ISSN (Online) 2162-9161

EJOURNAL OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

VOLUME 10 | ISSUE 3

Enhancing Civic Engagement Through Leadership Education

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Abstract

Many civic engagement courses within higher education require students to work with community members to make progress on complex problems, which in itself can comprise leadership practice. Yet, there is little evidence that leadership development is strategically incorporated into such civic engagement courses in general. The authors taught eight leadership sessions over two semesters in the Principled Problem Solving Scholars program at Guilford College. The study discussed in this article examined the perceived impact of a leadership curriculum on the personal leadership practices and the civic engagement of 14 undergraduate students. The authors present their findings in the context of three themes, highlighting (1) the shift in the students' philosophies of leadership from leader-centric to collective perspectives, (2) the value of civic leadership and democratic engagement praxis, and (3) salient leadership lessons. The authors also discuss implications of their study findings as well directions for future research, calling for greater integration of the fields of civic engagement and leadership studies and more research around the curricular integration of leadership education and civic education.

Keywords: civic engagement, leadership education, collective leadership, qualitative inquiry

Enhancing Civic Engagement Through Leadership Education

Civic engagement and leadership are two areas of study that have developed along parallel timelines. Emerging largely in the 1980s and proliferating in the 2000s (Guthrie & Jenkins, 2018; Post et al., 2016), both are concerned with addressing wicked problems through collaboration, and both employ murky, malleable, and contested terminology. In this article, we conceptualize *leadership* as an activity, not a position (Chrislip & O'Malley, 2013), that engages others in making progress on addressing tough challenges (Heifetz et al., 2009). Leadership is a socially constructed process that requires collaboration among multiple stakeholders (Ospina & Foldy, 2016). While definitions of *civic engagement* also vary widely, we use the definition offered by the director of The Pew Charitable Trusts:

> Individual and collective actions designed to identify and address issues of public concern…. [Civic engagement] can include efforts to directly address an issue, work with others in a community to solve a problem or interact with the institutions of representative democracy. (Delli Carpini, 2009, para. 2)

When examining these definitions, one might conclude—as we have—that civic engagement is itself an act of leadership. Therefore, the parallel fields could more intentionally learn from and enhance one another, a notion we explored in this study. Specifically, we examined how leadership education has been or can be used to enhance civic education.

As educators interested in developing civic engagement and leadership in students, we have sought examples of how these fields have been integrated through educational practice. The literature makes clear that many leadership courses prepare students to be civically engaged members of society by integrating community-engaged learning, internships, and project-based collaborative learning into their curricula (Althaus, 1997; Arensdorf & Brungardt, 2017; Johnson & Woodward, 2014). There is less evidence, however, that civic engagement courses have made a similar move to systematically incorporate leadership development into their curricula. To investigate whether and how leadership education had been incorporated into civic engagement courses, we examined 100- and 200-level syllabi for leadership content in the list of readings, assignments, or learning outcomes to determine if the instructor had made connections for students between leadership and civic engagement work. Table 1 summarizes the 11 syllabi examined. While a more systematic review would likely have shown more nuance, this initial review of selected syllabi suggests generally that leadership content is underrepresented in civic engagement courses.

Table 1

Leadership Content Within Selected Civic Engagement Courses

Course Name	Institution	Year Offered	Did the Learning Objectives Include Leadership Development?
Introduction to Community and Civic Engagement	University of California, Irvine	2011	No
Introduction to Civic Engagement	San Diego State University	2013	No
Introduction to Civic Engagement	University of Houston	2013	No
Public Discourse	Gustavus Adolphus College	2014	No
Civic Engagement and Social Change	Hagerstown Community College	2015	No
Introduction to Civic Engagement	Drexel University	2015	No
Non-Profit Leadership and Community Engagement	Harvard Extension School	2015	Yes
Civic Engagement	University of Maryland, Baltimore	2016	No
Introduction to Civic Responsibility	Illinois State University	2017	No
Introduction to Community Engagement	Virginia Commonwealth University	2017	No
Introduction to Civic Studies	Tufts University	2019	No

Our study is significant because it investigated how incorporating leadership development into civic engagement courses enhanced the practice of civic engagement for undergraduate students (e.g., helping students name their strengths and assets in addition to the community's assets), filling a gap in the civic engagement and leadership literature.

Integrating Leadership Education Into a Civic Engagement Curriculum

In this section, we describe the civic engagement program and courses that served collectively as the site of the study. We then outline the leadership curriculum that was

incorporated into the courses. Lastly, we provide a subjectivity statement describing how we aligned our backgrounds and roles in this teaching and research.

Principled Problem Solving Scholars Program

The courses and students involved in this study were part of the Center for Principled Problem Solving at Guilford College. Students selected as principled problem solving (PPS) scholars engage in a year-long, credit-bearing educational program, which consists of a fall and spring course. Through these classes, the students identify their core values and commitments, reflect upon how these values (and the core values of Guilford College) connect with their education and vocation, highlight capacities and strengths within local communities, examine particular problems that contradict students' and Guilford's core values, and research the intersecting root causes of these problems—as well as efforts already underway to address them. The PPS program is open to all students on campus who have earned a 3.0 GPA or higher. They must submit a written application and complete an oral interview in order to be selected for the program.

As a key feature of the program, students collaborate in groups, focusing on a social issue of their choice. The students work on their chosen project using the asset-based community development model (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993) and determine collectively what action might be appropriate for that particular time and place. In the past, students have centered on wide-ranging topics such as food security on college campuses, sustainability education, and affordable housing and homelessness.

For example, one of these collaborative group projects comprises an ongoing mentoring program at a local area high school where minority students account for two thirds of the student body. The PPS students offer support to immigrant and refugee students and encourage them to pursue higher education by showing them available resources and helping them with the college application process if they decide they want to go to college. Four participants in the current study were part of this mentoring group, and each has undertaken their own journey to find belonging as the first American born in the family, the daughter of lesbian parents, an immigrant, and the child of refugees—experiences that have encouraged them to support immigrant and refugee students in discovering their own sense of belonging in higher education.

Leadership Curriculum

The leadership curriculum was introduced over eight sessions throughout the two semesters. The sessions were co-developed by both of us to integrate them into the overall course curriculum. From the beginning, we had a general idea of the topics to be incorporated, but the curriculum was refined as we gained more context about the students and previous class sessions.

The leadership topics were generated using a collective leadership paradigm (Ospina & Foldy, 2016). This paradigm—or philosophy of leadership—conceptualizes leadership as a "phenomenon that implicates all members of a group rather than one or several individual members" (Ospina & Foldy, 2016, p. 1), thus shifting the focus from the leader to leadership (Rost, 1993) and from leadership as a position to an activity (Chrislip & O'Malley, 2013). Therefore, topics such as strengths-based leadership (Clifton et al., 2001), which could be used to reinforce individual heroic views of leadership, were introduced as tools for understanding how to exercise leadership within teams.

Several emerging theories of leadership fall within the collective leadership umbrella, including distributed leadership, shared leadership, democratic leadership, and adaptive leadership (Kniffin & Patterson, 2019). For our study, we presented the conceptual thinking around the shift from leader-centric to collective perspectives of leadership, but we drew heavily on the framework of adaptive leadership (Heifetz et al., 2009) to organize and introduce the leadership sessions. Adaptive leadership is one of the most developed, practical frameworks under the collective leadership umbrella. The Kansas Leadership Center has built upon this framework to develop four competencies—diagnosing the situation, managing self, intervening skillfully, and energizing others (O'Malley & Cebula, 2015)—which were specifically used to frame our leadership sessions.

Since this course was rooted in public issues, we also included Ganz's (2010) work on developing public narratives so that students could practice connecting their individual stories to public issues. We also facilitated a deliberative civic engagement forum (Kliewer & Priest, 2016), again drawing from Ganz, to connect students' individual narratives into a shared story focused on collective action. Both of these sessions allowed students to learn skills in the classroom which are directly applicable to public work. Tables 2 and 3 summarize the leadership topics, offer brief descriptions of those topics, and list resources used in the sessions.

Table 2

Summary of Leadership Curriculum, Fall Semester

Topic	Description	Resource
Strengths-based leadership	Students took the StrengthsQuest inventory, explored their top five strengths, and learned about the strengths of their classmates.	Clifton et al. (2001)
Strengths-based leadership	Students analyzed the strengths of their civic engagement team using a team strengths grid.	Clifton et al. (2001)
Adaptive leadership: Diagnose the situation	Students diagnosed their civic engagement topic including distinguishing between adaptive and technical elements and naming factions.	Heifetz et al. (2009) O'Malley & Cebula (2015)
Adaptive leadership: Intervene skillfully	Students brainstormed how they could intervene in their civic engagement topic through the lenses of acting experimentally, holding multiple interpretations, and embracing conflict.	Heifetz et al. (2009)

Table 3

Summary of Leadership Curriculum, Spring Semester

Topic	Description	Resource
Public narrative	Students learned about Ganz's framework for telling a public narrative and then developed their own narratives.	Ganz (2010)
Deliberative civic engagement	Students participated in a deliberative civic engagement process, which included sharing individual stories, drawing themes from their stories, and determining action steps.	Kliewer & Priest (2016) Roadside Theatre (1999)
Adaptive leadership: Manage self	Students took an inventory assessing their mental, physical, spiritual, and emotional energy. They then engaged in self-reflection through writing about how to focus on managing their energy, not just their time.	Heifetz et al. (2009) O'Malley & Cebula (2015)
Ethical leadership	Students discussed a case study called *Cornea's in the Congo* by Joanne Ciulla to apply Kidder's framework for identifying ethical dilemmas.	Karim et al. (2012) Kidder (1995)

Subjectivity of the Teacher–Researchers

As faculty and community members, we both bring experience in teaching and community engagement. I, Sonalini, taught classes in civic engagement and politics at Guilford College, and supported faculty in their community-engaged teaching and scholarship. I also conduct my own community-engaged research. In January 2021, I moved to the Institute of Community and Economic Engagement at the University of North Carolina Greensboro (UNCG). There are various aspects of my identity that are central to understanding my embodied experience coordinating civic engagement and leadership development courses at a predominantly White institution. I am a young(ish) Punjabi-Sikh immigrant female born in Saudi Arabia into a low-caste/dalit family. I try to make these parts of my identity visible during the first week of classes to help students break down the stereotype of leadership as an activity confined to and exercised by dominant groups. As a feminist teacher–scholar, I believe it is my responsibility to expose students to pressing civic issues and equip them to think critically about hegemonic narratives and how to dismantle unjust power structures.

I, Lori, am a boundary spanner between leadership education and community engagement. First studying and teaching leadership with a civic orientation at the Staley School of Leadership Studies at Kansas State University, I was steeped in Heifetz et al.'s (2009)

adaptive leadership framework and the Kansas Leadership Center's competencies and principles. As a White, cisgender, middle-class woman, I often taught students with similar perspectives as my own. Teaching in the PPS program allowed me to learn alongside more diverse students who demonstrated a passion for justice in their communities. During this study, I was a community-engaged professional at UNCG supporting faculty in doing community-engaged scholarship and conducting my own community-engaged research on civic leadership development as a doctoral student. As a learner, teacher, and scholar in Greensboro, my identities were more differentiated from those around me and were often more privileged, leading to my own learning and increased passion for teaching leadership from frameworks that recognize the assets of diverse stakeholders. In 2020, I transitioned back to a department of leadership studies as a faculty member at Fort Hays State University.

Research Design and Sampling

This qualitative study used a survey, focus groups, and document review to explore how 14 students in the PPS Scholars program perceived the impact of the leadership development curriculum on their personal leadership practices and their group civic engagement practices. Upon receiving institutional review board approval to conduct the study, we invited the PPS students to participate and provided them an alternative option for the class session. Data were not analyzed until the course was complete, to assure students that participation would not impact their course grade.

Some of the majors represented within the cohort we researched included art, biology, English, history, international studies, philosophy, psychology, and Spanish. The vast majority (13) of the students were traditionally aged college students; six identified as students of color, and 11 identified as female. For their community engagement projects, the student participants worked in four small teams. They first completed an online, eight-question survey, which we used to refine our focus group protocol. We simultaneously held two 45-minute focus groups, each of which included two civic engagement teams. The third data source consisted of an assignment on leadership from the students' e-portfolios. The assignment asked students to write a reflection, based on their experiences in the scholars program, describing how their definition of leadership had evolved throughout the academic year.

Analysis

The data were analyzed using an open-coding procedure that primarily applied in vivo codes (Saldaña, 2009). We began by each coding the data from the focus groups and conducting our own thematic analysis. We then met to discuss our themes, categories, and codes, which we found to be mostly convergent. After determining that our analysis methods were aligned, one of us coded the surveys using the same coding procedure and then merged the codes from both focus group transcripts and the surveys into common themes. We selected one assignment from the e-portfolio that spoke directly to our research question (described previously) as a way to crystalize—or open a more complex understanding of (Tracy, 2010)—our findings. Though this assignment was not coded, it was used to illustrate more contextual detail around themes that surfaced in the analysis of the survey and the focus groups. Ultimately, three themes emerged from the data, and in the following section we incorporate all three data sources in our discussion of the themes.

Findings

The first of the three themes that emerged from the data—shifting philosophies of leadership—is the broadest and describes the origins and influences of the students' philosophies of leadership and how they changed and expanded throughout their experience in the PPS Scholars program. The second theme—civic leadership and democratic engagement praxis—describes how students connected leadership theory to their practice of civic engagement. The third theme—salient meaningful leadership lessons—focuses on the specific lessons that students named as most meaningful in their experience of applying leadership to their civic engagement work. All three themes were supported by participants in all four civic engagement groups, and evidence from the survey and the focus groups from all four groups are included in this discussion of the findings. To provide a more contextual description of the themes, we highlight the mentoring group, using evidence from their leadership assignments.

Shifting Philosophies of Leadership

This theme illuminates the students' thinking about leadership, including how they viewed leadership prior to the course and how those views shifted. Additionally, we describe various ways that students defined leadership and the values they believed informed their philosophy of leadership.

The philosophy of leadership taught in the PPS courses maintains that leadership is an activity, not a position (Chrislip & O'Malley, 2013). This philosophy aligns with a collective paradigm of leadership (Ospina & Foldy, 2016) and contrasts with leader-centric perspectives (Rost, 1993). Early in the courses, it became apparent that many of the students had preconceived notions about leadership which aligned with a leader-centric perspective. The students reflected on this in the study. Deja (all participant names are pseudonyms) said, "I feel like [leadership] was kind of predetermined on me like this person's the leader [and you just have to] kind of look to them." Nahid indicated that she had "romanticized" the definition of leadership and thought "it had to be a certain type of somebody that could be a leader," naming very visible leaders such as Malcolm X, Rosa Parks, and Gandhi. Furthermore, Ashley, commenting on her high school leadership program, said, "They, like, have this very specific mold of what a leader is, [and if felt like], 'Okay well, we're going to shove you in this mold and you have to fit it or else like, you know, you don't fit up to the standard.'" This view of leadership as inaccessible and romanticized was representative of many of the students' perspectives prior to the course. Therefore, as instructors, we had to facilitate the unlearning of these ideas.

The study findings suggest that the curricular intervention shifted, albeit to varying degrees, the students' philosophies of leadership toward collective perspectives. One student explained, "I never really defined leadership as a team endeavor before this year. So, my whole philosophy has changed." A couple of students' definitions revealed a mix of leader-centric and collective leadership paradigms. For example, one student defined leadership as "an act where people take charge and know when and how to execute leading effectively. Knowing when to step back and when to be the driving force." While many students demonstrated a more collective or democratic philosophy of leadership, some still struggled to let go of the idea that a leader must take charge or have authority. Other students indicated that their philosophies already reflected a more collective paradigm but that the course helped them learn how to apply their leadership more and affirmed their perspective on leadership.

The students were also asked to reflect more broadly on their thoughts about and practices of leadership beyond their definitions, with some describing leadership as being smaller than they previously thought. For example, Andrew, who had been volunteering with an animal rights club on campus, said that he originally thought he needed to be an officer in order to lead. However, he explained a shift in his thinking:

> Now I feel like I can be in the club just as a member and sort of lead through myself and what I want to get from that club…. So I think that I understand that leadership can be a small thing. It's not always big.

Similarly, Mary described showing up consistently to club activities as a way to lead outside of an officer position. She said, "I feel like sometimes it's just by you committing to something and you actively showing [up] and being present in that space, you're able to exercise leadership even if you weren't given like … a position." In this way, leadership became more accessible to these students.

As suggested by the reflections of the PPS students, leader-centric perspectives of leadership may unnecessarily make leadership "big" and inaccessible. When students romanticize leadership, they may think they cannot lead or that they must wait to lead until they have more ideal characteristics or a formal title. Yet, when students realize that leadership is a process that they can participate in with the strengths they already possess, many possibilities for leadership open up for them. One of the most powerful realizations came from Gabi, a mentoring group member:

> I want to be a leader to show people from my community that it's possible. That any of them could be one too…. I've had so many opportunities that I've let slip out of my hands because I was too scared to lead and be the center of attention. I didn't want so much responsibility to rest on my shoulders. There are so many issues I am passionate about tackling. From immigration to prison reform to education. There's so much work to be done in our nation. We can be and do better, but sometimes it feels like no one is doing anything. I'm tired of waiting for someone else to do the work when I can do it.

Challenging the dominant narratives of leadership which students held was an important precursor to their leadership practice, and the data showed that the curricular intervention in the PPS course succeeded in encouraging students to shift their thinking about leadership to one that included themselves as potential leaders.

Civic Leadership and Democratic Engagement Praxis

As community engagement professionals, we understand that community–university partnerships ought to be mutually beneficial and reciprocal. This requires a commitment to working *with* communities to address public issues instead of fixing problems *for* the community. The PPS course included civic engagement content such as asset-based community development (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993), which is a tool that helps map community assets. Introducing students to a collective paradigm of leadership was an additional way to teach them strategies for working with the community and their group mates. This theme highlights the value of collective leadership in practice as understood by the students. Some students provided examples of how collective leadership applied to settings beyond the PPS course, but here we focus primarily on its application to their civic engagement work. Our intent is to demonstrate how collective leadership can enhance the practice of civic engagement for students.

For their civic engagement projects, the PPS scholars worked in small peer groups and with community members. Collaborating within their small groups gave them multiple opportunities to integrate collective leadership into practice, and many students highlighted how they learned to lead with other classmates capable of leading. Several students described how they shared work, including comments such as, "We've split up responsibilities in a way where it's best suited with our strengths" and "My group and I took turns following and leading for our group." What seemed to be unique for this civic engagement project compared to other group projects was the students' intention to share leadership and responsibility across the group. One student explained,

> I have learned to engage more in a collaborative decision-making process, and I have seen exactly how I act within a team of strong individuals. I used to be someone who would take charge of almost all of the workload in a group setting, but now I am more of a harmonizer and someone who gives insights when I feel it is needed.

Students described learning to lead from their strengths and realizing "others' potential contributions," resulting in more balanced leadership, as opposed to one person taking control.

While the students practiced their own leadership in the civic engagement project, they also had ah-ha moments about leading with, not *for*, communities in the context of strengths-based leadership. Spencer shared humbly,

> I remember, like, for a second I was like, "Wait, homeless people have jobs?"… and then I was like, "What a stupid thing to think," but I thought it and, you know, to have to interact with that thought and confront your ignorance as opposed to just like letting them fester. That was, and like a more simple tiny thing was like, I know I'm good at art and stuff, and I think it was important for me to remember that just because you have a strength in something doesn't mean that other people don't.

Just as we talked about everyone in the classroom having strengths to bring to the table, it took Spencer time to realize that people experiencing homelessness also have strengths. Similarly, another student noted that, although they recognized that everyone in their group was "a leader in their own right," it was still valuable to listen to "members of the homeless population tell us what's wrong with the different systems" rather than trying to "tell them how we can 'fix' it." An important element of teaching civic engagement courses is helping students realize they are not saviors who will come in and solve community problems.

Students in the mentoring group highlighted practices related to applying leadership within their community settings. One student explained that "knowledge of effective leadership, collaboration, and communication" helped ease the process of working with speakers, staff, and high school students. Another student identified the process of relationship building as a valuable aspect of working with communities: "I tend to focus more on community building rather than diving straight into tutoring or helping the community, since I understand the importance of trust before service." Daxa took this a step further, blurring the line between student and community:

> I realized that instead of having it be a two-sided thing where the community and researchers are volunteers and stuff … it can be like a community and different researchers and volunteers in the community. And it made me think about how the most effective work that I can do is start from my own community. So instead of just having

> outsiders coming to my community to help out, I feel like it would be much more effective if I help my community.

While not all students achieved this deeper level of reciprocity with their community partners, many began to perceive the assets they brought to their group, the assets they could rely on from their group mates, and the assets within the community. This combination of collective leadership, strengths-based leadership, and asset-based, reciprocal civic engagement hold promise for civic leadership practices.

Salient Leadership Lessons

Regarding this final theme, we present findings related to the leadership lessons that students highlighted as most meaningful to their learning and practice of civic engagement. Overall, there were three major lessons that the students referenced repeatedly in the study: (a) strengths-based leadership, (b) public narrative, and (c) managing self.

By far the most frequently named leadership lesson was strengths-based leadership (Clifton et al., 2001). First, students appreciated that an external source, the StrengthsQuest inventory, provided them language for "qualities you have," which made it "easier to communicate those things with [their] peers." Second, it helped them see how they could contribute to teams without having a title; as Mary said, "You're still able to use your skills and combine with other people to fill a leadership role." Additionally, their ability to see diverse strengths of their teammates working together within their respective civic engagement project helped them "get a better understanding of how to interact with [others]," while also interacting with people who "had a lot of similar categories." Charlotte added, "Working on our projects really allowed me to see leadership in many different lights. After doing StrengthsQuest, my group was able to apply our skills in different areas, and we all became leaders in our own skills." This helped some students recognize when they could rely on other team members to lead. One student explained, "I was able to grow in that and then also look and see like, 'Okay, in this case, I need to step back because this isn't like my specialty and so I need to let somebody else take the reins.'" Gabi, from the mentoring group, explained,

> I realized that no one person really possessed an entire balance of strengths that would make them "perfect." This, in a way, made me feel good and better about the fact that I'm not "perfect" myself. It also made me feel like I could be of some use to my teammates.

The notion of strengths-based leadership resonated with students because it helped them understand their own leadership strengths and how to embrace the strengths of others.

The content on public narrative (Ganz, 2010) invited students to make themselves vulnerable by digging deeply into why they were leading. The students often related this learning back to strengths in recognizing that the ability to tell a compelling story about why one engages in leadership work is also a strength. For example, one student reflected on how she used to uphold leaders as "really strong voices in the community"; however, after learning about public narrative, she concluded that "when they're being remembered, it's their story of how they led … or what inspired them to lead" that should be remembered. Nahid shared that she cried during the public narrative session, during which she told a story about how her brother had been discriminated against. She said,

> I thought leaders were supposed to be strong, and therefore hard … suppress their emotions, lead by logic. And I was like, "That can't be me. I'm too emotional."… But

> then seeing everybody be vulnerable, and that's like part of the process of being a leader. And that's actually making me realize that [having] feelings is probably good for the issue that you're leading for or about. And it's also, like, good for humanity, because you obviously care.

Building on Nahid's comment, another student noted that asking for help requires a leader to risk vulnerability. Learning to rely on the strengths of others was hard for her because she had previously seen that as a weakness. Overall, the students held up vulnerability as a key aspect of learning to tell their public narratives and made them more willing to share with others their reasons for leading.

Self-care is important in community engagement work because making progress on community issues can be very personal and can appear never-ending. Students found the concept of managing self (Heifetz et al., 2009; O'Malley & Cebula, 2015) an important aspect of their civic work. One student explained, "Managing the self has been one leadership role that I did not know I needed to be partaking in; however, in order to be a good leader, you must first make sure you are mentally able to lead." Another student commented on the need to manage self for the sustainability of the work:

> It's not always about giving, giving, giving. In order for someone to continue giving, I believe they have to have something to give. Sometimes you run out of it because you need time to regenerate and take care of oneself.

Managing self is an important part of civic engagement work because the public issues individuals face are often ongoing. The work is long, personal, and taxing, and finding ways to sustain that work by taking care of the self throughout is critical.

In addition to strengths, public narrative, and managing self, the students highlighted other salient leadership lessons but not to the extent of these other three. These additional lessons included ethical dimensions of leadership, values-based leadership, and the social change model. We also recognized that the term adaptive leadership, which we used to frame multiple course sessions, was almost completely absent in the study. While students picked up the overarching collective paradigm of leadership and specific elements of adaptive leadership, such as managing self, they did not reference that framework when reflecting on their civic engagement work. The most frequent recommendations that students shared regarding future sessions was to implement the leadership content earlier in the semester and to provide even more resources that students could reference later.

Implications

Leadership is a process of engaging others to mobilize change. When we as educators ask students to engage with communities to effect change around complex challenges, such as access to higher education for immigrant/refugee students, we are asking them to practice leadership. As evidenced in this study, integrating leadership development curricula into civic engagement courses can provide students with knowledge, attitudes, and skills to more effectively lead alongside their community partners. This is particularly relevant for people with marginalized identities who are not often portrayed as "leaders," but who exercise leadership in numerous ways.

This research study has implications for educators who teach civic engagement courses, pointing to the value of integrating leadership curricula. It also has implications for students,

particularly students with minoritized identities, who may benefit from leadership development as a means of shifting their perspectives on what type of people can engage in leadership. More broadly, community partners working with students through civic engagement projects may be able to support students in their leadership development by seeing how the community partners exercise leadership in their arena.

Strengths and Limitations

A strength of this study was that the participants represented all of the students in this PPS course, not just those who demonstrated higher aptitude for leadership. Additionally, the participants had diverse identities, including many that are not often represented in mainstream perspectives of leadership (e.g., immigrants, undocumented students, introverts). In hindsight, we wish the survey had gathered students' names so we could match their responses to their participation in the focus groups and their leadership assignments. As in most qualitative research, the deeply contextual nature of this study was an asset. However, it also limited our understanding of application beyond this set of students since we discovered that students in the following year engaged with the curriculum in different ways. Similarly, this scholars program was rooted in the Quaker ideas of discernment and ethical leadership. It is unclear to what extent this foundation impacted students' capacity to learn ideas related to civic leadership and how that may differ at other institution types.

Future Research

This study shows promise for the integration of leadership education into civic engagement, and more research should focus on this topic. We recommend: (a) expanding the analysis of existing civic engagement syllabi to discover other examples of courses—including non-credit bearing courses—that include leadership development in the curriculum; (b) studying this integration outside the private, Quaker institutional setting; (c) developing longitudinal studies to understand how the course outcomes persist or change over time; and (d) further developing collective leadership theories and translating them into frameworks for guiding educators.

Conclusion

Through our collaboration, we integrated a leadership development curriculum—from a collective perspective—into a civic engagement course. This qualitative study examined how the integration of this curriculum impacted the practice of leadership and civic engagement for the participating PPS students. We found that many students shifted their philosophies of leadership from leader-centric to collective paradigms and that they began to see themselves as individuals who could lead in communities now. We found that students incorporated their learning, such as in the area of strengths-based leadership, into both their small groups and in their civic engagement projects—which at times led to more asset-based and reciprocal practices. We learned that strengths-based leadership, public narrative, and managing self were three leadership lessons that were applicable to students within and beyond their civic engagement practice. We encourage more instructors of civic engagement courses to consider how the strategic incorporation of leadership development might enhance the practices of civic engagement and encourage additional research at this intersection.

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