found nursing students to clearly identify their advocacy activities as health promotion, disease prevention, and "improvement of the human condition" but did not describe their activities as political in nature or intent.^{43(p222)} Students tended to view "politics as something other people do."^(p222) These researchers also found that students had not been helped in their nursing programs to make connections be-

tween "...the personal, professional, and political."^(p223) Their study showed that nursing students viewed policy as a barrier to practice rather than a way to facilitate change and empower selves and others. While students voiced and demonstrated a strong community service and volunteerism ethic, they did not see the link between their activities and politics.

Several educators provided examples of strategies used to teach nursing students about political advocacy. Courses were delivered live and online with strategies described for both delivery methods. Common to all these examples is specific preparation and practice in political and policy concepts in a "stand-alone" course format rather than integrated throughout the curriculum. In addition, these educators designed activities to reflect "real world" authentic learning with experiences for students to practice civic engagement skills including speaking, debate, persuasion, and writing for various audiences.

Taken together, civic engagement is supported by nursing's ethical and moral obligation to include sociopolitical action as part of the domain of nursing. Progress has been made in nursing education as more programs have explicitly included health policy in graduate education. The outcomes of these programs are beginning to be documented as curricular policy models are shared and revised; outcomes are evaluated and specific policy research is produced.

More undergraduate nursing programs are including policy and political information in curricula. While some documentation of stand-alone courses is evident, it is not clear at this time how most programs incorporate these concepts into curricula. Often, the literature focuses specifically on more narrowly focused political and policy skills rather than the skills required for civic engagement, which are broader in nature.

It is also unclear whether the skills students are gaining in areas of political advocacy, policymaking, and service are extending into their lives after graduation. The literature included results from pilot studies,

which tested whether learning gains were achieved in political courses from precourse to course completion.^{31,43} From a civic engagement perspective, it would also be important to know whether students continued to exhibit service, civic, and/or political and policymaking qualities in their workplaces, with specified populations or in the communities in which they lived beyond the immediate course experience.

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT IN THE UNITED STATES

Studies about young people's participation in the process of democracy and civic life in the United States suggest that nurse educators face a challenge in promoting civic engagement and policy advocacy as an expectation of the nursing role.^{1,42,48} While young people overall show greater interest and rates of volunteerism in their communities, it has largely been done on a nonpolitical basis, meaning that the activity was seen unrelated to politics, political, or societal issues.^{49,50} The volunteering was seen as an action of charity to help others when there was a need⁴⁸ or to take action when there appeared to be no other solution.¹ Giroux would call this acting from the liberal ideology "culture of deprivation" if the underlying issues surrounding the need, for instance, poverty, discrimination, or unequal access to healthcare, are unexamined and ignored.^{14(p127)} The volunteer simply does the needed job, such as volunteering at the food bank without questioning the fact that all people in the community do not have enough to eat.

Galston, a Brookings Institution scholar, states that today's young people believe in the American Dream and are patriotic.⁵¹ These beliefs contribute to high rates of volunteerism among high school students and entering college freshman. This volunteerism is done, however, as an alternative to traditional politics. He describes this view of volunteerism coexisting with civic detachment, the idea that participation in democracy is optional.

Overall, there are declines in several indicators of civic engagement. Sax,⁴⁸ in a national study of freshmen and seniors in higher education conducted by the Cooperative Institutional Research Program at the Higher Education Research Institute at the University of California, Los Angeles, found the political interest dramatically decreased. The number of freshmen who felt it important to keep up with political affairs decreased from 57.8% in 1966 to 32.9% in 2002. Only 19.4% of freshmen in 2002 said they "frequently discuss politics" in comparison with 29.9% in 1968.^(p4) National studies have shown slight increases in the areas of voting, volunteering, and political expression by young people aged 18–29 years with an 11% increase in voting in the 2004 presidential election, but increases tend to trend upward in presidential year elections.¹ Whether the upturns will be long-lasting remains to be seen.

The most disturbing information in the Sax study was the amount of conversation and discussion the freshman students had about politics and political topics by major.⁴⁸ The lowest rates of political discussion were among freshmen with majors in healthcare professions (11.5%) and education (11.9%). The highest rates were among political science and history majors (57.6% each). This suggests that nursing students do not tend to come to their education with already-heightened interests in political topics and issues.

All nursing students would readily agree that learning to measure blood pressure, temperature, pulse and respiratory rates were required, critical skills for nurses. Fewer would see voting, knowledge of state and national government, how to communicate with policy makers, and how to effectively lobby for policy change as skills equally as critical as vital signs. Learning how to work collaboratively with others, listen open-mindedly, identify multiple solutions, and work with communities is the skills of civic engagement and nursing. When nursing students tend not to talk about or be involved in politics, nurse educators are challenged to create learning environments that will move students from

apathy and indifference to empowerment and beginning competency in being civically engaged in their communities as nurses. This is the movement needed to become an engaged, active nurse citizen.

Societal views contribute to socializing students and faculty about political involvement in healthcare. Generally, citizens' participation in politics has declined, with older members of society participating politically to a greater extent than younger members.⁵¹ Researchers at the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement studied civic and political engagement across generations—the Matures, born before 1946; Baby Boomers, born between 1946 and 1964; Generation X (GenXers), born between 1964 and 1976; and DotNets, born after 1976.⁴⁹ One dimension studied was attentiveness to political affairs. The differences in generations were especially important in this area. Sixty percent of Matures and 50% of Boomers claimed to pay attention to politics, but percentages fell to 37 for GenXers and 24 for DotNets. Attention to, and awareness of, political issues is a foundational skill, which underpins all other skills of political advocacy. News viewing or reading, be it on television, radio, newspapers, or the Internet, was lowest for DotNets followed by the GenXers.⁴⁹ One can hardly vote (responsibly, at least), identify issues, recognize political figures, or even begin to identify the issues of common concern to a community without some degree of attention through discussion with others, reading, or listening to news.

Nursing students can be assumed to follow some of the same patterns of civic engagement as the students profiled in these studies. I was unable to identify studies specifically documenting nursing students' or nurses' specific political characteristics. From my vantage-point of teaching a senior undergraduate-level policy and politics nursing course for the past 11 years, students routinely share many of their civic and political activities. Some of them do volunteer regularly in their churches and children's schools, and attitudes about volunteering are quite

positive. Although I do not ask them specifically to reveal their personal voting practices, when voting is discussed, it is not unusual for up to one third of the class to self-report that they do not vote. Some of the youngest students, in their early to mid-twenties, have not ever registered to vote, despite many being long-time residents of the area. Anecdotal evidence from my experience with these young folks validates what was shown in the studies about volunteering and political practices.

Why has civic engagement declined?

Reasons for Americans' decreasing participation in the civic life of their communities and country are many. Sax⁴⁸ and Ehrlich³ attribute the decreased civic involvement to an increased emphasis in society on the goals of individuals at the expense of the common good. Galston identifies disenchantment with politics and politicians, increasingly polarized political parties, contentious issues, and the inability for equitable participation by groups, minorities, and races.⁵¹ Lack of knowledge of civic and political processes has been identified as problematic with 35% of high school seniors scoring below basic level on the National Assessment of Educational Progress Civics Assessment.⁵¹ Ehrlich has pointed to a need for increased mentoring of young people by elders who are civically and politically competent.³

Societal, cultural, and historical changes have influenced Americans' civic participation. Increasing numbers of hours are spent at work both in occupational settings and at home, leaving fewer hours for community connection and civic work. Increasing numbers of families require more members to work to meet families' needs. Working mothers and fathers scramble to meet demands of jobs, children, and extracurricular activities. Technology plays a larger part in people's lives, with television and computer replacing both relaxation and recreation time that was formerly used to connect with others in person or through social activities like attending civic groups and clubs in evenings and on weekends. The presumed or actual reduction

in safety in neighborhoods contributes to people staying more isolated from one another. The National Conference on Citizenship has noted that while there was a surge in volunteering and political interest after the event of 9/11, it did "...not appear to have trigger[ed] a broader civic transformation."^{1(p4)}

HIGHER EDUCATION RESPONSE TO CIVIC EDUCATION

However, there is hope. A key finding in the report of the National Conference on Citizenship was the distinct difference between those with college degrees and those having less education.¹ College graduates were more likely to vote, volunteer, attend club meetings, and work on community projects. Even though there were declines in all these areas from previous years, evidence still points to the fact that college does make a difference, and experiences in college are among the most meaningful of a person's life. Because of the declines in civic involvement by young people,^{1,52} and in an effort to reclaim the aims of liberal education for higher education, leaders of civic engagement education have promoted several initiatives to strengthen civic learning in universities.

The 2005 Conference on Research Universities and Civic Engagement was convened specifically to promote greater civic engagement in top-tier research universities.⁵³ Changes in research funding mechanisms, charges of isolationism from the communities in which they exist, and a discipline-oriented rather than society-focused stance are some of the reasons for a reorientation to civic engagement as a central university mission for these institutions. Using the Boyer Model of Scholarship, Sandmann is quoted saying that both faculty and students can do "academically relevant work that simultaneously fulfills the campus mission and goals, as well as fills community needs."^{53(p11)}

The American Democracy Project is a national initiative that began in 2002 and, now, has 219 member institutions from the American Association of State Colleges and Universities.⁵⁴ The goal of this project is

"...to promote graduates who understand and are committed to engaging in meaningful actions as citizens in a democracy."^(para5) Undergraduate students enrolled in participating colleges have academic and experiential opportunities to understand more fully and live participatory citizenship. Civic engagement is promoted campuswide and through the curriculum, both general education and in the disciplines, including nursing.

Campus Compact is a national coalition of 1100 college and university presidents with a demonstrated commitment to civic education.⁵⁵ Since its inception in 1985, this group's efforts have centered on campus engagement through socially responsible community service. In the 1990s, changes in the focus resulted in SL as a pedagogy of experiential learning and reflection, linking students' academic study to community settings, issues, and groups. Nursing has embraced SL as pedagogy as evidenced by the many programs and projects described in the literature and information available about them on the Internet.^{28,45}

Service-learning, community-based nursing, and civic engagement

SL and community-based nursing (CBN) are 2 pedagogies used in nursing that have relationships to civic engagement. There is some overlap in the goals, skills, and values promoted by each. The following is provided as a brief overview and organizer for thinking about these pedagogies. It is not meant to be an exhaustive review of SL or CBN but rather to help the reader understand the connections and differences related to civic engagement.

Many pedagogies of engagement can be used to promote civic engagement. These might include SL, experiential learning, problem-based learning, collaborative learning, or cooperative learning. Some of the key skills emphasized in SL projects include critical thinking, collaborative and interpersonal communication skills, and identification of needs, issues, and problems that community members see as concerns. Values promoted in SL include, but are not limited

to, listening, openness, appreciating perspectives other than one's own, appreciating differences, valuing diversity, experiencing volunteering in communities, and citizenship. Reflection is a central component of the pedagogy and is used to deepen learning and growth and to assist students to make connections in their learning.^{2,3}

Nursing has long used SL as a teaching pedagogy, aiding students to contribute actively to community needs, reflect on experiences, achieve personal growth, and make conceptual connections and civic service contributions.^{28,29} A distinction has been made between SL programs that offer learning experiences for "exposure" and those that promote "engagement," in which students go deeper to explore the underlying cultural, social, and political dynamics and take action.⁵⁶ The connection that has not always been made in SL is the political and/or policy connection. This is where civic engagement can extend the current use of SL. Educators can use SL to help students discover links to underlying political and policy needs and actions that may be required for community and societal change.

Nursing faculties are sometimes hesitant or may not know how to broaden reflection about the SL experience to include political or policy talk and/or action. They may have many concerns as follows: being unsure of appropriate ways to talk about politics or political topics in state-funded or religious schools, feeling uncertain about cultural norms for discussing politics in the classroom and workplace, unfamiliarity with strategies for teaching policy and politics in relation to health, lack of knowledge of political issues, and/or not feeling these concerns should be addressed with students, particularly at undergraduate levels. Faculty may be dealing with their own sense of apathy or frustration and the demands of their lives and workloads in relation to civic engagement.

CBN is another widely accepted pedagogy in nursing.⁵⁷ It is generally defined as nursing practice occurring where individuals, families, and groups live, work, and play. Nursing care is targeted at primary,

secondary, and tertiary levels of prevention, but secondary and tertiary cares are emphasized. McEwen describes several roles for community-based nurses including educator, direct care provider, collaborator, advocate, leader, manager, and researcher.⁵⁸ Skills required by these roles are critical thinking, problem solving, issue identification, interpersonal and group communication, writing, and many more. Some of the values to be promoted in CBN are being open, listening, valuing diversity, having appreciation for multiple perspectives, gaining appreciation of communities and neighborhoods, and understanding differences.

CBN and SL overlap civic engagement in that all provide for experience-based learning for students, usually in community settings. CBN experiences largely involve clinical laboratory or practicum experiences; SL can be integrated with laboratory, practicum, or theory courses. Civic engagement could be accomplished in any of the courses. The key differences between SL, CBN, and civic engagement are the goals of each. The goal of civic engagement is the development and fostering of an array of citizenship skills, which includes political advocacy and policymaking skills. SL and CBN can include these things but, often, are narrower in scope and focus. Both SL and CBN can be enhanced to include the broader focus on civic engagement.

NURSING EDUCATION AND PROMOTING CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

How do nurse educators prepare nursing graduates to become engaged, responsible citizens? Three strategies will assist them to guide students and graduates toward active citizenship: (1) use SL, CBN, or other pedagogies of engagement; (2) teach students skills of civic engagement; and (3) role model and mentor civic engagement for students.

Use pedagogies of engagement

Faculty using SL or CBN pedagogies should continue to use these strategies. If SL has not

been a part of courses or the curriculum, explore how this active, experiential strategy can benefit students and communities. Further information is available at Campus Compact (<http://www.compact.org/>). Many colleges and universities have offices of SL and an SL coordinator or director who can provide valuable assistance and resources.

Many programs and faculty have successfully made the transition to CBN in their programs. Faculties are urged to make changes in curricula, which will prepare nurses for new practice roles in communities. There are numerous resources available in print literature and on the Internet as well as conferences and consultants available to describe how nursing education programs have survived and thrived using community-based practice models.^{57,58}

Faculties are encouraged to use other “pedagogies of engagement” in their teaching.^{2(p8)} Echoed in the literature are calls for faculty to use pedagogies and strategies that increase students’ engagement in learning not only in concepts of citizenship but also in learning for deeper understanding. The National Survey of Student Engagement is a national survey of freshman and senior university student learning behaviors.⁵⁹ This study of students, sampled from more than 730 four-year colleges and universities, suggests that students rank other students first, as most important to their learning, with faculty a close second. Students also learn more from active collaborative learning experiences with diverse student groups. This finding is repeated by others who promote cooperative learning⁶⁰ and collaborative learning⁶¹ to name 2 specific frameworks for group learning. Other feminist theorists offer frameworks and strategies promoting open, democratic classrooms with confrontational, “safe” spaces to explore important issues such as racism, sexism, ablism, and classism.^{10,37} hooks¹³ describes transformative pedagogy as a growth-empowering experience for students that requires listening, openness, and intellectual rigor in which multicultural differences and experiences can be explored.¹³

What these frameworks or strategies have in common is a reduced emphasis on faculty lecturing and more deliberate structuring of students talking with each other, faculty, and everyone who is part of their learning. When students talk to each other about their learning, their learning deepens.

Teach for civic engagement

Enhance new or existing SL or CBN experiences with specific concepts of civic engagement. These include teaching in the 4 spheres: personal integrity, social conscience, civic involvement, and political engagement. Teaching for civic engagement means aiming for both affective and cognitive learning domains with students, learning that reaches head, heart, and soul. Doing this requires examination of departments’ philosophies and curricula to make hidden values more overt. Work to bring the desired moral characteristics forward to be made explicit in program and course documents, including course assignments and evaluation tools. Use these moral principles and behaviors to discuss and examine nursing issues and dilemmas and to interrogate politically the situations that students and faculty experience during learning.

Civic engagement includes political engagement and advocacy. Strengthen those components in courses by including political components as an aspect of SL reflection discussions. Strive to make it as natural for students to consider political phenomena as they do the psychological, developmental, and physiological aspects of their nursing care. The goal is to help students actively shape their own sociopolitical personas and to integrate them within their nursing professional selves, to see themselves as nurse citizens.

Be a role model and mentor

A final strategy for nurse educators to use in teaching civic engagement is to be a role model. Vote, and talk about voting. Bring

current and political affairs into the classroom, and establish a climate where talk about politics is encouraged and expected. Acknowledge that everything is political¹⁴; indeed, nursing itself is political. Help students get comfortable with political talk, agreement, disagreement, and questioning. Giroux says to explore with "relentless negativity," not meaning to be eternally pessimistic in viewpoint, but rather never hesitating to say "why" when proposals are made; to test rationale against personal, disciplinary, or ethical standards.^{14(p86)}

Consider extending the research on political advocacy and civic engagement in nursing. To what extent are policymaking and political education included in undergraduate education? What are the outcomes of that education? Are undergraduates demonstrating political and policy advocacy in their working lives and communities—if so, in what ways, and if not, why not? Program evaluation research in education is needed at both graduate and undergraduate levels to document outcomes.

Aim for Boyer's Scholarship of Engagement in the communities in which students and faculty are working.¹² Include students in scholarly research and projects whenever possible.

Assist students to see that civic engagement is not just for them, it is for everyone.

If your university's mission is already centered on civic engagement, join with colleagues and share personal successes and expertise in working with SL and community partners. Nurse educators have skills and knowledge from years of working with communities and agencies. Educators from other disciplines in universities are only just beginning these adventures and can benefit from nursing's experience.

Speak out to ensure that promotion of civic engagement does not mean only 1 way of being a citizen, 1 ideology to follow, 1 cultural, white, corporate view of democracy and education about citizenship. Active, engaged citizenship in a democracy can be lived in a multitude of ways. Teaching concepts and values of civic engagement to nursing students is not done simply to coax students into a voting booth. Promotion of civic engagement is rooted in the optimistic view of creating a society in which all voices are heard, and justice and equity are more sharply brought to the forefront of decision making. It is up to us to make civic engagement come alive for our graduates in nursing; it is time to foster the growth of the professional nurse citizen.

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