SIMULATED CITIZEN: HOW STUDENTS EXPERIENCED A SEMESTER LENGTH LEGISLATIVE SIMULATION

by

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For my mother, Flora Lee Ganzler: Everything I am and might be is because of you.

For my wife, Valerie Ganzler: My gratitude is without limit; as is my love.

For my advisor, Diana Hess: No words can describe how grateful I am.

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To my children, Wilson and Jackson: You gave me the strength to see this to the end.

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Abstract

This collective case study contains the results of year-long inquiry into how students experienced a semester length legislative simulation that was rife with political conflict. Specifically the study sought to determine: what teaching strategies were employed, what role conflict played in affecting students' political engagement, and what the ideological underpinnings of the simulation were.

Pre and posttests that measured political engagement and internal efficacy were given at the beginning and end of each semester. One third (n=26) of the sample size was interviewed about their experiences. Teachers were interviewed about the purpose of social studies, their conception of democracy, and their pedagogy. Each class was also observed several times.

Students increased their level of political engagement and their internal efficacy. Political engagement was moderately correlated with comfort with conflict. Students reported being highly engaged, more interested in politics, and singled out the interactive, constructivist nature of the simulation as the primary source of their self-reported change.

Students also acknowledged the skill, passion, and knowledge of their teachers. Teachers did not disclose their opinions on controversial issues. Teachers used parliamentary procedure, and emphasized civil discourse during class debates. The highly scaffolded nature of the simulation helped to structure conflict.

This simulation bridged political participation with a justice oriented view of citizenship, which had previously been identified as a gap in citizenship education. Students increased their

interest in politics, their sense of possessing the skills necessary to participate in the political system, as well as having the ability to critically analyze the root cause of social and political problems.

Chapter 1. A Tale of Two Debates

During the summer of 2009, the United States Congress began to consider health care reform. Senators and representatives returned home to hold town meetings with their constituents, only to find that participating in such meetings was nearly impossible. Across the nation – from Green Bay, Wisconsin where a meeting hosted by Rep. Steve Kagen was marred by hecklers, to Tampa, Florida where Rep. Kathy Castor was drowned out by shouts of "Tyranny, Tyranny," - members of Congress were unable to engage with voters in substantive discussions about health care (Smith, 2009). Instead, many members of Congress were confronted with charges of creating 'death panels', some were intimidated by angry mobs, while others received death threats (Krugman, 2009).The protestors who disrupted town hall meetings and health care forums rejected a particular form of participation labeled *deliberative democracy*. Deliberative democracy holds that political discourse among citizens who wrestle with public policy options is the most reliable means of producing decisions that will be regarded as judicious, legitimate, and moral.

Central to the acceptance of deliberative democracy is a tolerance for *conflict*. Conflict is the collision of interests that occurs as people pursue and promote divergent outcomes in public policy. Deliberative democracy asserts that conflict is not only unavoidable in a democracy; it is healthy because the friction between two opposing sides often results in a sifting of competing claims. As false claims fall through the sieve of public scrutiny and logic, those that remain have the most merit. Political rhetoric distinguished by hyperbolic claims is no more novel than voter discontent with their representatives in Congress. But the health care protests were unique in the sense that the goal of the protest was not simply to mount opposition, but rather to shut down a

discussion. The nature of the claims made by opponents of health care reform extended beyond the usual spin of political partisanship. Many of the claims they made: the government would have a monopoly on health care, bureaucrats were going to kill the elderly, suicide would be encouraged - were demonstrably false. The government did not take over health care, there was no public option, government boards did not determine who would live and who would die. There is mounting evidence to suggest that uncivil, and uninformed political discourse is on the rise, and that it is only one of several markers that indicate the U.S. polity has become increasingly uninterested and, perhaps, unable to engage in political deliberation.

Consider now a group of high school seniors confronting public policy differences in a completely different way.

The Full Session

It is 9 a.m. towards the end of the semester and more than 200 students dressed in business apparel, ranging from slick corporate attire to eclectic pairings of sneakers with ties, are worried about whether or not the governor is going to veto a bill on gay rights. Regardless of what the governor decides, this bill will never become a law. The bill in question is part of an elaborate semester length simulation that seniors at this high school must take in order to graduate. Over the next two days, as the seniors who are enrolled in government do every semester, students play the part of senators.

Despite the fact that the bills passed will not be legally recognized outside of the school, the students seem neither to notice nor mind. They debate a wide array of contentious public issues that run the gamut from social issues such as abortion and sex education to economic issues such as the minimum wage and tax rates.

The students have been preparing for this “Full Session” since the first day of class, where they have debated issues, learned parliamentary procedure, placed themselves on a political spectrum, joined a political party, elected party leadership, authored bills, and formed committees to determine which bills should be debated during the Full Session.

The theater is crowded, and people are bunched into two corners. Students are separated by an imaginary line that runs down the middle of the room. On the left, Democrats are huddled in a pre- bill strategy session. On the right, the Republicans are mounting an attack on the bill. Toward the front, on a raised dais, the Speaker of the House grips a gavel, and is flanked on both sides by assistants. The assistants each have a laptop, and the Speaker is seated directly above a microphone. An audio visual projector illuminates a screen filled with a spreadsheet that will contain the results of the vote.

One of the bills forwarded to the floor is a proposal to increase the minimum wage. Two podiums stand on opposite sides of the theater, a dozen students stand in line behind each one. The Speaker announces that twelve minutes have been allotted for debate. The Democrats, filed neatly on the left side of the room, are allowed to go first, for two minutes. A young man speaks into the microphone while the humming projector beside him competes with his soft voice. A student behind the speaker tells him to speak up; he does. Numerous statistics fill the screen informing the audience of cost of living increases, and the burdens that working people face. The student concludes by asking his audience if the cost of living goes up, why don’t wages?

Now it is the Republican’s turn to speak. A student at the other podium begins her two minute speech by claiming that an increase in the minimum wage will result in higher prices for

consumers, and workers being fired. She also points out that only 1.2% of minimum wage workers are the head of their household, and 57% are single.

The Democrats are allowed to rebut the argument. One student quickly states that the minimum wage is less than $7 an hour, hardly enough to live on. Another student is given the microphone. She is a native Spanish speaker, but delivers her speech in English. She says, “It’s tough on minimum wage.” The people on the left side of the theater clap. “You shouldn’t judge what it’s like to live in poverty unless you have experienced it.” After several more speeches from both sides of the aisle, the Speaker of the House calls the vote.

Immediately, 20 student caucus leaders find their caucus members and tally their votes. The students are allowed to vote yes, no, or present. The caucus leaders read the results of their tally while the clerk projects the results of the vote onto a screen that displays the Excel spreadsheet, into which students have inserted a formula that tallies votes. Because of the spreadsheet, the students know how many people are attending this session, and how many votes are needed to pass the bill. As the tally passes 109 votes for the bill, loud cheers erupt through the theater. The bill has passed and the sponsor of the bill hugs another student.

Ponder for a moment how the student debate described above contrasts with the public health care debate. The health care debate protestors shared three characteristics: first, their accusations were marked by outrageous, unsubstantiated claims; second, there was a discernable intolerance for views other than their own; third, there was a complete disregard for civil discourse. In other words, the protestors did not simply disagree with their political opponents; they rejected that the other side should be treated civilly, or even accorded the basic right to

speak. Together, these actions constitute a view of democracy that is inherently undemocratic. This is an ideology that rejects pluralism, diversity, civility, and ultimately, deliberation.

The students in the minimum wage debate engaged in deliberation. Although the debate was marked by conflict – each side disagreed with each other over the public policy they thought would be best, their discourse was civil. That is, they attacked each other's ideas, but they did not attack each other. The students warranted their claims with credible data, providing strong justifications for their arguments. People from a broad range of perspectives – including those who came from families that subsisted on minimum wage - were given the opportunity to speak. In sum, this was an example of a form of democracy that values civility, rationality, tolerance for conflict, participation, and diversity.

Why I chose to study this simulation

I sat in the theater, deeply intrigued, as the events I describe above played out. On my left, my dissertation advisor whispered, "Are you sure you don't want to change your dissertation?" I did. Hours before, we had been traveling in a car discussing, among other things, what subject I would select as the focus of my dissertation. I had initially wanted to study how teachers' conceptions of social studies informed their classroom discussion practices. But that idea faded as I saw 200 high school seniors do something that the literature in political education told me was lamentably rare: youth enthusiastically and skillfully debating public policy.

There was energy in the air. The students were engaged, they were in charge, and they were participating in precisely the kind of activities that experts in democracy education have been publicly advocating for the last decade. However, as intriguing as the simulation was at first glance, there were a number of questions that it raised: First, was the engagement genuine?

Second, even if their engagement was genuine, did engagement within the simulation result in a deeper appreciation, interest, and involvement in politics? Third, if this simulation did in fact have a positive effect on political engagement then how did both the design of the simulation and the pedagogy of the teachers contribute to this change? Lastly, what kind of citizen was this elaborately designed simulation intended to produce? These initial queries later became the foundation of the research questions that drive this study.

Before becoming a graduate student, I taught high school social studies for seven years. I hoped my students would be stimulated by the historical and political content of my classes, and I hoped that they would vote as a result. Although I used a variety of teaching strategies, there were only two - simulations and controversial issues discussions - that appeared to engage students while spurring their interest in politics.

But evidence of my students' interest and involvement in politics was anecdotal at best. Many students (and their parents) told me they enjoyed the discussions we had about controversial issues such as welfare reform, abortion, the death penalty, the tax rate, and whether or not to invade Iraq. They also told me they enjoyed the legislative and moot court simulations I facilitated. However, I did not know how many students enjoyed these activities, how strongly they felt about it, and whether or not their enjoyment would translate into political action. Further, I did not know if my class was responsible for my students' interest in politics (at least those who had vocalized their interest) – or whether or not their interest in politics was in fact independent of the class they took with me. I enrolled in graduate school hoping to address these questions.

I went to graduate school posing what I thought was a straightforward and distilled question: What can schools do to encourage more 18 to 24 year-olds to vote? I realized quickly however that not only was that question not easily answered, it was the wrong question.

A better question to ask is this: What can schools do to increase the *political engagement* of 18 to 24 year-olds? The difference between the two questions is one of scope. Voting, while important, is a single act. Political engagement is defined as "an activity that has the intent or effect of influencing government action" either directly (for example, by implementing policy) or indirectly by "influencing the selection of people who make the policies" (Verba, Schlozman, & Brady, 1995, p.38).

Political engagement encompasses three large categories: knowledge, interest, and efficacy (Verba, Schlozman, & Brady, 1995). A knowledgeable person is aware of who elected officials are, and can explain governmental processes such as how a bill becomes a law. An interested person will follow the news and frequently discuss politics with others. Lastly, there are two types of efficacy: internal and external. Internal efficacy is a person's sense that s/he can make a difference within the political sphere. External efficacy is the belief that the government works well and is responsive to individual and group needs.

The question about political engagement also proved to be both inexact and incomplete. Schools and teachers stand out as particularly malleable agents in encouraging (or discouraging) young people to participate in the political system. But ultimately, the nature of the engagement matters. The protestors in the health care debate were both active and engaged. If engagement is the school's primary goal, then the health care protests was evidence of its success. The question I think that should matter most is: How can schools promote engagement of the kind that places

a premium on deliberation, diversity, and action, a concept that Parker (2003) terms "enlightened political engagement." In this view, democracy is not something that should just be thought about; it is something that should be practiced. Students should participate in the formation of alternatives and solutions to community problems. They should also embrace diversity, understanding that it is a social good, and how democracy is intrinsically linked to it.

Over the last few decades, social scientists have honed in on effective teaching strategies that promote political engagement among youth. The most promising approaches were summarized by a panel of governmental and educational experts in *The Civic Mission of Schools* (CIRCLE, 2003). In their report, the panel concluded that students who participate in controversial issues discussions "have a greater interest in politics, improved critical thinking and communications skills, more civic knowledge, and more interest in discussing public affairs out of school. Compared to other students, they also are more likely to say that they will vote and volunteer as adults" (p. 8).

If controversial issues discussions are, as the authors of *The Civic Mission of Schools* declare, a pathway to enhanced political engagement then teachers interested in promoting participation in politics should be providing their students with opportunities to engage in such discussions; unfortunately, current research indicates that this is not the case.

Between 2000 and 2008, the youth vote, defined as those between the ages of 18 and 29, rose 11%, to just over 23 million (Circle, 2008). While this is seemingly good news, a deeper look at the statistics reveals that non-college educated youth do not vote in the same proportion as college educated youth. Young people with no high school diploma, who are disproportionately African American and Latino, make up 14% of the population, but only

account for 6% of the voters (Circle, 2008). Conversely, those who have attended some college comprise 57% of the population, but account for over 70% of the voters. This continues a trend from the last presidential election in 2004, when it was noted that the largest gap in youth voting was between college educated and non-college 18 to 24 year-olds. While 59% of college educated youth voted in 2004, only 34% of those without college voted. This group of non-college attending youth was disproportionately African American, Latino, and male (Lopez, Kirby, Sagoff, & Kolaczkowski, 2005)

Kahne and Middaugh (2008) analyzed over 5,000 surveys of junior and senior level high school students and found that academic tracking, race, and socioeconomic status (SES) determined whether or not students would be given opportunities to participate in high school classes and activities that lead to political engagement. Students who attended high schools with higher SES measures, students who were college bound, and students who were white, were more likely to have occasions to talk about controversial issues, engage in service learning, and participate in simulations, than students who were from low income schools, not heading to college, and were of color (Kahne & Middaugh, 2008). In sum, students of color, students who attend high schools with low SES, and students on a non-college track, are not likely to encounter exactly the kind of curriculum that would encourage them to become involved in the political process. And, these are precisely the students who are less likely to vote in the first place.

Problem the research addresses

Shortly after World War II erupted, John Dewey (1939) noted that the "task before us" was to create a democracy (p. 225). While he acknowledged that forces outside of the United

States were bent on destroying democracy, he felt the more serious long term danger was posed by the internal disbanding of democratic life. He was particularly concerned about the culture of the United States and how community involvement, civic knowledge, and public dialogue formed the foundation upon which political participation took place. Without this foundation, democracy would be at risk.

The underpinnings of democratic culture appear to be in some peril. Schools in general and social studies teachers in particular, do not appear to be encouraging students to engage in political discourse, particularly about controversial issues. Within a larger context, people are joining fewer civic organizations, talking to each other less, and living apart from people who think differently than they do. In short, a deep sense of polarization has enveloped the culture of the United States. I will explore this polarization below.

The people who live in the United States are increasingly avoiding those who think differently than they do, and this is having a significant effect on how they view each other. Beginning in 2000, Robert Putnam observed that Americans were socializing less. People were joining fewer organizations; they were meeting friends, neighbors and family less often. They were literally and figuratively bowling alone (Putnam, 2000) and they still are (Sander & Putnam, 2010). With the rise of the Internet, people were increasingly able to control the slant of their news – effectively creating ideological filters that enabled a user to see, hear, and read about only those who agreed with their own views (Sunstein, 2002). Meanwhile Americans had, for the last three decades, been moving to communities that were ideologically homogenous, a trend that Bill Bishop (2008) has coined "the big sort." One electoral marker indicative of the enormous reshuffling that has occurred is the amount of Americans that live in a landslide

county, that is, a county where the candidate for president won by a margin of more than 20%. When Jimmy Carter ran in the 1976 presidential election only a quarter of Americans lived in a landslide county. When George W. Bush was elected in 2004, that figure had doubled to more than half of the population (Bishop, 2008). The combination of these trends: socializing less while filtering political information, and residing in communities of like minded people, has resulted gradually in a political and social existence that is marked by less and less ideological heterogeneity.

Not surprisingly, less frequent contact with people who think differently about politics has resulted in decreasing opportunities to engage in political discussions with people who have different views, what Diana Mutz has termed "cross cutting political talk" (2006). The decreasing contact of citizens with differing views has resulted in a rise of political polarization. Researchers are consistently reaching conclusions that point toward a less moderate, less tolerant, more partisan brand of politics. Among the more disturbing trends: Congress has lost most of its moderate members (Bishop, 2008). The more people talk with those who share similar views, the more likely they are to become more radical in their views, and less tolerant of those who believe differently (Sunstein, 2002; Hibbing & Theiss-Morse, 2002).

Schools' response to increasing political polarization has been to continue what they have been doing all along: ignore controversial issues. When researchers look for evidence of class discussions they rarely find it. The reasons teachers decide not use controversial issues discussions in their classroom range from fear of losing control (Bickmore, 1993), disagreement over the purposes of social studies (Barton and Levstik, 2004), the skill required to successfully facilitate a class discussion (Hess, 1998; Hess & Posselt, 2002; Hess, 2004), lack of parental

support for the inclusion of controversial issues in the curriculum (Zimmerman, 2002), and the desire by teachers, administrators, and school boards to teach only "safe" or "official" knowledge (Hess, 2009; Apple, 2000).

The reluctance of schools to teach students how to deliberate controversial issues is unfortunate because schools are in a unique position to encourage it. To begin with, schools are rich in ideological diversity (Hess, 2009), which as we know is a vital component missing from many people's lives. In fact, given the ideological segregation that has occurred across the United States in terms of housing, news consumption, political talk, and voluntary associations, public schools could be one of the most ideological heterogeneous organizations to which citizens will ever belong.

What kind of citizen are our schools encouraging students to become? Are they preparing them to act like the people who shut down the health care forums? Or are they preparing them to act like the students in the legislative simulation? Schools are in a unique position to shape how the next generation interacts with its political system. They can teach students to regard controversy as a point of entry into an issue, they can teach students how to value different opinions, they can teach students how to voice their own opinion; or they can ignore controversial issues. If schools continue to ignore the internal dissolution of democratic foundations: civic life, political tolerance, healthy disagreement, political knowledge; then schools are abandoning one of their most important tasks, which is to prepare students to value democracy (Dewey, 1916; Gutmann, 1987; Apple & Beane, 2007; Parker, 2003).

This study investigates how one school responded to what it saw as a gap in schooling. Teachers in the school created, and then refined, a simulation that attempts to prepare students to

value democracy. In order to assess how well they succeeded, this instrumental collective case study asks four questions that explore pedagogy, effect, and intent.

Research Questions

The aim of this dissertation is to further our understanding of how students experience a particular form of democratic education – one that emphasizes deliberation within a political simulation. Four main questions drive this study: 1) What pedagogical strategies do the teachers employ? 2) What is the role of conflict in the simulation? 3) How does the simulation affect student political engagement? 4) What are the ideological underpinnings of the simulation?

These questions represent an attempt to fill in the gaps of our understanding about how students respond to simulations, conflict, and deliberation. The first question, what pedagogical strategies do the teachers employ, is important if we are to understand how to effectively teach students to deliberate. My second question, what is the role of conflict in the simulation, addresses both the assumptions that exposure to conflict is beneficial, and that it may not be beneficial for everyone. The third question, how does the simulation affect student political engagement, is an attempt to assess whether or not an approach to teaching civics using controversial issues, conflict, and simulations, has the effect that its proponents claim. An assumption running through the literature of democracy education is that exposure to political conflict will result in enhanced interest and participation in politics. While this assumption makes intuitive sense, the theory remains essentially untested, and it is not without its critics. Academics from a variety of fields have questioned whether or not open deliberation can be achieved in heterogeneous classrooms. Lastly, among the most hotly debated questions in democratic education are: What kind of citizenship should schools model? And what effect, if

any, does citizenship education have on students? My last question, what are the ideological underpinnings of the simulation, addresses the importance of this debate in democratic education. If theorists, educators, and panels using the government's imprimatur, are all advocating for both more controversial issues discussions and simulations, then it seems worthwhile to examine what kind of citizen they are hoping to mold.

Overview of the chapters

Following this chapter, I delve more deeply into the research questions. Chapter II reviews the literature of discussion, simulations, conflict, and citizenship education. It also contains the theoretical framework for this study. Chapter III describes the mixed method research methodology utilized during the study, the sources of data used, and how the data was both collected and analyzed. In Chapter IV I begin to directly confront three of the research questions: 1) What pedagogical strategies do the teachers use in the simulation? 2) What is the role of conflict in the simulation? 3) What effect does the simulation have on student political engagement? To answer those questions, Chapter IV contains teacher and student interviews, results of the student questionnaires, and descriptions of classroom activities.

The results of this analysis reveal that the legislative simulation did increase political engagement. The exposure to numerous controversial issues discussions increased students' interest in politics, expanded who they talked to about politics, increased their internal efficacy, and helped students to appreciate hearing other people's opinions.

Chapter V contains the data and findings related to the fourth and final research question: What are the ideological underpinnings of the simulation? I found that the simulation is attempting to encourage students to be both knowledgeable about the political system, as well as

active within the political system. The combination of these two purposes helps to bridge two typologies that have been developed in previous research (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004). I also analyze the program through a critical lens and conclude that although the simulation does not intend to reproduce the status quo; neither does it urge students to consider alternatives outside of the two party system.

Chapter VI contains a summary and analysis of how I taught the Legislative Simulation to my high school students, the challenges I encountered, and the insights I gained in implementing this curriculum.

I conclude the study in Chapter VII with a summary of the research findings, the limitations of those findings, the implications for current research, and suggestions for future research and practice.

Chapter 2. Theoretical Framework

I begin this chapter with a discussion of the theoretical literature on deliberation and then move to empirical studies that both validate and challenge the claims made by deliberative theorists. I have divided the empirical studies into two parts. The first part contains the critiques and negative findings about deliberation. The second part focuses on the studies where deliberation had a positive effect. As you will see, the difference between the two sets of findings is highly dependent on context. Next, I focus on the challenges faced by teachers and schools in implementing deliberation, as well as the potential benefits to students. I then turn to simulations exploring the theories behind using them, as well as the case studies that highlight their potential. Then I explore the role of ideology in citizenship education, and introduce frameworks that I will use in analyzing research questions. I conclude the chapter with a discussion of how the theoretical framework is related to the research questions of this study.

Over the last 30 years there has been a renewed interest in democracy which has been accompanied by a mushrooming of studies on the nature, purpose, and effects of deliberation. Some of this research has focused on adults, while others have focused on schools. Despite the burgeoning research, or perhaps because of it, much of what has been unearthed by the social scientists employing a variety of methodologies, sample sizes, and frameworks, is contradictory and contested.

What is known is that deliberation is rare both in civic life and in schools (McDevitt & Caton-Rosser, 2009*;* Hibbing & Theiss-Morse, 2002; Mutz, 2006; Nystrand,1997), it is difficult

to do well (Hess, 1998; Hess & Posselt, 2002; Hess, 2004; Hess, 2009), and when it is done well it appears to strengthen democratic outcomes such as tolerance, knowledge of the political system, civic skills, and efficaciousness (Hess, 2009; McIntosh & Munoz, 2009; Parker, 2003; Hahn, 1998; Torney-Purta, Lehmann, Oswald & Schultz, 2001; McDevitt &Kiousis, 2006). But the question of how high quality deliberation can be introduced to schools in such a way as to overcome the significant hurdles that still prevent its use: fear of losing control in the classroom (Bickmore, 1993), unsupportive school board policies (McDevitt & Caton-Rosser, 2009), or rejection of discussion as a pedagogical tool (Newman, 1988; Barton & Levstik, 2004). The purpose of this chapter then, will be to excavate relevant finding so that they can be organized into a theoretical framework and bolster understanding of the research questions driving this study which are:

1) What pedagogical strategies do the teachers employ? 2) What is the role of conflict in the simulation? 3) How does the simulation affect student political engagement? 4) What are the ideological underpinnings of the simulation?

Definitions, conceptualizations and limitations of various forms of discourse

Striving for conceptual clarity, researchers have sought to categorize various modes of discourse. These categories have helped researchers and practitioners to delineate between the purposes, distinctive qualities, and outcomes of these various forms of talk.

Johnson and Johnson (1979; 2009) define debate as occurring when two or more participants put forth positions that are incompatible. A judge then considers which side presented their position in the best way, and declares a winner. “An example of debate is when each member of a group is assigned a position on whether more or less regulation is needed to

manage hazardous wastes and an authority declares as winner the group member who makes the best presentation" (Johnson & Johnson, 2009, p.39). Debate is marked by competition, and thus, according to Johnson and Johnson, participants remain closed-minded and stay committed to their original positions regardless of the evidence they encounter.

Table 2.1. Discursive Typology.

	Purpose	How decisions are resolved	Outcomes
Discussion	To strengthen and deepen understanding.	No formal resolution	Illumination.
Deliberation	To reach a decision about an issue of controversy.	Participants vote on the outcome and are bound by it.	Decision and knowledge.
Debate	To win.	Two sides argue. A judge declares a winner.	One side wins.

Discussion lies in stark contrast to debate. Whereas in debate, the purpose is to win, according to Parker (2006) the purpose of discussion is to reach "an enlarged understanding" (p.13). Discussions are characterized by a powerful text, a central question, and multiple interpretations from participants that are brought to bear on both the question and the text. An example of a discussion would be if a teacher gave students a copy of the Pledge of Allegiance and asked the students the question: To whom are we pledging our allegiance? Contrasting with debate, participants in a discussion keep an open mind by speaking and listening with others to learn. "Enlarged understanding of the text *and* of one another are the fruits" of discussion (p.12).

Deliberation, or discussion with an eye towards decision making (Parker, 2003), differs in purpose from that of discussion and debate: "[I]n deliberations, learning is not the goal.

Although learning occurs as an intended side-effect, participants speak and listen to *decide*" (p.12). The purpose of deliberation is to decide on the best course of action to a shared problem. An example of a deliberation is if a group of student teachers were asked to decide whether or not teachers should reveal their positions on controversial issues to their students.

The simulation in this study employs discussion, deliberation, and debate sometimes distinctly, and often, simultaneously. The liminal quality of the discourse in the simulation presents some difficulty in classifying precisely what type of student talk was occurring at any given time. For example, during class "debates," students did argue with each other, which is characteristic of debate. But there was no authority or judge that rendered an ultimate verdict. Instead, the students comprised the body that decided the outcome of the issue, which is more like deliberation. Additionally many of the students did not have a predetermined position on the issue being talked about, which is characteristic of either deliberation or discussion. Further muddying the conceptual waters, students often asked questions about the issue being deliberated or debated, probing for clarification and meaning, which seems more like discussion.

The salient question all of this raises is: If a form of discourse does not align along the attributes of a particular typology, then what should it be labeled? For instance, Parker (2006) argues that purpose matters, and that one of the main differences between deliberation and discussion is the unique purposes of each. But what if an instructor's primary purpose in choosing a deliberative model is for her students to deepen their understanding of an issue? Perhaps, she reasons, that in coming to a decision about an issue of controversy, students will learn much more about the topic than if they were not encouraged to weigh alternatives to the problem. In this hypothetical case, the teacher's primary purpose is to deepen understanding,

which aligns with the purpose of discussion. But the model she chooses in this case is essentially deliberative. When the purpose and model do not align with the existing typology, what is the most appropriate concept label for that model? I will continue the development of this idea in chapter 4, where I will use student data from the simulation to further the discussion.

Deliberation

Since the late 1980s there has been a resurgence of interest in deliberation and its relationship to democratic education (Callan, 2004; Carpini, et al. 2004; Chambers, 2003). While some theorists have labeled the new interest in deliberation as "deliberative democracy" (Gutmann and Thompson, 1996), others have called it "strong democracy" (Barber, 1984), or "discursive democracy" (Dryzek, 1990). Whatever concept label is being used, they all share a belief that deliberation provides the key to revitalizing the public's waning interest in civic and political life as well as encouraging the development of the necessary skills, knowledge, and attitudes essential for a healthy democracy. In this view, talking about politics becomes both a form of participation, and a means to preserve democratic values:

> Discussion between citizens lies at the heart of most theories of democracy. For democracy to function there has to be scope for: diversity of opinion; free expression of those opinions; and resolution of differences and conflicts. Political talk is one means by which salient information, opinion and argument can spread through an electorate, and can be a means by which individuals make up their minds on the issues before them by testing their views against those of others. (Pattie & Johnston, 2009, p.263)

Deliberative theorists reject "conceptions of democracy that base politics only on power and interest" (Thompson, 2008, p. 498). In their view, other theories of democracy do not place enough emphasis on the justifications for laws "that bind them" (Ibid). They further believe that deliberation and democracy are inexorably linked, and that in promoting one, we advance the other.

Deliberation is a term whose meaning shifts depending on the field in which it is used. A literature review produced for the Keltering Foundation (Gastil & Kelshaw, 2002) found that both the definition and way in which it was applied varied considerably from context to context. Business studies for instance, used deliberation in terms of leadership decisions, with an emphasis on finding timely solutions to pressing problems. Legal studies focused on jury deliberations, while philosophy focused on open-ended dialogues. "There is a common core in the deliberative democracy literature construing deliberation as the public sharing of opinions, information, and arguments addressed to a practical question that the group as a whole is facing" (Estlund, 2009, p.16). Within education, there is general agreement that deliberation refers to the process of talking with others in order to form decisions about issues of controversy. The distinctions between discussion and deliberation are liminal, often separated by purpose, and context, and even the two terms are used to describe each other: "A discussion is more deliberative if it takes into account a broad range of perspectives on an issue" (Burkhalter, Gastil, & Kelshaw, 2002, p.402). Walter Parker defines deliberation as discussion with an eye towards decision making (Parker, 2003), and it is the definition that I will employ for this study. He advocates deliberation as being an occasion in which "marginalized voices are encouraged to speak, listening is generous, students have studied the alternatives they are weighing, claims are supported with evidence and reasoning, and a rich inventory of historic, scientific and literary

evidence is brought to bear" (Parker, 2006, pg. B7). Throughout this dissertation I will refer to deliberation (which is used most often in the context of political and educational theory) and controversial issues discussion (which is used mostly within the context of schools) synonymously, as their purposes and application are most often congruous.

Deliberative democracy is predicated on the belief that deliberation is the most justifiable form of making decisions in a democracy, is more likely to produce better decisions, promotes respect among opponents, and trains citizens to hold their elected representatives accountable for their actions. While the definition of deliberation seems to have reached consensus, not all deliberative theorists agree on what democratic outcomes will result from deliberation. Some theorists believe deliberation enhances legitimacy in a democracy. Others declare that it will enhance moral development. And still others advocate deliberation as a means to judicious decision making and increased political participation.

Legitimacy

Thresholds for what it means to be democratic vary considerably. Democracy is minimally defined as a form of government in which political decisions are reached by a majority of voting citizens (Landra & Meirowitz, 2009). A minimalist definition, for instance, requires only that free and open elections are held in order to be included in the list of democratic nations (Diamond, 2002). Robert Dahl (1998) identifies the following characteristics as vital: an Enlightenment view of education and legislation, in which the two are fused together, opportunities to meaningfully impact the outcome of events, full inclusion of adults, equality in voting, and participation in politics without fear of reprisal. Where precisely deliberation might fit into those definitions is not always clear. While most accepted minimal definitions of

democracy focus on voting, this is not the only mechanism to ensure that a democracy's policy decisions align with the wishes of its citizens. In fact, deliberation offers opportunities to affect the decision making of others whether it be at the polls, in jury rooms, or the way one votes (Ibid).

Amy Gutmann and Dennis Thompson, whose collaboration has produced some of the most theoretically rich work in deliberative democracy, assert that deliberation provides legitimacy to decisions in which there is bound to be disagreement (Gutmann & Thompson, 1996; 1998; 2004). They note that only decisions that end in consensus are without disagreement. But because of the inherent diversity of modern society, consensus in a democracy is rare. Therefore "citizens and officials must justify any demands for collective action by giving reasons that can be accepted by those who are bound by the action" (Gutmann & Thompson (1998, p. 10). Since decisions in a democracy must be made whether consensus is reached or not, most decisions result in one side winning and another side losing. Unless the winning side provides rational justifications for why their reasons should prevail, they should not expect those who disagree with them to accept an unfavorable outcome. Deliberation places emphasis on the justifications for one's position – which is why those who do not agree with the decisions of the government will nevertheless accept their legitimacy (Gutmann &Thompson, 2004; Gutmann & Thompson, 1996). In other words, decisions reached through deliberation provide sufficient reason for compliance.

Deliberation also reinforces legitimacy in a democracy by enhancing the accountability of elected officials. In this view, voters who exert pressure on their representatives for explanations of their positions are really holding public officials accountable for their actions.

This discursive pressure is viewed as the primary mechanism of accountability. Chambers (2003) views deliberative democratic theory as turning

> toward a view anchored in conceptions of accountability and discussion. Talk-centric democratic theory replaces voting-centric democratic theory. Voting-centric views see democracy as the arena in which fixed preferences and interests compete via fair methods of aggregation. In contrast, deliberative democracy focuses on the communicative processes of opinion and will-formation that precede voting. Accountability replaces consent as the conceptual core of legitimacy. A legitimate political order is one that could be *justified* to all those living under its laws. Thus, accountability is primarily understood in terms of "giving an account" of something, that is, publicly articulating, explaining, and most importantly justifying public policy. Consent (and of course voting) does not disappear…. Although theorists of deliberative democracy vary as to how critical they are of existing representative institutions, deliberative democracy is not usually thought of as an alternative to representative democracy. It is rather an expansion of representative democracy. (p.308)

Morality and Respect

Parker's (2003) central claim is that individual moral development is essential to "enlightened political engagement," a term that he associates with a sophisticated sense of justice, multi-cultural tolerance, judicious decision making, and knowledge about politics. Deliberation, he argues is essential to promoting democratic citizenry. The aim of education, particularly the social studies, should be to advance the skills and virtues necessary for

democratic living. Deliberation, in his view, is a way for young people to learn how to reason together about issues that concern the public good.

One of the most salient predicted effects of deliberation is to "encourage a thicker kind of respect" (Gutmann & Thompson, 2004, p.20) between political opponents. Disagreement is an inevitable outcome of democracy (Barber, 1984; Hibbing & Theiss-Morse, 2002; Gutmann & Thompson, 1996). However, disagreement does not necessarily have to result in rancor. Gutmann & Thompson believe disagreement over contentious political issues is less likely to result in accusations of impaired judgment when two opposing sides deliberate. The reason this is so is because each side is obligated to justify and rationalize their position on the basis of its merits. As an opponent considers a contrary view s/he is forced to respond to the merits of the other side's case, which usually produces mutual respect. It also usually produces something else: better decisions.

Enhanced Reasoning and Decision Making

Deliberation helps decision makers arrive at well justified decisions. By mutually reviewing and responding to the concerns and objections of each other's views, both sides can eliminate faulty reasoning, weak justifications, and ineffective arguments. Weinstein writes, "The relationship between rational judgment and political action is so fundamental in the history of thought that it hardly bears mentioning. From Aristotle to Mill rational deliberation and political actions were so tightly linked that appropriate political decisions were seen as impossible in the absence of adequate deliberation" (1991, pg. 4).

Discussion is also more likely to advance a truthful outcome. John Stuart Mill, in defending the principle of public discussion, and particularly addressing those who would

prevent free discussion from occurring, wrote “If the opinion is right, they are deprived of the opportunity of exchanging error for truth; if wrong, they lose, what is almost as great a benefit, the clearer perception and livelier impression of truth produced by its collision with error” (Mill, 1859/1956).

Amartya Sen (2005), explains the relationship between public discourse and its close association to democracy by noting that it enhances reasoning:

> [D]emocracy is intimately connected with public discussion and interactive reasoning. Traditions of public discussion exist across the world, not just in the West; and to the extent that such a tradition can be drawn on, democracy becomes easier to institute and to preserve. Public reasoning includes the opportunity for citizens to participate in political discussions and to influence public choice. Balloting can be seen as only one of the ways—albeit a very important way—to make public discussions effective, when the opportunity to vote is combined with the opportunity to speak and listen without fear. (p.28)

In summary, deliberative theorists believe that deliberation is the most effective method of enhancing and preserving democracy. Deliberation, in this view, promotes the legitimacy of decisions, enhances respect among those of opposing views, and improves decision making. In the next section I turn to the impact of empirical studies on deliberation.

Deliberation in the wild

Empirical studies of deliberation fall into two large categories. In the first category, social scientists have examined deliberation in a controlled setting, that is, the deliberation occurs in a

context in which there is a facilitator, invited participants, and prepared reading material. In the second category, none or only some of the previous conditions are met. In other words, deliberation in this context occurs without rules, formal preparation, or facilitation. In this section, I explore the studies that cover this latter category: deliberation without formal facilitation. The findings from these studies cast serious doubts about whether deliberation can increase political engagement (Mutz, 2006; Hibbert and Theiss- Morse, 2002), whether deliberation is possible in a stratified society (Sanders, 1997), and whether deliberation encourages judicious decisions (Sunstein, 2006).

A study conducted by Diana Mutz (2006) utilizing three representative nationwide samples of U.S. citizens in 1992, 1996, and 2000, found that people were unlikely to engage in what she labeled as "cross cutting" political talk, talk marked by a level of disagreement among the discussants[1]. Based on her data, she concludes that as little as one in four people have regular discussions with people who hold opposing political views. This is not to say that Americans are adverse to political discussions. In fact, compared to other nations, the United States ranks above average in frequency of political talk, but highest in talk characterized by a lack of disagreement (Mutz, 2006). Mutz also discovered that those most likely to engage in cross cutting talk were characterized as non-white, lower income, and less educated. Perhaps most significantly, she also found that discussing politics across lines of agreement acted as a barrier to further political engagement because it increased ambivalence and decreased tolerance for political disagreement. "My findings," Mutz writes, "are extremely consistent: crosscutting exposure discourages political participation" (p. 114).

[1] Again, it is difficult to categorize where "cross cutting" political talk falls within discursive typology. One can only guess what the mindset of the participants in Mutz's study were – whether or not they maintained an open mind. One can only guess also, as to the purpose of the discourse.

A study that complements Mutz's findings can be found in *Stealth Democracy.* Hibbert and Theiss- Morse (2002) believe people do not participate in politics because "they simply do not like the process of openly arriving at a decision in the face of diverse opinions" (p. 3). Hibbert and Theiss-Morse believe that if Americans were exposed to more political conflict then there would be two positive corollary effects: First, they would not be revolted by the political disagreements that are so frequent in democratic politics. Second, they would have a more accurate understanding of their own views in relation to the rest of the population. The authors theorize that this ability to place themselves on the political spectrum of American politics should help them to develop, identify, and articulate their political needs. Many Americans, they claim, misunderstand the nature of disagreement in a democracy. Most people believe they personally hold reasonable and moderate views. When others disagree and articulate different views than their own, they tend to conclude that the dissenting views are radical. If people would learn to accept controversy as a natural and inevitable aspect of the democratic process, there would be less cynicism and detachment from political life. Hibbing & Theiss-Morse conclude their study with a plea for more education centered around controversy. "To the extent the climate in schools these days encourages avoiding controversial political issues rather than teaching students to be comfortable in dealing with those issues, a great disservice is done to the students and the democratic process" (p. 226).

Sanders (1997) charges that deliberation "is often neither truly deliberative nor really democratic" (p. 349). Deliberation, she argues, requires equality of "epistemological authority," which is a necessary component of equal participation. Equal epistemological authority would mean listening to every person's view during a deliberation. A stratified society, in which one group often enjoys economic, social, and political benefits that another group does not, is

unlikely to accord everyone an equal opportunity to speak during deliberation. Drawing on decades old, and often, international research, she concludes the often unseen presence of prejudice and privilege affects jury deliberation. The elected foreperson is more often than not a white, college educated male (p. 364). Men are also more likely to participate in jury deliberation, and those who speak more frequently are most likely to be regarded by other members of the jury as persuasive (p. 365).

Continuing to build on a critique of deliberation, Sanders concludes that believe deliberation is possible, but in order to be called deliberation the following conditions must first be met:

> To qualify as democratic, deliberations must meet egalitarian standards. To qualify as deliberative, opinion must be generated under "good" conditions conducive to thoughtfulness and characterized by balanced consideration of alternative information and perspectives. To both ends, deliberative democracy needs to be a well managed, safe encounter, so that it will not discourage, and will motivate to participate, the ordinary citizens who do not already feel driven to express their intense political views. (Sanders, 2009, p. 41)

Sunstein (2006) provides another empirical critique of deliberation. Reviewing scores of deliberative studies, he argues that deliberation often produces an incorrect or unjust outcome. Sunstein believes this is so for two reasons: First, when entering into a group dynamic, many individuals give themselves over to the consensus view, thus not raising objections that might alter or rectify errors made by the majority. Second, if the deliberative process does not provide a

credible shield from ridicule, people will fear to speak at all. Because of these two factors, deliberative groups can be lead to error "not despite deliberation but because of it" (p. 102).

Sunstein's meta-analysis however is riddled with questionable methodological procedures which reduce the credibility of his conclusions. As evidence for instance of deliberation's inferiority to individual decision making, Sunstein cites studies in which group estimates of a person's weight were not closer than the best guess of the most skilled individual of the group. But it stretches credulity to suggest this finding is related to deliberation. Weight guessing is not a task in which shared information or reasoning plays a prominent role; one person's guess of 170 lbs is not going to be illuminated by another's guess of 175. In a second assault on deliberation, Sunstein employs studies that show a group's ability to solve brainteasers were no better than the best member of a group, but were in fact better than the average of the group. This would seem to indicate that deliberation is in fact a superior process to determine the answer, since it is better than what most people could do alone. In other problem solving tasks, such as manipulating interest rates to determine monetary policy, deliberative groups outperformed even the most accurate member. As for the charge of deliberative groups leaning toward the view of the majority, this is only problematic when the majority view is initially wrong. But as Sunstein points out, the group moves toward the view of the majority far more often when they are right than when they are wrong. His overall point that deliberative processes are not error free is beyond question; however, whether or not that is enough to cast serious doubt on deliberation as a method to solve problems is not.

Summary of deliberative studies in the wild

The theories of deliberative democracy are not entirely supported by empirical studies. Deliberative theory argues that deliberation is more likely to encourage respect among those who disagree, and it is more likely to produce decisions that are well reasoned and avoid error. Empirical studies of deliberation have found that the presence of conflict can have a stifling effect on political discourse. Cross cutting political talk is rare and when it does occur people do not seem to learn anything from it, or become more politically engaged. But these critiques all involve studies in which participants were not necessarily formally deliberating. Did the studies cited in this section really involve deliberation? Parker's (2003; 2006; 2007) conception of deliberation posits that deliberations seek to answer the question: What should we do? He further identifies a particular epistemology (literary and scientific), and a particular mentality (openness and egalitarian) that should be utilized in a deliberation. Did the cross cutting political talk that Mutz (2006) examined, or the group discussions that Sunstein (2006), and Hibbert and Theiss-Morse (2002) cite, qualify as deliberations? Using Parker's definition, the answer is no. Deliberation is not simply people arguing with each other anymore than it is tool to estimate a person's weight. In the next section, I examine deliberative forums which employ a variety of deliberation that more closely meets Parker's definition.

Deliberative forums

Several researchers have found evidence that deliberation can result in more sophisticated decision making, increase tolerance, and lead to greater political participation. Luskin and Fishkin (1995) discovered that when a small group of randomly selected participants was given briefing information from opposing interest groups, and held a deliberation moderated by a skilled facilitator (one who remains unbiased, upholds participant civility, and ensures that participants maintain their focus on the key deliberative questions), participants were willing to

shift their opinions and rely more on factual data. The biggest shifts in opinion most often occurred among those who had the least amount of knowledge coming into the deliberation. These findings have been replicated and confirmed by other studies (Fishkin, 2009; Fung, 2001; Fung & Wright, 2001; Gastil and Kelshaw, 2002).

Both Mutz and Hibbing & Theiss-Morse's work has been criticized. The most serious critique has come from Thompson (2008) who believes that their work represents a failure to understand deliberative theory.

> They extract from isolated passages in various theoretical writings a simplified statement about one or more benefits of deliberative democracy, compress it into a testable hypothesis, find or (more often) artificially create a site in which people talk about politics, and conclude that deliberation does not produce the benefits the theory promised and may even be counterproductive. (p. 498)

Thompson's (2008) critique raises an important point about what exactly constitutes deliberation. Merely engaging in talk marked by disagreement does not constitute deliberation – it simply is discourse characterized by conflict.

Habermas (2006) views the contradicting empirical data on deliberation as "indicators of contingent constraints" (p. 420), but he does not believe the negative empirical findings tear down the foundations of deliberative theory; rather, they helpfully identify the conditions that deliberation requires to live up to its promise. Clearly, deliberation can foster tolerance, more sophistication in decision making, and political participation if the deliberation meets basic "contingent constraints." People do benefit from deliberative forums and deliberative talks with

their neighbors, but the effects of such experiences appear to be dependent on ideological conviction and social context.

The benefits that participants accrued from participating in deliberation appear to be in line with deliberative theory. Participants increased their tolerance, knowledge, and political commitments. These positive effects were the result of deliberative forums in which participants kept an open mind, were briefed with high quality material that explored the nature of a conflict, and the deliberation was moderated by a skilled facilitator.

Context and deliberation

Recent research has suggested that how disagreement is viewed is dependent on several variables that are unique to the context or the individual. The strength of one's ideological conviction seems to be a significant factor. Strong ideologues were found not to be motivated to political action after participating in deliberative forums. But those identified as moderate and weak ideologues were much more affected by deliberation (Wojceiszak, Baek, & Carpini, 2009). The authors hypothesized that their results indicate that strong ideologues were not emotionally or cognitively excited by the forums because they already were aware of conflicting arguments, but those with more moderate convictions experienced the deliberations as novel and stimulating. McClurg (2006) studied cross cutting political talk within the context of neighborhoods. He found that when people engaged in political conversations that sparked disagreement, those in the political minority were negatively affected by the experience. However those in the political majority did not report any erosion of political engagement. This suggests that disagreement is affected by the context in which it takes place.

Barabas (2004) found that deliberation in which participants were exposed to a diverse array of opinions and were able to keep an open mind resulted in significant knowledge gain and a shift of opinion. Interestingly, he also found that discussion about politics did not have similar effects on knowledge. The difference between the deliberative and discussion forums is that during the deliberative session participants were encouraged to soften their views before deciding about where they stood on the issue before them. Barabas hypothesizes that this softening encouraged participants to keep an open mind and thus be more receptive to information which might disrupt their previously held beliefs.

Summary of studies on deliberation

Deliberative democracy theory states that engaging in deliberation will increase a variety of democratic outcomes. Among these are legitimacy, morality, decision making, accountability, and respect. Eager to test the theory's claims, researchers studied an assortment of settings, people, and issues in an attempt to validate or falsify deliberative theory. What they found was mixed. When people argue with each other they do not appear to reap many benefits, and in many cases it actually weakens democratic commitments. However, when people participate in a deliberative setting that is filled with diverse, open-minded people, it is moderated by a skillful facilitator, and they are given informational material that robustly explains a controversial issue, the results comport well with deliberative theory.

The results of these findings indicate that deliberation does what theorists claim it will do: strengthen democracy. It also indicates deliberation requires certain conditions be met in order for it to work. Indeed, if these conditions are not met, it may be misleading to label such discourse as deliberation. The stark differences between the results of the various empirical

studies suggest that deliberation is both special and delicate. It is special in the sense, that among various forms of discourse, deliberation is well poised to deliver benefits to people who engage in it. It is delicate in the sense that if it is not done under the conditions that have been mentioned above, participants may not benefit from it.

Deliberation and schools

Schools constitute one of the rare rehearsal sites for deliberation. Gutmann (1987) believes that since deliberation is the most justifiable way to make decisions in a democracy, and schools are charged with the task of preparing children to become functioning citizens in a democracy, then schooling should "cultivate the skills and virtues of deliberation" (pg. xiii).

Successful deliberation requires a wide range of perspectives. Such diversity already exists in public schools since the hallmarks of students' diversity: their socioeconomic, ethnic, religious, sexual, and ideological backgrounds are unlikely to be homogenous across the entire school. This diversity provides ripe opportunities for deliberation (Parker, 2003; Hess & Ganzler, 2007).

Other institutions such as family, the media, work, and religion that loom large in peoples' lives are unlikely to teach people to deliberate. Families can't be forced to teach their children to deliberate and there is no reason to believe they are equipped or willing to do so (Gutmann, 1987). The media is more likely to promote consumerism than deliberation, while the Internet has not fulfilled the democratic possibilities some theorists have hoped that it might (Sunstein, 2001). The workplace, also a potential site for deliberation, often fails to encourage deliberation – relying instead on a hierarchical chain of command (Apple, 1995). Researchers

have noted too that churches often discourage or shut-down discussions which challenge prevailing mores or dogma (Hibbert & Theisse-Morse, 2002).

Rarity

Schools may be the most logical sites for deliberation, but that does not necessarily mean they are the most prevalent. In fact, deliberation appears to be exceptionally rare in schools, and it may be even rarer than previous research has indicated.

Many researchers, citing empirical studies, believe that discussion of any kind is still rare in schools. However, some researchers have found indications that discussion in the classroom is widespread. In other words, a disparity has arisen over just how frequently discussion occurs. Self reported student data indicates that discussion is not rare, but when researchers actually go into classrooms, they have trouble finding classes in which discussion can be observed. The reason for the disparity may simply be a semantic difference between how students define discussion on the one hand, and how researchers define it on the other.

Andolina and her colleagues found that students believed there were frequent discussions in their high school classes. A representative sample of 15-25 year olds reported that half of their high school social studies teachers encouraged students to express opinions about social and political issues in an open classroom environment; another 27 percent believed that their teachers sometimes did so (Andolina, et al., 2002). And yet, when researchers look for evidence of deliberations, they rarely find confirmation that teachers are engaging their students in them (Kahne, et al., 2000; Newman, 1988; Nystrand, et al., 1998).

Fred Newmann (1988) for instance, had trouble locating high school teachers who used discussion in their social studies classrooms, even though the teachers in his study had been

nominated by their peers and administrators for their skill in facilitating discussions. Another study examined 106 middle and high school classes of English and social studies. They found that there was no discussion in over 90% of the classes, and in those classes where there were discussions, they lasted less than two minutes on average (Nystrand, Gamoran, & Carbonara, 1998). An additional study surveying over 100 social studies classes concluded that there was no mention of contemporary problems in the vast majority of classrooms (Kahne, Rodriguez, Smith, & Thiede, 2000). In more recent work, Kahne and Middaugh (2008) were able to prove that students attending high schools with a low SES average were less likely to receive an education that provided them with opportunities to discuss controversial issues compared to students who attended higher SES high schools.

The disparity between the amount of discussion that students report being exposed to, and the dearth of discussions that researchers have found can be explained by the definition each group (students and researchers) use to define discussion. Researchers, such as Nystrand (1997), define discussion as the free exchange of ideas between three or more participants. Hess and Ganzler (2007) observed high school social studies classes to determine whether or not the research standard for discussion was met. They interviewed a representative sample of students in the classes they observed, asking them about classroom climate, frequency of discussion, and for the students' definition of discussion. The results indicate that students' definitions of discussion are much more flexible than researchers'. Students were willing to label classes in which they felt free to talk as "open" but the exchanges they described did not necessarily meet the research definition of discussion because the exchanges were typically between a single student and the teacher. From a research perspective, the type of discourse described by the students fits the definition of a recitation (teacher initiates a question, student responds, and

teacher evaluates the response) more than a discussion. The definitional differences between how researchers characterize discussion and how students define it, most likely explain why self reported student descriptions of what happens in the classroom is so much at odds with peer reviewed research on classroom discussion.

Campbell (2006) makes a compelling argument for the rareness of deliberation finding that open, honest deliberation is unlikely to occur in settings of ethnic diversity. Campbell (2006) examined IEA data on 124 public and private high schools and determined that open classrooms have a great impact on civic competence, defined as civic knowledge, efficacy, and interest in politics. However, he found that open classrooms are more likely to occur in racially homogenous high schools than in those with racial diversity. He draws this conclusion based on two findings: first, those students who attend racially diverse high schools were less likely to report open classrooms, or classrooms where students felt free to discuss issues without fear of reprisal; second, racially homogenous classes were more likely to experience diverse or controversial issue discussions.

Campbell's study does contain a large sample size. His study however suffers in two important respects. First, he relies essentially on a correlation to make his conclusions. He posits that there is a relationship between diversity and lack of controversial issues discussions that is not based on chance alone. The extent to which this correlation is valid requires more data and analysis. Second, although quantitatively rich, the study is qualitatively poor. He never visited any of the classrooms or interviewed any of the students or teachers. The dearth of qualitative data reduces the certainty of any claims about both the pedagogy and classroom climate, since we do not know what happened in any of the classrooms in his study.

Some teachers fear that controversial issues will spiral out of control (Bickmore, 1993) and thus result in complaints from parents and a loss of professional status. Conflict reticent school board policies and administrators can also stifle or encourage controversial issues discussions (McDevitt & Caton-Rosser, 2009). Other teachers do not believe the purpose of schooling includes a clarion call for discussing controversial issues (Barton and Levstik, 2004). Additionally, research has documented the high level of expertise required to facilitate class discussions (Hess & Posselt, 2002; Hess, 2004) which implies that teachers may avoid facilitating controversial issue discussions because they are so difficult to do well.

Over 50 years ago Hunt and Melcaff wrote about issues that were "closed" from American classrooms. There are, they noted, "areas of belief and behavior that are largely closed to rational thought….In our culture, irrational responses commonly occur in the areas of morality and religion, sex, race, and minority group relations, social class, nationalism and patriotism, economics and politics" (Hunt & Melcaff, 1955, p. 6).

Traditionally, schooling occurs under the expectation that teachers will lead the classroom and that students will be obedient. Deliberation means dealing with an issue over which there is substantial disagreement. Intentionally bringing in an issue that is bound to create conflict can be risky, and requires significant pedagogical skill (Hess, 1998; 2002; 2009; Parker, 2003). Newmann (1989), suggests teachers' epistemology prevents them from valuing the type of knowledge students might gain from discussion:

> Authentic discourse is usually suppressed by the belief that the purpose of teaching is to transmit fixed knowledge to students (so that they can reproduce it in identical form for teachers who reward students for playing the game of telling teachers what they want to

hear rather than asking and answering questions that students consider important). (p.359)

Summary

Researchers report difficulty in locating classrooms where students discuss controversial issues. The reasons teachers avoid controversial issues discussions are varied. Professionally, discussion entails a certain amount of risk and skill. Historically, discussion has not been valued in schools. Epistemologically, discussion has not been cultivated as an activity worth pursuing.

Teacher disclosure

Teachers who facilitate controversial issues discussions in their classrooms are confronted with a choice over whether or not to disclose their views. The literature on disclosure is filled with tensions. Those advocating teacher disclosure divide their arguments into two categories: positive reasons for disclosing; and the dangers of not disclosing. They argue that disclosure provides an opportunity for teachers to model to their students how reasoned political views are reached. Through the parading of their views, teachers are able to show their students a passionate, human side. Even in cases where the teacher is ambivalent about an issue, sharing their frustrations will help students deal with their own ambivalence (Kelly, 1989).

Further, advocates of disclosure reject calls for neutrality in the classroom on five different grounds. Neutrality is first, they argue, an illusory concept. Teachers are not neutral in any sense of the word. They constantly transmit values that are either aligned with their own views, the views of the state, or both (Kelly, 1989; Daniels, 2007). Second, the self-suppression of teacher views indicates they are ashamed of having political opinions (Kelly, 1989). Students sense the teacher's reticence to air their views, and surmise that political views are best left

closeted. Third, neutrality is boring, whereas opinions are exciting. A neutral teacher is synonymous with a boring teacher. Since students learn best in dynamic environments, neutral teachers are inadvertently robbing their own students of a rich learning opportunity. Curriculum Director Brian Daniels synthesizes the prevailing disclosure arguments thusly: "Neutrality is a false construct that defeats learning" (Daniels, 2007). Fourth, students are filled with resentment and distrust when their teachers purposely hide their opinions. One reason for these ill feelings is a sense that teachers underestimate the "independence of mind" of their students. Finally, nondisclosure can also be viewed as "a cowardly evasion" from the teacher's own belief system (Kelly, 1989), while others warn that neutral teachers are modeling "a stance of moral apathy" (Bigelow, 2002).

Kelly (1986; 1989) argues that although teachers have greater authority and power than the students in their classes, the disparities of that relationship can be minimized if teachers engage in four practices: 1) publicly engage in self critique, 2) encourage student critique of teachers' positions, 3) sincerely praise all reasoned views, 4) critique students' parroting of the teacher's views.

Opponents of disclosure argue that the power and authority of teachers overshadows any of the well intentioned arguments advanced by the disclosures. Non disclosers believe that teachers have considerable power and influence over their students. Teachers possess "institutionalized powers" such as the ability to ask particular questions, to lecture on any subject of their choosing, to select which curricular material the students are exposed to, and finally the ability to determine a student's grade (Freedman, 2007). "All teachers," writes educator Kelly Keogh, "no matter how young or old, are seen as 'authority figures'" (Keogh, 2007). Roeske,

(2007), a secondary social studies teacher, remembers "being terrified to disappoint the teacher and possibly say something with which the teacher disagreed or might criticize" (p.8).

There is an epistemic rationale for not disclosing that is related to a teacher's authority. When a teacher takes a stand on a controversial issue, it is presumably done so in the belief that the reasoning undergirding that particular position is better than those who take a different stand (Gardner, 1984). Thus, a plausible implication to students is that any stand other than the one chosen by the teacher is inferior.

Because non disclosers believe teachers are viewed by their students as authority figures, they also believe students are more likely to adopt the views of the teacher. Keogh (2007) wants students to develop logic and critical thinking skills, even if those views conflict with his own. "To achieve this, I still feel it appropriate that I refuse to disclose my own views but keep pressing my students to weigh the evidence and make up their own minds" (p.5). "What is most important in my classroom is that a student can passionately defend a position with facts and logic; it is not to impose what I think the students should believe" (Roeke, 2007, p. 9).

Kelly (1986) believes that the standards for a fair hearing on a controversial issue would be achieved if "the most sophisticated competing advocates on an issue could determine that their views received as fair and accessible a rendering as possible, given the developmental nature of the student population" (p. 21).

Several respected researchers have suggested that teachers have several options in their pedagogical quiver. The most heavily recommended is what Kelly (1986) has labeled 'committed impartiality' where the teacher makes a conscience effort to air all legitimate sides of a controversy and then shares his or her own views on the subject.

The official position of the National Council for Social Studies (NCSS) on disclosure is to not mention it. Only briefly, do the national standards touch upon the values that teachers should promote:

> Some values are so central to our way of life and view of the common good that we need to develop student commitment to them through systematic social studies experiences. These include such fundamental rights as the right to life, liberty, individual dignity, equality of opportunity, justice, privacy, security, and ownership of private property. They include as well the basic freedoms of worship, thought, conscience, expression, inquiry, assembly, and participation in the political process. In some instances, the social studies curriculum will focus on how values are formed and how they influence human behavior rather than on building commitment to specific values. (NCSS, 2010)

This statement by the NCSS broadly outlines the beliefs that teachers should inculcate. But nowhere in the curriculum standards does it mention whether or not teachers should disclose their personal views. One could argue that the list of "some values" the NCSS identifies as "central to our way of life" is tantamount to saying that other values not on this list do not necessitate "student commitment" and should therefore be approached with a neutral stance. Others may argue the opposite: the absence of any sanctioned stance by the NCSS indicates teachers should promote any and all values they believe to be appropriate.

The effects of disclosing or not disclosing are just beginning to be investigated. Hess and McAvoy (2009) analyzed student responses from over 1,000 high school students and found that students on the whole, did not appear to be affected by whether their teacher disclosed or did not

disclose. Among those who did have a disclosing teacher, 75% said they were not influenced by the teacher's beliefs.

Benefits of deliberating in schools

There is also a growing body of literature that points to discussion and deliberation as a particularly effective way to promote political tolerance, political engagement, and enhanced learning.

One of the most significant foundations of a healthy democratic society is having citizens that are tolerant of dissenting views. Political tolerance is present if a person is willing to extend democratic norms to those whose interest or ideas they are opposed (Hahn, 1998). Pat Avery (2002) found that opportunities to discuss controversial issues in an open atmosphere, especially those issues related to civil liberties, will increase students' tolerance of marginalized groups. There was though an important caveat to this finding. Students who were prone toward authoritarianism and had a low level of self-esteem were more likely to become less tolerant after discussing controversial issues. The vast majority of students however did demonstrate measurable gains in tolerance, and those results held four weeks later in a follow-up study.

Young people who have experienced discussions of current issues as a part of their social studies classes are much more likely to report that they will volunteer, vote, and discuss politics with family and friends than those whose classes did not have such discussions (Hahn, 1998). An open classroom, defined as one in which the teacher is unbiased, controversial issues are frequently discussed, and students are not intimidated or prevented from speaking, correlates positively to future civic engagement (Blankenship, 1990; Ehman, 1969,1980; Hahn, 1998; Torney-Purta et al., 2001). Ehman (1969) developed a classroom climate scale that measured the

following attributes: the frequency of social issue topics in the class curriculum, teachers' disclosure of their opinions on controversial issues, whether or not more than one side of an issue was presented, and the extent to which students felt comfortable sharing their opinions in class. Ehman conducted two major studies using the climate scale. In the first study (1969) he found a strong correlation among those students who scored highest on a politically efficacy scale and those who had also taken the most social studies classes in an open environment. Political efficacy is the belief that individual action can have an effect on the political system. The second study (Ehman, 1980) focused on the range of views in the classroom. Those students who were exposed to open classrooms in which there were a wide range of views presented or examined felt more politically knowledgeable and efficacious than their peers in classes where only one view was presented.

Findings from the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) study have pointed to a strong correlation between the discussion of controversial issues in an open climate and future political engagement. The IEA study drew on over 90,000 students in 28 different countries. Future political engagement was measured by students' self-reporting whether or not they planned to vote when they were of legal age (Torney-Purta, Lehmann, Oswald and Schultz, 2001).

A comprehensive study of the program Kids Voting has produced some of the most dramatic evidence connecting deliberation with future political engagement (McDevitt &Kiousis, 2006). The researchers found that exposure to the interactive, election based curriculum of Kids Voting two weeks before the 2002 election had a positive effect on political engagement. McDevitt and Kiousis utilized a quasi-experimental design, in which a control group and

experimental group of similar demographics were compared to each other. The results of the study indicate that a curriculum emphasizing the discussion of controversial issues in the classroom while encouraging parents to talk with their children at home about politics will lead to growth in political engagement. Political engagement included attention to news, frequency of political discussion, and voting. Unlike the IEA data, which relied on students' own assessments of future voting habits, the Kids Voting study examined the voting records in the four counties covered in the study to provide an accurate assessment of whether voting rates increased; they did in the group exposed to the Kids Voting curriculum.

The results of recent polling suggest there are strong connections between political knowledge and political engagement. Scott Keeter and his colleagues conducted telephone and web interviews with a nationally representative sample of young people between the ages of 15 and 25. They found that those who could answer at least one of the poll's political knowledge questions correctly were more than twice as likely to participate in civic activities as those who could not answer any political knowledge questions. Participation in civic and political life was also related to news consumption. Measuring 19 different forms of civic engagement, the researchers discovered that those who participated in civic activities were more likely to use one of five types of news resources than those who did not (Keeter, et al., 2006).

One of the most salient claims for educators about discussion is that students can learn more effectively if they are presented with opportunities to participate in discussions. Harris (1996) proposes an explanation as to why discussions might be so effective. Responding coherently to a question of public policy "puts knowledge in a meaningful context, making it more likely to be understood and remembered" (p. 289).

Nystrand, et al. (1997) found that even a small amount of open discussion (as little as two minutes a day) can have a significant effect on academic outcomes such as essay writing, and recall of content. But, at the same time, the positive effects of discussion were only found in those classes in which the teacher attended to substantive content, asked genuine questions, and required "students to think, not just report someone else's thinking" (p. 72).

Hess and Posselt (2002) found that students had a positive attitude about class discussions (though not all believed participation should be forced). Students were also able to improve their discussion skills if they were taught to do so. But like other studies, (Auls, 1988) they also found that the learning effects were diminished when negative peer relations were present. Indeed, "the power of peers was greater than that of the teacher" (p. 312). The ability of peer culture to affect who participates and why, echoes findings in social psychology and raises a disturbing problem for teachers who wish to encourage discussion since teachers have little control over the relationships of peers outside of the classroom.

Summary

Controversial issues discussions are recommended by democratic theorists as a means of strengthening democratic commitments and capacities; they are also recommended by educational researchers because of their positive effect on learning. Hess (2009), summarizing a decade of research, writes,

> the purposeful inclusion of controversial political issues in the school curriculum, done well, illustrates a core component of a functioning democratic community, while building the understandings, skills, and dispositions that young people need to live in and to improve such a community. (p.5)

But teachers have been reluctant to introduce controversial issues discussions into their classrooms. The reasons for this avoidance can be attributed to the skill required to teach with discussion, pedagogical and ideological views that prohibit viewing controversial discussions as part of the profession, and conflict-adverse school policies.

Given the broad range of studies in various settings, and over a significant amount of time, an uncomfortable fact must be acknowledged: one does not necessarily adopt a habit simply because it is beneficial. Clearly, discussing controversial issues has benefits for students. And just as clearly, teachers are not engaging in this rewarding but difficult practice. Students (and teachers) may need deliberation to be packaged in a more appealing parcel rather than merely being told it is good for civic education. It is in this capacity, as a way to structure classroom discourse, and to provide an engaging format, that simulations may be especially useful.

Simulations

Games have been around for as long as civilization. Recently, excavators in Egypt unearthed a family's 4,000 year old tomb (Millman, 2006). Inside were dozens of games. Games have been a part of family life for millennia, but they are rarely found in schools. The educational historian David Tyack (1974) depicts 19th century schools as stern sites of discipline. Fun was something a child had outside of the classroom, not in it. Therefore, educational undertakings in which children were asked to participate in imaginary activities, or assume roles that were not their own, were deemed to be inappropriate. The purpose of schooling, many believed, was to prepare a new generation of workers and this required obedience and restraint.

There is little evidence that this mindset has shifted given how resistant schools have been to change (Tyack & Cuban, 1995).

Despite the resistance to change, educators are developing instructional material that are centered around games and simulations. A game, in an educational context, refers primarily to computer video games (Foster, 2009). Since the simulation that is the focus of this dissertation is not a video game, I will focus the review of the literature primarily on simulations. The literature on educational simulations is immense, and growing, covering some of the following areas: science, nursing, business, international relations, job training, and elementary social studies. But, interestingly, very few studies concerning secondary social studies have been conducted. The National Council for the Social Studies' journal, *Social Studies*, has been consistently publishing lesson plans of simulations for the past few years, (Reap & Rethleson, 2006; Joyce, 2008; Russell, 2010) and while these are useful to teachers, they do not contain measurements or descriptions of effects. Several studies of computer games that concern social studies have been undertaken (e.g., Squire, 2006). However the lack of interaction among players, the limited role of the teacher, and the disconnect between the games' objectives, and curricular standards, makes direct comparisons between computer games and simulations unsuitable.

Simulations and learning

Simulations create virtual worlds where people can learn by directly experiencing concepts rather than just reading, or being told about them. This type of learning enhances the imaginative and role playing activities that children already utilize to make sense of the world (Williamson, Land, Butler, & Ndahi, 2004). These worlds help to create rich learning

environments that enable players to manipulate and learn from variables that are not normally available (Gee, 2004). Simulations:

> have the power to recreate complex, dynamic political processes in the classroom, allowing students to examine the motivations, behavioral constraints, resources and interactions among institutional actors. . . after a simulation, participants have a deeper understanding of institutions, their successes and failures." (Smith and Boyer 1996, p. 690)

Further, these simulations, when they are well designed, appear to motivate students to learn (Asgari & Kaufman, 2005; Shaffer, 2006; Calleja, 2007; Foster, 2008).

One type of simulation that appears to hold significant promise for education is the epistemic game. An epistemic game is a simulation in which students interact with each other using the lens of a profession to ground the way they approach, analyze, and solve problems (Shaffer, 2004a, 2004b). Since each profession has a unique way of seeing and acting in the world, epistemic games have the potential to teach students to think and act in a way that is valued by people in the world outside of school.

Epistemic games emphasize creating environments that maximize learning. Shaffer and Resnick (1999) have described learning environments that align learning activities and assessments with valued practices in the world as "thickly authentic". Thickly authentic settings abound in complex content, which is easily accessible to the learner because it is part of the milieu. In this way, it is a form of "situated learning" (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Situated learning posits that learning takes place in a social atmosphere where knowledge is constructed by multiple participants. Learning takes place in the same context where it is applied. As a result,

learning is communal and thus highly dependent on the community around it. Examples where situated learning occurs are most often found in communities of practice that range from Yucatan midwives to navy quartermasters to butchers to insurance claim adjusters (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998).

Simulations and Social Studies

Very few studies of simulations concerning secondary social studies have been undertaken and as a result, measuring and describing the effects of social studies simulations on student learning is in its infancy. Jenkins and Squire (2005) have documented the need for more research of content area simulations in order to build theory. The scholarship of peer reviewed social studies simulations is small. I review the recent literature below.

Schweber (2003; 2004) found that a Holocaust simulation she studied did engage students, improve knowledge of the Holocaust, and provide opportunities for students to wrestle with moral dilemmas. Although she concluded the simulation's strengths outweighed its weaknesses, Schweber notes that the teacher leading the simulation did miss opportunities to deepen historical understanding and on several occasions framed the lesson in ways that others might find contentious. Schweber's description of the Holocaust simulation suggest that while the potential for student engagement and learning during such a simulation is high, it does not necessarily mean that the potential will be realized, and that the teacher has enormous power in facilitating and interpreting the simulation.

Becket and Shaffer (2005) used a mixed methods approach to study the game Madison 2200. The game required students to assume the roles of urban planners charged with the responsibility of redesigning a downtown area. The students visited the physical site, interviewed

professionals connected to the area, and worked collaboratively in class to redesign the downtown area. The authors concluded that the students began to adopt the epistemic frames of urban planners as evidenced by their increasingly sophisticated awareness of the variables involved in urban planning and how their plans would impact residents and businesses.

A study to examine the effects of social studies simulations focused on the Constitutional Rights Foundation's CityWorks curriculum. The study (Kahne, et al., 2006) relied on pre and post surveys between control groups to measure changes in democratic outcomes. They found that the three teaching strategies of the curriculum: simulations, service projects, and exposure to role models – played a significant role in promoting democratic and civic outcomes such as social trust, a desire to volunteer and vote, and understanding the root causes of social and political problems. However, they also found that there was a wide degree of variation of the desired outcomes. The researchers attributed this variation to the ways the teachers used the curriculum. They discovered that the six teachers in their study placed varying degrees of emphasis on simulations, service projects, and exposure to role models. Correlating the different emphasis each teacher placed upon these three strategies with the differing democratic outcomes, Kahne and his colleagues found that there was a significant relationship between the simulation in the study and social trust, understanding the root cause of social and political problems, and participation in civic and political activities. These findings highlight the ideological nature of simulations, indicating that the simulation itself is designed to produce specific outcomes related to civic education.

A study of over 300 middle school students participating in a web based global education simulation found that students' interest in social studies increased as a direct result of the

simulation (Gehlbach, et al., 2008). Gehlbach and his colleagues utilized a pre-post design to conclude that student interest in the social studies increased because of the challenging nature of the simulation and the perspective taking that the simulation both structured and encouraged. A follow up study conducted the next year using a control group, confirmed the previous findings (Ioannou, et al., 2009), as well as demonstrated that the students in the simulation improved their understanding of global history in relation to the control group.

The work on simulations is only beginning. While there is now a theory of why simulations might be both engaging and relevant to students as well as guidelines for constructing future simulations (Shaffer, 2004a; 2004b), the empirical evidence is lean. One study documented the high level of student engagement, as well as missed opportunities for deeper historical thinking (Schweber, 2003; 2004). Two other studies found that learning outcomes improved as a direct result of the simulation being studied (Gehlbach et al., 2008; Ioannou, et al., 2009). The other study pointed to correlations between a simulation and positive growth in democratic outcomes (Kahne, et al., 2006).

Ideological curriculum

Deliberation theory is inherently ideological. Since deliberation theorists argue for increased political engagement among students, they are advocating participation within the United States' brand of politics. They thus promote attachment to, and participation within, a political system that is simultaneously championed by some and critiqued by others.

Ideals and conceptions of what constitutes 'a good citizen' often influence curricular goals, practices, and outcomes. One of the most powerful forces in shaping citizenship education over the last century has been the American Political Science Association (Ahmad, 2006;

Cherryholmes, 1990). The APSA has defined a conception of good citizenship that is closely tied to knowledge of the political system, and schools have aligned their curriculum with this emphasis.

Other theorists, particularly those on the political left, have placed a heavier emphasis on citizens who can effectively offer social critique and identify structural problems with the political process (Freire, 1990; Apple, 1995; 2004). In this view, students should be able to challenge both contemporary and past decisions made by political leaders. Citizenship education becomes an opportunity to question the judgments of others rather than simply affirm them. Others, on the political right (Bennett, 1995; Finn, 2006), stress conceptions of citizenship that rely on character, patriotism, and virtue.

Early political socialization researchers concluded that schools' attempt to deliberately influence political attitudes and behaviors were ineffective (Langston & Jennings, 1968; Torney, et al., 1975). Succeeding research however contested many of these findings. Subsequently, political scientists renewed their interest in civics courses as a pathway to political participation. This new round of research focused on the way courses were taught, and pointed in particular to opportunities to discuss current events in class (Niemi & Junn, 1998).

Virtually every component of citizenship is contested. Patriotism, for instance provides an example of one debate. Ravitch (2006) criticizes schools for not instilling a stronger sense of patriotism in children. In her view, studying past sacrifices of previous generations and becoming knowledgeable about the U.S. Constitution will encourage the development of patriotism. Kahne and Middaugh (2006) however, note that developing a strong sense of patriotism does not necessarily align with a firm commitment to democratic principles. A survey

of over 2,000 high school seniors at 12 diverse high schools found that more seniors believed it was un-American to criticize the policies of the country than those who did not believe that was true. Although the study did not correlate the attitudes and beliefs of the students to any particular curricular approach, the findings underscore the pervasive lack of political critique embedded in the social studies curriculum.

Michael Apple's work on curriculum examines how ideology is embedded in the curriculum of schools. In *Curriculum and Ideology* (2004), Apple notes the influence of neo-liberal and neo-conservative ideology on shaping the experience of schooling. The dominant idea of schooling is influenced and guided by virtually unquestioned norms. For instance, middle class ideals and behaviors are taught in schools, but rarely questioned or challenged. Accordingly, particular kinds of perspectives are privileged – those that maintain the dominant cultural, economic, and political interests of the country.

An empirical study lends support for Apple's claims. Using a random sample of surveys from 15 to 25 year-olds, Peter Levine and Hugo Lopez found that there was a correlation to the beliefs young people held about the government and themes emphasized in their social studies courses. Additionally, their study revealed most social studies courses emphasize traditionalist themes and values. Students in courses that emphasized "Great American heroes and the virtues of the American system of government" were more likely to have volunteered, and to trust others. The students who reported the major theme of their social studies course was "problems facing the country" reported the highest level of efficacy, and were most likely to believe that voting makes a difference. Students who reported their teachers emphasized themes of social

justice such as confronting racism and poverty, were most likely to be involved in solving problems within their local community (Levine & Lopez, 2004).

Chomsky (1988) insists that the range of ideas deemed reasonable within mainstream political consciousness is severely limited. The left and right of the political spectrum in the United States is limited to those ideas expressed by members of the Democratic and Republican parties – and the differences between these two parties is relatively mild compared to the range of political ideas that exist along a classic ideological spectrum. For instance, neither the Democrats nor the Republicans seriously question the fundamental assumptions of a capitalist economic system. Such a critique would raise concerns about private companies extracting natural resources for profit from public lands; it would advocate for much stronger progressive tax rates; and it would raise concerns about how five unelected members of the Federal Reserve Board determine the fiscal policy of the United States. Such discussions are limited to the wilderness of political expression and are not represented in mainstream news outlets, political parties, and of course, schools.

Subsequent research into the ideological diversity allowed into school curriculum indicates that the range of ideas is limited. Carole Hahn (2002), for instance, examined multiple social studies textbooks and found that nearly all of them contained the same information, and none of the information was contested. As one example, Hahn found that none of the texts she examined contained a treatment of a multi-party political system, thus reinforcing acceptance of the two party system that characterizes U.S. politics. Scholars have repeatedly found textbooks in particular contain limited perspectives, uncontested information, and are focused on a national narrative of progress (Lowen, 2007; Zimmerman, 2002; Camicia, 2007). Recently, Hess and

Stoddard (2007) examined a broad range of curricular materials about the terrorist attacks of 9/11. They concluded the vast majority of materials did not encourage students to critically examine either the roots of the attack or the international policies of the United States.

Kahne and Westheimer (2004) examined ten democratic education programs and constructed a framework that captured three distinct visions of citizenship embodied in the programs. These three types are: the *personally responsible citizen*; the *participatory citizen*; and the *justice oriented citizen*. Each of the programs they examined had ideological conceptions of citizenship that drove the pedagogy and ultimately resulted in significantly different political outcomes for the students. For instance, the students in the justice oriented programs were much more likely to offer structural explanations for poverty than the students who completed programs that emphasized personal responsibility or participation. While the personally responsible citizen might contribute to a canned food drive, and the participatory citizen might help to organize one, the justice oriented citizen would explore the root causes of poverty and homelessness.

Summary

The range of ideological perspectives allowed into the school curriculum is limited. The information that is permitted into schools tends to reinforce existing notions of political norms, such as the two party system. Textbooks and curricular materials often present information in an uncritical framework that does not invite inquiry. An important study of school curricula found that encouraging students to be simultaneously participatory and social justice oriented remains elusive.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study draws on disparate theories from four areas: *deliberative theory, deliberative empirical studies, simulation studies,* and *ideology and citizenship*. The research from each area has raised questions that are yet to be answered. *Deliberative theory* has laid claim to deliberation's ability to politically engage students, but *deliberative studies* have shown that deliberation is not always successful: people do not always learn from deliberation, marginalized voices are not always heard, and conflict can tamper political engagement. Studies of political conflict have produced two opposing views: one side views exposure to conflict as restoring the public's waning interest in politics, while the other side believes conflict will shut down deliberation. The studies of *simulations* have noted a remarkable potential to engage students. But engagement and thoughtfulness are not always the same thing. Just because students are engaged does not necessarily mean that what they are learning is useful and healthy for democracy. Finally, the *ideology* of a curricular program whether it is explicitly stated or not, has a very real effect on the type of *citizen* that it encourages students to emulate. Through the framework, I view a particular approach to teaching secondary social studies (a simulation that structures conflict while promoting deliberation) as a solution to two problems. The problems it potentially addresses are the lack of political engagement among youth in the United States (particularly those who do not attend college) and the lack of deliberation in secondary high school social studies classes.

While political engagement among 18 to 29 year-olds is relatively low, the division between voters and non-voters is most dramatic among two groups: those who attended college and those who did not. Attending college appears to nearly double one's chances of voting. What this means is that if education is to positively affect the political engagement of someone who doesn't attend college – it will have to be done before s/he leaves high school.

One of the most promising educational methods for encouraging political engagement is the discussion of political issues in the classroom. And yet this approach, for a variety of reasons, is rarely embraced by teachers. Chief among these reasons are the difficulty in facilitating discussions, reprisals from the community for not appearing neutral, and concern over controversy spilling out of control in the classroom. Political simulations offer plausible solutions to all these concerns.

Simulations are structured, and that structure has three relevant corollary effects. The first is to offer everyone involved a role. With regard to controversial issues this has the liberating effect of encouraging the students to choose sides of a controversy because the simulation rather than the teacher is demanding that they do so. The roles provide teachers with a carapace of neutrality, and thus potentially protect them from accusations of bias. Secondly, the simulations provide an architecture for controversy. Controversy occurs when the simulation has prepared students for it. This has the welcome effect of situating controversy in a framework where the rules of interaction are clear, the roles of the participants are clearly defined, and the controversy itself can be contained within the classroom. Finally, viewing the simulation as a tool, the structure of the simulation reduces the onus of facilitating the discussion from the teacher and shifts more responsibility to the students.

A political simulation then may encourage deliberation within the classroom. But what type of citizen does it attempt to promote? The conception of citizenship that it upholds depends heavily on the beliefs and values that are embedded within the simulation and pedagogy of the teacher.

Figure 2.1. Theoretical framework.

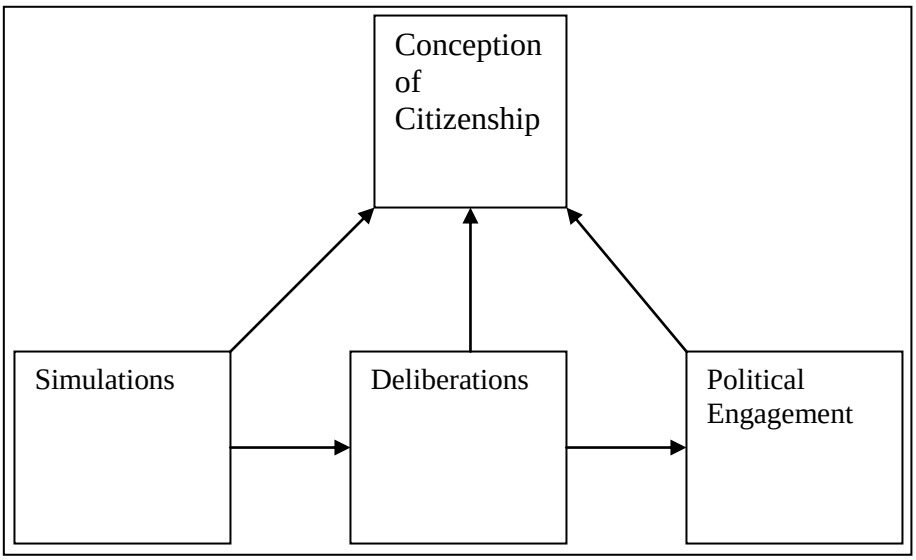

Fig. 2.1 Simulations structure deliberations so they are more likely to occur in the classroom. Deliberation leads to political engagement. Political simulations, deliberations, and political engagement all promote some ideological conception of citizenship.

Chapter 3. Methodology and Study Design

This study explores both how high school students experienced a semester length simulation that plunged them into the role of legislators and how teachers facilitated this simulation. The study is designed to capture the effects of the simulation on the students, as well as provide descriptions of how the simulation is taught.

In the previous chapters I introduced the theoretical framework as well as the four questions driving this study: 1) What pedagogical strategies do the teachers employ? 2) What is the role of conflict in the simulation? 3) How does the simulation affect student political engagement? 4) What are the ideological underpinnings of the simulation? Below, I preview how the questions, framework, and methodology are aligned.

Preview of alignment between questions, framework and methodology

Question 1: What pedagogical strategies do the teachers employ?

Deliberation is often recommended as a way of strengthening the democratic commitments and capacities of students, yet it is rarely used. If deliberation is to become more commonplace in schools, then studying and describing how teachers successfully implement, facilitate, and negotiate this difficult form of pedagogy may provide insight into how it can become a more common fixture in social studies classrooms.

To answer this question, I observed teachers' classrooms and key parts of the simulation. Teacher interviews provided opportunities to delve more deeply into how they prepared for

Table 3.1. Alignment between questions, framework, and methodology.		
	Alignment to framework	Alignment to methodology
Q1: Pedagogical strategies of teachers.	Why were these teachers able to use deliberation when most teachers do not?	Teacher interviews and observations help to describe what they did. Student interviews provide information about how the students experienced pedagogy. Questionnaires triangulate and complement qualitative data by providing additional information about class climate and disclosure.
Q2: Role of conflict.	Is conflict beneficial or harmful to students?	Student interviews reveal whether they felt personally attacked. Observations provide opportunity to witness the tone of debates. Questionnaire results reveal comfort with conflict and relationship to political engagement.
Q3: Political engagement.	Will the variety of deliberation used in the simulation increase or decrease political engagement?	Student interviews give voice to attitudes about politics. Pre and posttests provide quantitative level of engagement.
Q4: Ideological underpinnings of simulation.	No curriculum is neutral, what does this curriculum attempt to make students believe? Where does the simulation fit into democratic education?	Student interviews provide evidence of what students believe about the simulation. Teacher interviews indicate what they wanted students to know and believe. Structure of simulation provided evidence of intent. Questionnaires indicate level of change.

deliberations, how they facilitated them, and how they dealt with the challenges of classroom management. Student interviews and questionnaire results provided an account of how students responded to the teachers' pedagogy and how they viewed the class climate.

Question 2: What is the role of conflict in the simulation?

The theoretical framework contains conflicting accounts of how exposure to conflict affects people who talk about politics. On the one hand, exposure to conflict is a healthy part of a democracy. On the other hand, most people do not appear to be engaging in cross cutting political talk; many who do are driven away, rather than toward, political engagement. Given that this simulation is designed to encourage political conflict, this study is well poised to address the contradictory nature of what is known about conflict. The design of the study will enable several facets of conflict to be captured. First, student interviews will reveal whether or not students felt personally attacked. Second, analysis of pre and post questionnaires will show the degree to which students felt confident about speaking in front of their peers, and whether or not the classroom environment was open or closed. I correlated these finding with students' ethnicity to determine if race played a role in how students experienced conflict. Finally, observations from the Full Session, allowed me to witness the tone of student rhetoric and to witness the arguments they employed as they debated contentious issues.

Question 3: How does the simulation affect student political engagement?

Political engagement is an important goal of democratic education. How this goal might best be reached however, is not clear. Contradictory findings of studies that examined the role of conflict in face to face exchanges has called into question whether or not exposure to conflict will increase or decrease political engagement. This study design helped to answer this question.

Pre and posttests measured students' interest in following the news, commitment to voting in elections, and how often they talked about politics. Student interviews provided a window into how the participants of this simulation regarded politics, and how they thought the simulation affected their view of politics.

Question 4: What are the ideological underpinnings of the simulation?

Social studies education is intertwined with citizenship education. While the simulation clearly engaged students, the purposes of that engagement, its ideological nature, and the ultimate intent of participating in the simulation was not clear. I examined what bills and topics the students explored, paying particular attention to the range of ideological diversity allowed into the debates. I examined how the simulation was structured to create its own sense of what is normal. I placed the simulation within an existing framework of citizenship typology, utilizing quantitative measurements to determine changes to political engagement and efficacy.

Methodology

This study employs a mixed methods approach, which combines qualitative and quantitative research techniques into a single study. Qualitative data in the form of interviews and observations were combined with quantitative data from pre/post questionnaires. Mixed methods research draws on several forms of inquiry that include: "induction (or discovery of patterns), deduction (testing of theories and hypotheses), and abduction (uncovering and relying on the best set of explanations for understanding one's results)" (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p. 17). Mixed methods design has been successfully employed in several democratic education studies. Westheimer and Kahne (2004) for instance used a mixed methods approach to analyze democratic outcomes of students enrolled in two different citizen education programs. The

mixed method design of their study enabled them to make claims about the level of change that occurred from the beginning to the end of the school programs as well as formulate a typology of citizenship for each program. Hess (2009) employed mixed methods to quantitatively capture the range of student ideological diversity in classrooms, and then used qualitative observations and interviews to cast light on teaching practices and give voice to student perspectives.

The goal of mixed methods research is to draw on the strengths and minimize the weaknesses of qualitative and quantitative methodologies in an effort to answer research questions (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Although there are host of researchers who claim that differences between the quantitative and qualitative research traditions are too large to be bridged[2], and are indeed incompatible, others have pointed to the similarities. To begin with, both methodologies employ critical thinking, empirical observations, descriptions of data, explanatory arguments, and speculations about what the data means. Additionally, both traditions have built in safeguards to minimize error, bias, and lack of trustworthiness (Sechrest & Sidini, 1975; Sandelowski, 1986; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004).

Greene et al., (1989) developed a framework of mixed method uses. The authors identify several qualities of a mixed methods approach. I will employ two of these: triangulation, and complementarity. Triangulation seeks to corroborate, through multiple measures, a single focus of inquiry, or phenomenon. For instance, in order to assess historical knowledge, a researcher might use both a qualitative interview and a quantitative questionnaire. Complementarity seeks enhancement, clarification, or illustration by employing two methods that measure overlapping and different facets of a phenomenon. For example, one might attempt to assess a student's

[2] For a defense of quantitative methods see for example (Nagel, 1986). For an equally passionate defense of qualitative methods see (Guba & Lincoln, 1989).

interest in a subject as well as a complementary attribute such as motivation. Although both phenomena are linked to performance, they are distinct. This is different from triangulation in the sense that triangulation's purpose is to converge on one facet of a phenomenon, while complementarity uses different measurements to assess diverse facets of a phenomenon.

Selection of school, teachers and students

Two criteria were used to select the teachers and students, which serve as the bounded cases (Stake, 2000). The first criterion is that deliberation, defined by Parker (2003), as discussion with an eye towards decision making, is utilized as a key component of instruction. The second criterion is that each teacher participates in a semester long legislative simulation. An explanation of the simulation follows this section.

During the 1980s at a suburban public high school in the Midwest that I will call Jefferson, an experienced government teacher was concerned about low levels of political engagement among his students. As a response to this problem he developed a semester length legislative simulation. Through a decade of refinement, and recruitment of other social studies teachers, all of the senior classes in this public high school are now automatically enrolled in the simulation. Completion of the course satisfies the school's government requirement for graduation. The government classes are mainstreamed and untracked meaning that students are randomly assigned to their government class and there is only one academic level of government. Other classes in the school are tracked.

Students are prepared for the simulation by engaging in daily debates with their classmates. The debates are structured using parliamentary procedure, and are on topics of current political controversy such as tax rates, gun policy, and the death penalty. As the semester

progresses, the students declare membership to a political party (or they can be independent), elect party leaders, and hold a two day legislative simulation in which students fully inhabit the role of legislators.

The simulation is scaffolded into eight parts. First, students are asked to reflect on their own political beliefs and values through a series of controversial issue discussions in class and then they are required to continue the discussion online using the software platform Blackboard. Next, the students determine their own position on the U.S. political spectrum. Then they publicly declare a party affiliation by placing their name on a spectrum that is housed in the school library. Following that, they form committees to study issues of interest. The political parties elect their leadership, and then begin the process of writing bills. The committees hold hearings on the bills, and finally, the bills that pass the committee are debated during a culminating two day "Full Session."

The majority of students enrolled in the school are white; one third of the students are Latino. A quarter of the students have been designated as low income, which is below the state average of 40%. One out of every ten students is learning to speak English, which is almost double the state average. The district pays its teachers well above the state average even though the average number of years taught (11) is below the state average of 13. Overall performance on state tests indicates the students at Jefferson perform slightly below the average for the rest of the state. The high school graduation rate is an impressive 95% and this high rate holds across ethnic and class lines. 90% of Latinos, 90% of students with limited English proficiency, and 96% of students designated as "economically disadvantaged" graduated the year data was collected for this study.

Context of the study

This study is situated within a larger study that is now in its sixth year of data collection. Diana Hess is the lead researcher on this project, which is called Discussing Controversial Issues (DCI). The major purpose of the DCI study is to identify the ways in which issues deliberation in social studies classes influences what young people learn and how they act politically both while in school and after graduation. Two research questions guide the work:

1. How do high school students experience and learn from participating in social studies courses that emphasize the deliberation of controversial international and/or domestic issues?
2. Do such deliberations influence students' political participation after they leave high school? If so, what are the pathways to participation?

I was the research assistant for this study from 2003 to 2006. During that time we collected data in 20 high school classes in 9 schools in three Midwestern states. Beginning in September of 2005, a second cohort of students was added to the study, some from the same schools and or teachers as from the first cohort, and many from new schools.

It is from this larger ongoing study that I began a smaller case study of three teachers and their students at one school. There are key differences between this study and the DCI study. First, the scope of this study is of three teachers and their students at the same site; the DCI study contains a much larger sample. The grade level, type of class, and time spent in class all vary widely in the DCI study. The students in this study all were seniors enrolled in a semester class. Second, the unit of analysis in the DCI study is each classroom; the unit of analysis in this study is a legislative simulation at one high school. Third, the DCI study relies on longitudinal data to

map a pathway to political participation; this study will rely on data collected during the 2005/2006 school year only. Finally, the research questions driving this study differ from the DCI study. While both this study and the DCI study focus on how students experience and learn from deliberation – the deliberative practices in the DCI study vary widely. For instance, some students in the DCI study experienced only a few days of deliberation throughout the school year, and did not participate in any kind of simulation. The students in this study were exposed to deliberative practices everyday, which were centered around a simulation. The DCI study is concerned about political participation during and after high school; this study seeks to answer questions about political engagement during high school only. This study also seeks to answer questions about the ideology of this school's government curriculum, a topic that is not the focus of the DCI study.

Because this study is situated within the context of another study, I was bound to both the instruments (pre and post questionnaires) as well as the interview protocols that were already in place. However, I was the initial research assistant on the study and I helped to conceptualize and develop the questionnaires, scales, and interview protocols.

Sample size

Consent forms were distributed to students at the beginning of the fall and spring semesters during the 2005/2006 school year. There were three government teachers at this site, and all of them elected to participate in the study. Each semester two of the teachers had two sections of government, and one teacher had one section, for a total of five sections per semester, and ten for the entire school year. There were slightly over 200 students involved in the legislative simulation each semester, for a total of about 400 students during the entire year. 122 students turned in a positive consent form and filled out the pre-questionnaire. Of the 122

students, 67 were enrolled in the fall semester, and 65 were enrolled in the spring semester. Roughly half, or 66 students total, filled out both the pre and post questionnaires.

The large percentage of students who did not complete the post questionnaire gives rise to the issue of non response bias. The dropout rate on the post questionnaire is most likely tied to the length of the questionnaire and the age of the respondents. Length, in the context of a questionnaire can refer to number or pages, number of questions, or response time (Vicente & Reis, 2010). Several studies have found that questionnaire length has a moderate effect on completion rates (Dillman et al., 1993). However, a recent controlled study designed to ascertain how young people react to survey length found that response rates on questionnaires were significantly affected by questionnaire length, with the longer questionnaire having higher dropout rates (Ganassali, 2008). The post questionnaire in this study is over 100 questions long. It is probable that the senior students, facing the end of their mandatory schooling at the end of a semester simply deemed that the questionnaire was too long. While not ideal, a dropout rate of half does not necessarily indicate that there is a nonresponse bias. Groves (2006) found there was no strong association between response rates and nonresponse bias across a range of studies.

Table 3.2. Sample size.

Total students both semesters	Fall semester 5 sections	Spring semester 5 sections	Interviews (total)	Post quest(total)
122	67	65	26	66

Demographics

The following demographics were assessed for students: gender, ethnicity, religious preference. religious attendance, whether or not they are native English speakers, number of books in the home, newspaper subscriptions, and plans after graduation.

The sample is more female than male. This is not surprising given the higher national dropout rates for males, coupled with the fact that the students in this study are in their senior year, which means the disparity between male and females would have reached its apex. Roughly one third of the sample is Latino, which is in proportion to the percentage of Latinos who attend the school. The table below summarizes the gender and ethnicity of the sample (N=122).

Table 3.3. Demographics of sample.

	Male	Female
Total	47	75
Anglo	28	45
Latino	18	44
African American	2	3

Note: the sum of the numbers in each category do not match the total since not everyone answered the question, and some students marked more than one ethnicity.

Research Design

Data Collection and Instruments

Data was collected over the course of the 2005/2006 school year. The data comes from two semesters involving over 120 students in ten different sections. I have collected data through *classroom observations, student pre and post questionnaires, and student and faculty interviews.*

Classroom observations: Each teacher was observed once per semester teaching each of their sections, for a total of 10 observations between the two semesters and the three teachers. The observations were timed to coincide with lessons that were directly related to the simulation. Particular attention was paid to how the teachers structured a lesson that dealt with a controversial issue, the level of student participation, and what students said and did during the lesson.

At the end of each semester I observed the two day full scale simulation, or Full Session, where the students convene a legislative body and debate bills that have made it out of committee. I tried to capture through field notes how many students spoke for each bill, the arguments each side utilized for their debate, and the result of the final vote on the bill. The bills are an important indication of the type of issues that were debated.

Student Questionnaires: The pre-questionnaire contains 86 items in multiple choice and Likert-type scale formats, while the post contains 114 items. Responses for the Likert-type items are based on either agreement or frequency. Pre questionnaires were administered at the beginning of the semester, and posts were given at the end of the semester. The pre-questionnaire has 11 scales, which are listed in Table 3.4.

Table 3.4. Scaled items on the questionnaire.

Scale name	Questionnaire item
Political engagement	q15,q17,q20,q21,q24
General awareness of news	q48,q49,q50,q51,q52,q54b,q54c,q54e
Forming opinion	q28_4,q103,q106a
Efficacy – internal	q15,q18,q22,q23,q26,q27,q33,q34
Duties of citizen	q16,q17,q65,q66,q67,q68,q69,q70,q71
Attitudes – government	q61,q62,q63,q64_2,q80_4
Resources home	q6,q7,q8
Class influences	q35,q36,q37,q38,q39,q95,q96,q97,q98,q99
Religious attendance	q14
Teacher disclosure	q100
Self-assessed tolerance	q32

Each scale was developed with an eye toward testing theoretical claims about the effectiveness of controversial issue discussion, or to follow up on empirical studies that attempted to determine how controversial issues discussion affected students. Many of the questionnaire items have been field tested by other researchers in previous studies.

Student Interviews: The student pre-questionnaires were analyzed to determine where the class stood along key socioeconomic and political markers which included class, gender, ethnicity, religion, language spoken at home, and who they would have voted for in the 2004 presidential election. I also selected students that represent a range of academic achievement, since students who are doing well in the class may experience the class much differently than other students. I asked the teacher to help me identify students who have a wide range of grades. A few students in each class were then selected as representative of the ethnic, socioeconomic and political range within the class. Selecting students in this way enabled me to choose students representative of a wide range of life experience, perceptions, and beliefs. For instance, information from the questionnaire helped ensure that I interviewed students who have different

religions, ethnicities, and political beliefs – all of which are characteristics that may have affected how the student experienced the class. Capturing an ethnically diverse sample also provided the opportunity to further test Campbell's (2005) assertion that ethnic diversity is prohibitive to maintaining an open class climate.

Each student whose consent form allowed it, and was selected, was interviewed once for 30 minutes at the end of the course. The student interviews helped determine how the students experienced the class. More than one third of the sample was interviewed in total. The first semester only those students who had completed a post questionnaire were included in the interview. During the second semester, in an attempt to widen the interview pool, any student who had consented to be interviewed was considered.

Each interview lasted between 15 and 30 minutes. The interviews followed a structured format. Interviewees were asked to assess their teacher's effectiveness, whether or not they approved of their teacher's disclosure policy, what their interest in politics was before and after the simulation, how they regarded conflict, and what they thought they had learned from the simulation.

Teacher Interviews: Each teacher was interviewed two times using an in-depth semi-structured format. In a semi-structured interview, the interviewer relies on an interview guide to shape the interview. The format however remains fluid, as the interviewee is encouraged to open up new topics, or delve deeply into topics that interest them (Payne, 1999). The first interview took place at the end of the first semester, and was used to determine the teacher's conception of democracy, discussion, and the social studies. I also asked the teachers about what they thought students should be able to know and do in a democracy, and how they defined "a good citizen."

After reviewing the tapes from the first interview, I used the second interview to ask follow up on questions that seemed contradictory, or required more probing. The second interview was conducted after I had observed the teacher's class. The interview focused on the dynamics of the lesson, with an eye toward trying to understand the reasons the teacher chose the issue, how the students were prepared for the lesson, and what the students were supposed to learn. Table 3.5 summarizes how the data was gathered for each research question.

Table 3.5. Research questions and data sources.

Research Question	Data Sources
1) What pedagogical strategies do the teachers employ?	Class and simulation observations; student pre and post questionnaires; student interviews; teacher interviews.
2) What is the role of conflict in the simulation?	Class and simulation observations; student pre and post questionnaires; student interviews.
3) How does the simulation affect political engagement?	Student pre and post questionnaires; student interviews.
4) What are the ideological underpinnings of the simulation?	Class and simulation observations; teacher interviews; student interviews.

Data Analysis

There are a number of different data collected for this study. They include: student pre and post questionnaires, student interviews, teacher interviews, and classroom observations. In the sections that follow I explain the data analysis in two parts. First, I explain how I analyzed the data through the lens of the instruments that were developed for the study. Next, I use the lens of the research questions to explain how I analyzed the data to answer each question.

Student Questionnaire

The student questionnaires served as the main source of information for the quantitative portion of this study. In keeping with a mixed method study, I used quantitative analysis to enhance triangulation and complementarity of the findings. The questionnaires were analyzed using the quantitative software SPSS to determine the effect of the simulation on the measurable scaled items. Paired-samples t-tests were run to look at whether scores at post-questionnaire was significantly higher than scores at pre-questionnaire. The scales were tested for reliability. I ran Pearson's correlations looking at associations between political engagement and individual characteristics. This was done looking at the associations within the pre-questionnaire and again at those same associations within the post-questionnaire. In addition, I used linear regression to examine whether any pre-questionnaire individual characteristics predicted political engagement in the post-questionnaire.

Interviews

The teacher and student interviews were transcribed by a professional transcriber. I then used inductive coding methods (Glaser, 1978; Glaser & Strauss, 1967) to develop a coding scheme (see Table 3.6). The coding scheme was adjusted as different themes emerged. These themes were compared within and across student cases.

I began by aligning the coding scheme with the research questions. For instance, I created categories such as "attitude about controversy" and "attitude about conflict" to explore how students viewed the controversial issues discussions they had in their classes, thus giving me insight into how to answer the research questions about teacher strategies and the role of conflict in the simulation. As the study progressed, I adjusted and refined the coding scheme. For instance, initially I was interested in whether or not the teachers in the study disclosed. When it

became apparent that they did not, my interest turned to how the students felt about this policy and so I created a new coding category called "attitude about teacher disclosure."

I decided not to use the qualitative software Nvivo and instead coded by hand. I made this decision for three reasons. First, I felt detached from the data using SPSS and I did not want to feel that way about the interviews as well. Second, the number of interviews (n=26) was low enough for me to code without additional tools. Third, I felt constrained by using Nvivo, as it did not allow me to look at all my interviews at once in the same way that simply spreading the transcripts out on a table did.

Table 3.6. List of codes.

Codes (+ sub codes)	Description
Attitude about politics before semester (positive, negative)	Student assesses how they regarded politics before they enrolled in their government class.
Attitude about politics after semester (positive, negative)	Student assesses how they regarded politics after they finished their government class.
Political engagement outside of school (reading newspaper, watching news, talking about politics)	Student reports evidence of political engagement.
Attitude about controversy (positive, negative)	Student assesses how they regard political controversy.
Attitude about conflict (positive, negative)	Student assesses how they regard political conflict.
Value of different perspectives (high, medium, low)	Student assesses how much/little they valued exposure to different student perspectives.
Favorite part of the course	Student identifies their favorite activity during the simulation.
Attitude toward government/politicians (positive, negative)	Student assesses how they regard politicians and government.
Level of engagement in course (high, medium, low)	Student cites evidence of level of engagement in the course.
Teacher/ handling conflict (skillfully, not skillfully)	Student assesses whether or not their teacher handled conflict between students skillfully.
Attitude about teacher disclosure	Student assesses how they viewed their teacher's non disclosure policies.
Types of issues discussed	Student identifies what controversial issues were discussed in class.

I began coding cautiously, reading over a transcript several times before applying all the codes. I created memos in which I made observations about the data and how the interview data compared to class observations, the questionnaire data, and across other student cases. I looked for patterns, and themes. But I also looked for anomalies, careful not to rule out data that would challenge emerging hypotheses and conclusions (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Research questions

Four research questions drive this study. They are:

1) What pedagogical strategies do the teachers employ?

2) What is the role of conflict in the simulation?

3) How does the simulation affect student political engagement?

4) What are the ideological underpinnings of the simulation?

In this section I will explain how the research questions relate to the existing literature on democratic education, why they are important to further our understanding of teaching controversial issues, and how I gathered and analyzed the data to answer them.

Question 1: What pedagogical strategies do the teachers employ?

Teaching controversial issues is highly recommended (Hess, 2009; Kahne & Middaugh, 2008; Pace, 2008; Parker, 2003; CIRCLE, 2003;) yet teachers do not often use them (Kahne, et al., 2000; Newman, 1988; Nystrand, et al., 1997). The teachers in this study used controversial issues as an integral part of their curriculum. That the teachers were able to employ a frequently

touted, but often underused pedagogy in the simulation raised the question of how they were able to do it.

To answer this question I utilized three types of data: class observations, teacher interviews, and student interviews. I used class observations to verify what students and teachers told me about how class discussions were conducted. I asked teachers how they ran discussions. I asked students how their teachers moderated class discussions, and how the students experienced those discussions.

Answering this question is important to determine how teachers were able to hold frequent controversial issues discussions in a diverse, non tracked public school. The findings from this question could help teachers and administrators develop successful strategies to implement controversial issues discussions.

Question 2: What is the role of conflict in the simulation?

The legislative simulation is infused with daily deliberations characterized by political disagreement. It therefore offers a compelling case study on the effect such conflict might have on political attitudes.

An assumption running through the literature of democracy education is that exposure to political conflict will result in desired outcomes such as greater interest in politics. The claim I was most interested in assessing is *the Stealth Democracy thesis*: exposure to political conflict will increase interest in politics. While this assumption makes intuitive sense, the theory remains essentially untested, and it is not without its critics. Campbell's (2005) study suggests political discussions among a heterogeneously racial class are unlikely to be open. While Sanders (1997)

rejects deliberation as a nostrum for political engagement since deliberation will most likely reproduce societal inequities.

I am defining political attitudes as students' desire to follow political news and engage in discussions with family and friends, as well as their commitment to voting. Several of the scales in the questionnaire directly address the issue of conflict and political engagement. Students' comfort with conflict was correlated to the other scales concerning political engagement to determine if there was a causal relationship between them.

The student interviews and class observations were used to answer this question. Campbell's (2005) assertions about students' (or teachers') discomfort with conflict in a heterogeneous environment are based on correlations between the amount of time spent discussing controversial issues in the classroom and the ethnic composition of the students in those classrooms. But he has no interview data to probe the students' attitudes about the discussion of controversial issues, nor was he present in any of those classrooms. This study will avoid the pitfall of relying exclusively on questionnaire data. Students were asked about how they dealt with the conflict they encountered as part of the simulation, whether they felt attacked, and whether or not they felt pressured to conform to either their teacher's or other student's point of view.

Question 3: What effect does the simulation have on political engagement?

I am defining political engagement as voting, following the news, talking about politics, volunteering, and political awareness. The political engagement of the students is self-reported and will not extend beyond high school. Each of these items has been scaled from the

questionnaire. Additionally, during the interview, the students were asked about how often they talk about politics, their attitudes about political conflict, and how the class affected them.

Perhaps the most compelling argument in favor of deliberation being taught in school is that it will lead to increased political engagement. At the same time, most of the criticism leveled at deliberation focuses on the negative effect deliberation will have on its participants. If Sanders, Sunstein, and Campbell are correct, then marginalized students will feel even more marginalized. However, if deliberation theorists are correct, then political engagement will increase, and students' respect for each other should also increase.

There is the possibility that a socioeconomic factor may interact with the simulation in such a way as to have a dramatic effect on political engagement. In order to explore that possibility, I cross referenced major demographic categories with the results of the pre/post results.

The demographic information of the students was determined from a number of questionnaire items that include the following questionnaire items: gender, ethnicity, religion, language spoken at home, newspaper subscriptions, number of books in the home, plans after graduation, and number of years of education they plan to complete.

Question 4: What are the ideological underpinnings of the simulation?

Kahn and Westheimer (2004) identified three distinct goals of civic education programs. Using their typology as a starting point I compared the results of student attitudes toward volunteering, politics, and duties and obligations of citizens to the typologies that Kahn and Westheimer induced from their study.

Additionally, the type of issues discussed – whether or not there were opportunities to critique current policies – plays a large role in determining the ideology of the simulation, and the type of citizens it attempts to create. Critical theory, with the importance placed on power relations, attention to what is considered normal, and emphasis on disrupting the status quo, was used to assess the purposes and intentions of the simulation.

I used teacher and student interviews to determine how they experienced the simulation. I asked teachers about what they hoped the students would know and be able to do by the end of the simulation. I also asked questions about why they think social studies is important, and how they conceptualize democracy. Students were asked about what their teachers wanted them to learn, and how they learned it. Students were also asked about how they think the class would affect them in the future.

Conclusion

Using mixed methods methodology, I tried to use the varied kinds of data at my disposal: observations, interviews, and questionnaires, to answer the research questions. Again, those questions are:

1) What pedagogical strategies do the teachers employ?

2) What is the role of conflict in the simulation?

3) How does the simulation affect student political engagement?

4) What are the ideological underpinnings of the simulation?

The next two chapters report findings as they relate to these questions.

Apendix 3.1. Scale Constructs

I. ***General Awareness*** is information/understanding that indicates they are well informed.

Knowledge items have "right" answers.

A) General Awareness

Item #'s 48,49,50,51,52,54

48. Which party do you consider to be more conservative?

49. Which party controls the U.S. House of Reps?

50. Which party controls the U.S. Senate?

51. Which party is more in favor of tax cuts to stimulate the U.S. economy?

52. Who is currently Vice President of the United States?

54. Where are American troops currently stationed?

II. Action

B) Political Engagement is a scale that is designed to determine how active, knowledgeable and involved students are in the political system.

Item #s 15,17,20,21,24

15. I have a good understanding of political issues.

17. I think it is important for people to follow political issues

20. I enjoy talking about politics and political issues.

21. I know where to register to vote.

24. When I am eligible I expect that I will vote in every election.

C) Forming an opinion is a scale that is designed to determine how students form opinions about political issues.

Item #'s 28,103,106a

28. Important to listen to several sides of an issue.

103. To discuss the issue with my friends and family.

106a. To read about the issue on my own.

III. Dispositions – preferences, beliefs, feelings, attitudes. Some of these are questions for which we think there is a better answer leading to good political engagement, and some are questions of controversy for which we believe there is no right answer.

D) Efficacy- internal – students self assessment of how good they are at something.

Item #s: 15,18,22,23,26,27,33,34

15. I have a good understanding of political issues

18. I'm as well informed as others about current events.

22. I am good at expressing my political opinions in a group.

23. I feel like I can influence what local government does.

26. I think I am, or could be, a good volunteer.

27. I am good at speaking in front of a group.

33. I am good at working in groups.

34. I feel like I can influence what the federal government does.

E) Duties- what students think citizens should do in order to be a good citizen.

Item #s: 16,17,65,66,67,68,69,70,71

16. Being actively involved in community issues is my responsibility.

17. I think it is important for people to follow political issues.

65. To speak and understand English.

66. To vote in every election.

67. To participate in activities to benefit people in the community.

68. To speak out for someone who is treated unfairly.

69. To be loyal to the ideals of the country

70. To respect the rights of others.

71. To know about the country's history.

F) Attitudes about government

Item #s 61,62,63,64,80

61. What people call 'compromise' in politics is really just selling out one's principles.

62. Our government would be run better if decisions were left up to non elected, independent experts rather than politicians or the people.

63. Elected officials would help the country more if they would stop talking and just take action on important problems.

64. Most of the time when politicians argue it is because…

80. The federal government handles its job pretty well.

G) Comfort with conflict – The degree to which people are willing to disagree with others, and listen to others with whom they disagree.

Item #'s 42,43

42. In conversations, how often do you openly disagree with people about politics?

43. How often do you listen to people talk about politics when you know that you already disagree with them?

H) Tolerance

Item # 32

32. I think I am a tolerant person.

I) Class influences – This scale measures how students perceived the class with regard to thinking and talking about politics.

Item #'s 35,36,37,38,39,95,96,97,98,99

35. I enjoy sharing my ideas in my classes.

36. I am afraid that my teacher will criticize or judge me based on my comments in discussion.

37. I hesitate to speak in my classes because my classmates think my ideas are unworthy of consideration.

38. Every student in class has the responsibility to contribute to class discussions occasionally.

39. Participation in class discussions is a matter of personal choice. It is not essential that everyone contribute in this way.

95. People should consider everyone's side of the argument before they make a decision.

96. Everyone should participate

97. People should be knowledgeable about the subject they are talking about.

98. There should be lots of different opinions.

99. People should not be criticized for having different points of view.

V. Demographics

J) Resources at home – This scale assess the availability of intellectual resources available to the student in his/her home.

Item #s 6,7,8

6. Do you get a daily newspaper at home?

7. Do you get a weekly newspaper at home?

8. About how many books are there in your home?

K) SES – This scale assess the student's socio-economic status. It primarily relies on the previous scale: resources at home, and adds 1 more question.

Item #s 6,7,8,9

9. How many years of education do you plan on completing after this year?

L) Religious Attendance – This scale is a self-reported measure of religious attendance.

Item # 14

14. Aside from weddings and funerals how often do you attend religious services?

Apendix 3.2. Student interview protocol

Questions About the Class Writ Large

1. What has she learned in this social studies class this year semester? Ask probing follow-ups to get her to explain the meaning of her answers.
2. How would she describe how she has done in this course?
3. How much does she like this course? In comparison to other courses she is taking this year? How hard is this course? Compared to others? What influence does she think this course will have on her in the future?
4. What kind of activities and assignments did you do in class to prepare you for the simulation? Tell her that you will read a list, ask her to think about it for a bit, add other activities to the list that are missing, and then answer the question.

    Listening to the teacher lecture (probe for whether she takes notes)

    Learning parliamentary procedure

    Watching films or video

    Working in small groups or committees

    Reading independently

    Participating in small group discussions

    Participating in large group discussions/debates

    Ask for other activities that students do during class

5. How would she describe the teacher/teaching in this course? Probe for her normative assessment of the teacher/teaching?

Questions about Controversial Issues/Topics in this Course

Explain that many social studies courses include content that is controversial. Some of these issues are historical (Should the US gone to war in Vietnam?), some are contemporary (Should the death penalty be allowed in the US?), some are local, some state, some national, some international. Give more examples if the student seems confused.

1. Were controversial issues included in this course? If so, ask the student to list as many she can remember. Try to get a sense of the quantity of issues relative to other things.
2. When controversial issues were included, what were students asked to do?
    a. Read about them
    b. Listen to teacher lecture about them
    c. Discuss them (in small groups? In large groups?)
    d. Debate issues
    e. Have student identify other activities she did with issues (for example, simulations)
3. If student said students discussed or debated issues (either in groups or as a whole class), ask the following:
    a. How does the student define discussion? Or debate?
    b. What, if anything, did students do to prepare for the d/d?
    c. How would she describe a controversial issues d/d that occurred in this class? What is typical?
    d. How long did issues d/d typically last?
    e. What did the teacher do during issues d/d? Try to get a sense of how much teachers talked and what kinds of things they said.
    f. How many students typically participated? Lots of probes here.
    g. Did she typically participate? If not, why not? If so, why?
    h. Did participation in issues d/d influence student's grades?

Classroom Climate

1. Are students encouraged to express their opinions about issues in class?
2. Do you think students expressed their true opinions about issues in this class?
3. Did students feel free to disagree openly with other students about issues? With the teacher?

4. How would she describe the range of political difference in the class. For example, what % of students does she think would have supported Bush/Kerry/Nader in 2004? When there is a issues d/d, how much disagreement typically exists among students?
5. Does she know the teacher's opinion on the issues they dealt with in class? Lots of probes here. If so, how did she find out? If not, why not?
6. What does she think about how the teacher dealt with the "disclosure question?"
7. Did she ever feel like it was important to agree OR disagree with the teacher's opinion? With other students' opinions?
8. Does she think the teacher was trying to convince students to have a particular opinion on issues? If so, how does she feel about this? Also, to what extent was it effective (that is, did students believe what the teacher wanted them to believe)?
9. Are there some issues that should not be discussed in social studies classes? If so, which ones and why? If not, why not?
10. How were decisions made about who was assigned to speak for what bill?
11. Did you think the process was fair?
12. Did you feel that you were listened to by the other members of your party? (If they didn't join one of the parties, ask how that affected their experience.)
13. Did you ever feel as if you were being personally attacked during class or during the simulation?
14. Did you change your position on the ideological spectrum during the semester? What do you think accounts for this change?
15. After going through this simulation has your opinion of government changed? If so, how?
16. Could you tell me what you know about the Electoral College?
17. What is an omnibus?
18. What obstacles did you have to overcome in order to try to get a bill passed during the simulation?

Closure

1. Is there anything else that she would like to say about the course that she thinks would help us understand what she has learned and why?
   Thank her.

Chapter Four. Findings and Analysis

Chapter four contains data and analysis from the first three questions of this study. I begin by providing an overview of the simulation, and then turn to answering the first three of the four research questions. In order to answer the first question of this study: What are the pedagogical strategies of the teachers in this simulation? I provide biographical sketches of the three teachers who ran the simulation: Eileen, Robin, and Brian, paying particular attention to their beliefs about social studies that undergird the simulation. Classroom observations of two of the teachers follow the portraits. Next, I present the quantitative and qualitative data from the student questionnaires and interviews as they relate to two of the three remaining questions driving this study. Those questions are: What is the role of conflict in the simulation? How did the simulation affect the political engagement of the students? I conclude with a discussion of the findings, drawing out the salient features of the simulation that contributed to the results.

Overview of the simulation

The Legislative Simulation is a semester length activity in which senior students learn the skills and habits of legislators. The legislature is modeled after a state deliberative body, but also considers national issues that only Congress has purview over such as withdrawing troops from Iraq. The simulation is scaffolded into eight key stages and culminates in a two day "Full Session" in which participants meet as a legislative body to determine which student authored bills will be passed. The first stage involves learning parliamentary procedure and begins on the first day of class. For several weeks, teachers select issues which they believe will highlight the

differences between the Republican and Democratic parties. The teachers develop a resolution and select briefing material that summarizes and captures the two opposing sides. After reading the material, students debate the resolution and then vote on it. Students run the debates and alternate serving as the debate chair. The chair of the debate serves as the arbiter of how parliamentary procedure is followed. S/he is responsible for recognizing who is allowed to speak, and how voting is conducted. The chairperson is given a gavel and uses it to keep order. During this time the issues being debated are teacher driven. Later in the semester however, class debates shift from teacher selected issues to student generated bills.

After each class debate, students are required to post on the electronic discussion platform Blackboard. The Blackboard assignment consists of two posts: one in which the students lay out their position on the issue, and another in which they respond, using civil discourse, to a person's post with whom they disagree.

After the first month, students are asked to consider their position on the U.S. political spectrum. Students pin an index card along a liberal conservative spectrum that explains their social and economic views and indicates what political party they will join. The spectrum is housed publicly in the library. Students are free at any time to move their position on the spectrum. Not all students elect to join a political party; there is no penalty for refusing to join one, other than being ineligible to chair a committee – since only a member of the majority party can chair a committee.

During the next stage the students form small groups of two to three people for the purposes of researching and authoring a bill. Students select an issue, identify a problem, and then propose a solution. Students post their bills on Blackboard.

Each student is assigned to be on a committee that will decide whether or not the bills before them should be considered for inclusion in the Full Session. Each committee member is responsible for posting questions and comments on Blackboard about the bills they will be voting for or against. The authors present their bill and then answer questions from the committee. The committee then deliberates the merits of the bill, has an opportunity to amend the wording, and then votes on it. A bill must receive a majority of votes in order to survive the

Table 4.1. Key stages of the simulation.

	Description
Class debates	Students debate teacher selected issues to learn parliamentary procedure and distinguish between Democrats and Republicans.
Blackboard	Students participate in online discussions related to daily class debates.
Party declaration	Each student publicly declares their party affiliation and posts their position on the political spectrum in the library.
Author their own bills	Students join together in small groups to research and author a bill based on their interests.
Elect party leadership	Students elect a speaker of the house, party whips, and floor leaders.
Committee hearings	Each student is assigned to a committee in which students present bills. The committees vote on whether to allow the bill to go forward to the Full Session.
Full Session	Everyone in the simulation assembles to debate and vote on the bills that have made it through committee. The Full Session is entirely student run.

committee process.

Finally, students meet from all the classes to form a legislative body. Students are required to speak at least three times during the Full Session, which lasts for two days. Students sign up to speak before the Full Session on Blackboard. During the weeks prior to the Full Session, students have been debating in class the bills they will debate as a whole body. At the conclusion of each bill, students caucus with their political party and cast their votes. A bill must have a majority of votes in order to pass. If the bill does pass, a governor, elected by the participants of the simulation has the option to veto it. If it is vetoed, then the bill is resubmitted to the legislative body where it must pass by a 2/3 majority. If anyone from the Full Session challenges the constitutionality of a bill, a supreme court, comprised of social study teachers, will rule on the bill. If the court finds the bill unconstitutional then the bill does not officially pass.

Pedagogical Strategies

Eileen, Robin, and Brian are government teachers at Jefferson High School. Each of them teaches one third of the senior class. Eileen has been teaching for nearly two decades and helped to develop, and then refine, the legislative semester. Robin is a first year teacher who majored in political science. Brian has been teaching for twelve years at Jefferson, but this is his first year teaching government.

Because two of the three teachers never taught the simulation before, they met during the summer and practiced the parliamentary procedure rules by which the simulation operates. The Legislative Semester was modeled on the rules used by their state legislative body. These rules determine when someone speaks, how the next speaker is transitioned, and how much time each

speaker will be allotted. Students are trained to use parliamentary procedure starting with the first day of class.

The three government teachers in the school synchronize their lesson plans and pedagogy in an attempt to minimize the differences between their classes. To that end, the teachers introduce the same topics for discussion each day, plan the same activities and assignments, and have agreed to adopt a strict policy of never disclosing their opinion about the issues they discuss in class.

The semester begins with in-class debates that use parliamentary procedure. The students who were interviewed remember about ten debates in class. The debates were about perennial issues over which Republicans and Democrats usually disagree, such as abortion, gun control, the death penalty, the inheritance tax, and funding for education. According to the teachers, these early debates served two purposes: first, they offered students an opportunity to explore their own position on these issues, while developing a political ideology of their own. Second, as they confronted these controversial issues they also learned how to use parliamentary procedure. During the debates teachers play the part of a committee chairperson, calling for votes, recognizing speakers from the floor, and enforcing time limits for speakers. The teachers use a gavel to enforce order. As the semester progresses, the teachers will gradually diminish their own role while enlarging the role of students. Teachers pass off the gavel to students who then take turns assuming the duties of committee chairperson. Other students are selected to take roll, call votes, and set a daily agenda.

Teacher Portrait: Eileen

Eileen has taught for 16 years. She was drawn to teaching in general, and to social studies in particular, because of her interest in politics. Her student teaching assignment was at the same high school at which she now teaches. The teacher, to which she was assigned, is the man who created the Legislative Simulation. She recalls that he emphasized "hands on learning" a "dynamic" classroom, and lessons that required heavy student interaction.

Conceptions

Examining teacher's beliefs about the subjects they teach has been shown to cast light on teaching practices (Waters-Adams, 2010; Otote & Omo-Ojugo, 2009; Hess, 2002). I examine the teachers' underlying beliefs about social studies, democracy, conflict, and rationales for the simulation, in the following sections.

Conceptions of the purposes of social studies

Eileen is driven by a conception of Social Studies that prepares students to participate effectively in the political life of the United States. For her, effective participation requires that students are interested in politics, knowledgeable about issues, understand how government functions, and frequently engage in political discussions marked by what she labels as civil discourse.

The impetus for Eileen's stressing the importance of civility during political conversations is motivated by her belief that political discourse in the United States has deteriorated. And she sees the class debates as an opportunity to learn how to "agree to disagree and express themselves in an appropriate manner and have honest, genuine discussions with one another about these issues." She defines civil discourse as the elevation of reason over emotion and civility over rudeness. "I think students should be able to carry out an intelligent

conversation using civil discourse to express themselves and not to be simply a political pundit, and not to simply express emotion." The importance of counteracting poor political discourse is also a motivating factor. "I think what they see a lot of times, the media today, it is really not modeling civil discourse." Eileen believes the simulation, with its emphasis on orderly debate provides a model for civil discourse. "The structures that we use in class" model civil discourse. And, once learned, that model is utilized by students outside of her class. "I hear from other teachers they will go to the other classes and have debates and say 'no this is not how you have a debate. We need to have public procedure.' They call each other out of order when…certain rules are not being followed." Thus, the motivation for civil discourse stems from a belief that there is a way to talk about contentious issues that is productive for the students.

Rationales for simulation

Eileen has many reasons for using the simulation; chief among those reasons is the way in which it decodes complex political issues. At the most basic level, she believes, students' disinterest in politics stems from an overwhelming sense of its impenetrable complexity. "I think a lot of times the kids think that government, political science, is over their heads." She believes that the frequent political debates in class help students untie – issue by issue – the intricate knot of politics. "They feel like, hey, I can understand these issues. When I see this on the news, I know what they are talking about."

Eileen believes the daily debates about current political issues ignite an interest in politics that extend beyond the classroom. As an example of their engagement, Eileen points to the students' conversations she witnesses at lunchtime. "Go down to the lunchroom to the Senior

tables and see what they are talking about….More often than not they are talking about the debate issue of the day, the death penalty, abortion, state's rights, whatever the case may be."

Students, she believes, are also "empowered" by the activities within the simulation. She defines empowerment in three distinct ways. First, students "feel empowered when they understand these issues...and are talking about them with their parents and their employers and their colleagues at work and such." Second, students begin to understand the power of their vote. "They see that in the simulation how important their vote is and how important accountability is." Finally, students learn not only how to access political information, but also acquire a sense of how to utilize that information. "They get empowered to search out information for themselves…to advocate to their representatives through email."

Selecting content: Issues and Materials

During the first few weeks of the semester, students engage in daily debates over current political issues. Eileen and the other two teachers select which issues students will debate. They use two criteria to select the issues. First, the teachers must consider the issue to be a source of controversy. The teachers are seeking to generate disagreement, and issues over which there is little controversy are unlikely to arouse student interest. Second, issues which are representative of the ideological divide between the Republicans and the Democrats are given priority. The rationale for selecting issues in this way is to help draw out the differences between the two parties so that students can appropriately situate themselves on the political spectrum – within the two major parties.

The simulation is taught without a textbook. Teachers select "an artifact" for each class debate which may include a video clip, an editorial, or a newspaper article. The artifact frames

the issue the students will be debating. Sources for the artifacts vary from local and national television broadcasts, to local and national newspapers. The teachers make an effort to portray several sides of whatever issue they select. "[We] give them a common text or a video clip that portrays both side of the issue. So we try to give both sides before we actually debate the question."

Conflict

Some of the primary reasons teachers do not use controversial issues discussions in their classrooms is the concern that the conflict will boil over, feelings will be bruised, and the teacher will lose control of the classroom. How teachers control the conflict inherent in controversial issues discussions is one of the key skills of facilitating such discussions.

Eileen controls conflict in four key ways: relying on the rules of parliamentary procedure, scheduling particularly contentious issues at the end of the semester, repeatedly stressing civil discourse throughout the semester, and holding students accountable when they fall short of appropriate behavior.

It is important to note that Eileen does not view conflict as an undesirable effect of controversial issues discussions. She courts controversy. "And I do tell them [the students] that in a democracy, I want there to be conflict. I want them to disagree on issues." But she stresses that the disagreement needs to be tempered with respect both for the process of debate, as well as the people with whom the disagreement lies. "But we can agree to disagree and walk away with a better understanding of one another….Just because you disagree with me on an issue doesn't make me a bad person, you know."

One of the reasons that Eileen values disagreement is because of her experience teaching abroad. She taught in China and remembers that both students and teachers were afraid to voice their opinions because the rooms were bugged by the government. "And so I will tell them [the students] stories about that and say, well, what we have here is so important. It is the ability to disagree on issues and have genuine discussions and conversations about that and how important that is."

At the beginning of the semester, Eileen and the other teachers purposely stay away from issues they suspect will be emotional for the students. "I wouldn't debate abortion on day one. I wouldn't debate gay marriage on day one." As the semester progresses and students become acclimated to the rules of parliamentary procedure, the teachers introduce issues such as abortion and gay marriage.

Students in the simulation are continually exposed to conflict, and thus also to the temptations of verbally attacking other students. Besides the daily debates in class, students are also required to respond to students with whom they disagree on the online discussion forum, Blackboard. Eileen consistently reinforces the tenets of civil discourse. "We stress, oppose ideas, not people, on the discussion board, in Blackboard, no personal attacks." In order to ensure that students engage in civil discourse, the teachers read the posts that students write on Blackboard. When they find an inappropriate post, they talk with the student. "We sort of model and give the kids ideas that I really disagree with you when you say this because my belief is this. I shouldn't be reading. You are stupid. You have the IQ of a … I shouldn't be saying things like that."

Disclosure

Eileen does not reveal her opinions about the issues students discuss in class. She believes that not disclosing creates a classroom environment where students are more likely to freely speak their mind. “We don’t want the kids to feel pressured to sort of brown-nose and take on our opinion. We do not want kids to feel rejected if they have an opposite opinion. We just don’t feel it is our place.”

Facilitation

The culminating activity of the Legislative Simulation, the Full Session, is student run. Beginning with the first day of class, the teachers turn over what are traditionally teacher roles to the students.

The teachers do play a vital role in facilitating debates, selecting issues, reinforcing key concepts – but much of what they do is not readily apparent. “We are kind of working behind the scenes. We are sort of pulling the strings, and making sure certain papers are in place and certain training happens by certain deadlines.”

One of the most visible actions the teachers do perform is facilitating the classroom debates. Although a student usually chairs the debate, and students are expected to keep the debate moving, teachers also contribute to the debate. Eileen views her role as ensuring that both sides of the issue being debated are aired. Thus, she becomes involved when “the debate becomes lopsided.” If only one side of the debate is being argued by the students “I come in as devil’s advocate and ask a question or rephrase. So what you are saying is this and put it in such a way that it is a little bit provocative and they start to question it or see the other side of the argument.” But if the students are evenly distributed between the two sides of the debate, she will remain silent.

Eileen identifies several key attributes that are necessary for teachers to be involved in the simulation. “You have to be willing to let go of the teacher and let the kids make mistakes and learn from those mistakes.” Teachers need to collaborate. “You have to be a team player. You have to meet certain deadlines and have a little bit of give and take.”

Summary

Beginning with her student teacher experience, Eileen has been developing teaching strategies that emphasize student interaction. She places a premium on interactions that promote civil discourse and responsible citizenship. Eileen’s beliefs about social studies appear to be influenced by what she views as societal wide deficiencies with political discourse. The simulation then, in her view, is a way in which students are introduced to a working example of how people can disagree civilly, develop coherent political ideologies, and form persuasive arguments.

Teacher Portrait: Robin

Robin is a first year teacher. She recently graduated from her state’s flagship university where she majored in political science and minored in U.S. history. While she was earning her undergraduate degree, Robin worked in a legislative office. Combining her interest in politics with a lifetime desire to teach, Robin chose to teach secondary social studies.

Robin believes that students in her class should be able to place themselves on the political spectrum, identify where others lie on the political spectrum, have intricate knowledge of the legislative process, appreciate the function of political parties, be able to form coalitions, and be “an effective citizen.”

Students' ability to place themselves on the political spectrum is important in Robin's view because she is "sure it will help them vote. And it will help them make an educated decision." Specifically, she believes, people who are able to match their political views with a politician's political stances, are exhibiting qualities of an informed voter.

Robin is interested in not only ensuring that students understand the basic outline of how the legislative process works, but also the specifics of what someone would need to know in order to shepherd a bill through a legislative body. Robin believes the simulation makes politics less abstract and distant. She expects that students "realize that the Government is just not happening in Washington, D.C. It is not a crazy group of people in D.C. making up laws. It is real."

After leaving high school, Robin hopes her students are involved in the political process beyond "more than just voting." Voting is important, but the concept of effective citizenry involves a greater commitment of time and energy. "It is going to political rallies. It is working for candidates. It is writing another editorial to a newspaper." Robin's conception of citizenship appears to be in line with the "participatory citizen" that Kahne and Westheimer (2001) identified in their typology of citizen education programs.

Conflict

Robin believes that the teachers' efforts to prevent personal attacks were not entirely successful. Although she does not condone the attacks, she does believe that the simulation mirrored many of the same problems that exist in society writ large. Many of the attacks occurred over racial issues. She notes that the issue of race "is not unique to this age or this school." Robin believes that American society suppresses issues of race, so that when the issue

does emerge it is often awkward and unpleasant. “I don’t think that race is something that is talked about or people can have a politically sophisticated discussion about whether they are 18 years old or whether they are 45.”

Many teachers choose to avoid issues that are likely to provoke emotion, or cause discomfort, or even lead to verbal attacks, while others decide that controversial issues such as abortion and gay marriage are not controversial at all because they believe so strongly in one side or the other and thus close it as an issue of discussion. Hess’s (2002) model of wisdom study of three exemplary teachers who used controversial issues discussions in their classrooms found that two of the three defined certain controversial topics as closed. Robin however does not “think that not talking about it is better.” And she sees a demonstrable benefit from the rawness that surrounds debates concerning race. “I think that there was some tolerance that comes out of this only because you put a face to the topic.”

Facilitation

Robin views herself primarily as a facilitator. “You work really hard to get that student-centered approach and to make it a very student-centered activity.” One of the most appealing aspects of the Legislative Simulation for her is that “it is the epitome of the essential student-centered activity where it is run by students for the most part. We are just the facilitators.”

The largest challenge in being a facilator for Robin, was the devil’s advocate role she played during the debates. “That was definitely something that I had to work on. And I still am.” Part of the challenge was learning multiple sides of an issue. In order to meet the challenge Robin increased her news consumption, and became a consumer of “alternative media” so that

she could "get both sides of the story." She spends about "two hours a day" reading and listening to mainstream and alternative media.

One of the strategies that Robin used when she played devil's advocate was to identify politicians' positions as a marker for mapping out the tension in an issue.

> I try and work very hard at bringing in the devil's advocate from others points of view. Just off the top of my head when I think about like the immigration debate and you say this is Senator Sensenbrenner's idea on what we should do. This is Senator McCain's idea on what we should do. That way you can kind of do the comparison as a devil's advocate from someone else.

In this way, Robin dissociated herself from any of the positions that she was voicing.

Summary

Robin conceptualizes informed citizenship as being able to develop a coherent ideology and then situate that ideology on a political spectrum. She views political participation as more than just voting, and wants her students to write letters to newspapers, attend rallies, and work for political candidates. She spends about two hours a day consuming news in order to stay abreast of political issues. She uses that knowledge to bring in other points of view during class debates. Robin believes that conflict is a necessary part of the curriculum, but acknowledges that despite teachers' best attempts to contain it, they are not always successful. Nevertheless, she defends the role of conflict in the simulation by pointing out that much of the tension over racial issues can be traced back to not talking about them. Schools, she believes, should encourage students to talk about uncomfortable issues.

Teacher Portrait: Brian

Brian has taught for 12 years, but this is his first year teaching the Legislative Simulation. He majored in history and speech communication at a private university in the Midwest and then completed his teaching credential at a large public university. The majority of his career has been spent teaching American History, but he has "probably taught just about every class in the Social Studies Department," including Geography, Global Studies, and Environmental Politics.

Conceptions of Social Studies

Brian believes that students should learn how to critically evaluate information coming from the media. He is concerned that without this skill, people will be manipulated into believing falsehoods. "There are all these ideas out there, to be able to take them all in and kind of sort through them, figure out which ones they agree with, which ones they don't agree with, and not sort of get lost in the spin or lost in the sound bite" is the key to making an informed decision. He believes in "letting students make their own choices," which is difficult to do if they aren't questioning the information that is being given to them.

During our interviews, Brian emphasized the importance of an "informed citizenry who is willing to act." Americans, he believes, "are good at criticizing, but we are not very good at participating." He would like to see his students participate more "in the creation of government" which would include attending city hall meetings, school board meetings, and running for office."

Rationales for the simulation

The simulation, in his view, encourages students to participate in a political activity. “It takes concerted effort not to participate.” He hopes that by participating in the simulation students “are able to see some of the forces that act on them because other students will want them to vote for their bills and party leaders will lean on them and try to get them to vote one way or the other and there will be people who are spinning things one way or the other.” In this way, the simulation is a microcosm of the spin, and the pressure that will soon be brought to bear on the students on a larger scale once they leave school.

The simulation and the class are interchangeable in Brian’s mind. “I think the class is the simulation and the simulation is the class.” For him, the activities in the simulation encapsulate the political process as well as prepare students to participate in it. Specifically, Brian believes the simulation offers the students an opportunity to confront the political issues that will affect them and “force them to take ownership of their own opinions.” The students vote on resolutions, declare membership to a political party, and place themselves on the political spectrum, all of which “forces them to sort of back up, their votes or their beliefs with a declaration, a public declaration.” He continues:

> They are forced to be a part of this political animal and be a part of the House of Representatives. And that is very different than sitting in class and reading an article and debating. So when they are confronted by the personal pressures and the party pressures and the different interest groups that are kind of weighing on them, then I think it makes them look even more deeply where they are on the spectrum. And, in fact, last semester our Democratic floor leader, probably one of the more true blue Democrats said that she

moved herself from the left and said the Democratic Party wasn't liberal enough for her and she became an Independent.

Brian believes that it is important for students be exposed to the ideologies of the Republicans and Democrats, even if they choose not to belong to either party. "I don't think it is necessarily important for a person to be ideologically consistent. But I think it is important to understand where those views come from."

Conflict

Brian acknowledges that containing the conflict from the debates is sometimes "tough." He believes the teachers are able to contain it by using parliamentary procedure and reminding students of the tenets of civil discourse. Parliamentary procedure helps to "depersonalize" the issues. "When we are addressing people in class it is always representative or Mr. and Ms." Students are forbidden from using first names. "If they mention any representative's name during their comments, that representative is automatically yielded the floor."

Teachers also monitor Blackboard. Since anonymity is not possible on Blackboard, students are "always accountable for their posts." Brian believes that students also enforce the norms of civil discourse. When a student does make an inappropriate comment, "the response from the other students is tremendous. Why don't you talk about the issues? Or…stop insulting people. You know. We will, of course, speak to the students but I think the students do a very good job of policing that as well."

Brian attributes exemplary student behavior to the modeling that the teachers and other students do on a daily basis. "I think that when they come in and they see an agenda every day and they see me address the students as Mr. or Ms., or representative as often as I possibly can, I

think that is huge." The students elected to leadership positions also play a vital role in setting the tone of the political debates. "They take things very seriously. And many of the Community Chairs run their committees probably better than a lot of the ones on C-Span in Congress. They don't mess around." Between the two influences - students or teachers - Brian believes the students have the far greater impact. "I think that hearing that from the other students is what really drives it. Because we can get teachers to say things but when another student says it, I think it means a lot more." The "more" here is intellectual growth.

In Brian's view, students benefit intellectually from exposure to conflict, which he equates with intellectual freedom. Brian believes that suppressing conflict is "suspect." Conflict increases the chances of discovering the truth, while "discouraging divergent views leads to a dark road." Discouraging conflict "does not lead to a very substantive or a very rich experience. It might lead to a very orderly and systematic system, but that is not what we are looking for."

Not all students adhere to the behavioral guidelines of the debates. Some students do make their comments personal; some students do verbally attack others. Brian believes that the attacks are reflective of the larger society in which the simulation takes place, the bulk of these attacks emanate from a particular demographic, and that the simulation is structured in such a way that these attacks exact a demonstrable political cost for the side that is responsible for making them.

According to Brian, most of the students responsible for making the personal attacks are ethnically White, and belong to the Republican Party. Furthermore, "the vast majority of White Republicans would be from the more affluent suburbs that go to the school." Their affluence,

Brian believes, leads these students to "advocate their positions more forcefully. Maybe not more accurately, maybe not more delicately. But more forcefully."

The forcefulness of their arguments did not necessarily translate into political success however. Democrats formed the majority party in the simulation. Demographically, Democrats tended to "have more diversity." The Republican attacks fell short, and the Democrats "won on almost every single issue. And I think that there was a lot of power there. And there was a lot of, you can say hurtful things and you can yell and you can do this, but, guess what? We won. Our issue won. Our viewpoint won."

Brian observed that many Republicans were in a state of "cognitive dissonance" because they experienced complete political failure as a result of their own arguments. "And I think a lot of the, you know, White or wealthier or more privileged kids who are Republican, after the Full Session, were really kind of dumped on. 'But how could we lose every, how is that possible? We didn't get anything." Brian hopes that the resulting lesson that the Republican students will draw is that "you can have all the arguments that you want. You can attack all the people you want. But if you don't have the votes, they are not going to get it done." Ultimately, losing the debates may have highlighted an important democratic concept, which is every vote counts:

> But I think for a lot of kids it has sort of showed that even though somebody doesn't speak up in class, their vote matters as much as other peoples. And that was reflected in the final projects that the kids wrote about their sort of learning and the going processes that even if the kid didn't talk ever, their vote mattered. And there was a couple of issues that came down to two or three votes. And it really kind of showed the kids, wow.

> Maybe I need to sort of broaden my circle and broaden my influence and maybe talk to other people.

Regardless of the political outcome, there is still a cost to these attacks. Brian believes that the attacks may have a silencing effect on some students. “I think that when people of color see their positions or their fellow party members being attacked, unfortunately, they are less likely then to voice their opinion because it is not really fun to get attacked.”

Disclosure

Like his other two colleagues, Brian does not disclose his personal opinions to the students. He doesn’t disclose because he believes students will distort their own beliefs in order to be congruent with the teacher. “It just causes too much of kind of a dark cloud over the debate and you have kids who say certain things because they want to agree with the teachers.” He also believes that the simulation should be about the students developing their own political opinions. “It is about them and I think the minute that we get involved it stops being about them.”

Facilitation

During class debates, one of Brian’s most important goals is to ensure that the issues receive fair treatment. The assumption is that the issue has at least two legitimate sides, and both of those sides should be aired. However, students do not always devote equal time to both sides. When a debate is lopsided Brian will “give little carrots” to whatever side seems to need them the most: “we would say things like, the committee chair would be happy to entertain any arguments that pointed out the flaws in the current system or the committee chair would be happy to entertain any points that explain why the flat tax hurts the poor and things like that.” Brian used such prompting sparingly, and his role in each class might differ depending on the

debate. “In one class I might be giving a lot of right wing arguments because there were no right wingers in the class. In another class I might be giving a lot of left wing arguments. In the other class I might not be giving any depending on the breakdown.”

Brian views these two pedagogical tools: the carrots and playing devil’s advocate, as two tiered. That is, the gentle prompting is the first tool he reaches for when the debate stalls. If that does not work, then he begins to play devil’s advocate; but only rarely, because “I didn’t want future committee chairs to feel that that is what they should be doing.”

Debates at the beginning of the year are not always engaging because the students sometimes shy away from conflict. Brian’s last class of the day was often quiet at the beginning of the year, but they were “okay” by the end of the semester. “In the beginning they were very slow to engage in conflict. They didn’t want to be rude. They didn’t want to voice. It was kind of a shy group. Very, very bright, but very, very shy.” When the question was called, and the students cast their votes, a plurality of students would vote “present” – refusing to commit to any one side of the debate. Once the debate had ended, Brian would say:

> Okay, guys. Twelve presents? What is going on with that? And then all of a sudden, well, I didn’t understand this. Or I wasn’t sure about that. And then they would be happy to voice their opinion. And it was more of a traditional class discussion. So I felt much more comfortable at giving leading questions and probing and that kind of thing. But I didn’t want to do that as a committee chair.

A self described “news junkie,” Brian says he needed to stay on top of the news in order to be knowledgeable about the issues students debated. While teaching the simulation, Brian listened to two hours of National Public Radio a day – once in the morning and once in the

afternoon. He would then read the New York Times and other news sources throughout the day such as CNN, Reuters, and the BBC. He estimates this news regimen takes about three hours a day. Once students chose the topic for their bill, he found himself researching even more. "Because, of course, I would end up researching every bill along with the kids. And say, have you seen this website?"

Summary

Brian was motivated by a desire to have his students critically evaluate media, and be more involved in the political process. He feels that conflict is a necessary consequence of free expression. He believes that the simulation prepares students to be political savvy by helping them experience what it is like to encounter political opponents. Although he noted that conflict was not always contained, he believed that students learned the importance of building coalitions, reaching out, and that every vote counts. Like his colleagues, he did not disclose.

Class Snapshots

Eileen

I observed Eileen's class the day after the first day of the Full Session. The Full Session would continue after this class. Eileen began the class by talking about how the legislative process which they were in the middle of simulating was a key concept in our democracy, she congratulated the students for the "important" work they had done. She then asked for feedback about how students felt about the Full Session thus far. A number of students voice their critiques: "Boring at the end," one boy says. Another student says, "It went well."

After listening to the students, Eileen begins to offer strategic advice. She reminds the students that half of the bills will be voted up or down during the next session. Students will vote

on a Republican sponsored bill that aims to decrease tariffs on foreign goods. The Republicans have less representatives than the Democrats. Eileen reminds the Republicans not to make the debate personal, don't turn it into a "pep rally" because "you can't afford to lose any moderate Republicans."

Responding to Eileen, a student, referring to the Full Session, says, "It was like kids on a playground yelling at each other. No one changed their mind. I felt like it would be more productive if we had a more mature debate." Eileen nods her head and tells the class that they need to listen and respond more. "Try to convince the other people why they should vote for your bill. Civil discourse isn't just saying the PC thing. It's listening and trying to persuade – and that's what makes democracy work."

Perhaps defensively, a student responds to Eileen, "When I see someone acting rowdy, I don't take them seriously. I don't see them as intelligent." Undeterred, Eileen continues, "Develop clarifying questions to increase the exchange. Listen and respond and exchange those ideas." Eileen looks at the clock and quickly passes out a pink sheet, and tells the students to go to the computer lab, log onto Blackboard, select a thread for one of the upcoming bills, and answer the questions on the sheet.

The sheet has six questions for the students. 1) Did you agree or disagree with the position paper? 2) Did you agree or disagree with the solution proposed by the bill? 3) Cite and summarize your own research. 4) Summarize the discussion board on this issue. 5) Read the profiles of the Bill sponsors. Are their profiles consistent with the ideology of the bill? 6) Would you recommend that your party support or not support this bill? Explain your position using facts, party philosophy, focus questions, etc.

Summary of class snapshot.

Eileen used the class session between the Full Session to emphasize a critical goal of the simulation: to encourage civil discourse. She reminded students to not attack their opponents. She emphasized listening to the other side of the debate and responding to the concerns the other side raises. She emphasized that factual based arguments are much more likely to be persuasive than other types of argumentation. Finally, the assignment at the end of class steered students toward one of the other large goals of the simulation: to develop a political ideology. The questions in the assignment emphasized identifying the ideology of the bill sponsors, the bill itself, and then comparing those ideologies to the student's.

Robin

I observed Robin during the same day that I observed Eileen, which you will recall is the day between the Full Session. The two observations (Eileen's and Robin's) illustrate both how the curriculum is synchronized, as well as how the individual teaching is so personalized, so unique, that the differences between the two teachers is as great or greater than the similarities.

As students walk in, Robin directs their attention to the overhead, which displays four squares labeled: Positives; Suggestions; Suggestion to Leadership; Suggestions for Teacher. She asks for students to verbally respond to the overhead prompts, and as they do, she writes their comments on the overhead.

Under "Positives" students note that they did pass a large number of bills, the students who were responsible for security did their job well, and the student reaction to the speakers presenting bills was admirable. In the "Suggestions" category a student, feeling constrained by the rigidity of the two party system says, "Let people vote the way they want to vote." Another

student suggests that "We need more of a debate rather than just reading speeches." The categories "Suggestions to Leadership" and "Suggestions for Teacher" remain blank. A student, who notes that no one has offered any suggestions for the teacher, recognizes that the Full Session is completely student run and therefore suggestions for the teacher is not necessary: "Well you don't really do anything; not in a bad way. It's just mostly the students doing stuff."

Before handing out the "pink sheet" and going to the computer lab, Robin offers strategic advice. She points out that the Governor in the simulation, a Democrat, is likely to veto bills that are conservative. Particularly, the Governor will veto the military funeral bill, which would bar the press from taking photographs of the returning caskets of soldiers killed abroad. Robin suggests that students interested in seeing those bills passed will need to maximize their support across party lines. They will need to form coalitions with people who do not share their political ideology, but do share an interest in passing the same bill.

Summary of class snapshot.

During her interviews, Robin stressed the importance of students learning how to participate within the U.S. political system by being effective citizens. For her, this meant that students should be able to situate themselves and others on the political spectrum, have an intricate knowledge of the legislative process so that they will be able to get legislation passed, and to conceptualize their participation as doing more than just voting.

During the class I observed, Robin emphasized the coalitions that students would need to form in order to muster the votes necessary to override the Governor's veto. This demonstrates Robin's commitment to ensuring that her students have the knowledge to overcome a specific hurdle that would prevent legislation from passing. In also demonstrates her belief that as

effective citizens, her students should be prepared to do more than just vote; they must also mobilize other people to join their cause.

Robin was a first year teacher, responsible for facilitating daily controversial issues discussions. I have noted in Chapter 2 that discussing controversial issues is considered to be difficult, and is rare. One would expect that her skills, in her first year, might not be up to the complex task of controversial issues discussion facilitation. Yet, overwhelmingly, the students regarded her as a skillful teacher, albeit somewhat inexperienced. One student said, "I think she is good. This was her first year but she did a good job. Out of 10, she did like an eight because there is something like a couple of behavior things. But that is fine." There were seven students in her class that took the post questionnaire. All of them felt the issues in her class were interesting, students were free to disagree with her, and they were free to make up their own mind about an issue. Six out of seven students felt that she did not judge or criticize them based on comments during discussion, and that she respected and encouraged their opinions. The high rate of approval from her students may be explained by the structure of the simulation. The simulation's structure does not rely exclusively on classroom experience and teacher skill (though, to be sure, it is very important). Students interacted with other classmates without the presence of a teacher when they used Blackboard, during the committee hearings, and throughout the Full Session. Second, the highly scaffolded nature of the simulation also benefits a novice teacher in the sense that behavior during controversy is governed by rules of parliamentary procedure and civil discourse. These normative rules suffuse the entire simulation during every stage. Students learn to address people they disagree with in a respectful manner, to transition from one speaker to the next, and to attack arguments rather than people. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, Robin shared daily lesson plans with two other teachers. She never

had to rely solely on herself to generate discussion topics, to find source material, or to decide what to do next. This is not meant to imply that she was blindly following the other two teachers, or not contributing to the selection of issues. Rather, her burden was shared by two experienced teachers and she benefited from this collaboration.

Discussion of teaching commonalities

The three teachers in this study were aligned in three important ways. First, they all conceptualized political engagement as multi-dimensional. Voting, in their view was not enough to constitute fully fledged political engagement. Students needed to be informed about current events, develop their own views, align those views with political candidates, and participate more. They conceptualized participation as writing editorials, working for candidates, and taking part in political rallies.

Second, they all believed in the importance of exposing their students to conflict. Conflict was viewed as a byproduct of the free exchange of ideas. The teachers attempted to apply a delicate balancing act: to encourage conflict, and then to contain it. Minimizing conflict too much would have prevented students from being exposed to diverse opinions. Encouraging it too much would have led to personal attacks. Personal attacks did occur, and the teachers admitted to not always being able to control it.

Third, none of them disclosed their own views to students. Teachers believed that disclosure was likely to have unwanted consequences. They believed students were more likely to distort their own views to match their teachers, to accept the teacher's view without coming to their own decision, and to not trust a teacher whose views differed significantly from their own.

The teachers' pedagogy aligns with several elements of the theoretical framework from this study. First, they embraced a conception of democracy which envisions future voters possessing the skills to identify problems, propose solutions, and persuade others to mobilize into action. The combination of these skills suggest an overlap of the participatory (proposing solutions and mobilizing into action) and justice oriented (identifying problems and proposing solutions) citizen typologies (Kahne &Westheimer, 2004). (I will explore this connection in greater detail in Chapter 5.) Second, their attitude toward conflict aligns with the stealth democracy thesis, which suggests more exposure to conflict as an avenue to political engagement (Hibbing & Theisse-Morse, 2002). Third, the total absence of teacher disclosure suggests they saw disclosure as both incompatible with encouraging participatory and justice oriented views, as well as facilitating deliberation marked by political conflict.

How students experienced teacher pedagogy

Hybrid discursive models

At no time in the simulation did students come more closely to approximating a debate then during the Full Session. Students sat on opposite sides of the aisle. They were organized by political party. Floor leaders and whips exerted pressure to tow the party line. In short, if the closed minded frame that Johnson and Johnson (2009) describe as characteristic of a debate were to apply to the students in this simulation, it would be most applicable during the Full Session.

I asked students what their favorite part of the simulation was; for most, the answer was the Full Session. They described it as fun and engaging. When I asked them why it was fun, they indicated that it was because they appreciated hearing diverse perspectives. "I liked the actual

Full Sessions," one student said, "just hearing what everyone had to say at one time – having all the different opinions in one room." Other students said they enjoyed the class debates: "I like debating in class because most of the time you are kind of like, oh, here is a topic, and write about it what you think. But I like hearing other people's opinions. And that like opens my mind." And still, other students enjoyed the committee hearings because "in the committee hearings you really get to hear what people are thinking and really, you are able to question what is this in the bill and what are you trying to say?"

Students reported enjoying the various forms of "debates" because they "learned" where they stood on a host of contentious political issues. They enjoyed hearing other perspectives. They did not enter the classroom having a pre-determined stance on the issue. They did not close their mind. Perhaps the discrepancy between what Johnson and Johnson claim and what the students reported can be explained away by the fact that the student debates did not follow the structure that the Johnsons describe. The outcome of a debate did not rest in the hands of one authority, but rather was subject to a vote. Perhaps also, the definitional differences the students used to describe the debate left open the possibility of being open minded. Students defined debate as positive, informed, and constructive. One student, for instance, defined debate as a "disagreement between two or more parties conducted with civil discourse concerning issues, facts, statistics, and occasionally opinion." It is possible that the teachers' emphasis on maintaining an open mind, and employing civil discourse, explains why the students were able to view the debate as an opportunity to learn (as in discussion).

The forms of discourse in the simulation seemed to blend both the purposes and the characteristics of discussion, deliberation, and debate. This discursive cuvee suggests that the

conceptual clarity researchers have sought, has resulted in a typology of discourse that does not take into account the hybrid composition of all discursive types.

Disclosure

Disclosure was a salient feature of the teachers' pedagogy. Students were not allowed to know what their teachers' stances were on the issues they debated. How students reacted to this policy is reported below. The student data from this study regarding teacher disclosure was drawn from two different sources: the questionnaire and face to face interviews. In this section, I report the findings from the student data on the issue of teacher disclosure.

Questionnaire data

Running a paired samples t-test to see if student beliefs about disclosure changed from pre-test to post-test revealed that as the semester ended, more students believed that teachers should not disclose their personal opinion. Pre-questionnaire mean = 2.30/4. The post-questionnaire mean = 2.88/4. Students significantly increased their belief that teachers shouldn't disclose their opinions from pre-questionnaire to post-questionnaire $t(63) = 4.325$, $p < .001$) The students who believed that their teachers should have disclosed were marked by the following characteristics:

a. **Time 1:** Marginal effect that the less students had a general awareness of the political realm, the more that they believed their teachers should disclose their opinions ($r = .31$, $p < .1$).

b. **Time 2:** The less they reported classroom influences (people should be allowed to have different opinions and share them, etc) the more they believed teachers should disclose ($r = .30$, $p < .05$)

Student Interviews

Students consistently reported that they wanted to know their teachers' opinions about the issues they discussed in class. However, students also said their teachers handled the issue of disclosure well, by not revealing their opinions. Many students enumerated the reasons they felt teachers should not disclose.

Students enumerated a total of six distinct reasons why they believed disclosure to be a bad idea. The six reasons are: peer pressure, grades, use the information against the teacher, chance to think for themselves, would have soured the relationship with the teacher, and finally, would have been turned off from the political process.

Peer pressure plays a significant role during controversial issues discussions. Hess and Posselt (2002) found that the students in their study were more concerned with what peers thought of their comments during discussion than they were with what the teacher thought. The students in this study also experienced peer pressure – and to some degree they felt that the teacher's non disclosure policies helped to mitigate that pressure. A female student of color applauded the fact that neither she nor anyone else in the class was able to discern Brian's stance on any of the issues. "If he had said he was a Republican…it would have given the Republicans like a feeling that they had an edge over the Democrats because they had the teacher's support." Conversely, the student noted that knowing her teacher was a Republican would have had a chilling effect on the Democrats' willingness to voice their opinion in class. "It would have made

the Democrats feel like, okay, well, can I actually speak my mind knowing that the teacher is going to disagree with me?"

One third of the students interviewed mentioned grades as a reason why teachers should not disclose. Many students believed their peers would intentionally distort their own views to avoid any potential conflict with their teacher that might result in a lower grade, "we would probably think he would fail us or something."

Losing trust in their teachers was another reason students identified why their teachers should not disclose. . A Republican student said that if she discovered that her teacher was a Democrat, "I wouldn't have looked at her or thought of her ideas very seriously….And I think it would have really turned me off of the whole government process." The student went on to identify what she believed the purpose of non disclosure to be: "She is just trying to help us learn and she doesn't want to be there to preach her beliefs to all of us."

Students perceived their teachers as having no particular stake on any side of an issue. Instead, they believed the teachers' agenda was for students to reach decisions using reliable information. One student contrasted the teachers in the simulation with teachers they had in other classes. "I think a lot of teachers, sometimes they only show their opinion and their facts, so you can get all of the right answers." However, the teachers in this simulation, "helped to make it so you got all the facts and you thought about all the different ways you could look at things and then you weren't just one-sided."

Several students appreciated being able to form their own opinions, free from their teacher's influence. However, most of these students cloaked the idea of teacher influence by suggesting that their peers, but not them personally, would be swayed by teacher disclosure:

Ganzler: Do you know the teacher's opinions on issues?

Student: No. He does a pretty good job of remaining neutral for our classes.

Ganzler: And do you think that is a good way for him to handle it?

Student: I do. I know he wants us to think for ourselves and not be influenced by it.

Ganzler: Do you think that you would be influenced by him if you were,

Student: I don't but I think they want to remain neutral just because it may have an effect on some people.

Another student said, "Some kids are very easily persuaded."

Several students noted that disclosure could bring unwarranted charges against their teachers. "Students who may not like their teacher can use that against him, or her." Another student was more specific. "I think him taking sides would have been really bad for somebody who didn't like him….Like, I may have got a bad grade on it because me and him had different opinions or something."

Other students noted that they respect their teachers, and so any opinion their teacher divulged could potentially change their own position. "You might inadvertently change the views of your students just by saying, 'oh, he is an intelligent man. I respect him. So maybe his views should be my views.'

Not all students agreed with their teachers' disclosure policies. Four of the interviewed students wished their teachers had disclosed. These students felt that "our mind is already made

up" so it would not "really matter if they expressed their opinion." Another student added that if he knew his teacher's opinions, he would "still think of the issues in my own way."

Some students wanted to know where their teachers stood on the issues they debated in class, but at the same time admitted that the teachers had legitimate reasons for not disclosing:

Ganzler: Did you ever know the teacher's opinion on issues?

Student: No. (Laughter).

Ganzler: Do you think that was a good thing not to know?

Student: Well, I guess it was good for the class. But I wanted to know.

Ganzler: You were just curious.

Student: Yah. For my sake.

Despite not knowing their teachers' views on political issues, the students I interviewed spoke of their teacher's knowledge, skill, passion, and humor.

S1: He is a great teacher. He like really relates to the kids. And I don't know, he taught us so much. I like him a lot. He makes the classes fun and he wants us to be engaged more rather than just talking.

S2: I think his teaching is great. He explains everything fully and he gets it to relate to the students as much as he can. He is really funny. (Laughter).

S3: I thought he did an absolutely phenomenal job of teaching.

S4: She was really fun and outgoing. She makes class interesting. She is always making us laugh and cracking jokes. I like her a lot.

S5: I think she is really cool compared to some of the other teachers I have. I think she is very knowledgeable.

S6: She is really nice. She is really into the process and she wants us to succeed. It is important for a teacher. She really wants you to learn about the Government.

Summary: Disclosure

Students mostly approved of their teachers' disclosure policies. From beginning to end of the semester, students increasingly endorsed their teachers' decision not to disclose. Despite their acceptance of the policy, students still expressed curiosity about their teachers' opinions. Those students who disagreed with the disclosure policy tended to have a lower score on the general awareness scale, as well as believe that not everyone should share their opinion in class. Most likely, these students wanted more guidance about how to think about issues they did not fully understand. The teachers' practice of channeling, or re-voicing, arguments from both ends of the political spectrum provides a concrete example of how to skillfully maintain neutrality while engaging students intellectually. Teachers did not sacrifice their intellectual integrity or their moral authority by reigning in their opinions. Neither did they sacrifice their passion, nor compromise the passion of their students. Rather, students consistently recognized their teacher's intelligence, skill and enthusiasm for politics.

Approval of their teachers' disclosure policies, coupled with strong evidence that students respected and liked their teachers suggests that much of the existing literature on disclosure is in

need of refinement. Those advocating disclosure on the ground that not revealing one's opinions sends a message of "moral apathy" (Bigelow, 2002) or "defeats learning" (Daniels, 2007), or is "a cowardly evasion" (Kelley, 1989), need to explain why the students in this simulation sensed from their teachers a passion for politics and government. They need to explain why the students reported learning a great deal. And they need to explain why their students respected their teachers even though they did not disclose.

Summary and discussion of teaching strategies

Table 4.2. Teaching strategies.

Problem	Teacher strategy
Conflict	Hybrid discursive models; Parliamentary procedure; contentious issues are shifted; students held accountable; stressing civil discourse.
Debate is one-sided	Devil's advocate.
Disclosure	Did not disclose.
Students not skilled at debating	Teacher modeling; frequent practice.
Teacher not knowing all sides of debate	Intensive and frequent consumption of multiple news sources.

There are numerous reasons that teachers do not use controversial issues discussions in their classrooms. Finding teachers who employ this pedagogy is rare (McDevitt & Caton-Rosser, 2009*;* Kahne, Rodriguez, Smith, & Thiede, 2000; Nystrand, Gamoran, & Carbonara, 1998; Newmann, 1988). Finding teachers who employ this pedagogy to mainstreamed students is even rarer (Kahne & Middaugh, 2008). The skill required to facilitate a controversial issues discussion is considerable (Hess, 2002). Therefore, examining the successful practices of teachers who both

use controversial issues discussions frequently and skillfully will be of considerable use to both teachers and administrators wishing to implement this practice in their schools. In this case, the three teachers in this study encountered problems that could have potentially marred, halted, or ruined the discussions in their classrooms. Instead, the teachers developed a cache of tools that they utilized when necessary in order to keep discussions moving.

Strategies to deal with student conflict

Teachers were concerned that conflict between students would lead to personal attacks and were therefore constantly vigilant against them. Although teachers courted controversy throughout the semester by seeking contentious issues to debate, they did not do so immediately. Instead, the semester began with issues less likely to inflame student passions. Only when the students had been exposed to the idea of debating each other and had developed a mechanism for disagreeing with each other civilly, did the teachers introduce particularly contentious issues such as abortion and gun rights. Students who engaged in inappropriate behavior in class were immediately rebuked using the conventions of parliamentary procedure. Students who engaged in inappropriate behavior on Blackboard were confronted by teachers who dialogued with them about proper etiquette. Throughout the semester, students were consistently reminded to engage in civil discourse. When they failed to do so, they were confronted. If that failed, they were removed from the course.

Strategies to deal with one-sided debate, and not knowing all sides of a debate

When debates stalled, teachers were prepared to keep them going. The primary tool they utilized was to play devil's advocate. In order to do this well, the teachers spent several hours a day reading or listening to news from mainstream and alternative media. If students in a

particular class gravitated toward one side of an argument, then teachers voiced arguments from the neglected side. The points that teachers would make depended on the context of the class. In some classes they made right wing arguments, in others they made liberal arguments. Rather than summarize the argument, teachers used questions to provoke responses, or re-voiced arguments making sure to attribute their source. In this way, the teachers were able to distance themselves from the points they were raising, and thus maintain the appearance of neutrality.

Strategies to deal with disclosure

Throughout the simulation teachers consistently refused to divulge their views on the issues being debated; and students failed to perceive what their teacher's views were. Students were extremely curious about their teacher's views. But ultimately, students approved of their teacher's policies. In fact students identified six distinct reasons why they believed their teachers should not disclose: peer pressure; grades; use against the teacher; chance to think for themselves; would have soured the relationship with the teacher; and would have been turned off from the political process. The teachers were unified against disclosing. And they were very good at not revealing where they stood on any given issue.

The etymology of the word "neutrality" stretches back to 13th Century French where it was used in the context of war to describe those who did not take sides. The word is descended also from 'neuter' meaning not belonging to any class, but also suggesting "neither action nor passion" (Oxford English Dictionary, 2009).

Some of the harshest criticisms of teachers who assume a neutral stance has come from other teachers. Bigelow (2002) has equated failure to disclose with "moral apathy." Daniels (2007) has labeled neutrality "as a false concept that defeats learning." Miller-Lane, et al., has

suggested that neutrality is synonymous with abandoning the very purpose of democratic education (2006).

The results of this study suggest otherwise. The teachers in this study remained neutral during the semester. And yet, their students became more politically engaged. At the very least, neutrality did not hinder political engagement. More likely, the teacher's neutral stance was an integral component of the simulation's effectiveness. The teachers' practice of channeling, or re-voicing, arguments from both ends of the political spectrum provides a concrete example of how to skillfully maintain neutrality while engaging students intellectually. Teachers did not sacrifice their intellectual integrity or their moral authority by reigning in their opinions. Neither did they sacrifice their passion, nor compromise the passion of their students. Rather, students consistently recognized their teacher's intelligence and skill, as well as their teachers' enthusiasm for politics.

All of this suggests that for practitioners, refusing to take sides is neither a sign of weakness, nor is it detrimental to student achievement and growth. Indeed, the word neutrality may not be appropriate to use in this context, since it implies a paucity of passion, strength, and commitment – qualities that these teachers were not lacking.

Conflict

Here, I present findings for the second question of this study: What is the role of conflict in the simulation? To answer this question, I utilize data from the student interviews as well as the quantitative data from the questionnaires.

Students were exposed to conflict every day of the semester. Teachers chose contentious issues for class debates. When conflict waned during a debate, the teachers purposely attempted

to stoke controversy by playing devil's advocate. Outside of the classroom, students were required to post their reactions to debate topics. Again, the simulation is designed to bring out conflict here too. Students had to find people with whom they disagreed on Blackboard and respond to them using civil discourse. "We were actually encouraged to disagree," one student said. But he was quick to point out that teachers demanded students "still be polite and follow proper proceedings, wait their turn to talk, and what not."

Questionnaires

Comfort with conflict was moderately associated with political engagement in the pre questionnaire, ($r = .39$, $p = .002$), as well as in the post questionnaire, ($r = .34$, $p = .006$). This is a significant finding because it demonstrates that conflict was not prohibitive to becoming politically engaged as Mutz (2006) found in her study.

Student Interviews

Students recognized the work their teachers did in creating an atmosphere where personal attacks were not permitted. "Well, in class, you know, we practice civil discourse. You are supposed to attack ideas, not people." Other students described their class as "not a threatening environment at all." If a student descended into a personal attack "the teachers would tell us to stay on track." "All the government teachers made it a point that no one is supposed to be personally attacked."

Blackboard was more difficult to control than the classroom. If a student did not practice civil discourse within Blackboard, "the teachers delete that post." As the teachers noted in their interviews, they also talked with any student who committed personal attacks on Blackboard

making sure to clarify why it was inappropriate, and issuing a warning that if it happened again they would be removed from the course.

There were students who did not heed either their teacher's warnings or the injunctions of civil discourse. These students were ejected from the simulation. One student described what happened when his friend didn't follow the rules: "There was a Republican that was like, I knew him, he liked me, but like, he attacked so many kids. He needed to get kicked out. And he did."

Students defined debate in constructive and positive terms. One student defined it as "two different groups who have different opinions sharing their opinions and hopefully people are open to other people's opinions." Another student defined it as: "Two people of opposing viewpoints providing evidence for their views and trying to convince the other person that they are right through logical arguments." In both cases debate was viewed as productive.

Students frequently singled out the debates as their favorite part of the semester. They particularly enjoyed the multiple perspectives that debate made possible. "Just how you get to see different viewpoints and how you get to argue both sides and you get to see how people think differently on different issues and how they are not always going to agree." If everyone had the same view as me," lamented one student, "life would be boring."

Conflict does not appear to have created irreparable rifts between students. "It is just a class, I mean, like, you can't hate them for like thinking what they think." Another student who found himself on the opposing side of the political spectrum from his friends said, "I have a new respect for them because they share their personal experiences on the issues." Many students discovered the importance of voicing their convictions. "It is really not important what other people think necessarily about your opinions. You should voice them no matter what."

Personal attacks

Ganzler: Did you ever feel as though you were being personally attacked during the semester?

Student: No. Never.

There were three types of responses to the question of whether or not students felt personally attacked during the semester. A handful of students felt they were attacked. Some students felt that there was a great deal of tension, but did not feel personally attacked, and the third group felt they were never attacked. The student answer above was typical, and constituted the majority of responses. Students, on the whole, felt safe in the classrooms.

But not all discussions took place in the classroom. The students were required to post on Blackboard - an online discussion board - every week. There, away from the etiquette of parliamentary procedure, and the immediate intervention of their teachers, student tempers would flare, and attacks soon followed.

One student interviewed felt personally attacked during the semester. All of the complaints about attacks seemed to have occurred over issues of race. A female African American student I will call Brianna, felt the teachers did not do an adequate job of holding people responsible for uncivil comments made online. She said she was called anti-American, a racist, and a supporter of terrorism. Another student who is Latino said he was not personally attacked, "but I believe my race was because there were comments made during the Border Control debates" and then again during the Full Session. "There were some racist comments." However, not all students of color felt they were attacked. An African American female said that

while the affirmative action debate in class "got kind of itchy," when she got up to speak "they probably got a little itchy about something too, so it was okay. It was fine."

Brianna believed the cause of the attacks was entrenched racism:

> I don't even know if there is something that you can do to even make these kids not feel angry when the issue of race comes up because I guess prejudice and I guess, even to a certain extent, racism, is so embedded in some people, that you can't just say something to say, 'okay, you can't make racist comments anymore.

Three other female students mentioned Brianna during their interviews. One student agreed with Brianna, noting that her treatment was unwarranted. "She had very strong views and would not hold anything back. She gave long speeches during the Full Session. And the Republicans actually booed after her speech." This student believed that Brianna encountered this uncivil reaction partly because of "a lot of ignorance," but also because she always went "back to the white versus black differences….It didn't matter what the issue was, but it always ended up going back to race." Another student characterized Brianna's arguments as "good" and "well researched." But she also noted that Brianna consistently "attacked the other side. Not as immaturely as they did, but she did say things that were just not true and kind of insulting." The students noted that Brianna's treatment "was the only kind of break in the civil discourse, I think, that we experienced all semester."

The teachers, Robin, Brian, and Eileen, offered varied explanations. Robin believed, like Brianna, that American society suppresses issues of race, so that when the issue does emerge it is often awkward and unpleasant. "I don't think that race is something that is talked about or people can have a politically sophisticated discussion about whether they are 18 years old or whether

they are 45." She thought therefore that in order to break this cycle, issues concerning race needed to be discussed. Brian suggested that the simulation was a microcosm of society, and as such contained elements of racism. He also noted that bills concerning issues of diversity almost always won, meaning that the views of students of color prevailed. He concluded that "a lot of the wealthier or more privileged kids who are Republican, after the Full Session, were really kind of dumped on." This caused them to reevaluate their approach and ask "But how could we lose every bill? How is that possible?" Ultimately, he believed that in reflecting on their failure to garner enough votes, some students would conclude that "maybe I need to broaden my circle and broaden my influence and maybe not talk to other people." Eileen felt that any personal attack within the simulation was "inappropriate" and an offense worthy of sending a student to the dean's office, and revoking the right to participate. However, she was also clear in emphasizing that not all attacks on a position were necessarily attacks on a person's race.

There are at least two ways to interpret this data. On the one hand, this simulation appears to reify, perhaps even reproduce, racist behavior. Rather than opening up issues that simply allow privileged white kids to attack people of color, everyone would be better served if the curriculum focused instead on confronting and eliminating racism. Students of color were outnumbered in the simulation, and reluctant to subject themselves to a volley of insults by speaking their mind. Therefore, the simulation simply serves as a platform to reinforce racist assumptions at the expense of people of color.

On the other hand, this simulation is a microcosm of the community in which it takes place. Racism, and the reluctance to confront it, are, as some scholars have noted, characteristic of American society (Takaki, 1998; Ladson-Billings, 2006). In this way, the students in the

simulation are reflecting a problem Americans have had with race for centuries. But perhaps a key difference between the simulation and the larger culture is that in the simulation there were opportunities for change, and there were opportunities for students of color to respond.

For the teachers, closing off topics related to race would have threatened the entire simulation. Issues such as affirmative action and immigration have not produced consensus at a societal level, and therefore fit the definition of a controversy. If the teachers had closed these issues then they would have been betraying one of the primary purposes of the simulation, which is to discuss issues of controversy. Further, since the bills in the Full Session are student generated, they would have also been shutting down the constructivist nature of the simulation. Instead, the teachers chose to enforce the norms of civil discourse: demanding formality, condemning personal attacks, and ejecting from the simulation students who violated these norms.

Table 4.3. I hesitate to speak because classmates think my ideas are unworthy of consideration.

	Whites	Non-whites
Pre	21%	36%
Post	14%	13%

In an effort to determine whether or not students of color were intimidated from speaking their mind, and whether or not teachers were able to enforce civil discourse while maintaining an open environment, I examined questionnaire data. I found that Latinos and African Americans were more likely initially than white students to hesitate to speak in class because they believed their peers would feel their ideas were not worthy of consideration. However, by the end of the

semester, the vast majority of non-white students (87%, n=23) were not intimidated by their peers, which is actually greater than the number of whites who were not intimidated. This indicates that the rules of civil discourse, coupled with opportunities to speak, dramatically bolstered student confidence. The vast majority of non-white students also believed their classroom climate was open: 87% felt free to disagree openly with their teacher, 100% believed they were free to make up their own mind about issues being discussed, and 91% believed the teacher respected their opinions.

Summary

Conflict played a vital role in the simulation. There was a moderate relationship between feeling comfortable with conflict and being politically engaged. Most students reported enjoying debates and viewing them as productive, while feeling safe to disagree with other students.

Non-white students appeared to initially experience the simulation differently than white students, feeling more hesitant to express their ideas in front of their peers. But by the end of the simulation, non-white students were just as likely as white students to feel comfortable expressing their ideas in front of their peers. The vast majority of non-white students also reported that their classrooms were open. These results point to an atmosphere where diversity was accepted. Students of color become increasingly confident (even more so than their white peers), speaking their mind in front of their classmates.

These results indicate concern about controlling conflict (Bickmore, 1993) and unease over non-egalitarian approaches to deliberation (Sanders, 2009; Sunstein, 2006) were both justifiable and salient. Conflict was difficult to control, and there were personal attacks. However, the structure of the simulation combined with the procedural parliamentary safeguards

of the teachers, produced an environment in which students of color did experience personal attacks, but those attacks occurred in a larger environment that protected and valued them. This indicates that the emphasis on procedural rules and trained facilitators (Fishkin, 2009) is important for successful deliberation in schools. The dramatic increase in confidence of speaking, and overall sense that the classroom environment was open (Ehman, 1980), confirms the pedagogy and the simulation promoted egalitarian deliberation.

Political Engagement

Political engagement or the interest one has in learning about, discussing, and participating in politics, is the focus of my third research question: Does the simulation increase or decrease political engagement? Below, I present the findings to this question using two sources of data, results from the pre/post questionnaire, and a summary of the student interviews.

Questionnaire results

Paired-samples t-tests to look at whether scores at post-questionnaire was significantly higher than scores at pre-questionnaire prove individuals significantly increased their reports of political engagement across the two questionnaires. The post-questionnaire scale (M = 3.42) was significantly higher than the average of the pre-questionnaire scale (M = 3.05), $t(63) = 5.01$, $p < .001$. Political engagement pre and post simulation were moderately correlated $r = .32$, $p = .009$.

Additionally, Pearson's correlation, looking at the associations within the pre-questionnaire and again at those same associations within the post-questionnaire, was performed. I used linear regression to examine whether any pre-questionnaire individual characteristics predicted political engagement in the post-questionnaire controlling for their political

engagement in the pre-questionnaire to see if any of them predicted changes in political engagement over time.

Table 4.4 Scale results.

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
HowGoodTeacher	65	2.00	4.00	3.3615	.44136
Politicalengagement	64	1.60	4.00	3.0469	.47139
post_politicalengagement	65	1.25	4.00	3.4195	.53835
Teacherdisclosure	63	1.00	4.00	2.3333	.91581
post_teacherdisclosure	65	1.00	4.00	2.8897	.62727
Generalawareness	65	.00	5.00	3.0308	.99952
post_generalawareness	65	2.00	8.00	6.0154	1.51547
Formingopinion	64	1.33	4.00	2.9583	.48523
post_formingopinion	65	1.50	4.00	2.9000	.57267
efficacy_internal	64	1.83	4.00	2.8371	.48480
post_efficacy_internal	64	2.12	4.00	3.1884	.46265
Duties	64	1.78	4.00	3.2519	.40069
post_duties	65	2.12	4.00	3.4109	.35998
Attitudesgovernment	65	1.00	4.00	2.4997	.72715
post_attitudesgovernment	65	1.50	4.00	2.5756	.66184
Comfortwconflict	64	.00	4.00	2.1641	1.16174
post_comfortwconflict	65	.00	4.00	2.1462	.93426
Tolerance	63	.00	5.00	3.4603	.87668
post_tolerance	64	1.00	5.00	3.9844	1.03114
Classinfluences	64	1.10	3.40	2.9813	.31916
post_classinfluences	65	2.20	3.80	2.9607	.29200
politicalengagement_diffscore	64	-1.75	1.63	.3714	.59269
Resourceshome	64	.67	4.33	2.6563	1.25423
Religiousattend	64	.00	5.00	2.5312	1.50099
Ses	64	.33	4.17	2.6406	.91779
Valid N (listwise)	60				

In the pre-questionnaire: By far the biggest association was with **efficacy internal**. The more that individuals felt efficacious the more they reported being politically engaged $r = .65$, $p < .001$. Other variables associated with political engagement were: **duties** (r = .39, p = .002), **comfort with conflict** (r = .39, p = .002), **SES** (r= .27, p=.03), and **religious attendance** was marginally significantly associated (r = .24, p = .056).

Post-questionnaire: Again, the biggest association was with **efficacy-internal** (r = .48 p < .001). Other associations included: **duties** (r = .28, p = .026), and **comfort with conflict** (r = .34, p = .006).

Pre-to-Post: **Duties** predicted more reports of political engagement at the post questionnaire controlling for initial levels of engagement (B = .355, t = 2.064, p = .043). **Comfort with conflict** marginally predicted more reports of political engagement at the post-questionnaire controlling for initial levels of engagement (B = .114, t = 1.912, p = .061). **General awareness of politics** from pre to post declined slightly.

Student Interviews

Recall that 26 students were interviewed. Six students did not address their attitude about politics before taking the course. Five out of 20 (25%) students said they were interested in politics before taking the class. Fifteen of the 20 (75%) who did address the question, clearly stated that they had no interest in politics before taking the course. All fifteen (100%) of the students who said they were not interested in politics before taking this course indicated that they were now interested. These students were initially unengaged for one of four reasons, none of them mutually exclusive: they believed that the political process was an exercise in criminality, it was too opaque to be understood, it was irrelevant, or it was boring. Below, I provide summaries

of the student interviews from the two groups of students: those who were initially interested in politics before the course, and those who were not.

Political engagement among those previously interested in politics

There were five students who indicated, during their interviews, they were interested in politics before beginning the Legislative Semester. These students also reported increasing their interest and knowledge and commitment to politics, but in markedly different ways than their peers. The most tepid response came from a Latino male student who said he was "a little more interested" in politics. Two of the five students, both female, said they are seriously considering pursuing a career in government. Two other students said they now rejected the Democrat/Republican dichotomy and chose instead to participate outside the traditional parties. "I don't even want to have anything to do with the political spectrum. I think we should have our own views."

Political engagement among those previously not interested in politics

The belief that politicians are dishonest and lazy was a pervasive sentiment at the beginning of the semester, but as the simulation progressed and students assumed the role of legislators, they began to express empathy with politicians. One male student learned at home to distrust politicians. "All I knew is my mom always told me that out there they screw people." He later went on to say that he used to believe politicians "are out there to line their pockets." However, by the end of the semester his attitude toward politicians had changed. "Now that I took the course I see things do get done. It is just not very fast because all of the procedure and things it has to go through." Another student admitted that she thought politicians were "sleazy" but now recognized that they "served a purpose" and did "important work." When I asked them

what had changed their mind about politicians, they indicated that going through the simulation made them realize how difficult a job politicians had. “I think it has made me more aware. I mean, I knew that it wasn’t perfect, obviously. But I guess I have greater respect for the people that work in it. Because it is very difficult, and I have only had, obviously, a very small glance into it.”

Six of the students felt initially they did not have enough information to understand politics. One student admitted “it just kind of went over my head.” Another student said, “I don’t even know if I had a feeling about it because I didn’t really know too much about it.” By the end of the semester however, indifference had given way to passion. Another student claimed “I know more, I am more involved.”

Five students at the beginning of the semester had trouble understanding the relevancy of politics. “I was not very into politics at all. It was sort of there. It didn’t seem to have much effect on anything at all.” At the end of the semester these students spoke of “having the knowledge” to appreciate how politics affect them. Others spoke of now being “very interested” and acknowledging that the simulation opened their “eyes to a couple of things.”

Three students admitted to finding politics boring before the semester. One student was “dreading” taking a semester length class about politics. “I go, God, politics, it is so boring.” These students also reported changing their view of politics. “After learning about abortion rights, or fetal rights and all that stuff, you actually want to know what happens in the Supreme Court or it makes you want to read the news…you get to learn so many different topics.”

Political engagement among those with low SES

Those in the lowest quartile of SES (n=17), that is those with less than 50 books in their home, whose families do not subscribe to a newspaper, and who plan to complete less than four years of education after high school, are among the least likely to become politically engaged.

The simulation appears to have had a mixed effect on this group. Their commitments dipped slightly. Although 83% expected they would vote, this was down from 87% at the beginning of the semester. Their enjoyment of discussing politics also fell slightly from a high of 65% to the end of the semester when only 62% said they still enjoyed it. However, their sense of internal efficacy rose considerably with 47% believing they could be efficacious from 23% at the beginning of the semester.

Political engagement outside of class

The change in attitude toward politics – from indifference or confusion, to understanding and relevance – also led to reports of increased political activity that included higher levels of news consumption, discussions of politics outside of school, and plans to vote.

Students who expressed a lack of passion for politics at the beginning of the semester reported a greater commitment to political activities. Many described talking about politics with their family. A male student watched President Bush's State of the Union and afterwards "had a full hour conversation" with his mom. He admitted it "was kind of nice." Several other students also mentioned watching Bush deliver his speech and then talking about it with their parents. "It was kind of bonding." Other students realized that family political debates, which had once been boring to them, were now "interesting" and "cool."

Students increased their news consumption. “Before I would just kind of read the front cover of the newspaper” one student said, “but now I look at the politics section.” This attitude was prevalent among those who identified themselves as previously uninterested in politics.

Many students declared that they had registered to vote, and acknowledged that they did so because of the class. “I probably wouldn’t have gone out and voted right away because I wouldn’t have understood what I was doing.” Some students said they would have voted without taking the class, but they would have relied on family members to tell them how to vote. “I think I would have voted but I think I would have just done, okay, Mom, who are you voting for?” After her experience in the Legislative Semester, the student is now “going to pick who I am going to vote for”.

Summary and discussion

The simulation increased political engagement among the students in the simulation. Those with low SES did not increase their interest in talking about politics, or their commitment to vote when they are able. However they did increase their own sense of their ability to speak in front of large groups, and particularly to influence what government does. Students did not increase their general awareness of what was happening in the news. Perhaps this is because students were assigned to research bills, about which they learned a great deal, but this knowledge was not enough to increase their overall news knowledge. Additionally, the debates in the simulation, focused on perennially controversial events such as gun control, taxes, and the death penalty, none of which would necessarily increase general news knowledge..

Students who were not interested in politics before taking this course described how their government class had awakened an interest in politics. And furthermore, this newfound interest

resulted in increased political engagement outside of school. Discussions about politics with family members, friends, and acquaintances increased. As did news consumption.

These findings confirm the assertions of deliberative theorists (Gutmann & Thompson, 2004; Parker, 2003) who have claimed that deliberation will increase political engagement. The findings also demonstrate that exposure to conflict is not incompatible with increased political engagement (Mutz, 2006).

Additionally, students changed their attitude about politicians. Where students once reviled them, they now expressed respect for their role and empathized with the difficulty of their job. These findings add to the theoretical work on simulations, particularly Schaffer's (2004) concept of epistemic games. Students were empathetic to the difficult choices faced by legislators. This would suggest that in this simulation students not only played the part of legislators - they also learned to feel like legislators.

Students who were interested in politics before taking this course increased their political engagement. While they reported increased interest and knowledge in politics, some also indicated a desire to enter politics as a profession, while some rejected the two party system.

Discussion: Features of the simulation and pedagogy that encouraged engagement, structure, and success

A male student, who proudly admitted he was not academically inclined, said:

> I just think it is a lot better than like if I was in the classroom. I would probably get a pretty bad grade. Like, I just get so bored. And I actually have never slept in this class. And usually I sleep in class….I don't miss this class too. And I think I

> missed like 10 days of school and I barely missed this class. It makes me learn things. And I am going to vote now. So it made me like in tune with what is going on in the world and what is going on with our government. And I do have the power if I vote, you know.

This student usually slept in class, and often missed other classes. He was usually bored. And yet he was engaged in the simulation. What accounts for this difference? He recognized that he was learning about government and the outside world. He also recognized that he had power and that voting was a way to exercise that power. How did participation in the simulation help him make these connections?

Students in this simulation reported high levels of engagement, increased their interest in politics, and developed a wide variety of civic skills. They were exposed to frequent political issues discussions despite the fact that they were in mainstreamed and in diverse classes. How both the simulation's structure and the teachers' pedagogy contributed to the students' achievement is discussed below.

Students engaged in democratic deliberation

During the Full Session, there was a debate on the death penalty. Many students employed statistics, logic, and morality in service of their arguments. Toward the end of the debate, a young woman spoke for those opposing a ban on the death penalty. She laid out a different sort of argument. Where her allies had used arguments drawing on legal theory, economics, and justice, she turned to religion. She began with a straightforward thesis: "The death penalty is just." As she spoke, many of the people on her side of the aisle emphatically nodded their heads in agreement. But then she added, "as the Bible says…" and a loud, plural

groan emerged from her compatriots, so loud in fact, that the rest of her sentence, " an eye for an eye" was nearly drowned out by her peers' moaning. Nodding was quickly replaced by conventional signs of irritation: people slapping their palms to their foreheads; long, exasperated sighs; downward, desultory gazes. What was so striking about all of this was that the displays of irritation and disappointment came not from her opponents, but from the people who agreed with her position. Why did they react so decisively and uniformly against her argument?

The reason they rejected her argument is that the students in the simulation had been taught to develop arguments that were persuasive. Persuasive arguments contain claims that are warranted by factual information. As Amy Gutmann and Dennis Thompson have written: during a deliberation, "citizens and officials must justify any demands for collective action by giving reasons that can be accepted by those who are bound by the action" (1998, p. 10). Since many people do not view the Bible as fact, the students' epistemology did not recognize the Bible itself as a valid warrant. The students who wanted the death penalty to continue were not necessarily against the Bible, they were against losing their debate. And when one of their own violated the rules of argumentation, they knew, instantly, that they had lost the debate.

The simulation in this study embraced the central ideas of a deliberative democracy. The simulation was an event in which "claims are supported with evidence and reasoning, and a rich inventory of historic, scientific and literary evidence is brought to bear" (Parker, 2006, pg. B7).

Less is more

One of the most salient characteristics of the Legislative Simulation is how little reading was required of the students. There was no text book. Readings in class consisted of short articles. Students rarely had to read a text for homework. Yet, despite this ostensible lack of

rigor, students consistently reported that they learned a great deal. All of which begs the question: If their classes were not academically rigorous, what accounts for students reporting that they learned so much?

While they might have read less than other students enrolled in traditional civics or U.S. government courses, it would appear they were at least more engaged in the subject matter. Over 30 years ago, Johnson & Johnson noted that it was virtually impossible for students not to think about a controversial issue if they were required in some to way to respond (1979). Confronted with an interlocutor during a controversy, students have several choices. They can agree with the thrust of what is being said, in which case their opinion is reinforced; they can disagree, in which case they must construct an argument defending their position; or they can be paralyzed – literally not know which side is the one they agree or disagree with, in which case they need to evaluate both sides of the argument (a controversy implies that at least two sides disagree) and ultimately make a decision about where they stand.

Students also were responsible for thinking about the daily readings by posting on Blackboard. These posts required the students to do two things: first, they had to articulate their position on the controversial issue. Second, they were required to respond civilly to someone with whom they disagreed.

Ditching the textbook

The reason the teachers in the simulation avoid the textbook is that a textbook would not be able to provide the foundation for controversial issues discussions. First, textbooks are rarely current. The school adoption process usually takes years. By the time the textbook reaches the classroom, the topics that are most current, most pressing, and – more often than not – most

interesting, are not included in even the most current editions. Additionally, even if a textbook is new, it does not, and cannot, remain new for very long. Furthermore, most textbooks elide over controversy, and are characterized by statements of vague progress, blind patriotism, and bland writing (Loewen, 2007). And this, perhaps more than any other factor, is why students dislike them so intensely. Students that I interviewed consistently mentioned how pleased they were not to be burdened by a text book:

> S1: From a student point of view, through a textbook, is kind of boring. Sitting in a classroom and just reading from a textbook, taking tests, scantron tests, is kind of boring. Students, these days, like to do more hands-on things. And the simulation that we have been doing, for example, like committee hearings, we made up our own bills. And we spoke about our bills and we had our peers debate them. And then we went into a Full Session where we discussed it as a large group. And it was a lot more interesting and grabbed my attention better.

> S2: I don't remember anything about American History because it was pretty much textbook. I do not learn out of a textbook. I am very hands on with learning. I like to talk a lot. So, I guess this class was a way for me to express how I felt about things and to be able to give speeches because I really enjoy that. And like textbooks are just kind of like written. I got home and I read a chapter and I come back and summarize it. Like you understand it from that point of time, and you take the test. But then, like later on it is like you will remember certain things. You don't remember all the little things. And then in Government class I remember everything. I know how certain things work and how certain issues are.

S3: This is actually probably one of my favorites as far as my entire high school career. I think, the whole hands-on aspect, it gets everybody involved. And it is not just reading from a book and doing busy work. There actually is a purpose to every assignment that we have.

While the students were not required to read copious amounts of text, they were required to think about what they read. For each small text, the students were confronted with an array of opinions through which they had to compose a cohesive response. They had to verbally formulate a defense of their position in class. They then had to construct both a written defense of their position, as well as pinpoint weaknesses in other people's arguments. All of which ensured that they had to actually think about the information that was being presented in class.

The simulation structured controversy

Controversy without conflict is like comedy without laughter. Controversy, as one student noted, "gets you moving." This simulation was designed to harness controversy for the purpose of engaging students. But controversy also provided students with additional opportunities for intellectual rigor, as well as increasing their appreciation for ideological difference.

All of the teachers in the simulation regarded conflict as a natural, healthy activity. As numerous studies have shown, social studies teachers do not usually embrace conflict in the classroom (Johnson & Johnson, 2009; Parker, 2006). One of the reasons these teachers did not fear conflict is that they had a powerful tool. The teachers used parliamentary procedure to structure their discussions. Parliamentary procedure provided a carapace that shielded students from personal attacks while giving teachers an infrastructure to facilitate exchanges. Consider

the various features of parliamentary procedure that prevent uncivil behavior: If a student personalized an issue, by either addressing another student by their first name or by a personal attack, s/he immediately lost the right to speak. A student interrupting the person who had the floor would quickly find themselves reprimanded for not being recognized. Students wishing to dominate a discussion would be at the mercy of being selected to speak, and once being selected they would be allowed to speak for only a limited time – subject to the two minute maximum imposed on anyone who has the floor. The relative degree of decorum provided by parliamentary procedure prevented the debates from careening out of control.

Parliamentary procedure also placed the onus of talking on the students rather than the teachers. Students ran the debates. Revolving students chaired the debates. Students maintained the rules of parliamentary procedure without teacher intervention. This left the teacher free to focus on the important task of asking questions, generating at key moments critical thoughts on the subject under debate.

Finally, parliamentary procedure gave the teachers cover. They did not have to take sides. This allowed the teachers to be seen as impartial. As a result, students did not detect a right/left bias in their teachers. Students did not feel inhibited by their teachers from expressing their true opinion on any subject. This perceived neutrality also allowed teachers to bring controversial issues into the classroom without fear of a community backlash. There have not been any complaints from the community about the subjects under discussion in the classroom. Fear of a community backlash is also one of the reasons cited in the literature to explain why most teachers shy away from controversial issues discussions (Bickmore, 1993).

Students were able to pursue their own interests

The initial stage of the simulation put the onus of selecting which issues were debated on teachers. After this stage was completed however, students selected which issues they wanted to debate. Every student was required to select a topic of their own choosing and develop it into a bill.

Again, this is the opposite learning model that a textbook based classroom embraces. Rather than assume all students must learn the same information, and that the information they need to learn is fixed from a single source, the simulation created opportunities for students to learn what was interesting to them. Many students singled out this phase of the simulation as their favorite because they enjoyed the opportunity to deepen their understanding about something they actually cared about – apparently, for them, such opportunities are rare in school.

What students did actually mattered

Virtually every activity in the simulation presented opportunities for students not only to interact with each other, but to affect the outcome of the activity. Students were able to persuade and be persuaded by their peers daily.

During class debates, students articulating particularly cogent and powerful arguments were able to affect the outcome of a vote. On Blackboard, students were able to make appeals for their argument to all of the classes in the simulation. During the committee hearings, student votes literally determined whether a bill would go on to the Full Session or whether it would die in committee. And finally, in the Full Session, student speeches and votes determined whether a bill became law.

What students did also mattered in another way: relevancy. Teachers directed students to ultimately create bills and debate them in a student run congress. Both of these activities: writing a bill and forming a congress, are activities that are enacted in the world outside of school. Whether it was as a legislative aide, researcher, lobbyist, or actual legislator, the simulation mirrored roles and activities one could pursue as a professional career.

Not only were the activities the students were required to participate in relevant, the products they were asked to make were relevant as well. Students were required to draft a bill. A bill is a proposed solution to a public policy problem. Bills are drafted, debated, and ultimately enacted within the political sphere. So, not only were the students simulating how politicians engage with each other, they were also simulating what politicians actually do. As one student summarized:

> I think it is an awesome experience because, I mean, the way the teachers teach it, it is not like a normal class. It is not like, here is paper. Here are notes. Here is homework. They actually involve you in the situation and the simulation. So you are like an active part in how all these bills become law. And then you learn how it works because you are doing it. So it is definitely a lot better that I think a normal class of Government would have been.

Pedagogy and assessment were aligned

Throughout the simulation there was a tight parallel between what the students were asked to do, and how their grade was determined. This has been labeled, by Shaffer and Resnick (1999) as "thick authenticity." Teachers asked their students to debate issues, form compelling arguments about those issues, and then to write bills which proposed solutions. Student grades

were primarily determined by their daily participation on Blackboard and the bill they submitted to their committees. In other words, the students had multiple opportunities to practice, refine, and master the activities and products which determined their grade.

Many students labeled the simulation as "easy." One possible explanation for this assessment is that the students were never graded on anything that they didn't have an opportunity to practice. Another possibility is that in fact, it was easy. But this is unlikely. To begin with, the students performed complex tasks that required subtlety, sophistication, and critical thought. Parliamentary procedure, debating a resolution, writing a bill, legislative maneuvering, forming coalitions; all of these activities are difficult.

There were multiple opportunities for students to shine

The simulation required a wide variety of skills from students. Whether it was speaking in front of large audiences (advocates), researching public policy (researcher), mastering parliamentary procedure (committee chair), organizing a schedule for debates (secretary), persuading others to vote with their party (whip), students found a role. These roles were substantive, that is they required skill and cognition in order to get them done. The variety of roles, coupled with teachers' commitment to ensuring the simulation was student run, ensured that every student contributed in a significant way to the simulation.

Table 4.5 Leadership positions.

Role	Number
Governor	1
Speaker of the House	1
Majority Party Whips	10

Minority Party Whips	10
Parliamentarian	1
Majority Party Head Whip	1
Minority Party Head Whip	1
Sergeant at Arms	2
Head Clerk	1
Total positions	28

Strategies to deal with unskilled students

Students had the opportunity to discuss controversial issues nearly every day of the semester. The skills required to do this well are complex, and difficult. (Parker, 2003; Hess, 2002). While these skills and dispositions are difficult to instill, with time and practice they do develop (Hess, 2002). The teachers begin the semester with high expectations for the end of the semester, but with realistic expectations at the beginning. What this means in practice is that they are patient. They know if they consistently model good discussion: using evidence to warrant claims, employing civil discourse, following parliamentary procedure, then by the end of the semester students will be competent at discussing controversial issues. Advances in brain research and cognition show that people construct new knowledge particularly well when they are provided opportunities to engage in trial and error, practice in safety, and have models of practice (Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 2000). The students in this simulation were provided with all of these opportunities in the build-up to the Full Session.

Students begin the semester with no burden to speak. There is neither reward nor punishment for speaking during debates. In this way, students were slowly acclimated in a pressure free classroom to learn how to speak during a debate. As the semester progressed, there were an increasing number of assignments in which students had to speak, and were formally graded for doing so. Students had to speak in front of a student committee to present their bills. They were also required to speak either for or against three bills during the Full Session. The class debates were seen by teachers as a prelude to the committee sessions, and the Full Session. Students had months to prepare for both of these public speaking events. By the time they were required to speak, the students were familiar with having to defend their claims, the rules of parliamentary procedure, and the conventions of civil discourse.

Chapter 5. The Ideology of the Simulation

Ideology refers to a set of complementary ideas and beliefs that a group uses to shape meaning and define what is normal and accepted (DeLeon, 2008). Ideology is never neutral and is often employed in schools to maintain dominant social structures and ideas (Apple, 2004). Simulations are socially constructed and are based on simulating something from the world. Thus, they represent ideas about what the world should look like and are, therefore, inherently ideological. Accordingly, examining the ideology of the simulation in this study should reveal much about the intention and purpose of the simulation.

My final research question is: What is the ideology of the simulation? To answer this question I rely on two previously developed frameworks. The first, DeLeon (2008), drawn from critical theory, examines the simulation through the lens of power relations. The second, Kahne and Westheimer (2004), employs a democratic lens to focus on how different citizen types are promoted through curriculum.

Does the simulation promote the status quo?

DeLeon (2008) coded and analyzed two social studies simulations in an effort to develop a framework that would uncover their ideology. The categories I utilize are: *Binaries, Claim to Knowledge,"Fixing" Meaning,* and *Naturalizing*. These categories help to focus attention on the lenses that students use to critique societal problems. Recall, from the theoretical framework in Chapter 2, schooling in the United States is characterized by a series of unquestioned norms that are embedded within the curriculum (Apple, 2004). The analysis that follows will bring to the surface the norms the simulation promotes. The social studies have been marked by a lack of

functional critiques of the government or its political system (Kahne & Middaugh, 2006). Uncovering the norms within the simulation will illuminate how the curriculum encourages (or discourages) students to critique contemporary problems and existing social and political structures. A brief explanation and examples of each category will precede each section.

Binaries: This category concerns the choices offered students within the simulation. For instance, does the simulation reduce complex problems to two simplistic options? Examples of a binary choice: Is an action either good or evil? Is a country either with us or against us? Binary options do not lend themselves to complexity; they reject nuance, and they force the student to decide between two options – neither of which may capture the student's thoughts or feelings.

Ostensibly, a cursory glance at the Legislative Simulation may suggest that it contains two binaries. First, students are directed to join one of two political parties: either the Democrats or the Republicans. Second, during the Full Session students have the choice of either voting for or against a bill.

However, on closer analysis, it becomes apparent that the choices offered students within the simulation are not binary. Although students are encouraged to join one of the two major political parties, not all of them do. Several students told me they considered themselves to be Independents, and neither party fit their ideological beliefs. Students were free to become Independents; the penalty for doing so was to be excluded from committee chair assignments. Students could also caucus with either party between votes during the Full Session. Additionally, the curriculum made allowances for a wide range of ideological variance within the two political parties. For instance, one student said that she is "socially liberal but fiscally conservative," thus

acknowledging that belonging to one party does not necessarily entail accepting either liberalism or conservatism in its entirety.

Students also have choices other than voting for or against a bill. During the committee hearings, the bill can be amended. So long as a majority of students within the committee can be convinced of the changes a student proposes to a bill, those changes become part of the bill. In this way, students can shape and alter the bills. Amendments can also be offered from the floor during the Full Session. If a student cannot decide whether or not to vote for a bill, s/he has the choice of voting "present," which indicates neither support nor opposition. Finally, students are required to speak at least three times during the Full Session. There is no script the students follow. There are no predetermined positions the students must assume. The students create their own mosaic of argumentation, piecing together their reasons for either supporting or opposing a bill.

Claim to knowledge: This category deals with how key terms and concepts within the simulation are defined. For instance, a concept such as terrorism may rely on an understanding that implies only people from the Middle East are terrorists. Such a definition washes over critical distinctions between individual acts of violence designed to incite fear, and government actions which have the same purpose. If terrorism is defined as an individual or group action within a specific geographic region, then governments (such as the United States) are not capable of terrorism.

The Legislative Simulation does not rely on a single text. During the initial class debates teachers select opposing texts in order to stimulate debate. Any ideas within the texts are subject

to challenge. As the semester progresses students select their own bills to research, and they are responsible for selecting their own texts as well.

During the debates, students wrestled with definitions central to their bills. For instance, during the debate on immigration, a Republican attempted to label illegal immigrants as criminals: "Is stealing a TV wrong? Yes. And therefore stealing citizenship is wrong too." A Democrat responded by pointing out that a definition of criminality that rested on full compliance of all laws would turn everyone into a criminal: "How many teenagers break the law every time they drink?" In this case, both sides sensed the debate centered on the definition of criminal, and both sides sought to define how others would think about it. The definition was open for the students to frame, and, at no time, was an official definition imposed upon them.

"*Fixing" meaning:* This category refers to how the simulation makes one kind of reality dominant and unchangeable. For instance, in the simulation *House Design* (DeLeon, 2008), participants compete in a competitive context for cash awards. Structurally, this simulation does not encourage cooperation, shared decision making, or acts of kindness. Therefore, material gain through competitive means is the sole means by which participants can interact within the simulation.

The Legislative Simulation places students in an environment of conflict and competition. It follows a deliberative model, where participants are bound by the decision of the group (Thompson, 2008). The overarching assumption is that deliberative democracy is the best way to make decisions. As a result, other forms of decision making are not explored. For instance, consensus, in which all students would have to agree on an outcome, is not an option as a mode of decision making within the simulation.

The simulation contains two opposing values regarding change. The students simulate the legislative process of a state legislature. Just as in a legislature, the two party system dominates the Legislative Simulation. The majority party elects the Speaker of the House; committee chairs must be members of the dominant party, and there are no alternatives to the current party system offered within the simulation.

On the other hand, this simulation is focused on causing change. Students are required to write and debate bills. A bill is, at its core, a solution to a problem. Students were free to select what problems they believed needed a solution. They were also free to select the solution to those problems. Bills during the Full Session contained an array of changes to the current social, political and even economic system. Students proposed to raise the minimum wage, cut military funding, eliminate the *No Child Left Behind Act*, extend equal rights to homosexuals, and decriminalize marijuana (see Tables 5.1, 5.2, and 5.3). To say that the simulation merely simulated the status quo would be misleading. Although the simulation presented the two party legislative system as both normal and unalterable, students proposed numerous changes to American society through their bills.

Table 5.1. Bills debated first semester, Day 1.

Bill name	Category
Adult crime adult time	Criminal justice
Legalize doctor assisted suicide	Freedoms
Enforce school district truancy laws	Educational

Increase funding for medical research	Medical
End affirmative action	Race
Stricter DUI punishment	Criminal justice
Ban No Child Left Behind	Educational

Table 5.2. Day 2.	
End War in Iraq	Military
Repeal FCC Censorship	Freedoms
Pro Gay Rights	Freedoms
Foreign Trade Reform	Economic
Fund Stem Cell Research	Science
Ban the Death Penalty	Criminal Justice
Harsher punishments for rapists	Criminal Justice
Reform the Patriot Act	Freedoms

Table 5.3 Day 3.	
Presidency can be naturalized	Immigration

Stop people from censoring video games	Freedoms
Amnesty for immigrants	Immigration
Federal funding for AIDS research	Medical
Mandatory bilingual education	Educational
Ban all hate crime laws	Criminal Justice
Decriminalization of marijuana	Freedoms
Lower tattooing age to 18	Freedoms

Naturalizing: Is a concept that deals with making social systems appear normal, neutral, and natural. For example, in one of the simulations that DeLeon critiqued, students were required to design and furnish a home. This simulation tied consumerism and consumption to the "American Dream." Thus, implicit within the simulation,was an assumption that owning a house and trying to make it as big as possible was the norm. Furthermore, student designs for the homes were placed in a "heteronormative" (Loutzenheiser, 2006) context, closing off the possibility of same sex households.

The Legislative Simulation did challenge some norms, but the range of opinions selected by the teachers fell short of challenging many prevailing norms. The selection of which issues were deemed to be debatable was an enormous power teachers used to define the political spectrum. The teachers selected conventional issues to debate and selected conventional solutions. "Conventional" here means issues which are discussed in mainstream media.

Chomsky (1988) has railed against the narrow range of issues and viewpoints allowed to seep into the national conversation and consciousness by media "gatekeepers". The teachers in this study appear to have followed the conventional definition of which issues were acceptable topics of debate. For instance, there was a debate on whether the tax rate for individuals was too high or low, but there was never a debate about whether or not large companies should pay higher taxes. There was a debate about withdrawing the military from Iraq, but there was never a debate about whether or not America is an imperialist country. In this way, the range of issues students might have used to develop their placement on the political spectrum was narrowed.

Although students were given the choice to opt out of the two party system, there was little time devoted to political ideologies such as socialism, or environmentalism, which might have better represented those students who did not find a place within the Democratic or Republican parties.

Framing the architecture of the simulation around the two party system does create a reality that implies the two party system is the only way one can participate within U.S. politics. While the teachers in the simulation would probably have allowed students to organize third parties, they did not provide opportunities to do so. Instead, students were confronted with three choices of affiliation: Democrat, Republican, or Independent. During the first few weeks of the simulation, positions on issues were referenced back to the two major parties. Teachers could have expanded the concept of the political system to allow a wider spectrum of ideas and beliefs. They could have referenced student positions to third party ideology, and they could have structurally encouraged students to form and join third parties.

If teachers assumed the responsibility of both widening the political spectrum and introducing third party ideologies, it would certainly encourage students to explore alternative political solutions that challenge normative assumptions. But the simulation does not necessarily constrain teachers from raising counter hegemonic possibilities. Teachers at other sites who facilitate this simulation could use the structure of the simulation to create an experience which offers several counter hegemonic lessons. For instance, the issues teachers select as debatable could draw from a wider spectrum of contemporary controversies that challenge social, political, and economic norms.

Finally, students were encouraged to participate in conventional ways. They were encouraged to write bills, to deliberate, and to vote. Unconventional political participation was not encouraged. This is not to say that it was actively discouraged, rather that it was not included within the conceptual framework of political participation. Students were not introduced to the idea of protest or civil disobedience. Unconventional forms of participation could have been legitimized, or normalized, and their absence virtually ensured students would think of political participation in purely conventional terms.

What kind of citizen?

I use Kahne and Weistheimer's (2004) democratic education framework to further the analysis of ideology within the simulation. Exploring the spectrum of ideas embedded in civic education programs, the authors identified three distinct categories civic education programs promote*: personally responsible, participatory,* and *justice oriented*. Furthermore, they identified tensions between how each defined what it meant to be a "good" citizen. The programs in their study either prepared students to follow rules (*the personally responsible citizen*); to be active,

involved citizens within the civic arena (*the participatory citizen*); or, they prepared students to critically analyze contemporary problems through a political lens and act to correct injustice (*the justice oriented citizen*). However, none of the programs successfully blended the essential elements of political analysis, organization, participation, and action, together. The authors are critical of programs that promote only a *personally responsible* ethic because the desired outcome, a law abiding citizen, is not inherently linked to democracy. Indeed, as they point out, a dictatorship would promote adherence to the law, and thus embrace the ethos of a personally responsible citizen because of its alignment to order, and control. The other two types of civic education programs, the *participatory* and *justice oriented* also lack the full array of knowledge, skills, and attitudes they believe are necessary in a democracy. So, while the graduate of a *participatory* program might be able to organize and rally a community to work in a homeless shelter, he would be at a loss to explain how the political and economic systems might create or diminish homelessness. Conversely, a graduate of a *justice oriented* program that focused on how inadequate living conditions, inferior schools, and racism cause homelessness would be at a loss as to how to harness citizens into political action which might solve the plight of the homeless.

The legislative simulation contained elements of all three citizen outcomes identified by Kahne and Westheimer. The onus of shepherding their bills through the simulation, provided multiple lessons in how to mobilize people into political action. Consider the many hurdles these three students had to clear in order to get their bills passed:

> S1: First of all you had to come up with people that sponsored your bill….And then you had to make sure that people actually agreed with it….Once it went to

> the Full Session people get persuaded by their majority or minority floor leader and that changes their views….So it was kind of difficult because you thought that you were going to maybe pass your bill and then you find out that people used certain other reasons why they didn't vote for your bill.
>
> S2: You had to go through all these different processes. You had to make sure that everything passed. Even though it passed in class doesn't like entitle the bill to pass in the committee hearings. It could be vetoed and then it wouldn't travel any farther. So I think it was hard, you know, to get it to pass.
>
> S3: First thing we had to do was choose our bill. And then we went online and researched what different delegates said…what people thought about [it]. My bill personally, was the progressive taxes. I am for the progressive tax. And we had to see different views about people who are for progressive taxes and then see what kind of percentages would be for what percentages of income. And then we had to play devil's advocate by ourselves and see why people [might] prefer a flat tax. And then we had to put that into a speech and try to convince our peers why we thought that the progressive tax was a better option.

All three of these students were aware of the difficulty involved in passing a bill. They "had to make sure everything passed," or that "everyone agreed". In order to ensure the bill's success they had to "try and convince" their "peers" that their solution "was a better option" than not voting for the bill. They were able to identify the points at which the bill was vulnerable: during committee and during the Full Session. They were able to identify the ways in which the bill could be killed even though it appeared to have support: by a floor leader or through a veto.

In their analysis of the different programs, Kahne and Westheimer (2004) identified a lack of specific outcomes in the programs they examined. The participatory programs motivated students to become more involved in their communities, but they did not increase students' interest in politics, or their ability to consider root or structural problems and how they related to contemporary issues:

> They did not examine data regarding the relationship between race, social class, and prison sentencing or question whether increased incarceration has lowered crime rates. They did not examine whether incarcerating juveniles (as opposed to other possible policies) affects the likelihood of future criminal activity…Nor did they identify or discuss the diverse ideologies that inform political stances on such issues. (p.253)

During the Full Session, one of the bills debated sought to ban the death penalty. The Democrats' argument for the bill was organized along three points:

1) The death penalty is unevenly applied to minorities and is racist in nature.
2) A person's location can decide their fate. There is no death penalty in Wisconsin, but there are in neighboring states.
3) It is not a deterrent. California's crime rates climbed once the death penalty was re-introduced.

These three points emphasize the difference between the Legislative Simulation and the participatory program examined by Kahne and Westheimer. The debate clearly brought out the

relationship between demographic factors and sentencing. It also examined the effectiveness of the death penalty on crime rates.

The other shortcoming of the participatory program that Kahne and Westheimer raise is the lack of discussions about ideology and its relationship to political positions. The students in the Legislative Simulation are taught to examine political debates through the lens of ideological difference. From the beginning of the semester, teachers introduce debates precisely to highlight the differences in ideology between Democrats and Republicans. By the middle of the semester, students have researched, argued about, and contemplated which party most closely aligns with their political ideology. Students officially join a party (or officially choose not to join). While the range of ideology is representative of the two party system in the U.S., and comparatively narrow to the range of ideologies in many parliamentary systems, the students are aware of the social and economic differences between the major political parties.

Contrariwise to the participatory programs in Kahne and Westheimer's study, the justice oriented programs they examined, increased students' ability to examine structural explanations for societal problems, as well as increased interest in politics, but their sense of being effective leaders did not change from pre to posttest.

The students in the Legislative Simulation increased both their interest in politics, as well as their sense of internal efficacy. The post-questionnaire scale for political engagement (M = 3.42) was significantly higher than the average of the pre-questionnaire scale (M = 3.05), $t(63) = 5.01$, $p < .001$. In terms of internal efficacy, the average of the post-questionnaire scale ($M = 3.18$) was significantly higher than the average of the pre-questionnaire scale ($M = 2.83$), $t(62) = 5.09$, $p < .001$. This is an important finding because in the programs Kahne and Westheimer

examined, none of them were able to positively affect students in terms of both political engagement and internal efficacy.

Table 5.4. Elements of citizenship types in the simulation.

What kind of citizen	Description	Evidence from simulation
Participatory	Actively participates in civic and governmental systems. Knows strategies for collective action. Knows how government agencies work.	Students learned how to create and run a legislative body. Students had to build coalitions to pass their bills.
Justice oriented	Analyzes root causes of current problems. Questions established structures and systems when they reproduce patterns of injustice.	Students analyzed societal problems through a political lens and proposed solutions using legislative means.

The simulation in this study appears to bridge the tension that Kahne and Westheimer identified. Students who graduate from this program are taught two essential skills. The first skill is to propose a solution to a social, political, or economic problem. In doing so, students must reflect on the cause of the problem. They must also acknowledge the problem has, at its root, a political solution. The second skill is to organize, inform, and inspire a coalition of their peers to agree on a particular course of action. In order to do this, a student must propose a solution that can withstand the logic and passion of an opposing side. They must marshal a cogent and powerful argument for their proposal. They must not alienate supporters. And they must convince skeptics that their solution is better than either doing nothing, or better than an alternative solution. The result of participating in these activities appears to increase students' sense of internal efficacy, as well as increase their interest in politics.

Summary and conclusions

Depending on the lens one uses, the Legislative Simulation is either a way in which the dominant two party system is reproduced within a school setting, or it is a bridge spanning between political participation and social justice; or it is both. Through the lens of critical theory, the simulation does indeed seem to promote the status quo. However, there is one important caveat to this claim: although the simulation does little to disrupt the two party system, it represents a potential disruption in how it might be used. Students were able to pursue their own interests in the simulation, and that often meant crafting bills which sought to radically alter the policies of the United States.

The biggest gap in voting rates is between those who attended college and those who did not. Invariably, the lowest voting rates are among Black and Latino males who have little to no college (Lopez, Kirby, Sagoff, & Kolaczkowski, 2005). Politicians are responsive to those who vote, and, conversely, ignore those who don't (Kahne & Middaugh, 2008). Therefore, encouraging non-college bound youth to not only vote, but to examine structural injustice, as this simulation did, could have profound, transformative effects on the political system.

Chapter 6. Doing It On My Own

After collecting data for this study I returned to my home state and began teaching 11th and 12th graders again. I taught in a public high school that is organized around focus areas. At the end of their sophomore year, students select a subject area that most closely aligns with their interests. The subject areas offered were sciences, arts, humanities, technology, the environment, and tourism. The subject area "core" consists of both juniors and seniors, and these students are shared by their core teachers. I taught in a core that emphasized tourism. I shared my students with a culinary, business, and English teacher.

The social studies curriculum is on a bi-annual rotation. During year one the social studies curriculum is U.S. History; during year two it is U.S. Government and Economics. During the Government rotation I decided to replace the traditional government course with the Legislative Simulation. This chapter explores the challenges I faced and insights I gained from teaching this simulation. I did not use the instruments (interview protocols, formal observations, and questionnaires) from the study since doing so was not within the parameters of the human subjects protocol. Instead, I focus here on how I experienced the simulation from a pedagogical standpoint. In this way, I hope to add a complementary layer of meaning to this study.

I have over 10 years of teaching experience and I felt comfortable committing to the Legislative Simulation. I had observed and interviewed teachers who were skilled at running this simulation. I had spoken with many of the students who participated in it. I had analyzed

considerable amounts of data from this study. In short, I felt I was prepared to do this. I was only partially right.

The simulation is much more difficult to facilitate than it might appear. There is no script to follow. There is no text to rely on. Parliamentary procedure is difficult to master. Selecting issues is difficult, while finding good material for both sides of a debate is arduous. Most students didn't initially possess the skills needed to engage in high quality debate. None of the students had ever experienced anything like the Legislative Simulation, so they weren't sure what they were doing, or why.

I had to practice parliamentary procedure during the first couple weeks of the semester, and by facilitating a few debates a day, I became comfortable with the format. I found that I had to spend several hours a day reading, and collecting a broad range of political news. Finding quality material that accurately represented diverse and contradictory views took time. Many students were initially reluctant to join in and debate because they were intimidated by the format and by debating in general. After the second week, when they could see that the debates could be fun, and that the format structured the conflict, more and more students participated and began to believe that they would be able to run their own debates, committees, and Full Session.

Transferability

Transferability, or the application of learning in one context, transferred to a novel context, is one of the main goals of education. I hope, for instance, that the knowledge students acquire about the health care system from a debate on Obama's health care proposal will have some usefulness beyond the debate itself. Ideally, students will use something from the debate to

inform their political stances, to help guide them to candidates, causes, or organizations that are aligned with their views.

The most prevalent form of transference that I witnessed was student political engagement outside of class. Many students told me that they had discussed with their family members a topic that we had previously debated in class. When I met parents, they often told me the same thing. When seniors turned 18 they told me they had registered to vote. And, as the semester progressed, students frequently related debate topics to items that they had seen in the news (this did not happen at the beginning of the semester).

Some of the skills they learned during debates were also evident outside of my class. By the second semester, the other teachers in my core were telling me that whenever a conflict or debate broke out in their classrooms, the students automatically started addressing each other by their last name. Students were formalizing conflict and reverting back to parliamentary procedure. I saw this in my class too. I did not have another formal debate for the rest of the year, yet when I held a discussion in class, students would often use parliamentary procedure: yielding their time to indicate when they were finished talking; referring to each other by their last names; prefacing a question with the phrase: point of information.

Finally, students who graduated came back to tell me that they were very comfortable with the online components of their college courses. One student who enrolled in an online college told me that the transition to online learning had been smooth because of his familiarity with the discussion forums from the simulation.

What students reported

At the end of the semester I asked students to evaluate their experience. Like the students in this study, my students also noted that the simulation was fun, engaging, and increased their interest and understanding of politics. Students also indicated that they valued the opportunity to select and present topics of their own choosing. Many of the students, particularly the juniors, noted that they enjoyed being treated as adults. I suspect that because the simulation is dependent on students running debates, most students felt a sense of maturity for the opportunity to be in charge. About half of my students were juniors and many of them were in charge of committees, and ran debates during class. The Speaker of the House and the Minority Leader were both juniors. The juniors' appreciation for the leadership opportunities indicates that this simulation is not just for seniors, and may suggest that the simulation may be appropriate for younger students as well.

Blackboard was good for special education students

There are three special education teachers who work with me. Over the course of the year, each one of them independently told me how much the students in their case load enjoyed using Blackboard. Among the reasons their students identified as enjoying Blackboard were: the freedom of logging on to any computer to do their homework; the reliable structured format of two posts per night; and the excitement of interacting with their peers.

Neutrality is hard

I struggled to maintain my neutrality. Sometimes I lost that struggle. I remember one debate on immigration. A student was complaining that illegal immigrants didn't have to pay taxes, and she would like to be able to not pay taxes. Another student said that immigrants do pay taxes. Before anyone else could speak, I said that there are three kinds of taxes: payroll,

sales, and income. While illegal immigrants don't pay income tax (since they aren't supposed to be working here) they do pay sales tax, and many of them do have payroll deductions but they won't ever see the benefits of social security since their social security numbers are forged. After I was finished, a student said, "Well, I guess the debate is over." And it was over. No one was going to contradict me. No one was going to try and follow me. I had ended the debate. And to what end? I had taken the momentum out of the debate. I had taken power away from the students by interrupting them. I had cut short an opportunity for students to learn from each other. I had replaced discussion with an edict. And I didn't feel very good about it.

On the other hand, I try to treat my students as maturely as possible. Withholding my position on issues struck some of them as a sign that I did not trust them. After a particularly good discussion on universal health care a student asked me during the break where I stood on the issue. I told him I couldn't tell him. His response was direct, efficient, and devastating. It's too bad we can't have that discussion, he said. It was. I felt like I had deprived him of the opportunity to discuss this issue with an adult, and in a very real sense, deprived him of the chance to act like an adult. The next day I pulled him aside and ran down the list of why I didn't want to disclose: it would isolate students who did not have the same position as me; ambivalent students would gravitate towards my position; those concerned about grades would substitute their views for my own in hope of raising their grade. He took my arguments in and told me he agreed. This is a student who consistently tells me without a hint of hesitation, remorse, or timidity (in the middle of class – and loudly) when he doesn't like an assignment. So, I was inclined to believe him. What the incident left me with was an appreciation for having follow-up conversations with students who were curious about my views. In their view, I may not be

treating them as adults when I withhold my views, but they certainly feel more mature when I talk with them about it.

I've written approvingly of the three teachers in this study, and how they have dealt with the issue of disclosure. But I don't want to imply that I haven't struggled with my own decision not to disclose. I absolutely think that many students would be unaffected if I disclosed. Many, in fact, would revel in disagreeing with me. Others would weigh my opinions, but not necessarily be swayed by them. Regardless, I know that some of my students would be disappointed if they knew I disagreed with them; I do think some of them would no longer participate in class. I fear also that most of my students are encountering these issues for the first time. Even after the debates are over, their position is tentative. I know that disclosing my opinion would alter theirs. I'm knowledgeable, I'm confident, I'm educated, I care about my students and they know it. Why wouldn't they be influenced by my opinion?

In the ongoing longitudinal portion of the DCI Study, Hess and McAvoy (2009) found that in the first wave of interviewed students from teachers who had disclosed, 75% said knowing the teacher's views had no influence. But that is the same as saying that 25% did indicate that knowing the teacher's views had an influence. It is important to note that "influence" here does not necessarily mean that the student gravitated toward a teacher's position. Influencing a student could mean, particularly in a context where the teacher is disliked, that the student becomes more convinced, rather than less of their own position. The interviewed students in Chapter Four noted six distinct reasons why disclosure was a bad idea. Only one of those reasons involved students switching their position on an issue. What percentage of students being influenced from disclosure one might find acceptable is, like disclosure itself, both a

matter of personal choice, and subject to wide ranging opinions. For me, influencing a quarter of my students (especially negatively) simply because I let my opinion be known, does not strike me as acceptable.

Ultimately, I feel that part of my role is to help students to develop the skills to form their own opinions. I believe in deliberation. Which is to say, that if students are exposed to high quality materials that effectively and accurately argue for two opposing sides, and are given an opportunity to engage in spirited discussion, while keeping an open mind, whatever decision they arrive at will be acceptable.

They wanted more

As I noted above, I teach in two year cycles: year one is government and economics; year two is U.S. history. Juniors, who were with me during the government/econ year, were seniors during the U.S. history year. During the first semester of teaching U.S. history, I did not hold any debates. Instead, I created project based units where students were asked to create complex products – such as documentaries. Although the students enjoyed being able to pursue their own interests, the seniors consistently asked me one question: When are we going to debate?

I embraced debate during the second semester. Looking at the state standards, I honed in on areas of historic controversy, found competing views, developed resolutions, and taught the juniors parliamentary procedure. The seniors of course already knew what I was doing, and they were able to model high quality discourse using parliamentary procedure.

The curriculum was fluid and supported student interests

At the beginning of the semester I selected the debate topics. As the semester progressed students selected their own topics and began writing their own bills. Following their lead, I

moved into a supporting role of choosing the students' topics for class debate. In this way, students were exposed to the complexities of the issues they were expected to debate during committee and the Full Session. There was also a deep level of curricular buy in from the students, who knew that we were debating their bills.

Racial Conflict

Debates encourage conflict; parliamentary procedure encourages civility. But when it comes to issues surrounding race, civility falls by the wayside. Entering into the simulation, my biggest concern was that students of color would be marginalized by the harsh, clumsy rhetoric of their Caucasian peers. I knew from my own study that some students of color had felt personally attacked. And indeed, my concerns were justified.

During a number of debates surrounding race and culture, there were student comments that caused me to cringe. For instance, during one debate over whether English should become the official language of the United States, several students accused Latinos of not wanting to learn English, and further implied that it was inexcusable to live in a country without making an attempt towards fluency of the dominant language.

A Latina student who had for several months not uttered a single word during debate, responded by relating the story of her father who was a successful business owner, worked every day until 9 p.m., and was primarily concerned with providing for his family. She recounted this story in English – which was not lost on the other students because the next student who spoke (referring to the packet I had handed out) pointed out that by the third generation, families of immigrants primarily speak English. One of her friends added that designating an official language was akin to designating an official race.

After the debate was over, and students were heading out the door to their next class, I wandered over to the Latina students and told them that I was happy they had said what they had said. A warm, wide smile replaced their pensive frowns. They both thanked me; I thanked them.

In acknowledging that I approved of their comments, I relinquished my role as a neutral facilitator. But I doubt that I alienated anyone – which is the danger of choosing sides in a debate. Very few students were in the room, and I did not take sides in the debate. For me, the opportunity cost of not saying anything far exceeded the cost of violating any sense of neutrality. If I had remained silent there was a strong likelihood that these students would have left feeling that their comments were not valued by anyone in the class. Precisely because it was rare that I praised anyone for their comments, they must have known that my approval was authentic.

Two other points should be made: First, the resolution to make English the official language failed. The comments the Latina student made likening an official language to an official race struck a chord with many of the students and obviously affected their vote. Secondly, later in the year when I was not holding debates, the Latina students I described above were among the strongest advocates of having more debates. So, I think it is safe to say that not only were their comments vital to the debate, the harshness they encountered did not prevent them from either enjoying the debates, or wanting more of them.

I believe the teachers in this study are skilled and compassionate practitioners of social studies. But I also believe the three teachers that were the focus of this study would have reacted differently than I did. If no student violated their rules of civil discourse nothing would have been said. If the rules of civil discourse were violated the teachers would have talked to the student that violated them. I wonder however that if the teachers in this study had acknowledged

the value of their students of color after hostile exchanges, whether those students would have felt differently about the simulation. Would they have felt that they were being heard? Would they have felt that their comments were valued? I do not pretend to know the answer to these questions. I do know that my students felt better about the debate after I spoke with them. And I know I felt better too.

Conclusion

My experience teaching the Legislative Simulation in many ways matched the findings from this study. Students enjoyed the simulation. They appeared to become more comfortable with conflict and more interested in politics. Like the three teachers in this study, I found that it was necessary to read the news several hours a day in order to keep up with the students' need for high quality information. I also found that it was difficult to remain neutral.

Additionally, I discovered that students transferred their debating skills to other classes. Special education students particularly benefited from the online portion of the simulation. I found that bending the rules of neutrality, especially with students who experienced racial conflict was effective and worth the risk. However, I still struggle with the issue of neutrality and believe that in most teaching contexts it is better not to reveal one's opinion.

Chapter 7. Discussion and Conclusions

I began this dissertation by drawing a contrast between two types of political discourse. In the first case, a determined group of protesters, brandishing angry, inaccurate slogans, attempted to silence any discussion about health care. I argued that these protesters acted in ways that were unhealthy for a democracy. Protesting, of course, is a protected right and is an important form of political activism. However, the reason I found these protesters so troubling is that they based their opposition on erroneous information, and they failed to listen to the other side. Furthermore, their protest was aimed not only at preventing health care reform, but at preventing people from discussing reform. They sought to shut down one of the most important hallmarks of democracy: the ability to engage in political discourse with members of one's community. In so doing, they rejected a tenet of deliberative democracy, which states that discursive politics is a vital component for a healthy democracy.

Disagreements in a democracy are inevitable. Diversity, pluralism, and individuality all conspire against homogeneity and consensus. That conflict will occur is a given; how conflict will be received, is not. It is doubtful that tolerance for conflict and diversity is innate. Schools can play an important role in teaching students how to disagree, how to build persuasive arguments, and how to enact a political agenda.

In stark contrast to the health care protests, I described how two opposing sides of students debated whether or not to raise the minimum wage. During the course of their debate, students demonstrated that they could disagree with each other while engaging in substantive discourse, precisely the traits that the health care protesters lacked. In order to support their

arguments, students on both sides of the debate employed a variety of supporting evidence. Students whose parents received a minimum wage spoke to the entire audience. This debate displayed the essential elements of egalitarian participation that Sanders (1997; 2009) has emphasized. The debate also illustrated the requirements of literary and scientific evidence that Parker (2003) identified as an essential characteristic of democratic deliberation. How the students experienced the simulation that encouraged these discursive exchanges has been the focus of this study.

Reviewing the study

In Chapter 1, I highlighted two national problems: a lack of deliberative discourse and a failure of schools to respond to this challenge. Schools can make a difference by teaching students how to deliberate. But in order to do this, something about how we approach deliberation needs to change. Deliberation is a difficult, complex process. Unfortunately, very few teachers appear willing to embrace this challenging, but rewarding, form of education. Many studies have pointed to the lack of deliberation in schools. This study addresses those findings by describing in detail how a simulation that encourages high quality deliberation is enacted, paying particular attention to the pedagogy of the teachers, the ideological underpinnings of the simulation, and how the simulation affected those who participated in it.

Chapter 2 contains a theoretical framework that shaped the study. In the framework I used the relevant literature to demonstrate that:

- Deliberation is inexorably tied to a strong democracy, particularly because of its emphasis on the accountability of elected officials to offer the reasons for their decisions,

as well as its ability to increase the legitimacy of decisions reached through a deliberative process.

- Deliberation is most likely to lead to increased interest, knowledge, and respect when balanced reading materials are used, a facilitator ensures that the participants are civil, they remain focused on the deliberative questions, and participation is both widespread and egalitarian.

- Although deliberation in classrooms increases tolerance, learning outcomes, and political engagement, students rarely have the chance to engage in this form of learning.

- Teachers avoid using deliberation for a variety of reasons that include: fear of losing control, lack of commitment to discursive learning, difficulty of mastering deliberative skills, and restrictive school board policies.

- Simulations have the potential to engage students in creative, authentic modes of learning that increases interest, learning, and participation.

- Curriculum is inherently ideological. Most traditional social studies classes avoid critical analysis of underlying problems, their origins, or challenges to the underlying assumptions behind political decisions.

These elements form the basis of the theoretical framework. The framework was utilized to answer the four questions driving this study: 1) What pedagogical strategies do the teachers employ? 2) What is the role of conflict in the simulation? 3) How does the simulation affect student political engagement? 4) What are the ideological underpinnings of the simulation?

Chapter 3 introduced the methodology of this study: a qualitative design that uses quantitative data to complement and expand on the findings**.** This design aligns the study questions, the framework, and the methodology. Each of the questions arose as a result of gaps in our current understanding of how deliberations are taught, how they are experienced by students, how they affect political engagement, and how they affect conceptions of citizenship. The mixed methods approach allowed me to describe pedagogical strategies that the teachers employed, as well as hone in on student outcomes, effects of the simulation, and correlations between variables.

Chapters 4 and 5 contain findings and analysis for the four main research questions, while Chapter 6 contains a summary of the challenges and lessons I learned while teaching the simulation. I will now turn to answering the questions that have driven this study.

Implications: Pedagogy

There are two significant findings related to pedagogy. The first is that the teachers did not disclose their personal views, yet students increased their levels of political engagement. Recall, from Chapter 4, students reported that they found their teachers to be knowledgeable, kind, fun, and skilled:

> S1: He is a great teacher. He like really relates to the kids. And I don't know, he taught us so much. I like him a lot. He makes the classes fun and he wants us to be engaged more rather than just talking.
>
> S2: I think his teaching is great. He explains everything fully and he gets it to relate to the students as much as he can. He is really funny. (Laughter).

S3: I thought he did an absolutely phenomenal job of teaching.

S4: She was really fun and outgoing. She makes class interesting. She is always making us laugh and cracking jokes. I like her a lot.

S5: I think she is really cool compared to some of the other teachers I have. I think she is very knowledgeable.

S6: She is really nice. She is really into the process and she wants us to succeed. It is important for a teacher. She really wants you to learn about the Government.

These evaluative comments fly in the face of many claims made about non disclosure, namely that it will send a message from the teachers to their students to be ashamed of their opinions, it will prevent students from becoming politically engaged, and it will prevent teachers from forming a bond with their students (Kelly, 1986, 1989; Daniels, 2007; Bigelow, 2002). The evidence from this study indicates none of these assertions were applicable in this case. I make no claim that disclosure is immoral. Indeed, Hess' (2009) ongoing study of controversial issues discussions indicates there are teachers who are skilled at disclosing, and who do so to the benefit of their students. I claim only that these teachers did not disclose and none of the predicted negative outcomes made by those who advocate disclosure while disparaging non disclosure, occurred.

The implications of this finding may affect how teachers approach disclosure. While disclosure is still a viable option, not disclosing is also. A teacher does not need to sacrifice her morality or effectiveness if she chooses not to disclose. The teachers in this study were committed to not sharing their opinions with their students. Pre and post questionnaire results

clearly indicated a rise in political engagement. Students who were interviewed indicated they were interested in their teachers' opinions, but also listed several reasons why their teachers should not disclose. Among these reasons were: students might distort or silence their own views, use the information against the teacher, not trust their teacher, or have been turned off from the political process. Ultimately, the teachers and students identified many reasons not to disclose. The results of the questionnaires and the voices of the students point toward the conclusion that while there may be a danger of disclosing, there was no downside to not disclosing.

The second important finding is the identification and description of techniques and strategies the teachers employed to contend with the many challenges they faced. This is particularly significant for teachers who avoid controversial issues discussions because they might not have the pedagogical skill required to do so successfully.

The teachers developed strategies to deal with the wide array of challenges they faced. The most significant challenge was to contain conflict. The teachers monitored Blackboard and held people accountable for personal attacks – ejecting some students from the simulation when they did not heed repeated warnings. An ethos of civil discourse characterized the debates. Teachers taught students to attack ideas, not people. Parliamentary procedure helped structure debates and students addressed each other by their last names, adding a patina of formality to the discourse.

The second significant hurdle they faced was stalled and one-sided debates. In order to keep the debates moving, teachers would assume a devil's advocate role. Teachers posed relevant questions about the topics, ensuring that students in every class were confronted with "a

best case hearing" (Kelly, 1986) of both sides. The teachers utilized elements of discourse from discussion, deliberation, and debate. This hybrid discursive style allowed the teachers to probe for depth and improved understanding while encouraging students to make a decision about the best course of action, and then voting to determine the winning side. Knowing both sides of the debate required the teachers to spend a number of hours a day consuming news from multiple media outlets.

If this simulation were to be scaled up, then teachers would benefit from high quality curricular debating material that contained a collection of topics explored from various ideological viewpoints. While the teachers in this study were willing to put in the hours collecting information, and staying abreast of current events, expecting all teachers to do the same is unrealistic.

Implications: Conflict

The theory of deliberative democracy has been beset by many detractors who point to a proliferating mountain of empirical research that casts tall shadows over its claims. Several studies have shown that when particular conditions are met, deliberation does produce the results theorists have predicted it would. However, studies showing how such conditions could be met in schools have been rare. This study has shown how a curriculum intended for a diverse student body works in both practice and theory.

Exposing high school students to conflict has been problematic. On the one hand, a host of democratic theorists have extolled the benefits of political talk centered on contrasting opinions. On the other hand, when researchers have examined how people experience and benefit from exposure to conflict they have raised legitimate questions about its effects.

Campbell (2005) suggests that the presence of an ethnically heterogeneous student body makes teachers shy away from encouraging political discussions. Mutz (2006) reports that people who are exposed to opinions different from their own are neither more likely to appreciate those differences, nor are they more likely to participate in the political process. The questions of what benefits, if any, students might derive from exposure to conflict, and how the conflict can be structured in the classroom are still salient - and unanswered.

This study investigated three issues related to how conflict is taught. The first issue studied was what pedagogical strategies the teachers use for the simulation. The teachers in this study embraced pedagogical practices that brought conflict to their classrooms on a daily basis. All three of the teachers expressed comfort with the idea of conflict. They recognized that conflict has advantages: it livens up a classroom, and it helps to increase interest in politics. At the same time however, teachers also recognized that conflict is potentially harmful. Teachers were vigilant against personal attacks. They constantly reinforced the idea of "a civil discourse" which meant that students could not engage in personal attacks. Students who consistently violated the guidelines of civil discourse were thrown out of the simulation. Finally, the teachers felt it was incumbent upon them to both encourage wide-spread participation in class by calling on every student frequently, as well as to ensure opposing sides of an issue were explored. When students did not generate arguments for one side of an issue the teachers would voice those missing arguments.

The second and third issues in this study concerned the role of conflict in the simulation, and the effect of conflict on students' political engagement. The students in this simulation were exposed to conflict on a daily basis, and they reported high levels of political engagement. It is

difficult to believe conflict did not play a significant role. Exposure to conflict helped the students see debate as a constructive form of discourse.

Implications: Political engagement

Most students indicated that the simulation played a significant role in helping them to learn about politics. Students compared learning from a "boring" textbook in their other courses to the active hands-on learning encouraged during the simulation through research, debate, and committee work. Students also reported that the roles they assumed during the simulation – whether it was of a committee member, senator, or floor leader, helped to galvanize their interest in politics. These findings add to the theoretical work on simulations, particularly Schaffer's (2004a) concept of epistemic games. Students were empathetic with the difficult choices confronted by legislators. This would suggest that in this epistemic game, students not only played the part of legislators - they also learned to feel like legislators.

The nature of the political engagement that resulted from this legislative semester appears to be of a type that extends simply beyond a sense of obligation to vote. Students reported frequently discussing politics with their family and friends because they were interested in the outcomes of issues that mattered to them.

Perhaps most significantly, the enhanced political engagement reported by the students who were enrolled in the legislative semester was widespread. Students not previously interested in politics reported dramatically increased levels of interest in politics at the end of the semester. Since the main gap in voting rates is between those who attend college and those who do not, the increased level of political engagement among students regardless of academic achievement is encouraging. This simulation then, potentially offers a pathway to increased political

engagement for all students, including those who will not attend college. The findings in this study further extend the framework of Hibbing and Thiess-Morse (2002), who hypothesized that exposure to political conflict, would act as a pathway to political engagement.

The results of this study also challenge Campbell's (2005) findings, which point to diminished opportunities for political conflict in racially heterogeneous classrooms. The students in this study attended a racially heterogeneous high school, and were able to participate in daily activities that were predicated on political conflict. Both the students and the teachers were able to do this because of the structured nature of the simulation.

Despite the success of the simulation in terms of political engagement, there was a negative side to it as well. A few students believed they were personally attacked, with race appearing to be an issue that was difficult for the teachers to control. And the teachers did try to control it – by removing comments from Blackboard and confronting and suspending people who behaved inappropriately. The findings from this study suggest that exposure to conflict was an effective pathway to political engagement for these students. But conflict can also act as a conduit for personal and racist attacks There are trade-offs to conflict: it does lead to greater interest in politics; yet even under a structured format, under the watchful eye of conscience teachers, personal attacks still occur. Is the chance that these attacks will occur worth the potential trade-offs?

The teachers in this simulation believe the answer is yes. Students are bound to encounter conflict over contentious issues such as immigration and affirmative action – precisely because the issues are so contested. Further, they argue, in school there is actually an opportunity to grow

from these debates, and to prepare the people on both sides of the debate how to speak civilly to each other.

Encouraging young people to become involved in the political process is a noble goal. How schools in general, and the social studies in particular, might best pursue this goal is open to debate. Political simulations, which provide teachers with the role of facilitator, while providing students the means to discover their political ideology and engage in structured conflicts, may prove to be an effective avenue of reaching this goal.

Implications: Ideology

The norms embedded within the simulation limited the range of ideological diversity to which the students were exposed. As a result, during class debates students were not frequently offered structural critiques that would challenge existing power structures. There was no challenge to the two party system. Participation within the political system was conceptualized within conventional terms: keeping abreast of current events, discussing politics, and voting. Unconventional participation such as protesting did not play a part within the simulation. However the students were encouraged to research topics of personal interest for their bills. This freedom of inquiry allowed students to investigate a wide range of political problems, and propose solutions or alternatives to those problems. Some of these bills challenged norms, and existing power structures.

This simulation bridges a gap between Kahne and Westheimer's (2004) participatory and justice oriented citizenship typologies. This is a significant finding because civic education programs that increase students' internal efficacy as well as political engagement are rare.

Educators interested in promoting both types of citizenship outcomes may want to consider using this simulation.

Recommendations: Teachers of social studies

Teachers of social studies have not embraced deliberative practices in their classrooms. This study confirms that they should, and that the benefits of doing so range from increased political engagement to an increased sense among students that they possess the skills necessary to make a difference in the political realm. Teachers should involve their students more frequently in deliberation; this study has demonstrated a way in which they can.

Teachers who do not use deliberation in their classrooms need to develop the skills and knowledge to deal with two challenges: controlling conflict and positioning themselves within a conflict. The first challenge, how to contain conflict, can be met by using parliamentary procedure, which will formalize discourse, and encourage civility. Civility can also be maintained by modeling civil discourse, which emphasizes attacking ideas rather than people. Holding those students accountable for violations of civil discourse is vital to maintaining a safe environment in which students feel comfortable expressing their opinion.

The second challenge, how teachers position themselves, can be met if teachers have a clear role during deliberations. A deep understanding of the topic being deliberated is essential. Knowledge of the topic, with a particular understanding of the tension between competing solutions, will help teachers focus their comments. Teachers, who view their role during a deliberation as ensuring that both sides of a controversy receive a fair hearing, will find that deliberation is achievable. Finally, not disclosing can help teachers maintain credibility among all their students while enhancing their role as an unbiased facilitator.

Recommendations: Teacher educators

Teacher educators can encourage deliberation in two concrete ways. First, they can, as Barton and Levstick (2004) recommend, place an emphasis on strengthening democracy as one of the salient reasons for encouraging deliberation. Perhaps, it is also time to add to these rationales, a concrete list of the skills, knowledge, and attitudes that exposure to deliberation helps to develop. Rather than relying on democratic theory, a more effective approach may be to demonstrate how student learning outcomes are tangibly enhanced by deliberation's inclusion in the curriculum.

Secondly, teacher educators need to model how to deliberate. It stretches credulity to accept that teachers choose not to use deliberation simply because they don't believe in it. More likely, many teachers avoid deliberation because they do not know how to practice it in their classrooms. This study illustrated how deliberations were scaffolded, and how teachers employed specific strategies to deal with the challenges of facilitation. These skills need to be taught to student teachers if we expect them to use deliberation in their classrooms.

Recommendations: Administrators

One of the most important characteristics of this simulation was that it involved the entire senior class at one high school. Despite the fact that other classes were tracked, this one was not. Mainstreaming students into the simulation ensured a broad range of diversity. Student diversity in turn, guaranteed an assortment of ideologies were present during the debates. This diversity was essential to the simulation's success. During the debate about minimum wage for example, perspectives from students who grew up in minimum wage households provided other students

with firsthand accounts of how minimum wage impacted their peers – something that statistics and second hand accounts just can't match.

Administrators need to safeguard the ideological diversity necessary for rich deliberative experiences. They can do so by ensuring that classes in which deliberation occurs are mainstreamed and diverse.

Recommendations: Researchers

This study illustrated how a group of teachers successfully structured deliberation. We know from previous studies that deliberation in classrooms is rare. Investigating more deeply teachers' resistance to using deliberation in the classroom would help those who care about increasing deliberation. What training for instance, would a mid-career teacher require in order to begin using deliberation? Whether teachers who avoid deliberation do so because of lack of knowledge, lack of skills, lack of commitment, lack of materials, some combination of all of these, or some other reason, is not known. Knowing the reasons for teachers' reluctance to deliberate would help researchers hone in on effective ways to break teacher reluctance (or resistance) to this powerful form of teaching.

Limitations

This dissertation is a case study involving a purposive sample. The students and teachers were not randomly selected, and the sample size is small. Therefore, generalizations from this study are limited. This study focused on a unique legislative simulation, and as a result it was not designed to formulate generalizations about simulations, social studies classes, teachers, or teenagers.

I made use of several sources of data: pre and post questionnaires, student interviews, teacher interviews, and class observations. However, because of fiscal and time constraints I was not able to observe the teachers and the students as much as I would have liked. There is no substitute for being at the site of a study, and I was able to be at the site only a few times each semester. The limited exposure I had at the site made it impossible to get to know the individual students in the study, or to observe each of the classrooms more than twice.

Finally, with regard to researcher positionality and objectivity, I have endeavored to act ethically. I do respect the teachers in this study, and I have come to appreciate the design of the simulation. Nevertheless, I reported and analyzed what the data showed, not what I wanted it to show.

Future research

Regarding this study, a number of questions arose that I was not able to explain. Students did not increase their general awareness of the news. This is a surprising result given how much time was spent deliberating current events. In any future study I would design a questionnaire that contained more news items grouped by domestic and foreign categories to better measure gaps in student knowledge. Students in this study whose average SES scores were low did not greatly improve their level of political engagement. A study similar to this one but with a larger sample size of low SES students would add to our ability to explain this result. Lastly, whether or not the simulation was undoubtedly responsible for students' increase in political engagement could be answered by a quasi experimental design that would allow a direct comparison between a control and experimental group.

This study examined how deliberation could be scaffolded within the social studies, and within the context of a simulation. The results demonstrated deliberation could be taught to mainstreamed, heterogeneous classes. This study demonstrated one way deliberation could be enacted. However, many teachers reject using controversy in the classroom for epistemological and pedagogical reasons. Epistemology and pedagogy are taught within teacher education programs. A case study examining a teacher education program whose graduates use deliberation in the classroom would greatly benefit our understanding of how best to approach deliberation within schools of education.

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Apendix A. Pre Questionnaire and Post Questionnaire.

Discussing Controversial Issues Study

Student Pre-Questionnaire

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this questionnaire on discussing controversial issues. Your participation in this questionnaire is voluntary. You may withdraw from this study simply be returning the questionnaire without completing it, without any penalty. If you choose to participate, your answers to the questions will remain strictly confidential. This questionnaire poses no risk to you. Information that could be used to identify you will not be shared with anyone.

Name: _____

School: _____ **Teacher:**_____

Date of Birth (month/day/year):_____/_____/_____

There are no right or wrong answers to the questions asked in this booklet. Your answers will not affect your grade in any of your classes. Most of the questions ask your opinions about school and politics. Please read each question carefully and then mark your response by filling in the answer that best represents your answer.

Section I. Information about yourself.

1. Gender
   A. Male
   B. Female

2. Were you born in the United States?
   A. Yes
   B. No

3. If you were not born in the United States, how old were you when you moved here?
   A. 1 to 5 years old
   B. 6 to 10 years old
   C. 11 to 15 years old
   D. 16 years or older

4. How do you describe yourself? You may bubble in more than one answer.
   A. European/white
   B. Latino/Hispanic
   C. African American
   D. Asian/Pacific Islander
   E. American Indian
   F. Other (or more than one ethnic/racial group)

5. How often do you speak English at home?
   A. Always
   B. Most of the time
   C. Sometimes
   D. Never

6. Do you get a daily newspaper at home?
   A. Yes
   B. No

7. Do you get a weekly newspaper at home?
   A. Yes
   B. No

8. About how many books are there in your home? *Do not count newspapers, magazines, or books from school*

A. None
B. 1 to 10 books
C. 11 to 50 books
C. 51 to 100 books
D. 101 to 200 books
E. More than 200 books

9. How many years of education do you plan to complete after this year?
A. 0 years
B. 1-2 years
C. 3-4 years
D. 5-6 years
E. 7-8 years
F. 9-10 years

10. How many schools have you attended since first grade?
A. 2 to 3 schools
B. 4 to 5 schools
C. 6 to 7 schools
D. 8 to 9 schools
E. 10 to 11 schools
F. 12 or more schools

11. Have you spent time participating in any community service or volunteer activity in the last 12 months?
A. I volunteered within the last 12 months.
B. I volunteered but not within the last 12 months.
C. I have never volunteered.

12. If you have volunteered within the last 12 months, which type of group or organization have you volunteered for the most? Skip this question if you did not volunteer within the last 12 months
A. A religious group.
B. A political organization or candidates running for office
C. An environmental organization.
D. A civic organization involved in health or social services. This could be an organization to help the sick, poor, or elderly.
E. An organization involved with youth, children, or education.
F. Other group or organization not listed above.

13. What is your religious preference? How do you describe your relgisou preference
    A. Christian
    B. Jewish
    C. Muslim
    D. Hindu
    E. No religion
    F. Something else

14. Aside from weddings and funerals, how often do you attend religious services?
    A. More than once a week.
    B. Once a week.
    C. Once or twice a month.
    D. A few times a year
    E. Seldom
    F. Never

Section II. Political Engagement

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	A.) Strongly Disagree	B.) Disagree	C.) Agree	D.) Strongly Agree	E.) Don't Know
15. I have a good understanding of political issues.					
16. Being actively involved in community issues is my responsibility.					
17. I think it is important for people to follow political issues.					
18. I'm as well informed as others about current events.					
19. Public officials don't care what I think.					
20. I enjoy talking about politics and political issues.					
21. I know where to register to vote.					
22. I am good at expressing my political opinions in a group.					
23. I feel like I can influence what government does.					
24. When I am eligible, I expect that I will vote in every election.					
25. I am willing to volunteer to make my community better.					
26. I think I am, or could be, a good volunteer.					

	A.) Strongly Disagree	B.) Disagree	C.) Agree	D.) Strongly Agree	E.) Don't Know
27. I am good at speaking in front of a group.					
28. It is important that people listen to several sides of a political issue before making a decision.					
29. I would avoid buying something from a company if I disagreed with the social or political values of the company that produced it.					
30. Immigrants should have the opportunity to continue speaking their own language.					
31. Having many immigrants makes it difficult for a country to be united and patriotic.					
32. I think I am a tolerant person.					
33. I am good at working in groups.					

Section III. How you typically participate in class

Please choose the answer using the following scale that best reflects your feelings for each of the following statements.

	A.) Strongly Disagree	**B.) Disagree**	**C.) Agree**	**D.) Strongly Agree**
34. I enjoy sharing my ideas in my classes.				
35. I am afraid that my teachers will criticize or judge me based on my comments in discussion				
36. I hesitate to speak in my classes because my classmates think my ideas are unworthy of consideration.				
37. Every student in a class has the responsibility to contribute to class discussions occasionally.				
38. Participating in class discussions is a matter of personal choice. It is not essential that everyone contribute in this way.				

Section IV. Political Talk and News

Please choose the answer using the following scale that best reflects how often you do the following things.

	A.) Never	B.) Once a month	C.) 3-4 times per month	D.) 2-3 times per week	E.) Daily
39. How often do you talk about politics with your friends?					
40. How often do you talk about politics with your parents?					
41. In conversations, how often do you openly disagree with people about politics?					
42. How often do you listen to people talk about politics when you know that you already disagree with them?					
43. How often do you watch the news on TV?					
44. How often do you pay attention to news on the Internet?					
45. How often do you read the newspaper?					
46. How often do you listen to news on the radio?					

Section V. Political Knowledge – Current Events

Please select the best answer to the following questions.

47. Which party do you consider to be more conservative?
    A. Republican Party
    B. Democratic Party

48. Which party controls the U.S. House of Representatives?
    A. Republican Party
    B. Democratic Party

49. Which party controls the U.S. Senate?
    A. Republican Party
    B. Democratic Party

50. Which party is more in favor of tax cuts to stimulate the economy?
    A. Republican Party
    B. Democratic Party

51. Who is currently Vice President of the United States?
    A. Joseph E. Kernan
    B. Dick Cheney
    C. John Edwards
    D. Rod R. Blagojevich

52. If you had been able to vote in the 2004 presidential election for whom would you have voted?
    A. John Kerry
    B. George Bush
    C. Ralph Nader
    D. Other

53. Where are American troops currently stationed? Circle all that apply.
    A. North Korea
    B. Iraq
    C. Afghanistan
    D. Iran
    E. Germany

Section VI. Political Knowledge - Democracy

Please select the best answer to the following questions about democracy.

54. In a democratic country having many organizations for people to join is important because this provides ...

A. a group to defend members who are arrested.
B. many sources of taxes for the government.
C. opportunities to express different points of view.
D. a way for the government to tell people about new laws.

55. Which of the following is most likely to cause a government to be called non-democratic?

A. People are prevented from criticizing the government.
B. The political parties criticize each other often.
C. People must pay very high taxes.
D. Every citizen has the right to a job.

56. Which of the following is most likely to happen if a large publisher buys many of the smaller newspapers in a country?

A. Government censorship of the news is more likely.
B. There will be less diversity of opinions presented.
C. The price of the country's newspapers will be lowered.
D. The amount of advertising in the newspapers will be reduced.

57. Which of the following is a political right? The right ...

A. of pupils to learn about politics in school
B. of citizens to vote and run for election
C. of adults to have a job
D. of politicians to have a salary

.

58. Two people work at the same job but one is paid less than the other. The principle of equality would be violated if the person is paid less because of ...

A. fewer educational qualifications.
B. less work experience.
C. working for fewer hours.
D. gender.

Section VII. Your feelings about conflict
Please choose the answer using the following scale that best reflects your feelings for each of the following statements.

	A.) Strongly Disagree	B.) Disagree	C.) Agree	D.) Strongly Agree	E.) Don't Know
59. Elected officials would help the country more if they would learn how to talk with one another better.					
60. What people call 'compromise' in politics is really just selling out one's principles.					
61. Our government would run better if decisions were left up to non-elected, independent experts rather than politicians or the people.					
62. Elected officials would help the country more if they would stop talking and just take action on important problems.					

Directions: Choose the best answer to this question.

63. Most of the time, when politicians argue it is because…
    A. Such arguments are sure to happen in a democracy.
    B. They are representing special interests and not the people.
    C. Politicians just like to argue.

Section VIII. Duties and Obligations of Citizens

People have lots of ideas about what makes a good citizen of the United States of America. **How important is each of the following activities to being a good citizen?** For each action or activity, please mark your answer sheet to tell us whether you think each activity is **definitely important** to good citizenship, **probably important** to good citizenship, **probably not important** to good citizenship or **definitely not important** to good citizenship.

Action	**A.) Definitely Not Important**	**B.) Probably Not Important**	**C.) Probably Important**	**D.) Definitely Important**
64. To speak and understand English.				
65. To vote in every election.				
66. To participate in activities to benefit people in the community.				
67. To speak out for someone who is treated unfairly.				
68. To be loyal to the country.				
69. To respect the rights of others.				
70. To know about the country's history.				

Section IX. Your Political Beliefs
Please choose the answer using the following scale that best reflects your feelings for each of the following statements.

	A.) Strongly Disagree	**B.) Disagree**	**C.) Undecided**	**D.) Agree**	**E.) Strongly Agree**	**F.) Don't Know**
71. The rich are too highly taxed.						
72. The freer the market, the freer the people						
73. Abortion, when the woman's life is not threatened, should always be illegal.						
74. Our civil liberties are being excessively curbed in the name of counterterrorism.						
75. The death penalty should be an option for the most serious crimes.						
76. Charity is better than welfare as a means of helping the genuinely disadvantaged.						
77. What two consenting adults do in the bedroom is not the government's business.						
78. The federal government handles its job pretty well.						

Directions: Choose the best answer to the following questions.

79. Compared with the past, would you say the U.S. is MORE respected by other countries these days, LESS respected by other countries, or AS respected as it has been in the past?

A. MORE respected
B. LESS respected
C. AS respected

80. Do you think the war in Iraq has helped the war on terrorism, or has it hurt the war on terrorism?

A. Helped the war on terrorism.
B. Hurt the war on terrorism.
C. No effect on the war on terrorism.

81. Preemption is the idea of attacking countries that **may** threaten, but have not attacked the U.S. In your opinion, preemptive force can be justified…

A. Often
B. Sometimes
C. Rarely
D. Never
E. Don't know

82. Preemption is justified when…

A. The President of the United States says it is.
B. The United Nations passes a resolution authorizing force.
C. The United States Congress passes a resolution authorizing force.
D. Preemption is never justified.
E. Don't know

Directions: Rate each of the statements below according to your personal beliefs using the following scale.

	A.) Strongly Oppose	**B.) Oppose**	**C.) Support**	**D.) Strongly Support**	**E.) Undecided**
83. In today's interconnected world, many serious problems can be addressed only through international cooperation.					
84. Using our economic and military power around the world creates more enemies than friends.					
85. Trying to make deep changes in the way the world works is naïve and dangerous.					
86. As Americans, we have a responsibility to spread democracy around the world.					

Notes on the post version

The post version of this survey eliminated the demographic information (Section I questions 1-14). In addition these questions were added to Section III. How you typically participate in class:

	A.) Strongly Disagree	B.) Disagree	C.) Agree	D.) Strongly Agree	E.) Don't Know
25. In this social studies class my teacher presents several sides of [positions on] an issue when explaining it in class.					
26. Students feel free to disagree openly with their teacher about political and social issues during this social studies class.					
27. In this social studies class students are encouraged to make up their own minds about issues.					
28. In this social studies class my teacher respects our opinions and encourages us to express them during class.					
29. In this social studies class my teacher requires students to memorize dates and definitions.					
30. My teacher in this social studies class encourages us to discuss political or social issues about which people have different opinions.					
31. The issues presented in this class were very interesting.					

32. I attended the CRF Youth Forum/Capitol Forum for this class.
    A. Yes
    B. No