Becoming Citizens: Deepening the Craft of Youth Civic Engagement

Chapter 11

Civic Youth Work

SUMMARY. We propose civic youth work as a new craft orientation in the family of child and youth care, education, social work, recreation and other relevant semi-to-full professions. We envision this practice as based in the philosophies and practical sciences of pedagogy, politics, and human development. The ideal-type civic youth worker will have a skilled praxis in understanding young people and working with them in democratic, inclusive, just and nonviolent ways in small groups on issues meaningful to them. The goals of such work are individual human development, strengthening of democratic institutions and practices, mastery of relevant knowledge and skills by young people, and positive, public change in this meaningful issue. The philosophical and praxis basis of this practitioner role are enumerated and examples given. doi:10.1300/J024v29n03_11 *[Article copies available for a fee from The Haworth Document Delivery Service: 1-800-HAWORTH. E-mail address: <docdelivery@haworthpress.com> Website: <http://www.HaworthPress.com> © 2007 by The Haworth Press. All rights reserved.]*

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In the past few sections of this volume, we have four readings of Public Achievement (PA), Youth in Government (YIG), and the Youth Science Center (YSC). Each reading comes from the perspective of a particular theoretical frame–education, political theory, vocation, and youth. These four readings are designed both to illuminate and interrogate the programs in particular and youth civic engagement (YCE) in general. In the broadest sense, each program looks different when viewed from a different frame. But theoretical frames are more than simply shifts in perspective. Theories represent ways of organizing categories, scientific findings, and moral values. They help determine what counts as real and what does not. These frames matter because they are implicit in funding processes and expected educational outcomes such as, in the U.S., No Child Left Behind. We certainly believe in having clear expectations but want youth workers to be aware that behind these outcomes are theoretical frames that have real world consequences for practice. For instance, scientific discourses on adolescence determine, in part, what a teacher, social worker, or police officer may think is possible for a 12-year-old girl to think, feel, and do. In these initiatives we have seen how youth often defy these age-grade expectations, tackling complex issues that supposedly require a higher levels of moral, emotional and cognitive development.

The first part of this chapter summarizes each theoretical frame and distill three key ideas from our theoretical readings, and we distill three key ideas from our theoretical readings that we think are innovative. Then we translate theory into a new orientation to practice–*civic youth work.*

REVIEW OF FOUR THEORETICAL FRAMES

In chapter 7 we interpreted the three initiatives through the frame of education. Here, we contrast civic education with civic engagement. Civic education relies on standard definitions of citizenship and therefore focuses on learning content (knowledge *about* political institutions, principles, and processes of governance), mastering specific democratic skills (e.g., public speaking, critical thinking, etc.), and the attaining of particular dispositions (e.g., social responsibility, tolerance, compassion, etc.) (Butts, 1980; Patrick, 1996). Youth civic engagement challenges these conceptions of civic education. Rather than learning and

knowing-about in order be better informed, it emphasizes learning through doing. There is a key shift from the future orientation of civic education–learning about in order to–to the present orientation of civic engagement–learning through.

This conception of YCE clearly resonates with and is situated in the larger literature on experiential education. Experiential education is more, however, than simply learning through doing. Even though we are learning (and not learning) all the time in the course of our everyday lives, experiential education represents the reconstruction of experience in ways that promote learning and growth. In academic terms, this expands learning through doing to *reflexive doing*–that is, the intentional and reflective practice. From our conversations with young people, we identified presenting an invitation, supporting democratic ways of working together, doing *real world* public work, and reflection as critical components to powerful civic learning experiences. In this sense, these three initiatives were philosophically and pedagogically experiential education (Dewey, 1938; Joplin, 1995; Kolb, 1984). They do not offer an alternative conception of experiential education but, rather, refine key principles towards civic engagement.

Chapter 8 was written from the frame of political theory. Here, we contrasted standard accounts of citizenship with our expanded alternative understanding of *lived citizen*. Standard accounts of citizenship focus on what citizens are (legal status), what they should *do* (desirable activity), and *how* they identify as citizens (collective identity). Translated into civic practice, this frame directs practitioners and researchers to the development of civic and political knowledge, attitudes, skills, and dispositions. Indicators of "positive" civic engagement include voting, volunteering, contacting public officials, following politics in the news, engaging in boycotts and the like. While each of these indicators are important parts of citizenship, this frame may not *count* many of the students in PA and YSC as civically engaged. Standard measures do not map onto programs in which young people have the freedom to co-create the activities, projects, processes and outcomes.

From our reading of the lived experiences of young people in these three initiatives, we came to see that these standard accounts miss something very important–they miss the embedded, embodied, and dialectical relationship between *doing*, *being* and *becoming* citizen in specific contexts. Drawing from Hannah Arendt, we emphasize that politics should not be understood as limited to pre-defined activities or places but that politics take place wherever people act in concert for public pur-

poses. In addition to curricular and co-curricular programs, Arendt helps us see how museums, youth clubs, churches, and even families are possible places for engagement! Because these spaces for engagement do not arise spontaneously, we argue that an important part of YCE is to offer an invitation to engagement. We then turn to John Dewey to emphasize the interactive nature of YCE. Dewey directs our attention to lived experience, how each moment is pregnant with possibilities for learning and democratic citizenship. Our conversations with young people revealed that something as mundane as making a phone call can be an important source of learning and even transformation for an individual. Our alternative understanding of citizenship represents a broadening and opening to current discourses of citizenship. It hopes to knit together a more grounded, embodied, and fluid understanding of the relationship between *doing* citizen activities (PA, YIG, and YSC), *becoming* citizen (learning through interaction), and *being* citizen. Taken together, we advance *lived citizen* as the embodiment and integration of doing, becoming and being citizen.

In Chapter 9 we read YCE through the lens of vocation. Vocation may seem like a strange turn given its association with religion (hearing the call of God) and technical training (vocational education). However, we draw from the deeper and venerable tradition of vocation, in its religious and secular senses, to emphasize the idea of address and response. In our everyday lives, we find ourselves addressed or confronted by certain persons, issues, situations, conditions and ideas that are compelling; they require us to answer, to respond. How we hear this address and respond is who we are. We define ourselves; we craft ourselves in our lived-response. In this sense, we author ourselves in action, one form of which is citizen: lived-self as lived-citizen.

We examine this idea by unpacking and interpreting the statement we heard again and again in our conversations with young people–"I want to make a difference in my community." This statement can be read in terms of motive (the reason why I do this) or as a ritualized trope (a bullshit answer that young people think adults want to hear, like "don't take drugs"). We believe this statement becomes richer and clearer when read in terms of vocation. "I want to make a difference" represents a moral sense of commitment of the whole person. The vocational represents a an internal dialogue between the secular and the sacred, between such important issues as what I believe, what I stand for, and what compels me to act publicly and, ultimately, who I am.

In Chapter 10 we examined YCE through the lens of youth. Here we contrast the applied developmental model of adolescence with our alternative of youth as a social idea. The developmental model advances adolescence as a scientific fact, defined by chronological age in terms of cognitive, emotional, and physiological development. Simply stated, this model holds that an individual is defined by chronological age, say a 12-year-old girl, and this age defines certain traits, that is, age-appropriate ways of thinking, feeling, and acting. Even if we are not familiar with the social and biological scientific literature on adolescence, this developmental model is present in schools and other social environments where age expectations are clear, patrolled and, if violated, challenged. We are familiar, perhaps all too familiar, with statements such as "Act your age!" or "How old are you?"

As an alternative, youth as a social idea represents the social, political, and moral organization of these biological facts. Here we emphasize that youth is context-based; what we expect from youth is different in different contexts. In one sense, youth take on different social roles. We expect different things of a teenager who is a *worker* at a fast food restaurant than a *student* in an Advanced Placement class. Like student and worker, citizen is also a social role. This role is often age-graded–youth are subject to a different set of laws, are not allowed to vote, and in general are seen to need training in order to take on the moral responsibilities of citizenship. But more than simply playing a different role (as citizen), YCE represents a shift and rupture of age and role-based expectations youth. Instead of seeing youth as *not yet ready* and therefore *in need of training*, YCE challenges assertions based in science, philosophy, politics or folk wisdom that young people do not have the capacity or are unable or unwilling to take on substantive social roles while they are and are seen as youth, as persons 12-22 years old, and as young people. The young people in these initiatives have proven that they have the capacity, ability, and willingness to be citizens now!

THREE INNOVATIVE IDEAS

Throughout this book we have referred to the idea of *lived citizen*. It represents an attempt to get at citizenship from the inside, that is, from the lived experiences of civic engagement. In an important sense lived-citizen integrates the political, educational, and vocational frames we have just reviewed. It also ruptures expectations of young people in terms of age-grade expectations. Here, we distill three ideas from our theoretical readings of YCE that we think are innovative and serve as

the foundation for our discussion of civic youth work in the concluding chapter.

Open and Expansive Understandings of Citizenship and Politics

We described how standard definitions of citizenship and civic engagement defines in advance the behaviors, attitudes, activities, and outcomes that "count" as civic or political. Drawing on Arendt and Dewey, we call for expanding the definition of "the political" to include any situation where people work in concert for public ends. This pushes us away from seeing citizenship as an individual attribute and towards seeing it as a collective enterprise. It also pushes us away from seeing politics as only happening in governmental institutions. Citizenship can be conceived of as an interactive process between individuals and their environments. Any situation, say, meeting a school principal, is pregnant with civic and political potential. This does not mean that any gathering or any meeting with a principal is civic or political. Following theories of experiential education, we believe that there must be an invitation, support, and reflection to bring about powerful civic learning and engagement.

Hence, the idea of *lived citizen* approaches politics from the inside out. It starts with young peoples' everyday lived experiences and then they develop an understanding of "the political" through the process of reflective engagement. This idea radically opens up the domain of politics. However, does it strip "the political" of substantive content? Can we, in this frame, call anything we want political? Is not a street gang defending its "turf" an example of collective action for the public end of protecting its neighborhood? Rather than focusing on one correct definition, we suggest establishing procedural criteria to define the political. Following Boyte and Farr (1997), we suggest that a robust understanding of "the public" or publics offers guidance. It is a procedural in the sense that "the public" should not be defined in advance but through inquiry and in the context of youth's lives. There are relatively simple criteria to help youth think through the public dimensions of their work. Framed as questions, they include: Who does this problem affect? How does it affect them? Are there differing views about the nature of the problem? What are the negative consequences of this problem for the community? Who are the stakeholders (who has power in relation to this problem)? What kinds of projects or solutions will make the best impact? Who will they affect? Will they be lasting, public, and meaningful?

We believe that public criteria may actually require more of youth workers. Instead of implementing curriculum or organizing prescribed activities, youth workers need to be open to young people's worlds and be willing to work co-creatively.

Youth as Citizens Now

Building on this expansive sense of citizenship, our reading of YCE through the lens of youth as an idea calls for reconceptualizing youth as citizens now. When implicated in developmental conceptions of adolescence, YCE is often seen as preparation for future citizenship. Instead, we argue that citizen engagement represents an opportunity to disrupt or overcome age-grade and social role expectations for youth. Instead of envisioning youth as apathetic, youth as a problem, or youth as the future, we call for seeing youth as youth: as promise and possibility.

What does it mean to see youth as promise and possibility? On a simple level it means not pre-judging young people based on what they look like, how old they are, how they talk, how they carry themselves, what friends they have. On a deeper level it means embodying an invitation for co-creation with young people. In everyday terms, this means starting where they are and taking their ideas seriously. But it is more than a way of doing things with young people, it is a way of being (oneself) together with young people. This mode of being co-present with young people has the potential to invite, foster and witness young people's becoming (citizen).

Lived-Citizen as Vocation

Many discussions of citizenship and civic engagement focus on the role of citizen, that is, citizenship is one role among many–student, worker, sibling, friend and the like. We believe that vocation represents a more powerful way to articulate citizenship as a mode of being in the world. This is a more integrated, wholistic, and purposive understanding of citizenship–it is a relationship and dialogue between an individual and the world she lives in. When we are "living citizens" we hear the address of the world in public and political ways and we are compelled to respond. "I want to make a difference in my community" is transformed into "I cannot be myself if I don't make a difference when I see _____." This sense of self-as-citizen, citizen-as-self, is the ultimate goal of YCE. Rather than just focusing on what young people learn through a particular program, we believe we should also pay atten-

tion to what happens after the program is over. Vocation is one way to understand the ways in which young people become and be citizens beyond civic programming.

BEING AND DOING CIVIC YOUTH WORK

Young people are exhorted to become involved in civic issues while at the same time they are actively marginalized by adults–and peer pressure–from structures of participation in school, community, faith-worlds, sports, and family. And they are poorly, if at all, prepared for civic engagement and rarely supported in long-term involvement. Basic to this invitation, exclusion, and irrelevance is the assumption that they are neither interested in nor ready for responsible participation on important issues.

In contrast, our stance is in other places, a geography of rights and the spaces of democracy. In these, youth civic engagement is given in virtue of an individual's birth, not in virtue of his/her chronological or developmental readiness. This follows Jeffs (2001) and others in democratic theory (Boyte & Skelton, 1997). In this view, positive developmental outcomes, however defined and in whatever value frame, can be valuable concomitant results of active, viable, authentic, and meaningful youth engagement, but they are neither its purposes nor its goal. The right to participate as a birthright is what is in play and is what must be protected to preserve democracy, and this right is not age-graded, except for the very young, those with severe and persistent mental incapacities and the senile.

In many societies, young people come to engage in issues important to them by being recruited into existing political or social action youth-only or age-mixed groups, being pressed into joining such groups by other young people or adults, or by creating their own issue-specific groups, among other possibilities. Adults who recruit or pressure youth to be involved may be employed by a political party, an issue-group, a school or youth program. Typically, these adults have little training in how to work in democratic ways with youth in groups, while they may have training and experience in work with young people as recreation leaders, high school teachers, church leaders, and volunteers in youth organizations. Typically, youth who do this leadership work with other youth also have little training. One reason for the absence of this training is that there is no institutionalized worker role in most places oriented to democratic civic practice (VeLure Roholt, 2006). It is this we would like to propose.

Civic youth work is an embodied invitation to young people to become and to stay involved in civic issues important to them. Its craft orientation is to address young people–individually and in small and large groups–by being present, co-creating, and finding opportunities for viable, authentic, and meaningful engagement. Civic youth work can be practiced anywhere in the life-worlds of young people on the level of their everyday, ordinary existence in school, community, places of worship and recreation, and even at home.

Civic youth workers go about being this invitation and address by their presence in spaces available to young people and by their presence as invitation (Friedman, 1974; Friedman, 1983). There is here a geography of democratic opportunity that joins invitation to opportunity and availability: they are there where democratic work can be done together. Civic youth workers orient to young people as co-creators of ongoing democratic spaces wherein both act their right to be there together and to work together on common interests, privileging those of the young people.

The frame of the civic youth worker is existential, with an orientation in the moment, in emergence, and co-creation. In this way the civic youth worker co-creates democratic space and time and in so doing embodies democratic practice, discloses democracy, and teaches democratic practices and skills. Such work is an infinite game (Carse, 1986), ongoing, emergent, with a few rules but no conclusion, no winner or loser: ongoing, as is democracy.

This ongoing work is a process of connected instances, moments brought into existence by the workers intention and act-of-invitation, over and over again, never ending. This is a worker mode-of-being, not reducible only to knowledge, attitudes, and skills–the classical trilogy of professional practice–but to praxis which becomes integrated in being en-act-ed. The worker literally invites the young person to make real a possibility within which they then work together. This calls for the worker to imagine the possibilities of space potential in every moment and to imagine living in every space–to imagine that the worker's act right now, here, will invite opening which worker and youth can occupy and use. What is, is actually made into a future. After that moment the same is done again, ad infinitum. In this way, the worker is *doing democracy* with another.

An observer of this might see worker and young people "working together" or simply being together. Without the knowledge necessary to

discern, to know how to tell what it is and tell if it is real and true, the outsider may not be able to know and to say that what is seen is democracy and citizen. The outsider has to be a connoisseur. She or he can tell what is seen and the experience of it, one's feelings and thoughts. Those participating can describe what it is like to do and be self while doing this with a youth worker and, likewise, tell their feelings and thoughts and the meanings of doing and being in this way. In this we are given access to living-citizen, to the existential reality of citizen.

Basic to the interior and exterior description of the work is language and the issue for us is, "What are the languages of lived-citizen and lived-democratic practice?" At minimum, in the democratic ethos, one language must be everyday talk, folk-talk, as it were. Then there is the talk of the issue and the talk of the self-at-work and in other modes of being. Sometimes there is a reading of this living-text (Ricoeur, 1991) in the languages of politics, political philosophy, and political theory. Each language is a frame that, when used to read and speak, changes the reality of what is seen and said. For example:

Every day talk: "Well, having kids trying to make a difference . . . cause there are probably tons of adults trying to make a difference in something, and like they don't think kids can do it, so then they're giving kids a chance to try and make a difference in our community."

Talk of the issue: "We first started out in budget cut issues. Our first issue was the library and why the library was closed from schools and why we couldn't check out books. So we wanted to get some money for that. But in the end it got so complicated, so then we went to textbooks. And we got a lot of info like everybody was suing [county] because they was getting more money for schools than [other suburban schools]. So we got some help. We knew if we did try to take it to the Supreme Court we would have had some back up."

Talk-of-the-self-at-work: "The whole entire group was sitting around and he was drawing on the board. We were talking about regular polygons. And we worked our way up, we were like, 'What's the word for a hundred-sided polygon?' And then we said, 'What's the name for an infinite-sided polygon?' and it was a circle. And I was just trying to think of what can you take and make it into a triangle and would transform into a circle. And I came back the next day and I said, 'What if we used a laser inside of a circular mirror and just bounce it around in there?'"

All of this matters if one goal of these youth civic engagement efforts is civic education: One may not know this is what is going on unless one know that this is what is going on: to name is to see, feel, make sense, assess and all the rest. Few youth had a vocabulary in which they could make sense of their civic engagement as political, democratic, and citizen.

All of this also matters in program assessment and evaluation, both process and outcome, around the focused goals of civic learning, citizenship education, adolescent and youth development, and community and social change. A PA example from a Kansas City, Missouri, Catholic school makes this point: "I was the one who called the Park Department. They would not talk to me. I called three times. Then I talked to my coach. We decided that I should call the City Council first and get them to help me. That worked. Later when I called the Park Department, someone spoke to me."

Is this young person talking about making a telephone call or something else? Is this telephone call a significant citizen action or just a telephone call? For this young person, this telephone call had a civic purpose and required his or her courage; it was "scary." The telephone call was made in the name of the project, to work on a public issue and was a step in addressing an important personal concern. On the surface, simply a phone call, explored more fully, is a powerful example of an everyday civic act. The observer has to be able to discern the meaning of the act to the youth; the young person must have an interpretive frame and a language to make sense out of her/his act as a civic act and of himself/herself as doing citizen.

Describing Civic Youth Work

> The practical sense of nursing is an articulation of the essence of the way in which nursing is practiced. Unfortunately, many people think of practical as methods or techniques used in practice. But methods and techniques, isolated from the systems of meaning which give direction to their use in achieving the goods at which they aim, make little sense and hence are not practical at all. (Bishop & Scudder, 1990, p. 13)

As for nursing, so too for civic youth work. Brought to civic youth work, the primary system of meaning is democratic citizenship, and the second is human development, a broader and more inclusive frame than scientific adolescent development or socially normative youth development (Rich, 1971; Rogoff, 2003). That is, the work of the civic youth worker is co-creating democratic living citizens and this, at its most robust, is a moral frame for understanding, practicing, and evaluating the human development of young people.

Analyzing a bit more, note that we wrote co-creating democratic living-citizen, not citizen as social role. Rather, the goal is to bring about living-citizen, the doing and being citizen as a mode of being-in-the-world. Yet to make this confusing, when one is citizen one can read oneself as citizen and can be so read by others. What we are getting at is that here there are two ways of making sense and these are compatible and often congruent.

This means that how the youth worker orients to the young person/people, what he or she does and how it is done must be read and make sense to them and us both as grounded, practical democratic practice and not as abstract, reified youth work. The civic youth worker craft orientation, then, is to invite a way of doing and being a self (Kotarba & Fontana, 1984), a democratic, citizen self. What the youth worker does is to try *to become present and available to actual young people as an embodied invitation to co-create here and now space/time to be together and to work together in democratic ways on some issue, problem, condition or situation of immediate interest to them*, and to do this over and over again. How this is done, the particular and specific acts, methods and procedures are quite varied and many are available (Hildreth, 1998; McIntyre, 2000), and some having been evaluated as to their effectiveness against specific outcomes (Lerner, 2004; Winter, 2003). We prefer to distinguish between what is done and how it is done. In the same way, it is how one lives that shows lived-citizen and living as citizen, not only what she or he does, such as voting. Since a citizen as such can do bad, even evil, we write democratic lived-citizen. Since that too can lead to evil or merely the bad, it becomes clear that democratic civic youth work is a moral practice and not a neutral scientific practice–a moral practice based in part on/in the sciences of adolescent development, about political life, social change, and the like.

This formulation owes much to Bishop and Scudder's (1990) work on nursing, which has a clear and single bio-medical science base for nursing science and several other sources for its philosophy, approaches, and methods. This is true too for teaching (de los Reyes & Gozemba, 2002; van Manen, 1990), social work (Healy, 2000; Nelson Reid & Popple, 1992), and other human services. In all of these, expertise is an action praxis joining values, philosophy, morality, and technique. This is why one could claim that civic youth work and related praxes are more complex practices than rocket science. Bishop and Scudder (1990) title their book on nursing, *The Practical, Moral and Personal Sense of Nursing: A Phenomenological Philosophy of Practice*. A full description of civic youth work would do the same. What remains is to give more examples along with short discussion of the practices shown.

> Yeah, well, [the worker] like, [the worker] doesn't try and be like the leader, or the head guy, [the worker] makes us like try and be that, or one of us steps in the day, and, it works out, like, usually.
>
> She wasn't like those [workers] that just stepped back and kind of watch us; she actually participated in this with us.
>
> [The worker] is like "a supervisor who's just, if you need anything like materials, whatever, they will get it for you and will not take over your project."
>
> Just this last time I was waving the laser in a kind of cool way and it caused, like, a weird, like, shape to appear and [the worker] was talking about it and they tried to figure out more about it. And it turns out that we couldn't really do anything cool with it. But we just, you know, [the worker] kind of like took that idea, and I felt kind of special because [the worker] was paying attention to my ideas, I guess.

For those partial to cookbooks for teaching particular skills, we suggest reviewing and adapting *Public Adventures*, by 4-H (Bass, 1999), *Building Worlds, Transforming Lives, the Public Achievement Guidebook* (Hildreth, 1998), or *Developing Communities in Partnership with Youth* (Center for Youth as Resources, 2001). Remember it is not just what is done, it is also *how* it is done and what this doing means within the context of democratic lived-citizens as a type of human development for all persons and, given our interests, young people especially.

The What and How of Civic Youth Work

The general task of civic youth work is the ongoing co-creation with young people of democratic living-citizen. How is this done? Through the ongoing embodied invitation of worker to young person. Crucial is how the worker does his/her job. How does he or she live as an open invitation to responsible working together? All of this is part of civic education and civic youth work as a type of sociopolitical pedagogy, civic education (civics). This pedagogy is more social than individual in its orientation to taking on citizen role in one's life-worlds at home, school, play and work; in its orientation to interdependency between

and among others in small to large groups and in its awareness of social norms, social roles, social practices, and discourses constituting issues and ways of response. It is social in how the personal is brought to the everyday and in how freedom, choice, and responsibility–the Existential and existential triology–are given situated sociopolitical expression.

These general orientations of the craft and practice of civic education work as touchstones of reality (Friedman, 1976) that take on meaning-to-live-by in situations and other contexts. These elements of the civic youth work orientation can be made more specific.

Elements of Civic Youth Work Orientation

These elements are skill-sets or skill-clusters in the role-set (Merton, 1961) of civic youth worker. These are many ways of ordering and presenting skills basic to a semi- or full profession. This is one we prefer but may not be best for you the teacher, trainer, or worker: keep our ethos, and change the specifics!

A skill can be presented as inside or outside a situation or other context, as trained ability to master a task at a high level of competence and consistency; skill can be presented as an objective act and as a meaningful act. For us, skill is a meaningful, contextual act of expertise (Bishop & Scudder, 1990). Beyond even this, skills are embodied–we do these–and thus, along with meaning found in the craft orientation of civic youth work, skills are modes-of-doing and being lived citizen. Skills in this sense are philosophy-in-action, are praxis. Skills along with ethos and orientation are the essentials of the civic youth work craft orientation.

In presenting skills as modes of doing and being, we do not get to the level of technique, as in the chairs in the room are 17 inches apart, in a half circle, with. . . . Rather, we are at a more abstract level of skill orientation, and we use examples from interviews to point out what we want you to notice. In this we are suggesting that the workers' skills may not be visible to the naked eye. Instead, one must learn to see and hear these, to discern their presence, relevance, utility, and effectiveness. Second, we are quietly following Martin Buber's notion of teaching as pointing: "I have no teaching. I only point to something. I point to reality. I point to something in reality that had not or had too little been seen" (Schlipp & Friedman, 1967, p. 693). What are the essential modes-of-doing and being that we point to and in this way show *educaré*–opening outward, toward, i.e., educating?

Education as the "Discovery of Responsibility" (Morris, 1966)

> I mean there's a lot of things that are really difficult that probably I don't even know if they'll ever be able to control. But you have to try, and see if it does work, and if it doesn't you have to keep trying.

The worker invites young people into recognizing their responsibility to act in civic space as a way to live their freedom through choice (Lesnoff-Caravaglia, 1972). This is part of what it means to be a citizen in personal, social, and political terms. The worker lives a mode of doing and being either by going to the place of young people or inviting them to another place, being clear that the purpose of coming together is to freely explore individual and collective issues, problems, and concerns in their everyday lives or beyond in neighborhood, community, city, nation, world. Both the explicit and implicit message is that we together will co-create safe, public space for exploration, person choice, and group decision. In that common (civic) space, we will together come to agreement about whether we want to continue to come together in the hope and possibility of community–of persons, of interests, or for other purposes.

In these ways, individual youth and the worker both live their personal and civic responsibility to choose how they want their world to be and how they want to live so as to bring about and sustain that world. Their choice is about co-crafting future and, in this, co-crafting self (Holstein & Gubrium, 2000).

Education as the "Partnership of Existence" (Friedman, 1976)

> I didn't really think, like by myself, I would be able to change something in the community. But maybe with the group, I can. And so a lot of like the possibilities you can do with the group that might not be possible by yourself. Because then you have nobody helping you, and you're just trying to do it yourself. Now if you have the group, you can gather information and data, and everything, and have support from other people.

The worker invites young people into explicit realization that one's moral responsibility to others is both face-to-face (Calarco, Friedman, & Atterton, 2004) and more abstract (e.g., acting against hunger in a far away country) and that each person can join with others in types of interdependency which makes explicit each person's responsibility to

those others, near and far. This recognizes the existential truth that "... our very existence is only properly understood as a partnership. We become selves with one another and live our lives with one another in the most real sense of the term" (Friedman, 1974, pp. 304-305). Coming together to explore common interests and purposes is a ground for recognizing that we need others and the space for living-out that recognition. Citizen is a recognition of one's place in this social and political partnership. The Civic Youth worker's invitation as a mode of doing and being civic educator embodies existential trust (Friedman, 1974) in this partnership.

Education in "Existential Trust"

> We're all connected to the same role. Like everybody had to be responsible for a different part. And then, like, if I wasn't, I would set that example and, like, seeing that I'm not responsible, not dependable.

The worker as embodied civic ethos exists as a mode of address inviting young people to respond and, by so doing, to disclose "existential trust" (Friedman, 1974) as a possibility that exists and that they can make real by choosing freely to live in this as their mode-of-being and doing. There can be no together without this, and the courage to name, decide, choose, and act in common purpose on common interest presumes each person's willingness to believe and live the promise of existential trust.

Related in the worker-young person address and response is the idea of vocation, a conversation between and acts following from a compelling world-address–person, issue, problem, situation–its being noticed and read, and one's free choice to act, to respond. The civic youth worker as educator makes explicit both existential trust and vocation as reality touchstones guiding everyday life and life in the purposive group the civic youth worker is co-forming and co-sustaining with young people.

Education as Caring

> [The workers] are pretty cool. You know, you can just have fun around [and] with them, and actually have a decent talk.

Civic youth educators live caring about and caring for (Mayerhoff, 1971; Noddings, 1984) as modes of being and doing and, in this way, point the way to individual, small group, and larger group ways of being with others. Caring here is not a thing or an attribute or a process

but, instead, is a way of doing whatever one chooses to do; it is a how of doing, a quality of being together, one woven into responsibility, partnership of existence, and existential trust. Caring about individuals, issues and problems and caring for others are all included.

All civic youth work is about caring in these ways, in the invitation to come together, in how educator and young people work together and in how each makes individual and collective sense out of their togetherness: What is the meaning to each of our coming together to work together on this issue?

These four existential modes of doing and being civic youth work beg for specificity, concreteness, particularity. While we hear this, we respond in a way which is oriented to topics quietly introduced above: expertise, mastery and the skills of civic youth work. First, we introduce briefly the stage(s) of civic youth work.

From Stages of Civic Youth Work to Action-Orientation as a Stage-in-a-Process

A youth work process is constituted of smaller units, smaller time segments, and acts. Our language for this is phases or stages: earlier/later; now/then; first this, then that. Such youth work processes are not natural obviously; instead they come from practice experience and are reflected upon and later conceptualized as a process–a way of doing, the steps in doing, a praxis of purpose, way and steps, for example. Rarely, empirical research documents and evaluates such processes. Typically, processes of this type earn their legitimacy from practitioners who answer the questions, "What are you doing?" and "How do you do it?" with "This is my process"–trainers and educators too talk and write about the youth work process.

So there must be a civic youth work process!

And this is what is claimed by Banks (1999), Edginton, Kowalski, and Randall (2005), Jeffs and Smith (1999), Krueger (1980) and Maier (1987). Here words get slippery and the civic youth work process can blur into method, technique and guideline, and then come issues of expertise, mastery and skill to carry-out this process. For the moment, allow that there is a family of civic youth work processes and one way to understand these is as a sequence of stages. In this frame, we propose that there is a process composed of four sets of actions and these may occur in sequence 1-4 over a short to long period or they may occur in alternate sequences, e.g., 1,4,2,3 or 1,3,2,4. The actual sequence is decided upon by the worker and the young people in each specific context.

Action Sets:

1. Entering the place (site).
2. Co-creating the place (site) as a democratic civic rehearsal space.
3. Co-sustaining the democratic space at that place (site).
4. Co-expanding the democratic space into the larger world.

The civic youth worker must do 1 and, if she has been working with these same young people for some time, she may also and, at the same time, work at 3. Put academically, a distinction between when an act in a process sequence is undertaken can be distinguished from the intention of the act, and these may be incongruent. There can be simultaneity in the acts as seen from afar while, internally and phenomenologically, the intention of 1 and 3 are clearly different.

All of this is also about strategies, tactics, expertise, mastery, and skills–all in the context of what is civic youth work, what is its purpose, what are its approach and methods, and how do its practitioners go about their work (purpose, activities, acts and the rest). Let's examine this next using a constructed example based in our direct practice and research.

There is essentially only one stage of practice in civic youth work–the beginning. The beginning is entered or brought about over and over, always with the same purpose–to again co-create communal, civic space for work together on issues, problems and concerns important and meaningful to the young people participating. This is not non-sense! Instead, it is our effort to move toward *ever renewed beginning* as the way of this work and, in so doing, move away from a cookbook approach or a handbook or method that guides the worker through a process presumed to be, but rarely proven, effective: first stage is introduction, the second problem-finding and so on.

However, there is something important about such guides, training manuals, handbooks and cookbooks; they indeed can guide. But they alone are not the work of civic youth work–*the how of the way one does together*. This is the work, the praxis; and the work is done always as depending, as contingent on who is there, previously together-work, real-world constraints and openings, and the rest.

What Does the Civic Youth Worker Have to Know About and Have to Be Able to Do?

The civic youth worker walks into a room where six teenagers are sitting, talking, listening on their headphones. It is in a middle school

and the young people are students in the school. They came to the room to join a group called Students for a Better School. Six hundred students could have come at this time to participate in this group; they receive no school credit for being involved; their effort will be recorded on their school record and on their report card, which their parents must sign and return to the school.

1. What does the civic youth worker see?

- Kids, teens, young people, adolescents?
- 12, 13, 14 year olds?
- Good/bad kids?
- Caucasian, African American, Hispanic, Asian-American, African kids?
- Tall/short, skinny/fat, just right bodies?
- Volunteers, potential participants?
- Citizens?

Civic youth work-in-practice begins before the worker comes to the door; the worker knows as much as possible about: the purpose of the meeting; who called it and why; that person's role in the school; why she or he and not someone else called the meeting; the history of such efforts in general, in schools, with young people this age, in this community and city, etc. She has done some homework and can place this in more inclusive, more complex, and more useful contexts: she knows a lot about this sort of event, space and participants. She comes informed.

What does she do with all of this information, this preparation?

She puts it all into parenthesis (van Manen, 1990) and goes into the room and towards the young people as if one has never before done this. Why?

So that the uniqueness of this situation with these specific young people will have a chance to show the worker what and who they are in their particularity and uniqueness. She wants to be able to work here for the first time–the moment when everything is new and fresh and full of possibility.

Does one forget what is known?

No, merely sets these aside, for now.

2. What does one do next?

She says "hi" and introduces herself, then asks them all why they are there. She confirms the general purpose of getting together and then meets each young person. Then and there, as fully as possible (Friedman, 1983). Together they talk about why this group is being formed. And so on.

3. What is the worker orienting to and attending to?

The civic youth worker is orienting to what could emerge right now, here, with these young people regarding their coming together as a group, their working together on an issues meaningful and important to them, etc. In effect, it is orienting to future-making out of the immediate present here and now, attending to:

- The words and meanings of each person
- The body of each person
- The tone of the group, its ambience
- The sequence of the talk–who is talking, saying what, how and who speaks next, saying what, how.

The worker is imagining the possibilities of co-creating and inhabiting new spaces in which she and they make a new present, and new futures.

4. What is the worker listening for?

She is listening for opportunities to invite them to become a group, invite them to choose to work on a common issue, etc.

What does this mean? How do you listen for opportunities?

It means that the worker subjects every word, silence and body movement, every moment, to a question: Do I now invite them to work together? Do I now invite them to reflect on their talk? Do I now…? Remember: All civic youth work is co-creating beginnings!

5. What does one do next?

The civic youth worker invites and invites again and again, and again: she invites six young people to do something together, here and now such as forming a group or picking an issue to work on.

6. When does one use what has been put in the parenthesis?

The civic youth worker moves in and out of setting aside what is known from education, training, work/life experience, and the bringing it forward and using it. The more one defines herself as a professional and practices within those terms, the more reflexive you are. She is also reflective, waiting a bit, perhaps a moment or longer at the end of the meeting, to review what was done, what else could have been done and, of course, what was missed, done well and poorly. Civic youth workers evaluate to improve their practice.

As a professional she is accountable and responsible to self and others–teachers, parents, community–for the work. Thus the worker practices reflexively and reflectively (Schon, 1983) because it is an ethical imperative for professionals, because it is a good, because she may be required to do so by her agency, and because this is one way to monitor and improve practice. A good worker will also do this with young people for herself, her practice, and for theirs.

In the actual moment with the six young people, the worker watches herself watch, listens to herself think and talk, always aware of one's own awareness and of whatever is going on. During these moments of awareness, the worker can bring forward learning–education, training, experience–to make sense out of what is going on with two purposes: (1) the co-creating and co-sustaining with these young people here and now of civic space; and (2) the healthy development of these young people.

What grounds our example is the context, the situation, the stage in the process, the worker's stance (ethos), craft orientation, and praxis. A traditional language for these is knowledge, attitudes, and skills. We want to explore next how the categories of knowledge, skills, and attitudes can be reframed and to suggest positive consequences of this for civic youth work practice and for understanding it.

EXPERTISE, MASTERY, TECHNIQUE, AND SKILLS: WHAT IS CIVIC YOUTH WORK?

The classical frame for doing, understanding and researching practice in the applied human, social, and behavioral sciences–education, social work, counseling, and the like is to show relevant practitioner knowledge, attitudes, and skills. At times, these latter are grounded in methods and techniques. This is the frame of applied science contrasted by Bishop and Scudder (1990) to "practical human science." Without

walking this distinction back to epistemology, tradition, and culture in the crafts, arts and sciences–where there are real, important and complex issues–we nudge up against these complexities by examining civic youth work as expertise, mastery, and skills. We embed skills, as Bishop and Scudder, Jr. (1990) suggest, in meanings. Simply put, skill is practiced, animated, brought into existence in its performance, and that is always in a place, at a time, in a situation and in other contexts–skill is a situated act.

A skill is a particular type of act; its home is in two language and related social worlds–the workplace and mastery and expertise. The home of a skill is disclosed in answer to the question, "What does it take to do this job?" (Simon, Schenke, & Dippo, 1991, p. 27). A skill is not the sole possession of an individual or even individuals in a "community of practice" or a field or profession. Rather, skills are "always dependent for their development, display and maintenance on opportunities to put them into practice" (Simon, Schenke, & Dippo, 1991, p. 45). To get at skills, first get at the situation and the work-at-hand: What is the work/job to be done? What does it take to get the job done?

This is where skill is to be found. To look other places is to risk reifying skill, that is, treating it, an abstraction, as a concrete, particular thing or activity. A second home for skill is qualitative, not defining. It is about skill performance. Both skill and mastery are inside the larger frame of expertise (Ericsson & Smith, 1991). In the context of civic youth work skill, technique, mastery, and expertise are performative-in-context of what is at-hand to be done. Skills join in its performance, as well as do ethos, stance, orientation.

Beyond all of this, skill is a mode of doing/being. This means that skill is not only realized in performance as praxis; skill is also a way of living–the joining of one's doing and being. This is true especially in our society where what we do is said to be who we are, that is, doing drives being.

Further, skill is one element of technique and both are essential to "practical science" (Strasser, 1985). In practical science seen phenomenologically, the intentionality of the worker brings together what is needed to do a job (p. 57); the civic youth worker is a practical person and brings together what is needed to do this job here and now–with these youth in this venue with one and a half hours to get it done. This practical person brings together knowledge of young people as such; democratic, civic values and practices; the setting; the stage of the process and the like so as to craft in the here and now intentional acts to co-create, co-sustain, and co-extend young people's civic engagement.

Education and Training

Since skill in these senses is a verb, is action (in the service of a task), a performance, then mastery and expertise are high levels of performance. This tells us that the education and training of civic youth work skills is best done in an experiential pedagogy–learning quality performance through practice (Argyris, 1993; Argyris & Schon, 1974). But of a particular kind: each civic youth work skill then is a cluster of meanings, acts, activities, knowing, beliefs specific to each unique context and situation in which there is work to be done. What is the work to be done? Learning to do and be living-citizens in specially constructed rehearsal spaces and also in the larger worlds of school, neighborhood, community and beyond.

What is in this cluster? Again: belief in inclusive and just living-citizenship, understanding young person as human being and life moment-in-context, how to rightly and correctly work to co-create and co-sustain a democratic civic space, and the like.

How should civic youth workers be prepared? Doing with them exactly what one wants them to do with young people and doing this with an unusually high degree of explicitness about intention, purpose, technique, and evaluation so that the worker can come to understand as both insider (group member) and outsider (teacher) the reasoning for each element of the work. Doing this will facilitate the worker's own evaluation of the work, of self, of youth, and the ongoing enhancement of the work. This also is true in all accounts for the worker doing action-research (McNiff & Whitehead, 2006; Stringer, 1996) in addition to–or rather than–process and/or outcome evaluation.

CONCLUSION

Civic youth work is proposed as a new craft orientation for preparing young people for living-citizenship and for working on issues and policies supporting their everyday involvement in school, community, job site, and spiritual place. Introduced and outlined were the craft orientation and ethos, major skills/modes of being and doing, and the civic youth work process.

We conclude with a call for serious analysis, reflection, and action on civic youth work as such and on the need for it because of the moral panic about youth as citizens, because of the political right young people have to participate in issues that concern and affect them, because

young people say these opportunities are valuable and meaningful, because of the relative failure of traditional civics education, because of the relative success of the experiential education pedagogy, and because few in mainline child and youth care, education, or related professions are doing the daily, never-ending work of preparing young people to be just, nonviolent, and responsible agents in and for civil society now as youth and later as adults.

Somebody has to do this public work with and in the name of and for democracy! As Hanna Arendt, the political philosopher wrote, "The primary source of meaning and action . . . [is] in democratic action" (Ingram, 2006, p. 37).

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