

Debate as Civic Learning

Debate for Civic Learning Institute

September 20, 2019

Paul E. Mabrey III, Ph.D.

JAMES MADISON
UNIVERSITY.



**BEING THE
CHANGE**



SCHEV Civic Engagement

Civic engagement is an array of knowledge, abilities, values, attitudes, and behaviors that in combination allow individuals to contribute to the civic life of their communities. It may include, among other things, exploration of one's role and responsibilities in society; knowledge of and ability to engage with political systems and processes; and/or course-based or extra-curricular efforts to identify and address issues of public or community concern.

JMU Civic Engagement

At JMU, we define civic engagement as advancing the legacy of James Madison, the Father of the Constitution, by preparing individuals to be active and responsible participants in a representative democracy dedicated to the common good.

Participation is enhanced by knowledge of:

Participation includes, but is not limited to:

- campaigning – volunteering for a political campaign
- being a member of a political party or organization devoted to a political cause or societal issue
- financially contributing to a campaign or cause
- running for or holding public office
- contacting public officials
- attending meetings of town or city government
- following politics/staying informed
- discussing political issues with others
- making voice heard or voicing an opinion through blog, social media, newspaper, magazine, talk show, political buttons/bumper stickers
- protesting, boycotting, marching, demonstrating
- civil disobedience
- joining or originating petitions
- participating in community service/volunteer activities as a mechanism for political action
- participating in deliberative and collaborative groups with friends and community members
- analyzing and navigating systems (political, social, economic) in order to plan and engage in public action
- voting (or deliberate acts of non-voting or blank voting)

- political levers for influencing change
- universal democratic principles - popular sovereignty, individual rights and freedoms, responsibilities, rule of law, and the common good
- purpose and power of political institutions
- the legal aspects of citizenship, voting, and representation
- how democracy developed and why
- how historical events, social and political movements, conflicts and debates relate to the development of the American state
- how key primary sources (e.g., the Constitution, the Federalist papers, Emancipation Proclamation, the Seneca Falls Declaration, Letter from a Birmingham Jail) relate to development of American democracy
- the sources of individual identity and the influence of these sources on civic values and behaviors
- diverse cultures, histories, and values that have shaped the American experience
- basic global values, traditions, and problems
- the interrelationship between domestic and global practices, events, and values
- how the world is organized politically, including the role of governmental and non-governmental organizations
- political issues at local, state, national, and international level

Participation is enhanced by skills:

- capacity to read, write, and speak effectively and persuasively in forums appropriate to civic life and public affairs
- ability to explain diverse positions on democratic values and practices; take a position and defend it
- ability to apply ethical reasoning skills (e.g., 8KQs) to evaluate public policies and guide civic behaviors
- ability to apply ethical reasoning skills (e.g., 8KQs) to evaluate and guide political decision-making and principled dissent
- ability to distinguish reliable and valid evidence and facts from unsubstantiated claims
- recognize the impact all forms of media have on personal attitudes and political beliefs
- ability to evaluate strengths and weaknesses of potential approaches to civic and political problems and be reflective about decisions and actions
- ability to use critical inquiry, analysis, and reasoning to identify a contemporary problem, research solutions, analyze results, evaluate choices, and make decisions
- ability to effectively work across differences in order to reach collaborative decisions that best support democracy and civic life
- ability to listen to a variety of perspectives on political issues

Participation is characterized by values and dispositions:

- appreciation of empathy, open-mindedness, and diversity
- positive attitudes toward pluralism and diverse perspectives
- commitment to universal democratic principles – e.g., popular sovereignty, individual rights and freedoms, responsibilities, rule of law, and justice
- sense of civic responsibility and commitment to the public good over private interests
- development of a civic identity, where addressing public issues is considered central to one's sense of self
- development of confidence in individual and collective ability to address political/civic/social issue

BEING THE
CHANGE

JMU Civic Engagement

Participation is enhanced by skills:

- capacity to read, write, and speak effectively and persuasively in forums appropriate to civic life and public affairs
- ability to explain diverse positions on democratic values and practices; take a position and defend it
- ability to apply ethical reasoning skills (e.g., 8KQs) to evaluate public policies and guide civic behaviors
- ability to apply ethical reasoning skills (e.g., 8KQs) to evaluate and guide political decision-making and principled dissent
- ability to distinguish reliable and valid evidence and facts from unsubstantiated claims
- recognize the impact all forms of media have on personal attitudes and political beliefs
- ability to evaluate strengths and weaknesses of potential approaches to civic and political problems and be reflective about decisions and actions
- ability to use critical inquiry, analysis, and reasoning to identify a contemporary problem, research solutions, analyze results, evaluate choices, and make decisions
- ability to effectively work across differences in order to reach collaborative decisions that best support democracy and civic life
- ability to listen to a variety of perspectives on political issues

Participation is characterized by values and dispositions:

- appreciation of empathy, open-mindedness, and diversity
- positive attitudes toward pluralism and diverse perspectives
- commitment to universal democratic principles – e.g., popular sovereignty, individual rights and freedoms, responsibilities, rule of law, and justice
- sense of civic responsibility and commitment to the public good over private interests
- development of a civic identity, where addressing public issues is considered central to one's sense of self
- development of confidence in individual and collective ability to address political/civic/social issue

BEING THE
CHANGE

Debate is NOT



BEING THE
CHANGE

Debate is NOT



BEING THE
CHANGE

Debate can be



BEING THE
CHANGE

Debate can be



BEING THE
CHANGE

Debate can be

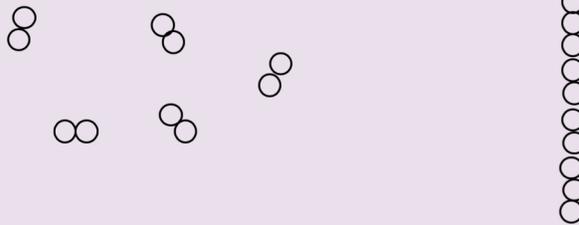
Fiscal Management Town Hall Advocacy & Decision-making Exercise

Each student will role-play as a key fiscal management stakeholder, advocating on behalf of a given position, and fiscal management decision-maker, reaching a decision on a controversial fiscal management issue.

Participants:

5 teams of two, each team represents a specific stakeholder

1 jury of ten decision-makers, representing the key decision maker



BEING THE
CHANGE

Debate as Civic Learning

Rowland's call for debate pedagogy to live Madison's ideals

- Reasoned advocacy
- Evidence
- Communicate clearly to knowledge/passions of audience

William T. Gormley Jr.'s *The Critical Advantage*

Critical thinking as open-minded inquiry that seeks relevant evidence to analyze question or hypothesis

- Willingness to challenge conventional wisdom
- Inclination to reconsider own cherished beliefs
- Relentless search for good evidence
- Draw appropriate inferences from good evidence
- Respect competing points of view
- Persistence when answers seem elusive

BEING THE
CHANGE

Debate as Civic Learning Evidence

PEPS Civic Learning Skills Items	Control Can do these things		Debate Can do these things	
	Pre (n=211)	Post (n=500)	Pre (n=250)	Post (n=131)
Listen to a variety of perspectives on political issues	88%	83%	86%	91%
Write effectively & persuasively in forums appropriate to civic life and public affairs	45%	55%	48%	63%
Speak effectively & persuasively in forums appropriate to civic life and public affairs	45%	54%	48%	66%
Explain diverse positions on democratic values and practices; take a position and defend it	58%	62%	54%	78%
Take a position on democratic values and practices and defend it	69%	69%	64%	83%
Distinguish reliable and valid evidence and facts from unsubstantiated claims	71%	70%	67%	87%
Recognize the impact all forms of media have on personal attitudes and political beliefs	81%	80%	84%	89%
Evaluate strengths and weaknesses of potential approaches to civic and political problems	72%	74%	68%	79%
Use critical inquiry, analysis, and reasoning to identify a contemporary problem, research solutions, analyze results, evaluate choices, and make decisions	66%	68%	64%	80%
Effectively work across differences in order to reach collaborative decisions that best support democracy and civic life	75%	74%	73%	87%

BEING THE CHANGE

Debate as Civic Learning Evidence

Compared to before participating in this debate or argumentation activity, students rated this ability a little or much better:



BEING THE CHANGE

Questions?

BEING THE
CHANGE