

# Chapter 24

## Higher Education Pedagogy Revisited: Impacting Political Science College Students' Active Learning, Opinion Development, and Participation

**Christopher McCarthy-Latimer**  
*Framingham State University, USA*

### **ABSTRACT**

*This chapter is an update that examines the effect of using “deliberation” as a tool for teaching at the college level. The students in this study considered the economic benefits and expenses of a box store. Deliberation provides a unique insight into what might be a better understanding of what students are thinking. The literature review contains various forms of deliberation including the process of deliberation in education; the outcomes of deliberative polling events; deliberation with technology; and whether working has an impact on students who deliberate. The use of pre- and posttest surveys shows that students who engaged in a deliberative dialogue were more likely to increase their civic learning and to change their opinions about the issues discussed. The findings demonstrate that deliberation pedagogy influences students' beliefs at both the individual and aggregate level.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

There is a problem with individuals not participating or engaging in the world around them. This indifference seems to have led to a decline of community. This relates to a weakening of what Robert Putnam (2000, 2002) identifies as social capital. He delineates social capital as the gatherings of social networks that place the foundation of trust, cooperation and teamwork for mutual benefit. Putnam (2000, 2002) revealed that participation in civic associations, taking part in local affairs, schools, churches and unions, spending time with family and friends, donating to charitable causes have diminished. This viewpoint adopts the notion that participation or engagement would be a benefit to our representative democracy.

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-6684-3706-3.ch024

These types of communities that increase social capital are difficult to locate but exist in the United States. Putnam, Feldstein and Cohen (2004) utilize twelve case studies showing the creation of new social capital in our society. These case studies are from all over the United States including public libraries in the City of Chicago that have expanded their mission to reach out to the local community and provide programs that meet local needs, enhance the quality of life and promote local engagement. This also includes a reading and mentoring program that connects older adults with younger children with tutoring and developing the community in urban Philadelphia schools. The authors discuss the precise situations of each example that existed in a community or association and understood that, "Building social capital depends both on the actions of protagonists and on key enabling structural conditions in the broader environment" (p. 271). Putnam, Feldstein, and Cohen (2004) believe that the results of these twelve case studies is fundamental to the effective construction of social capital.

The classroom is another "community" that can be used to increase social capital. This is because of the relationship between students and faculty that includes direct collaboration within a course. The growth of political apathy and the decline of social capital by students has been a growing concern to educators, policy makers and scholars (Arum & Roksa 2014; Noack & Jugert 2014; Zeldin, Christens, & Powers 2013). Several methods involve citizens and making their viewpoints valued. These include focus groups (Carey & Asbury 2016; Derksen et al., 2017; O'hEocha, Wang, & Conboy 2012); citizen juries (Degeling et al., 2017; Withall et al., 2016); citizen panels (Amelung & Grabner 2017; Voß 2016) and devising seminars (Wotela, 2016).

The deliberative poll is different from these previous methods listed above because it allows for estimating informed opinion while preserving the possibility of association to the overall population through sampling (Fishkin & Luskin 2005; Olsen & Trenz 2014; Gerber 2015). Deliberation in the classroom incorporates the importance of commitment, the forming of sincere relationships amongst the students and the faculty while allowing the class to know that their voices and opinions matter. Allowing for deliberation in a classroom and providing both sides of an issue might reasonably anticipate that these student decisions may reflect an individual's 'true' interests. Deliberation is a normative theory that assumes rational communicative actions, civic learning and involvement by its citizens (Fishkin & Luskin 2005). As a form of shared inquiry, deliberation involves several important elements for classroom instruction: a direct relationship, personalized and continuous contact, students' participation as well as informed decision-making.

The discipline of political science is one of the best departments situated to encourage political value, civic learning and engagement in several ways. The courses provide instruction regarding the association between democratic practices, government institutions, and civic learning. Studies have found that enrolling in a higher education course might be an important way to enhance civic learning and citizenship (Bennett, Wells, & Freelon 2011). It has been shown multiple times that an increase of education makes it more likely that an individual will engage in voting (Larreguy & Marshall, 2016; Uppal & LaRochelle-Côté, 2016). This study uses an adapted version of the Deliberative Polling process (Ackerman & Fishkin, 2004; Brown & Kenney, 2014; Sager, 2014). The author would like to know whether providing students an occasion to participate in a deliberative dialogue would influence their knowledge, their opinions, their levels of civic learning and engagement.

It will be essential to study whether this method of deliberative dialogue amongst students will lead to greater political efficacy and civic learning. Those participating may also shift from a position of ignorance and disconnection to a position of measured opinion and engagement in the community. The students participating with deliberation will most likely change from a position of ignorance and/or

17 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage:  
[www.igi-global.com/chapter/higher-education-pedagogy-revisited/295007](http://www.igi-global.com/chapter/higher-education-pedagogy-revisited/295007)

## Related Content

---

### Policy Inconsistencies and Community Development: Indigenisation and Economic Empowerment Act Changes and Community Share Ownership Trusts

Valeria Tafadzwa Supu (2023). *International Journal of Political Activism and Engagement* (pp. 1-13).

[www.irma-international.org/article/policy-inconsistencies-and-community-development/321112](http://www.irma-international.org/article/policy-inconsistencies-and-community-development/321112)

### Web Apps for Intercultural Competences and Sustainable Development: A Case Study in Higher Education

Carmen Ricardo-Barreto, Jorge Mizuno, Daladier Jabba, Humberto Llinás, Antonio Medina, Cinthia Astorga Acevedo, Pedro Acevedo, Judith Peña, Claudia Balocoand Sandra Villarreal (2021). *Handbook of Research on Promoting Social Justice for Immigrants and Refugees Through Active Citizenship and Intercultural Education* (pp. 349-373).

[www.irma-international.org/chapter/web-apps-for-intercultural-competences-and-sustainable-development/282321](http://www.irma-international.org/chapter/web-apps-for-intercultural-competences-and-sustainable-development/282321)

### Civic Engagement of Students: Perspectives of Bangladesh

SSM Sadrul Huda, Tanveer Kabirand Tanvir Alam Siddiq (2019). *International Journal of Political Activism and Engagement* (pp. 1-9).

[www.irma-international.org/article/civic-engagement-of-students/236661](http://www.irma-international.org/article/civic-engagement-of-students/236661)

### In the Midst of Digital Economy: The Level of Financial Literacy Amongst Millennials in Delhi City

Neelam Tandonand Deepak Tandon (2021). *International Journal of Political Activism and Engagement* (pp. 46-62).

[www.irma-international.org/article/in-the-midst-of-digital-economy/282512](http://www.irma-international.org/article/in-the-midst-of-digital-economy/282512)

### Participation Sphere: A Model and a Framework for Fostering Participation in Organizations

Carlos Quentaland Luis Borges Gouveia (2018). *Handbook of Research on Civic Engagement and Social Change in Contemporary Society* (pp. 16-39).

[www.irma-international.org/chapter/participation-sphere/198721](http://www.irma-international.org/chapter/participation-sphere/198721)