

CIVICS EDUCATION AT THE HIGH SCHOOL LEVEL: AN INTERDISCIPLINARY  
APPROACH TO EDUCATING DIVERSE POPULATIONS  
THE UTILIZATION OF SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY TO BETTER A POLITICAL  
SCIENCE PROJECT

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MATTHEW G. STROBEL  
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APPROVED:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Lewis Gantwerk, Psy.D.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Susan Forman, Ph.D.

DEAN:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Stanley Messer, Ph.D.

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## ABSTRACT

This dissertation is a single case study of an interdisciplinary research project combining the fields of school psychology and political science, exploring a new role for school psychology. The single case design was utilized in order to document the project and provide an understanding of the process. The interdisciplinary team included undergraduate political science interns, the director of the Youth Political Participation Program at the Eagleton Institute of Politics, and a school psychology graduate student from the Graduate School of Applied and Professional Psychology. The team worked to design, implement, and evaluate a high school civics education program within one academic year. The program was designed to increase the civic engagement levels of high school seniors. Civics education has decreased and many students are unprepared to be active citizens after graduating high schools. The program was implemented in two urban high schools and one out of district high school. Individuals in these populations have been found to have lower levels of political participation. Many barriers were faced during the design, implementation, and evaluation phases, and discussion includes how barriers were overcome. A key component of the project were trainings provided by the graduate student for the undergraduate interns. These trainings taught the undergraduates about program design, implementation, and evaluation, schools as systems, and working with diverse populations. Direct feedback was collected from students and school staff and analyzed to evaluate the effectiveness of the program. The program was found to be effective in all schools, though effectiveness varied based on population.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

This dissertation is an exploratory study of the experiences incurred by this author during his third year of graduate training at the Graduate School of Applied and Professional Psychology (GSAPP). These experiences occurred during the summer semester of 2007, the fall semester of 2007, and the spring semester of 2008, during which time this author participated in a practicum experience at the Eagleton Institute of Politics (EIOP). Within the EIOP, this author operated under the auspices of the Youth Political Participation Program (YPPP), and more specifically within the RU Ready Program. The RU Ready Program was supported through a grant from the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation (GRDF).

#### School Psychology as a Discipline

The American Psychological Association, Division 16, School Psychology, defines school psychology as a specialty area of professional psychology that involves studying and practicing psychology with children, youth, families, learners at any age, and families (<http://www.indiana.edu/~div16/goals.html>). According to the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP), school psychologists are a group of professionals who take on many diverse roles, often with the goal of helping children and youth succeed in the academic, social, and emotional realms. ([http://www.nasponline.org/about\\_sp/whatis.aspx](http://www.nasponline.org/about_sp/whatis.aspx)).



Work towards the goals of helping children, learners, and the schooling process takes on many different forms. A school psychologist is required to be able to work with a variety of clients, such as students, teachers, parents, administrators, etc. Work can take place at different levels, such as working individually with a student, training a group of teachers, developing a district wide agenda, etc. The work can also take many forms, such as group or individual counseling, teaching classroom lessons, consulting with teachers, parents, and administrators, providing training to other professionals, testing students to determine qualification for services, etc. According to NASP and Division 16, the type of work can include assessment, crisis intervention, consultation, evaluation, intervention, prevention, and research and planning. Due to the diverse roles that school psychologists are trained for, the work setting is varied. According to NASP and Division 16, examples where school psychologists work include public and private schools, school-based health centers, clinics and hospitals, private practice, universities, community and state agencies, social service facilities, and correctional facilities.

According to NASP, in order to become a school psychologist one must obtain at least a specialist level degree, which needs to include a 1200-hour internship. The degree granting program should emphasize “data-based decision making, consultation and collaboration, effective instruction, child development, student diversity and development, school organization, prevention, intervention, mental health, learning styles, behavior, research, and program evaluation”

([http://www.nasponline.org/about\\_sp/whatis.aspx](http://www.nasponline.org/about_sp/whatis.aspx)). Division 16 believes that school psychologist training should occur at the doctoral level, yet many of the outcomes of training are similar to NASP. Division 16 believes training in school psychology should

prepare school psychologists to “provide a range of psychological assessment, intervention, prevention, health promotion, and program development and evaluation services with a special focus on the developmental processes of children and youth within the context of schools, families, and other systems”

(<http://www.indiana.edu/~div16/goals.html>). No matter what level of training, school psychologists must be certified in the state that they work.

*The Graduate School of Applied and Professional Psychology (GSAPP)*

The Graduate School of Applied and Professional Psychology (GSAPP) is a graduate level professional school within Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey. GSAPP offers two Doctor of Psychology (Psy.D.) programs: clinical psychology and school psychology. Both programs provide doctoral level training for people who want to become professional psychologists able to offer services in a wide variety of settings. Emphasis in training is placed on working with underserved populations. (<http://gsappweb.rutgers.edu>).

*GSAPP Mission*

GSAPP’s mission has three distinct tenets: education, research/scholarship, and public service. GSAPP works to help students achieve gains in all of these areas with the hope of producing, well-educated, qualified, and competent direct-service psychologists. These psychologists should have a special commitment to direct community involvement and to underserved populations. They should be able to integrate scientific knowledge with innovation in order to provide services to individuals, families, groups, and organizations (<http://gsappweb.rutgers.edu/about/mission.php>).

## *Doctor of Psychology (Psy.D.) in School Psychology Program at GSAPP*

### *Program Purpose and Philosophy*

The main purpose of the school psychology program is aligned with the overall mission of GSAPP. The school psychology program is designed to provide doctoral training for individuals who want to become professional psychologists and work in schools or other community settings. The overarching purpose is to train individuals to be able to incorporate scientific knowledge with innovation in order to deliver services to individuals, families, groups, and organizations (<http://gsappweb.rutgers.edu/programs/school/overview.php>).

### *History*

The school psychology program was designed based on the Doctor of Psychology (Psy.D.) Practitioner-Scholar model of training initially developed at the 1973 Vail Conference (<http://gsappweb.rutgers.edu/programs/school/overview.php>). In this model, priority is given to delivering, evaluating, and improving psychological services, the practice of which is dictated by an individual's knowledge of the relevant research of school psychology, as well as empirically based decision making. The decision making is also tempered by the individual's knowledge of the setting in which they are practicing.

### *Current Practice*

The school psychology program strives to develop practitioners who can work at various levels to support students' many needs in school. They should be able to think about schooling in a psychological and systemic way. Practitioners should also be able to use a science-based approach to design, implement, and evaluate practices, programs and services. (<http://gsappweb.rutgers.edu/programs/school/overview.php>).

The current practice of the school psychology program is due much in part to the ideals and beliefs of the school psychology faculty. One of these beliefs is that decisions about what services are provided should be based on research findings and be evidence based, in order to produce the best results for the consumers of the services. Research includes needs assessment of consumer and client concerns that need to be addressed. Related to evidence based service selection, the faculty believes that data should be used to make decisions about continuing, changing, and terminating services. The faculty also believes that the services provided should be sensitive to culture and work with other programs and the larger goals within the school setting.

Based on the faculty's ideas and the training design developed at the 1973 conference, it is the belief that school psychology graduate students trained at GSAPP will be knowledgeable about how to select and administer evidence based interventions for students experiencing emotional, social, and/or behavior problems that impede learning and will be knowledgeable about how to work with all of the individuals involved with education in order to create environments in classrooms and schools that promote both psychological development and educational achievement. (<http://gsappweb.rutgers.edu/programs/school/overview.php>).

### *Core Values*

The school psychology program delineates six core values for the training and practice of school psychologists. These values summarize the training model and faculty ideals into brief usable components. The values are as follows:

1. Respecting the process of schooling and those involved.
2. Understanding the importance of data-based decision making.

3. Attending to client needs in relevant contexts as a basis for providing service.
4. Appreciating the relevance of diversity in providing culturally sensitive professional services.
5. Fostering collaboration in professional problem solving and service delivery.
6. Working to continuously improve the process of professional service delivery.

(<http://gsappweb.rutgers.edu/programs/school/corevalues.php>)

*Program Goals, Objectives, and Student Competencies*

The faculty of the school psychology program recently developed and revised a set of goals, objectives, and student competencies that reflect the core values of the program. Goals are designed to be overarching ideals of the program, and students should be able to meet the goal based on completion of the program. Objectives are smaller more specific aims that form the goals, while competencies are the actual task that students should be able to do. If the student has mastered the competency for an objective, the objective has been mastered. If all of the objectives for a particular goal are mastered, the goal has been mastered. These goals, objectives, and student competencies are used as a measurement tool to determine graduate student progress within the program. The following are the student competencies of the GSAPP school psychology program (goals and objectives are contained within Appendix A):

Competency 1.1 Formulates and conducts psychological assessments of students that are technically adequate, accurate, relevant to student problems and issues, and useful for decision making and student planning purposes.

Competency 1.2 Selects, develops, implements, and evaluates interventions in classrooms and schools that are relevant to the student, problem, and context, and that are empirically supported.

Competency 1.3 Provides useful guidance, advice, and technical assistance to teachers, administrators, parents, and other stakeholders in defining educational, social and emotional problems and needs of students, and determining viable ways for those problems and needs to be addressed appropriately.

Competency 1.4 Provides consultation and technical assistance to administrators and other stakeholders so that custom designed programs, products, and services can be linked to the needs and contexts of clearly defined target populations, monitored in terms of implementation, and evaluated with respect to worth and merit of outcomes.

Competency 2.1 Defines and clarifies problems, with consideration of problem background and context, prior to consideration of problem solution.

Competency 2.2 Considers, in a systematic manner, a range of alternatives that may be used in problem solution or in the development of new knowledge.

Competency 2.3 Selects and implements methods appropriate to address problems, decision situations, or gaps in knowledge using sound quantitative and qualitative approaches.

Competency 2.4 Accurately and cogently interprets data and research and draws appropriate conclusions.

Competency 3.1 Assesses and evaluates problems in a manner which indicates understanding of the impact of multiple systems on the development of students and on the functioning of school personnel.

Competency 3.2 Develops problem solutions and accompanying implementation strategies that address the impact of systems variables at multiple levels.

Competency 4.1 Incorporates the relevance of culture, ethnicity and other dimensions of diversity in designing, implementing, and evaluating programs, products, and services that relate to school psychology practice and research.

Competency 4.2 Interacts respectfully, appropriately, and productively with people of diverse backgrounds and contexts in school and community settings.

Competency 5.1 Listens attentively and respectfully, allowing others to present their views, during interactions with students, teachers, parents, and other stakeholders in school psychology services.

Competency 5.2 Synthesizes the views of others and offers accurate, cogent, practical ideas about student problems and potential solutions in team and group problem-solving situations.

Competency 6.1 Makes practice decisions that are based on ethical guidelines, standards, and laws related to school psychology.

Competency 6.2 Expresses professional respect for students, teachers, and other stakeholders of school psychology services, and makes professional decisions based on the intention of enhancing their functioning and quality of life.

(<http://gsappweb.rutgers.edu/programs/school/goals.php>)

### *Third Year of Study*

The school psychology curriculum is designed so that graduate students will be able to meet all of the goals, objectives, and competencies set forth by the school psychology program. Each year there is some combination of classroom study and practical

experience. Though there are foci for every semester and year of training, the following will focus on the third year, as this is the timeframe most relevant to the study at hand. The focus of the third year is to take all the prior knowledge and experience and apply it at a broader systems level. A significant class taken during this year is a year long Program Planning and Evaluation course. Practical experience during this year focuses on larger organizations as well as working with those traditionally seen as “higher up” within an organization (i.e. principals, superintendents, etc.).

### *Concentration in Psychological and Systems Support for Learning*

The school psychology program at GSAPP offers concentrations for students who wish to develop a more specialized field of study, one of which is the “Concentration in Psychological and Systems Support for Learning.” This concentration was developed through an Absolute Priority Preparation of Leadership Personnel Training Grant from the United States Department of Education. The concentration was developed as a response to a need to train doctoral students in school psychology as leaders in the implementation of evidence-based psychological interventions that support learning.

There are six special requirements of the Concentration in Psychological and Systems Support for Learning delineated in the School Psychology Training Program, Concentration in Psychological and Systems Support for Learning Brochure. The first requirement is completion of the course “Implementing Innovations in Educational and Human Service Organizations,” a new course in the school psychology program specifically designed as part of the concentration and grant. The second requirement is the completion of an elective course that focuses on evidence based interventions for children and adolescents and/or systems/organizational issues. Many of the courses



offered at GSAPP can be used to fulfill this requirement. The third requirement is the completion of a specialized systems change advanced practicum experience. The fourth requirement is participation in the “Rutgers School Psychology Research, Training, and Practice Network,” a group where systems level issues are discussed. The fifth requirement is a presentation at a regional or national professional conference. The presentation must relate to supporting the learning of students with disabilities through effective implementation of evidence based interventions. The sixth requirement is the completion of a doctoral dissertation on a topic related to supporting the learning of students with disabilities through effective school implementation of evidence based interventions.

This concentration further supports the school psychology program’s focus on implementing and sustaining evidence-based interventions in systems level settings. School psychology graduate students who complete this concentration should be able to provide research based interventions for individual students with an emphasis on addressing emotional, social, and/or behavioral problems that impede learning. They should also be able to work with teachers and other school personnel to develop inclusive classrooms that promote social and academic growth and be able to work at the organizational level to develop inclusive schools and school districts (School Psychology Training Program, Concentration in Psychological and Systems Support for Learning Brochure).

## Political Science as a Discipline

The American Political Science Association defines political science as the study of governments, public policies and political processes, systems, and political behavior ([http://www.apsanet.org/content\\_9181.cfm?navID=727](http://www.apsanet.org/content_9181.cfm?navID=727)). The discipline of political science is often broken down into subfields such as comparative politics, domestic politics, political theory, civic education, etc. Political scientists within each subfield take humanistic and scientific perspectives and used multiple methodological approaches to examine the processes, systems, and political dynamics of different countries and regions. ([http://www.apsanet.org/content\\_9181.cfm?navID=727](http://www.apsanet.org/content_9181.cfm?navID=727)).

Students who study political science enter many different professions and fields, such as law, business, government, nonprofit organizations, journalism, teaching and research.

### *Civics Education*

Civics education is a broadly defined component of political science. The American Political Science Association (2009) defines civics as the study of how national and local government work. Civics is often used to describe this study at the secondary school level in courses designed to train students for citizenship ([http://www.apsanet.org/content\\_4899.cfm](http://www.apsanet.org/content_4899.cfm)). The National Alliance for Civic Education (2002) defines civic education as “the multiple processes through which children and young adults acquire the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that are needed for effective democratic citizenship” (<http://www.cived.net>). According to Cogan (1999) modern civic education in the United States dates back to 1916. It was in this year that the National Education Association developed the Commission on the Reorganization of Secondary Education, whose mission was to review and improve the national secondary school

curriculum. One aspect of this curriculum was civic education, which at the time was mainly taught as part of the history curriculum (Cogan, 1999).

Crittenden (2007) states that civic education is designed to prepare the people of a country to carry out their responsibilities of being a citizen. Civics education is especially geared to the young. He goes on to further define civic education as, “political education or, as Amy Guttmann describes it, ‘the cultivation of the virtues, knowledge, and skills necessary for political participation’” (<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/civic-education>).

### *Eagleton Institute of Politics (EIOP)*

#### *History*

EIOP was established in 1956 from a bequest from Florence Peshine Eagleton, a suffragist and founder of New Jersey's League of Women Voters. Mrs. Eagleton was quoted in regards to her gift:

It is my settled conviction that the cultivation of civic responsibility and leadership among the American people in the field of practical political affairs is of vital and increasing importance to our state and nation .... I make this gift especially for the development of and education for responsible leadership in civic and governmental affairs and the solution of their political problems.

(<http://www.eagleton.rutgers.edu/DirectorMessage.html>)

#### *Current Practice*

According to Dr. Ruth Mandel, director of EIOP, EIOP strives to study and educate others about American politics as a respected education, research, and public service division of Rutgers. Since Eagleton was founded, “the Institute has been conducting innovative and practical research, educating graduate and undergraduate students, and

informing policymakers and the public”

(<http://www.eagleton.rutgers.edu/DirectorMessage.html>).

### *Mission*

The mission statement of the EIOP is “Because Politics Matters.” In order to support this mission, EIOP “explores state and national politics through research, education, and public service, linking the study of politics with its day-to-day practice”

(<http://www.eagleton.rutgers.edu/Mission.html>). Within this exploration, EIOP pays particular attention to how current political systems work, change, and how they could improve. To fulfill their mission, EIOP serves both undergraduate and graduate students, offering courses and practical experiences for both groups. Some of the experiences offered include working with politicians, the media, or other academic institutions.

### *Youth Political Participation Program (YPPP)*

The YPPP is a program run out of the EIOP. The purpose of the YPPP is to strengthen the quality of democracy by educating youth in the areas of citizenship through research, public service, and educational programs. YPPP also focuses on exploring civics education, especially at the high school level, and how young adults participate in the political arena.

### *RU Ready Program*

The RU Ready Program is a subdivision of the YPPP specifically targeted to high school seniors and utilizes the research, public service, and educational program domains of the YPPP. According to the EIOP website, “RU Ready is a citizenship training initiative directed towards high school seniors as they prepare to vote for the first time” (<http://www.eagleton.rutgers.edu/YPPP/RUready.html>). The RU Ready Program consists

of four interactions throughout the academic year between the RU Ready team and high school seniors in participating schools. The RU Ready team is mainly comprised of undergraduate political science interns. The first interaction (lesson), “Because Politics Matters,” introduces the idea that politics are important in the everyday lives of high school students. The second lesson, “All Politics is Local,” and is an exploration of local issues, including a visit to the school by a local elected leader if possible. The third lesson, “Voting 101,” is a session where students are guided through the process of voting and are offered the opportunity to register to vote if eligible. The fourth and final session, “Yong Leaders Conference,” is held at EIOP. This conference is offered as further training for representatives from participating schools. According to the RU Ready Program website:

High school seniors benefit directly from the RU Ready program. By targeting all seniors, the program touches students of diverse interests and abilities. Moreover, the program eases the burdens of political participation that often hamper youth civic engagement. RU Ready also meets the needs of high schools. The program equips students with many of the civic skills schools seek to provide to their students; is evenly spaced throughout the year and does not impose a burden on teachers’ valuable time; and it provides materials that will be valuable resources for teachers as well as their students.

(<http://www.eagleton.rutgers.edu/YPPP/RUready.html>).

The RU Ready Program was piloted during the 2007/2008 academic year in three high schools. The goals of the pilot year were: 1. Develop a citizenship training program with the intent of being able to replicate the program in other schools, 2. Implement the

program, and 3. Collect and analyze data about the program to be used in making modifications for future implementation.

*RU Ready Program sites.* For the pilot implementation of the RU Ready Project three high schools served as pilot sites. These schools will be referred to as Urban School 1, Urban School 2, and Out of District School. These sites were selected for a number of reasons including, but not limited to; their close proximity to EIOP, school administrations' expressed interest in the program, and the demographics of the districts. Urban School 1 and Urban School 2 are both Abbott districts, which are designated by the state of New Jersey as districts that are in economically disadvantaged municipalities and receive financial aid from the state of New Jersey in order to provide districts equal funding on a per-pupil basis (<http://www.state.nj.us/education/abbotts/about/>). Abbott districts were selected for this program based on EIOP's and the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation's missions. Out of District School serves students who present with behavioral, language, and/or learning disabilities, as well as students who manifest severe symptoms of depression, attention deficient hyperactivity disorder, conduct disorder, thought disorder or anxiety disorders. The needs of these students cannot be met in their home school districts and so they are placed at Out of District School for more services. Out of District School was selected to answer the research question if the RU Ready Program could be implemented with the population that it serves. Out of District School was also selected due to the author's interest and experience in working with the population.

Based on the 2000 data from the United States Census Bureau data, the population of the city in which Urban School 1 is located is broken down as 48.8% White, 23% Black,

0.5% American Indian and Alaska Native, 5.3% Asian, 0.1% Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander, 4.2% two or more races, and 39% Hispanic or Latino. The total population was 47,573 with 20.1% of people under the age of 18. Foreign born persons made up 33.4% of the population, with 46.2% of the population speaking a language other than English at home. The median household income was \$36,080 with 27% of the population living below poverty (1999 data). In 2000, the city had 9,287.4 persons per square mile.

According to the New Jersey Department of Education 2007-2008 School Report Card, Urban School 1's total enrollment for the 2007-2008 school year was 1385 with 311 students in twelfth grade. Students with disabilities, as defined by students with an Individualized Education Plan, made up 18.6% of the total enrollment. English was the first language spoken at home for 79.1% of students, with Spanish representing 20.6%. The student mobility rate, as defined by students who entered and left during the school year, was 24.7%. The percentage of seniors present on average each day was 88%. The graduation rate was 70.5%, with a dropout rate of 3.6% for Whites, 8% for Black or African-Americans, and 9.2% for Hispanics. Males had a dropout rate of 10.8% with females having a rate of 6.5%. Students with disabilities had a rate of 12.5%, students with limited English proficiency had a rate of 11.2% and economically disadvantaged students had a rate of 6.1%. For students who graduated, 15.8% reported going on to attend a four-year college or university, 27.3% to a two-year college, 3.2% to another type of college, and 37.9% reported that they planned to enter the workforce. During the 2007-2008 school year, 61% of students were suspended.

Of the 226 students who took the High School Proficiency Assessment (HSPA) Language Arts Literacy section, 31.6% were found to be partially proficient, 65.4% were found to be proficient, and 3% were found to be advanced proficient. Of the 268 students who took the Mathematics section of the HSPA, 47.8% were found to be partially proficient, 44.4% were found proficient, and 7.8% were found to be advanced proficient. The average score of the 159 students who took the Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT) was 447 in Mathematics, 413 in Verbal, and 418 in Essay. The student to administrator ratio for 2007-2008 was 173.1 to 1. The student to faculty ratio was 12.4 to 1. The faculty mobility rate, faculty who entered and left during the school year, was 8.9%. Of the faculty and administration, 55.8% held a BA/BS, 40% held a MA/MS, and 4.2% held a PhD/EdD.

Within Urban School 1's district, 18% of funding came from local sources, 72% from state sources, and 7% from federal sources. The total cost per pupil for 2007-2008 was \$15,723.

Based on the 2000 data from the United States Census Bureau data, the population of the city in which Urban School 2 is located is broken down as 46.4% White, 10% Black, 0.7% American Indian and Alaska Native, 1.5% Asian, 0.1% Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander, 5.6% two or more races, and 69.8% Hispanic or Latino. The total population was 47,303 with 28.5% of people under the age of 18. Foreign born persons made up 35.7% of the population, with 72.4% of the population speaking a language other than English at home. The median household income was \$37,608 with 17.6% of the population living below poverty (1999 data). In 2000, the city had 9,896 persons per square mile.



According to the New Jersey Department of Education 2007-2008 School Report Card, Urban School 2's total enrollment for the 2007-2008 school year was 2295.5 with 502.5 students in twelfth grade. Students with disabilities, as defined by students with an Individualized Education Plan, made up 11% of the total enrollment. English was the first language spoken at home for 30.5% of students, with Spanish representing 67.6%. The student mobility rate, as defined by students who entered and left during the school year, was 9.4%. The percentage of seniors present on average each day was 88.5%. The graduation rate was 95.1%, with a dropout rate of 1.5% for Whites, 1.4% for Black or African-Americans, and 0.3% for Hispanics. Males had a dropout rate of 0.5% with females having a rate of 0.3%. Students with disabilities had a rate of 0.4% and economically disadvantaged students had a rate of 0.4%. For students who graduated, 23% reported going on to attend a four-year college or university, 27.3% to a two-year college, 6.6% to another type of college, 7.7% to another post secondary school, and 16.5% reported that they planned to enter the workforce. During the 2007-2008 school year, 13% of students were suspended.

Of the 513 students who took the High School Proficiency Assessment (HSPA) Language Arts Literacy section, 40% were found to be partially proficient, 56.7% were found to be proficient, and 3.3% were found to be advanced proficient. Of the 508 students who took the Mathematics section of the HSPA, 51.6% were found to be partially proficient, 42.7% were found proficient, and 5.7% were found to be advanced proficient. The average score of the 236 students who took the Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT) was 434 in Mathematics, 405 in Verbal, and 401 in Essay.

The student to administrator ratio for 2007-2008 was 208.7 to 1. The student to faculty ratio was 12.8 to 1. The faculty mobility rate, faculty who entered and left during the school year, was 11.7%. Of the faculty and administration, 56.9% held a BA/BS, 42% held a MA/MS, and 1.1% held a PhD/EdD.

Within Urban School 2's district, 12% of funding came from local sources, 78% from state sources, and 3% from federal sources. The total cost per pupil for 2007-2008 was \$15,696.

Based on the 2000 data from the United States Census Bureau data, the population of the county that Out of District School is broken down as 68.8% White, 10.8% Black, 0.3% American Indian and Alaska Native, 18.6% Asian, 0.1% Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander, 1.4% two or more races, and 17.1% Hispanic or Latino. The total population was 789,102 with 23% of people under the age of 18. Foreign born persons made up 24.2% of the population, with 33.4% of the population speaking a language other than English at home. The median household income was \$75,069 with 6.6% of the population living below poverty (2007 and 1999 data). In 2000, the city had 2419.9 persons per square mile. Though this data provides a picture of the overall population in the county it is not an accurate representation of the student body of Out of District School, due to the overrepresentation of minority male students who are sent out of district due to behavioral concerns. Of the class that was served by the RU Ready Program, the majority of students were male and Black or Hispanic or Latino. The students' mobility rate of this school was also very high as is typical of many out of district schools. Some students returned to their home schools or were placed in other schools to meet their needs during the year. Due to the mobility the class size fluctuated,

with a maximum of ten students at any one time, and not every student received every lesson.

*Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation (GRDF)*

The Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation (GRDF) provides grants in a number of domains including education. The educational grants are given to provide “transformational experiences” for pre-K through 12th grade children in New Jersey who have limited opportunities for educational success. This goal was related to the selection of the RU Ready Program sites based on their status of being either an Abbott school or a school that served students with special needs. GRDF specifies “transformational experiences” in a number of ways, including providing transformations for students that result in the development of critical thinking skills with the hope that these skills will help the children grow into productive citizens. GRDF also supports learning opportunities that focus on experiences and connect students to the local and global community. In regards to the grant funding GRDF states:

Special consideration will be given to alternatives that emerge from intentional collaborations, between schools and outside agencies, dedicated to fostering the emotional, physical, intellectual, and social development of the entire community; programs, initiatives, people, and organizations that are connected across disciplines, build on either previous or current Foundation initiatives, and demonstrate clear potential to be maintained without, or with only modest, Foundation funding after an appropriate, and agreed upon period of time. (<http://www.grdodge.org/education/index.htm>)

The RU Ready Program sought out an intentional collaboration with local schools. The program was designed to develop the intellectual and social development of the students so that they could have an impact in their communities. The collaboration between EIOP and GSAPP made a connection across two very different disciplines. Once developed, it was believed that program itself could be run with little or no outside funding.

#### EIOPP and GSAPP Collaboration

The collaboration between GSAPP and EIOP came about during the time when Dr. Susan Forman, the director of School Psychology at GSAPP, was applying for a grant to provide for a Concentration in Psychological and Systems Support for Learning. One of the requirements for students working under this grant is that they must complete a special advanced practicum focusing on systems level change. From Dr. Forman's prior experience as an administrator at Rutgers she knew of EIOP and Dr. Mandel, the director of EIOP. Dr. Forman reached out to Dr. Mandel to see if EIOP was working on any projects that would involve educational policy issues and systemic change, and if EIOP would be interested in having a practicum student from GSAPP to assist. EIOP was also applying for a grant at the time to fund the RU Ready Program, which would focus on systematic change. Dr. Elizabeth Matto, the director of the YPPP, contacted Dr. Forman in response to her inquiry. Dr. Matto expressed interest in having a practicum student to assist with a new program entitled, RU Ready, as the program would be designed for and implemented with youth disadvantaged in various ways and no one currently involved in the program had much experience working with such youth. Dr. Forman informed this author of the opportunity to work with the RU Ready Program and a meeting was held with all parties to set up the collaboration between GSAPP and EIOP.

### *Needs Met Through Collaboration*

The collaboration between GSAPP and EIOP was one of mutual benefit, as both groups had specific needs that were met or enhanced through the collaboration process. The goals and beliefs set forth by GSAPP and EIOP, as well as the larger constructs of school psychology and political science, were also addressed by the collaboration.

The collaboration fit well within GSAPP's mission of education, research/scholarship, and public service, as well as with GSAPP's desire to produce psychologists who will provide direct service to underserved populations. It also fit within the more specific goal of the school psychology program of training psychologists to practice in school and community settings. One of the current focuses in the school psychology program is to help students learn to practice at a systems level using an approach that emphasizes evaluation. The collaboration provided for work in the school setting and also offered an evaluation component. The core values of the school psychology program include a section that directly relates to the collaboration, "fostering collaboration in professional problem solving and service delivery." The collaboration required a great deal of problem solving as the RU Ready Program was in its pilot year. Almost all of the goals, objectives, and competencies put forth by the school psychology program were, in part, met through the collaboration. The collaboration came at an opportune time for those involved as it occurred during the third year of this author's program, during which the emphasis is on systems level study. The "Program Planning and Evaluation" and "Implementing Innovations in Educational and Human Service Organizations" courses taken during this year further provided resources in the pilot year of the RU Ready Program.

The Concentration in Psychological and Systems Support for Learning presented unique and specific needs for the school psychology program, many of which were addressed through the collaboration. In particular, the requirement of a specialized systems change advanced practicum experience was met entirely through the collaboration. The collaboration also provided the material to meet the requirement of a dissertation related to systems level change. The “Implementing Innovations in Educational and Human Service Organizations” class offered as part of the concentration provided resources in how to implement and evaluate programs for broader audiences.

The collaboration was also beneficial to the EIOP and YPPP. The development of the RU Ready Program was consistent with Mrs. Eagleton’s original request that her bequest be used for, “...the development of and education for responsible leadership in civic and governmental affairs and the solution of their political problems” (<http://www.eagleton.rutgers.edu/DirectorMessage.html>). The collaboration worked within EIOP’s work of “innovative and practical research.” The research was especially innovative because EIOP had never before worked with GSAPP. The collaboration enhanced YPPP’s ability to explore civic education and young adult political participation, as this author was able to provide suggestions that helped YPPP explore in ways that they may not of thought about on their own.

The collaboration was useful in that it helped YPPP meet the criteria of the GRDF grant. The GRDF states that it will provide “special consideration” to grant applications that involve collaboration between schools and outside agencies. The RU Ready Program already met this criterion, yet the collaboration with GSAPP enriched the collaboration with the outside agencies component. The GSAPP and EIOP collaboration also resulted

in a program that was “connected across disciplines,” another special consideration of the GRDF.

Within EIOP, the collaboration was most beneficial to the RU Ready program as they were lacking specific knowledge about how to directly work with their target population of diverse high school seniors in multiple settings. The collaboration was especially useful when working with Out of District School, as this population presented unique challenges that a school psychologist was well trained to address. The collaboration also occurred at an opportune time for the RU Ready Program, as it started during the program’s pilot year. The goals of this year included developing, implementing, and evaluating the RU Ready Program, processes that fell in line with this author’s training in the Planning and Evaluation course.

#### Dissertation as a Single Case Study

The unique and innovative nature of the work performed as a result of the collaboration between GSAPP and EIOP led itself to be best presented in the model of a single case study. Single case studies are used in professional psychology when one wants to chronicle the complexities of a specific case rather than conduct a large scale research project that may not be as useful to understanding the case. Fishman (2005) advocates for pragmatic case studies to be used to further the field of professional psychology. According to Fishman (2005):

Theory and research should deal with problems as they holistically present themselves in actual situations, and that programmatic interventions administered to single clients (be they individuals, groups, organizations, or communities) should be studied, documented and assessed as whole units for a proper understanding and

evaluation of these programs. Thus the pragmatic paradigm argues that actual cases -- in all their multisystemic complexity and contextual embeddedness – should be one of the crucial units of study in applied and professional psychology. (p. 7)

Though they may differ from traditional research, pragmatic case studies should be viewed as imperatively useful tools in professional psychology. Pragmatic case studies meld quantitative and qualitative research and provide alternative points of view which in turn create “a rich resource for developing guiding conceptions, strategies, and procedures in addressing practical problems as they present themselves in complex, real-world case situations” (Fishman, 2005, p.33).



## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### The Expansive Role of the School Psychologist

School psychology has started to branch from the traditional position as the gatekeeper of special education into more diverse roles. Kratochwill and Stoiber (2000) discuss the field of school psychology becoming more diverse in the past half century. Some examples of this diversity include:

A shift, from student's deficits to student's potential, from the individual to the ecological context of learning, from remediation to prevention, from stand alone initiatives to school wide and systemic reform, and from a primary interest in disability determination to uncovering appropriate learner accommodations. (Minke and Bear, 2000, as cited p. 592)

Reschley (2000) suggests similar change to the school psychologist role:

Wider variations in roles can be expected to emerge during the next decade as the current alternative models are adopted more widely. School psychologists will continue to devote more than one-half of their time to students with at-risk characteristics or disabilities, but what is done will change toward less standardized testing and more intervention-oriented assessment, greater involvement with direct interventions, and problem-solving consultation. (p. 519)

Along with moving into diverse roles, school psychologists are being utilized in organizations besides schools. According to Curtis and Batsche (1991), school psychologists are being recognized for their ability to make contributions in settings outside of schools. Kramer and Epps (1991) found that school psychologists have diverse skills which allow them to practice outside of education and contribute to diverse organizations. To be able to practice outside of schools, training is required in non-school settings. Kramer and Epps “strongly encourage trainers to expand their horizons and to look beyond schools for other sites in which to provide appropriate training experiences. Individuals trained as professional psychologists within school psychology programs should not be limited to practicing in schools” (p. 460). Reschley (2000) found that the role of the school psychologist in the non-school setting varies from the traditional school based psychologist. He found that the non-school setting psychologists provide more direct services, such as interventions and consultation.

Opportunities to practice outside of schools often come from collaboration. Kratochwill and Stoiber (2000) feel that collaborations should be viewed as essential to school psychology practice. They suggest “researchers and practitioners in school psychology must share responsibility in committing to sustained, ongoing interactions that emphasize cross-training so that professionals from different disciplines can learn and extend their competencies of each other” (Adelman & Taylor, 1998; Stoiber et al., 2000, as cited p. 600). Dawson, et al. (2004), advocate for collaboration among different professions in education and different psychological specialties. A benefit to this collaboration is “to avoid duplication of effort and to ensure common goals and strategies” (p. 118). Kramer and Epps (1991) discuss the complexities of training and

professional development for school psychologists. They feel that both cross-disciplinary and interagency collaboration are needed in the training of school psychologists. Kramer and Epps state, “due to some overlap in expertise and services rendered by various disciplines, a cross-disciplinary model that supplements discipline-specific training might best foster professional development” (p. 459).

With the changes to school psychology practice must come changes to research in school psychology. Kratochwill and Stoiber (2000) feel that there is a need for different types of research methods in order to understand how interventions in schools work. They go on to specify, “in some areas of intervention work knowledge may be characterized by clinical observation and case study investigation” (p. 597). Keith (2000) supports this concept and adds support for single-case research designs, as they are applicable to schools and interventions. Qualitative research has also been deemed crucial in studying new ways that school psychologists practice. Qualitative research is also useful in “understanding the complexity of schools and issues surrounding policy and intervention...” (p. 596). Another type of research that has been found useful is collaborative action research. Kratochwill and Stoiber describe this method:

This methodology usually incorporates opportunities for practitioners to function as researchers and co-constructors of knowledge. Inherent in collaborative action research models is an assumption that practitioners' direct involvement in research will improve their capacity as informed decision-makers and provide greater authenticity and sustaining of intervention practices. Individuals who are involved in the collaborative activity develop and implement research methodology and focus

upon research activities such as generating hypotheses, research questions, methodology, and analysis and interpretation of data. (p. 597)

Dawson, et al. (2004) agree that action research is important and suggest that school psychologists need a better understanding of action research in order to understand what the method has to offer and increase the research tools available.

## Civic Education

### *History of Civic Education*

According to Cogan (1999) modern civic education in the United States dates back to 1916. He explains that in this year the National Education Association established the Commission on the Reorganization of Secondary Education whose purpose was to study the secondary school curriculum in order to suggest improvements. One subgroup of the Commission was dedicated to studying civic education. After study of the current state of civic education the subgroup, proposed developing a course at the ninth grade level, called Community Civics, and a course at the twelfth grade, called Problems of Democracy. These two courses were put into place in the 1916 curriculum framework and remain in place to this day. The Commission continued the work of studying the curriculum and in 1918 produced a report entitled the “Cardinal Principles of Secondary Education,” which delineated seven goals of public education, one of which was citizenship.

According to Charles Quigley, the Center for Civic Education Executive Director, civic education started to receive less attention and importance in the 1960’s when Vietnam and Watergate “brought disenchantment, rebellion, experimentation, a loss of faith in traditional institutions and traditional leaders, the breakup of consensus, the

weakening of the core culture” (as cited in Walling, 2007, p. 285). This resulted in the removal of civic education requirements from most curricula.

Though it may have faltered in the past, interest in civics education is again on the rise. According to Avery (2007) some of the factors attributed to the rise in interest involve more recent historical events. The first event was the fall of communism in Eastern Europe. This resulted in interest as to how nations transition from dictatorships to democracies, including how schools educate students for civic participation. The second event is the realization that classroom based civic education programs do have an impact on students' civic knowledge and attitudes as opposed to the students' individual demographic characteristics having the most impact (Niemi & Junn, 1998 as cited on p. 2). The third event involves the increasing populations of immigrant students in United States schools, many of whom do not have civic knowledge and need to be educated about civics (p.2). The fourth and final event is the steady decline in voting among young adults in the United States at the end of the twentieth century, which resulted in scholars trying to figure out what has caused such a downturn.

#### *Current State of Civic Education*

For some time civics education has not been a priority in the United States. Luckily, “one of the oldest topics in political theory, civic education is once more on the radar screen of contemporary political science” (Galston, 2001, p.217). Though civic education may be on the radar, the current state of affairs seems rather dismal.

Due to the recent resurgence in interest of civic education, many studies have been conducted involving the current state of civic education and the challenges that civic education faces. There have also been many studies involving civic engagement. At this

time it is clear that the evidence strongly points to a sharp decline in civic engagement, and some scholars have proposed that this is due to the similar decline in civic education.

The Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE) has been a main contributor to research involving civic education and engagement. CIRCLE has found that young Americans are less likely to vote and are less interested in political discussion and public issues than either their older counterparts or young people of past decades. As a result, many young Americans may not be prepared to participate fully in our democracy now and when they become adults. (Carnegie Corporation of New York and CIRCLE, 2003)

There are many indicators of civic engagement, such as civic knowledge, voting, volunteering, etc., most of which have sharply decreased. Galston (2001) points out that though there have been increases in formal education in the United States over the past 50 years, individuals levels of political knowledge have not changed much. In regards to voting, Galston summarizes:

In the early 1970s, about half of the 18–29-year-olds in the United States voted in presidential elections. By 1996, fewer than one third did. The same pattern holds for congressional elections- about one third voted in the 1970s compared with fewer than one fifth in 1998. (p. 219)

Galston also refers to survey data collected by the University of California, Los Angeles, which involves about 250,000 matriculating college freshmen and has occurred since the mid-1960s. Since the initiation of the survey,

Every significant indicator of political engagement has fallen by at least half. Only 26% of freshmen think that keeping up with politics is important, down from 58%

in 1966. Only 14% say they frequently discuss politics, down from 30%. (Bennett 1997; Sax et al 1998, 1999; Natl. Assoc. Secr. State 1999; Rahn 1999 as cited in Galston, 2001, p. 219)

Galston also discusses the data collected through The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Civics Assessment. He explains:

Each NAEP subject-matter assessment is divided into four achievement levels: “below basic,” which means little or no demonstrated knowledge of the subject; “basic,” which indicates partial mastery; “proficient,” the level representing a standard of adequate knowledge; and “advanced.”... In principle, every student could reach the level of proficiency. (Galston, 2001, p. 221)

Based on these definitions, Galston reports the results of the 1998 Assessment, which he describes as “not encouraging.” The results indicate, “Thirty-five percent of high school seniors tested below basic, indicating near-total civic ignorance. Another 39% were only at the basic level, less than the working knowledge that citizens are deemed to need” (Lutkus et al 1999 as cited in Galston, 2001, p. 221). Overall, “for fourth-, eighth-, and 12<sup>th</sup>-graders, about three-fourths were below the level of proficiency” (Galston, 2003, p. 31). Based on his findings, Galston (2001) compares the political knowledge of today’s high schools graduates as equivalent with high school dropouts of the late 1940’s. Kahne and Westheimer (2003) cite a study by the National Constitution Center, which found that only 38 percent of respondents could name all three branches of government. Kahne and Westheimer also found that “twenty-five percent fewer citizens go to the polls today than in 1960, and the largest declines are among young people. Political participation, such as working for a political party, is at a 40-year low” (p. 35). Robert Putnam states,

"Americans are playing virtually every aspect of the civic game less frequently than we did two decades ago" (as cited in Kahne, & Westheimer, 2003, p.35).

### *Challenges to Civic Education*

#### *Lack of Requirements*

In order to explain the current state of civic education, Galston turns to the Educating Democracy: State Standards to Ensure a Civic Core report, released by the Albert Shanker Institute in the spring of 2003. The Educating Democracy report had significant findings in the area of civic education. First it reports, "only half the states have even partially specified a required core of civic knowledge, fewer have made a serious effort to align their civics-related courses with challenging standards, and only a handful administer exams focused exclusively on civic topics" (Galston, 2003, p. 32). The lack of assessment of civic knowledge is concerning and many scholars have presented the argument that the government does not care about civic education as the focus has been on math and language arts. Kahne and Westheimer (2003) argue:

There is now frequent talk of "state takeovers" of schools that fail to raise test scores in math or reading, but it is unimaginable that any school would face such an action because it failed to prepare its graduates for democratic citizenship. (p. 34)

Many argue that the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act has done significant damage to making civic education a priority. Part of the NCLB act requires yearly testing in math, reading, and science, yet there is no requirement for social studies (the academic area civics most often falls under). Though civics testing is not required under the NCLB Act, it is tested by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). Unfortunately,



the civics section of the NAEP is typically administered only once every ten years (Kahne, & Westheimer, 2003).

Some feel that the lack of attention paid to civic education is due to the belief that civic knowledge is taught in other disciplines. The Center for Civic Education (1994) claims, “inattention to civic education stems in part from the assumption that the knowledge and skills citizens need emerge as by-products of the study of other disciplines or as an outcome of the process of schooling itself” (p.1).

An underlying issue to many of these problems is the lack requirements regarding civics education. Cogan (1999) argues that this is in part due to the “highly decentralized system of schooling” in the United States. He explains,

The United States Constitution makes no federal provision for education, leaving it instead to each of the individual states. Thus, the federal government cannot require the adoption and implementation of these or any of the other subject area curriculum standards; they are totally voluntary. Each state and, in many instances, individual school districts, decide whether or not to adopt the various standards. This means that there are no uniform measures for ensuring that civics and government are taught. The national standards in all subject areas are voluntary; not required. (p. 55)

#### *Lack of Qualified Teachers*

Another challenge to civic education is the lack of properly trained teachers. The Educating Democracy report found that in many states there are not specific civics certification requirements for teachers, and therefore these teachers may not have the knowledge and training to teach civics courses. History and social studies teachers are

typically called upon to teach civics, though they are also often not trained (Galston, 2003).

In regards to preparing teachers to teach civic education classes, The Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools (2004) found:

Teacher preparation programs seldom help aspiring teachers learn to foster students' civic learning: they offer few courses in civic education, and existing courses focus more on content knowledge than on civic dispositions and skills, even though all three are equally important parts of students' civic preparation. What's more, teacher education programs rarely demonstrate interactive teaching strategies that encourage students' participation, although these dynamic approaches are known to engage students' interest, and few programs provide strategies to help teachers manage classroom conversations about important civic matters. (p. 9)

Cogan (1999) agrees that the majority of teachers are not qualified, "a very small percentage of those who teach civics and government courses have actually received specialized coursework in politics and government, to say nothing of appropriate pedagogical training to teach these areas to young people" (p.55).

Along with often not being qualified to teach civic education, teachers and administrators are often uncomfortable with the discussion that can occur when teaching civic education. The Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools (2004) claims that school administration and teachers who do not want to discuss issues that could cause conflict often limit students being educated in civics. The Civic Mission of Schools report produced by CIRCLE "points to fear of criticism or 'even litigation' if teachers choose to

tackle topics that ‘may be considered controversial or political’” (as cited in Walling, 2007, p. 286). Cogan (1999) agrees with this argument, stating that teachers:

Appear also to avoid dealing with issues of controversy, the heart of democratic behavior and governance. Students, therefore, seeing little or no connection between these teachings and what goes on in their daily lives, get bored and turned off to what should be one of the most interesting subject areas in the curriculum. (p. 55)

### *Funding*

Funding is another challenge to civic education. “In 2003...federal expenditures by the Department of Education of civic education totaled less than half of one percent of the overall department budget” (Kahne, & Westheimer, 2003, p.35). Funding for civics education may be limited due to the subject not being tested or required.

### *Gaps Based on Background*

Another civic education concern is the gap between students of different socioeconomic and racial backgrounds, as Levinson’s research demonstrates (2007). Students are often in classes with teachers who do not have the skills required to reach the students and create an impact on their civic development (Avery, 2007). The students also have less opportunity to engage in best practice teaching approaches recommended by the Civic Mission of Schools” (Avery, 2007). Teachers of minority and low socioeconomic students are often, “inexperienced, teaching out of their field, and/or lacking teaching credentials” (Avery, 2007, p.8).

### *Special Education*

Currently, there is little to no literature regarding civics education for special education students. There is also a lack of literature regarding civic engagement for

people with disabilities. Due to this deficit it is not possible to summarize how these populations are being served, if at all. Though special education students often receive a modified version of the regular education curriculum, there is no information to determine if civics education follows this pattern. One cannot assume that students with disabilities participate in the civic arena in exactly the same patterns as students without disabilities, but exactly how they participate has not been documented.

### *Why Civic Education is Important*

Civic education is important for a variety of reasons. Galston (2001) has presented the argument that on the most basic level individuals need to be taught to be citizens because people are not born with knowledge to be a citizen. The Carnegie Corporation of New York and CIRCLE (2003) present this argument with more detail:

Recognizing that individuals do not automatically become free and responsible citizens but must be educated for citizenship, scholars; teachers; civic leaders; local, state, and federal policymakers; and federal judges, have with the encouragement of the president of the United States, called for new strategies that can capitalize on young people's idealism and their commitment to service and voluntarism while addressing their disengagement from political and civic institutions. One of the most promising approaches to increase young people's informed engagement is school-based civic education. (p. 4)

This does not mean that every student should be an expert in civics, yet students need to be equipped with enough knowledge to be able to make informed decisions. Galston (2001) believes that there is a basic understanding of civics required in order to make quality civic judgments, which can be provided through quality civic education.

CIRCLE (2004) feels that civic education should help students develop the skills, knowledge, and attitudes necessary to be competent and responsible citizens. They define competent and responsible citizens as:

1. Informed and thoughtful; have a grasp and an appreciation of history and the fundamental processes of American democracy; have an understanding and awareness of public and community issues; and have the ability to obtain information, think critically, and enter into dialogue among others with different perspectives.
2. Participate in their communities through membership in or contributions to organizations working to address an array of cultural, social, political, and religious interests and beliefs.
3. Act politically by having the skills, knowledge, and commitment needed to accomplish public purposes, such as group problem solving, public speaking, petitioning and protesting, and voting.
4. Have moral and civic virtues such as concern for the rights and welfare of others, social responsibility, tolerance and respect, and belief in the capacity to make a difference. (p.4)

Providing civic education during the high school years has shown specific positive results. Davial and Marie (2007) found civically-engaged teenagers do better in high school and go on to acquire higher levels of education compared to similar peers.

Furthermore, “civic activities undertaken during high school are related to significantly higher odds that individuals graduate from college in later years, when controlling for a host of socio-economic and demographic characteristics” (p. 3). Students who have taken a civics or government class are more likely to say that they, “helped solve a community

problem, can make a difference in their community, volunteered recently, trust other people and the government, made consumer decisions for ethical or political reasons, believe in the importance of voting, and, are registered to vote” (The Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement, 2007, p. 1). Students who participated in these classes have also been shown to be better able to understand political writing, follow the news and discuss politics with their parents. These positive effects have been demonstrated to be long term. The positive effects of civic education also carry over to more global skills essential to students’ social and working lives, including team building, working across differences, collaboration, listening, and negotiating (The Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools, 2004).

Providing civic education is especially important for low socioeconomic, minority, less educated, and immigrant populations due to their often marginal status in the political arena. Kahne and Sporte (2008) found, “low-income and less educated citizens, as well as recent immigrants and those less proficient in English, are often underrepresented in the political process and have far less voice” (p. 739). Galston (2001) points out that this lack of a voice result in an unequal distribution of power and resources:

It is hard to avoid the hypothesis that at some point the withdrawal from public engagement endangers the healthy functioning of democratic politics. At the very least, if the tendency to withdraw is asymmetrically distributed among population groups, then the outputs of the political system are likely to become increasingly unbalanced. And if those who withdraw the most are those who have the least, the system will become even less responsive to their needs. (p. 220)

Luckily, Galston feels that civic education can play an integral role in fixing some of these maladies, “civic education is one of the few forces that can resist the rising tide of materialism in U.S. culture that numerous surveys have documented” (p. 33). Perhaps civic education can assist these marginalized groups and help them to increase their political engagement as a way to get their needs met (Kahne, & Sporte, 2008).

One of the goals of civic education is to teach students so that they develop civic knowledge. Galston (2001) specifies civic knowledge as being important for a variety of reasons, such as understanding political events and integrating new information into previously formed frameworks. Civic knowledge can change views on specific public issues, and it promotes democratic values and political participation (Galston, 2003). It also, “helps citizens to understand their interests as individuals and as members of groups” and “helps citizens learn more about civic affairs” (p. 32).

Schools are in a unique position to provide the civic education required for a responsible citizenry. According to the Carnegie Corporation of New York and CIRCLE (2004), public schools have a tradition of providing civic education as “encouraging the development of civic skills and attitudes among young people has been an important goal of education and was the primary impetus for originally establishing public schools” (p. 5). Currently 40 state constitutions at least mention the importance of civic literacy, and 13 state that a central purpose of schooling is to promote good citizenship, democracy and free government (p. 5). Schools have the ability to reach the greatest amount of children as they “are the only institutions with the capacity and mandate to reach virtually every young person in the country” and so, “of all institutions, schools are the most systematically and directly responsible for imparting citizen norms” (p. 5). Schools “are

best equipped to address the cognitive aspects of good citizenship- civic and political knowledge and related skills such as critical thinking and deliberation” and they are “communities in which young people learn to interact, argue, and work together with others, an important foundation for future citizenship” (p. 5). In the past civic education was often provided through non-academic groups such as political parties, unions, nonprofit associations, and activist religious denominations yet these groups do not have the allure that they once did. Schools have the responsibility to provide quality civic education “that improves young people’s civic knowledge, skills, and intentions to vote and volunteer” (p. 5).

### *Best Practices in Civic Education*

It was once believed that classroom instruction in civic education did not raise political knowledge, yet these findings have been dismissed due to recent research (Galston, 2001, p. 217). Along with finding that civic education has a positive effect on political knowledge, researchers in civic education have determined some best practices in teaching civics education. These best practices can be broken down into four categories, assessment, structure, content/methods, and teaching.

### *Assessment*

Assessment must play a critical part in civic education. The Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools (2004) advocates for “identifying and/or developing high-quality civic assessments” in order to, “enhance accountability for students’ civic learning and motivate states to refine and strengthen their civic standards” (p. 7). Niemi and Junn studied data from the National Assessment of Educational Performance Civics Assessment and found significant effects from “the amount and recency of civic course



work, the variety of topics studied, and the frequency with which current events were discussed in class.”

### *Structure*

Niemi and Junn research showed that civics education classes offered in twelfth grade result in more of an impact than those offered earlier (Galston, 2001, p. 227). Campbell studied the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement Civic Education Study and concluded that good quality programs were more effective than programs offered for more sessions (The Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement, 2007, p.7). The Office of Democracy and Governance studied civic education as part of their USAID program (2002). One finding was that civic education sessions need to be frequent and should occur for at least three sessions.

### *Content/Methods*

The Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools (2004) suggests “bringing community activists, legal experts, and others into the classroom to speak about civic issues” (p. 11). Campbell found, “The degree to which political science and social issues are discussed openly and respectfully has a greater impact on civic proficiency than the frequency of social studies classes” (The Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement, 2007, p. 7). The Carnegie Corporation of New York and CIRCLE (2003) suggest incorporating “discussion of current local, national, and international issues and events into the classroom, particularly those that young people view as important to their lives” (p. 5). They found that when, “young people have opportunities to discuss current issues in a classroom setting, they tend to have greater interest in politics, improved critical thinking and communications skills, more civic knowledge, and more interest in

discussing public affairs out of school” (p. 5). In order to allow for open discussion, “teachers need to moderate so that students feel welcome to speak from a variety of perspectives” (p. 5).

Another best practice in teaching civics education is role-play. The Carnegie Corporation of New York and CIRCLE (2003) suggest that teachers, “encourage students’ participation in simulations of democratic processes and procedures” based on recent evidence that suggests “that simulations of voting, trials, legislative deliberation, and diplomacy in schools can lead to heightened political knowledge and interest” (p. 5). Avery (2007) refers to a 2005 study by the Constitutional Rights Foundation involving 2,366 Californian high school seniors who had participated in civic education. This study found that participation in simulations or role plays of civic, legal and political processes/concepts was associated with higher levels of civic skills and political interest, as well as the stated intention to vote as adults (Avery, 2007, p. 8).

Kahne and Westheimer (2003) studied 10 civic education programs and synthesized three branches of best practices, commitment, capacity, and connection. The commitment branch emphasized developing, “students’ commitments to actively engaging social issues and working for change. In pursuing this goal, they often employed two strategies: they helped students identify social problems in need of attention, and they provided motivating experiences in working for change” (p. 58). Identifying the social problems often took the form of open discussion, which then led to determining ways to rectify the problems. The capacity branch emphasized helping students to see themselves as capable of participating in the civic realm, by providing them with the skills and knowledge necessary (p. 61). This was often accomplished by engaging “students in real-world

projects that required students to develop such skills as speaking in public, using visual aids, facilitating meetings, conducting research, canvassing a community, and designing surveys” (p. 61). When it was not possible to engage students in actual “real-world” projects, skills were taught through workshops or simulations. The connection branch emphasized connecting students with civically minded role models, who were often community members rather than celebrities.

The Office of Democracy and Governance (2002) found that civic education lessons should be participatory as, “breakout groups, dramatizations, role-plays, problem solving activities, simulations, and mock political or judicial activities led to far greater levels of positive change than did more passive teaching methods such as lectures or the distribution of materials” (p. 1). Their research also showed that lessons should, “focus on themes that are immediately relevant to people’s daily lives.” This can be accomplished during the design phase of the program during which “program managers should work to identify an audience’s primary concerns, and then show how democracy and governance issues relate to those concerns” (p. 2).

### *Teaching*

Civic education researchers have also studied what makes good civic education teachers. Teachers must be trained in the pedagogy of civic education and need ongoing training to support their development (The Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools, 2004). On site guidance and feedback are also crucial. Teachers benefit from “support in broaching controversial issues in classrooms since they may risk criticism or sanctions if they do so” (Carnegie Corporation of New York and CIRCLE, 2003, p. 5). The Office of Democracy and Governance (2002) state that teachers leading civic education lessons

need to be knowledgeable and inspiring as teachers who can not engage their students will not be successful in “in transmitting information about democratic knowledge, values, or ways to participate effectively in the democratic political process” (p. 1). The Office of Democracy and Governance states, “it is crucial that trainers feel comfortable with a broad range of teaching methods, and have the flexibility to adapt both method and course content to the immediate concerns of program participants” (p. 2).

### Current State of Youth Political Participation

Civic and political engagement as an entity has many definitions, and therefore it is useful to create a working definition for purposes of clarity. The definition of civic and political engagement that will be used shall be the one defined in “The 2006 Civic and Political Health of the Nation: A Detailed Look at How Youth Participate in Politics and Communities” which was published by the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE). Their definition includes, “nineteen major indicators of civic engagement, plus several other forms of participation, to help quantify and define the concept (p. 6).” These nineteen indicators are broken down into three domains: Civic Activity Indicators, Electoral Activity Indicators, and Political Voice Indicators. Under the Civic Activity Indicators domain falls the following: community problem solving, regular volunteering for a non-electoral organization, active membership in a group or association, participation in fund-raising run/walk/ride, and other fund-raising for charity. Under the Electoral Activity Indicators falls: regular voting, persuading others, displaying (buttons, signs, stickers), campaigning contributions, and volunteering for candidate or political organizations. Under the Political Voice Indicators domain falls: contacting officials, contacting the print media,

contacting the broadcast media, protesting, e-mail petitions, written petitions, boycotting, buycotting, and canvassing.

While nineteen indicators may seem superfluous, there are various justifications for such a wide variety of activities. CIRCLE justifies their nineteen indicators stating, “breadth is important, because people have numerous ways to influence the world around them, and it is important to look beyond the most frequently measured forms of engagement (voting and volunteering) (p. 6).” This justification carries even more weight when one considers that not everyone can participate in each activity due to various issues.

Marcelo, Lopez, and Kirby (2007) found that there are differences in the nature and degree of civic engagement among young people based on their race and ethnicity. Payne (2003) researched African-Americans and found that they have had very distinctive patterns of civic participation. Hart and Atkins (2002) examined civic participation through an urban versus suburban lens and found that urban youth are far behind suburban counterparts in the areas of civic knowledge and participation. This does not immediately correspond with the prior findings, yet it starts to conform when Hart and Atkins go on to state, “cities are ethnically diverse; Hispanics, Blacks, and Asians constitute much larger fractions of the population of cities than they do of the country as a whole (p. 227).” The assumption is that the diverse populations of the urban areas do not match the suburban populations’ participation, adding another distinction in how groups are engaged or disengaged. Junn (2004) sheds some light as to why racial/ethnic groups differ in their political engagement. Her position is that the growing diversity in the US leads to questioning of the “prevailing notion that a true character of American

democracy has equal resonance, incentives, and costs to all members of the polity (p. 253).” This prevailing notion clearly does not correspond with each group in the same way and therefore differences arise among groups. Sánchez-Jankowski (2002) agrees with Junn’s position, yet does so through a group relations perspective. This fits in with all of the prior arguments that racial/ethnic groups respond to being politically and civically engaged in different and distinct ways. Overall there are proposals that race/ethnicity affect how one is civically engaged and there are some theories that offer reasons for this difference.

The proposals of differences in civic engagement are important because of the vast array and growing number of racial/ethnic groups in America. With the growing changes in demographics one must pay attention to these racial/ethnic mediators in political and civic engagement. In their research Marcelo, et al. found that the youth of today are more diverse than young people were just thirty years ago (based on estimates from the Current Population Survey (CPS)). They found that since 1976 the proportion of the youth population that is non-white has grown from 22 percent to 38 percent. Though percentages are a good way to draw a general conclusion, one may find actual numbers of these groups to be more meaningful. Marcelo et al. provide these numbers, using the CPS data. They found that for 2006 there were an estimated 6.4 million young non-Hispanic African-Americans between the ages of 15 and 25, compared to an estimated 27.9 million young non-Hispanic whites, 1.9 million non-Hispanic Asians, and 8 million young Latinos. These statistics are not surprising for most, as issues surrounding the changing face of America seem to come into play almost daily. The question remains as to what these changing demographics mean in regards to the represented groups’ political and

civic engagement. The following will address the ways in which the youth of different racial and/or ethnic groups respond to, and participate in, various forms of political and civic engagement.

Referring back to CIRCLE's definition of civic engagement, including the 19 indicators, it is important to note that not all racial/ethnic groups always have the ability to participate in every indicator, and therefore having a broad definition allows for better understanding of how groups participate civically. For example, Latinos have consistently been found to have the highest levels of civic disengagement. Though one may jump to the conclusion that Latinos do not care about being engaged, there are other factors that need to be considered. The levels of disengagement may be due to barriers that Latinos face, such as acquiring citizenship (Lopez, Levine, Both, Kiesa, Kirby & Marcelo, 2006). An example of this phenomenon is the fact that many young Latinos do not vote, which some may conclude is because they do not care. Yet caring may not be the issue so much as the fact that only US citizens can vote and a proportion of young Latinos do not meet this criteria. (More information concerning Latino civic engagement trends can be found later in this document, the current use of this group was solely for purposes of explanation in the matter at hand.)

Using the above indicators of civic engagement, the following is an in depth look into the various ways that minority groups engage in civics and politics. "The 2006 Civic and Political Health of the Nation: A Detailed Look at How Youth Participate in Politics and Communities" put out by CIRCLE includes data about how the youth of America are participating in politics and communities as well as information regarding their attitudes towards the government and current issues. The data collected represents a national

sample including 1,700 people ages 15-25, with over-samples of Latinos, African-Americans, and Asian-Americans. The data collected from this survey has become the gold standard in the political science field in regards to minority youth civic engagement as it is one of the most comprehensive and well sampled documents in print.

There are many broad findings from this report, the first being that young African-Americans are the most politically engaged racial/ethnic group. It also found that Asian-American youth are highly engaged in volunteering and in several other ways. In regards to the Latino population, the study found that they are typically not as engaged as other racial/ethnic groups, though they do often participate in protests, with 25% responding that they had protested, more than double to proportion of any other group. This response may have to do with the marches dealing with federal immigration policy during the spring prior to the study drawing a large proportion of the national Latino youth population. Other broad findings were that:

Asian-American youth have the most positive view of government relative to all other racial/ethnic groups. Seventy-two percent of young Asian-Americans say “government should do more to solve problems” compared to 68% of African-Americans, 65% of Latinos, and 60% of Whites. Sixty seven percent of young Asian-Americans say “government regulation of business is necessary” compared to 51% of young Whites, 52% of young African-Americans, and 55% of young Latinos. (p. 4)

The report goes on to create distinctions and groups based on how many of the nineteen core activities an individual participated in. They define the “hyper-engaged” as individuals who report engaging in ten or more of the nineteen core activities, and



“highly disengaged” as individuals who report no participation in any of the 19 core activities.

Using these classifications, the report states that about seven percent of young Americans are “hyper-engaged” and that compared to those who are not engaged, this group is more likely to be, “African-American, Democratic (or leaning toward the Democrats), liberal, urban, regular church attendee, from a family with parents who volunteer, a current student (in college or high school), and from college-educated homes (p. 8).” The report also found:

Compared to their engaged peers, members of this highly disengaged group are much less confident in their own ability to make a difference, less likely to have college-educated parents or parents who volunteer, less likely to have any college experience, less aligned with either party, and more likely to be Latinos or immigrants. (p. 9)

The report goes into more detail as to engagement trends (including levels of engagement on the nineteen core indicators) based on race and ethnicity and summarizes many findings, some of which support the levels engagement data. The first data represents young African-Americans and finds that they are the most politically engaged racial/ethnic group, which the report states is consistent with previous research. The findings include:

Compared to young Latinos, Whites, and Asian-Americans, young African-Americans are the most likely to vote regularly, belong to groups involved with politics, donate money to candidates or parties, display buttons or signs, canvass, and contact the broadcast media or print media. They are also the most likely to raise money for charity (tied with Asian Americans). (p. 20)

The report finds that young Asian-Americans are also engaged and, “are the most likely to work on community problems, volunteer regularly, boycott, sign petitions, raise money for charity (tied with African-Americans), persuade others about an election, contact officials, and regularly volunteer for a party or candidate (p. 20).” These findings represent one of the first times Asian-Americans have been included in data collection on these issues and therefore is groundbreaking. Though it may seem that minority youth as a whole are engaged, young Latinos paint a different picture. They are “the least likely to volunteer, work with others on community problems, buy or refuse to buy products for political or ethical reasons, sign paper or email petitions, contact officials, and belong to groups involved with politics (p. 20).” The report theorizes as to why Latinos have the highest rate of “disengaged” young people:

Disengagement may be a function of barriers to engagement, such as acquiring citizenship, that many Latinos face. For example, only U.S. citizens can vote in federal elections. Since a large proportion of young Latinos are not U.S. citizens (34% according to the March 2006 Current Population Survey), they may report lower levels of electoral engagement than their counterparts who do not face the same citizenship barriers. (p. 20)

Though young Latinos are “disengaged” they are involved heavily in the area of protesting, as it is reported that of those surveyed 25% had protested, more than double the rate for any other racial/ethnic group. This may be due to the many protests revolving around immigration issues that occurred in the spring before the surveys were given. Latinos have been found to be passionate about immigration issues more than other groups and it has been theorized that this is due to their status, or the status of someone

they are related to or know. Therefore it makes sense that many Latinos participated in protests, and further data needs to be collected in order to determine if Latinos will continually be civically engaged in this manner.

The report also looks into a few topics outside of the nineteen core indicators, which again are broken down into racial/ethnic responses. The first of these topics is the difference in overall views of the government. The report found Asian-American youth to be the most likely to say that “government should do more to solve problems.” Young African-Americans and Latinos are also more likely to say, “government should do more” when compared to their White counterparts. When asked if “government often does a better job than people give it credit for” or “government is almost always wasteful and inefficient,” African-American youth are the most likely to say that “government is almost always wasteful and inefficient.” The report also takes into account the differences in views of politics and elections by racial/ethnic group. It found that African-Americans are the most likely to view the political system as unresponsive to the genuine needs of the public, while Asian-Americans are most likely to say the opposite, the system is responsive. In regards to political party allegiance, the report found young African-Americans overwhelmingly identify or lean Democrat, and young Latinos are the most likely to identify as Independent.

“The 2006 Civic and Political Health of the Nation: A Detailed Look at How Youth Participate in Politics and Communities” report does a good job in finding and reporting some broad trends among racial/ethnic groups, though the findings regarding race/ethnicity are just one sector of a very detailed report. In their research, Marcelo, Lopez, and Kirby (2007) specifically looked at civic engagement among minority youth,

and using the some of the same data from “The 2006 Civic and Political Health of the Nation: A Detailed Look at How Youth Participate in Politics and Communities” report, went into further detail specifically regarding minority youth. Marcelo, et al. also used the same nineteen core measures of civic engagement broken down into the same three domains of civic activities, electoral activities, and political voice activities in their report, which helps to add to the findings already discovered along these domains.

Under the civic activities domain Marcelo, et al. found Whites are the most likely to report that getting involved in society is their choice, while Latinos are the most likely to say it is their responsibility. In regards to volunteering it was found that young Asian-Americans are the most likely to participate, especially when it comes to working in less formal groups designed to solve a community problem. Latinos were found to have the lowest rate of volunteering. The same results were found when rates of “regular” volunteering were looked at, with regular volunteering being something that is done on a consistent basis, not just a one time event. An interesting fact that arose from this further examination of volunteering rates was that the volunteers all favored the same types of organizations, no matter what their race or ethnicity was. In 2006, African-Americans, Latinos, and Whites, who volunteered worked with youth, civic, and religious organizations. Youth organizations were the most popular and religious organizations the least popular. For Asian-Americans civic organizations were most popular and religious organizations the least popular. Participation in raising money for charities was another form of civic engagement was found to be similar across the racial/ethnic groups.

Under the electoral activities domain, Marcelo, et al. found a great deal of disengagement, with youth feeling that they can do little to have an impact on elections.

Youth also believe that it might be difficult to figure out how and when to vote. This was found to be particularly true of Latino youth. Though most youth felt that they can do little to have an impact on elections, African-Americans thoughts were more positive in regards to their vote mattering. They were found to be the most likely to feel that their vote could make a difference in the outcome of an election. Voting as an expression of choice was looked at and it was found that similar percentages of African-Americans and Asian-Americans view voting as being able to express their choice. African-Americans were also found to take the view that politics are a way for the already powerful to remain powerful and not share the power. Young Asian-Americans stood out in this domain as being the most likely to report trying to persuade someone else in an election. As with the civic activities domain, Latinos reported the lowest levels of engagement on the electoral activities domain.

Data from “The 2006 Civic and Political Health of the Nation: A Detailed Look at How Youth Participate in Politics and Communities” report sheds some light on voter registration and turnout, both of which fall under the electoral activities domain. Marcelo, et al. looked at this information and furthered it through the use of the Census Current Population Survey (CPS), which has included data pertaining to voter turnout and voter registration with regards to race/ethnicity since 1972. Using data from the CPS, Marcelo et al. found that young African-Americans have had the highest voter registration rates since the late 1990s. They also found that young Latinos and Asian-Americans registration rates are lower than both African-American and white youth. Though registration is an important step in the civic process it is not the same as actually voting. In terms of actually voting, African-Americans and whites report the highest rates.

Overall there rates of voting for midterm elections have been on the downfall for most racial/ethnic groups since 1994, except for young African-Americans, who are the only group to have not had declining rates for midterm elections.

Marcelo, et al. (2007) describe political voice indicators as a measure of the ways people attempt to influence the government and their communities. Youth who participate in political voice indicators often feel that they can make a difference in their community. Latinos are again cited as being the least involved based on feeling the least efficacious, while African-Americans represent the group that feels the best about being able to make a difference. In regards to actual participation efforts on the political voice domain, young African-Americans were found to be the most likely to canvass and contact the print media. It was also found that young Asian-Americans were the found to be the most likely to sign an email petition and participate in a boycott. Young Latinos were found to again fall behind the other groups, with the exception in the area of protesting.

Marcelo, et al. take a similar approach to “The 2006 Civic and Political Health of the Nation: A Detailed Look at How Youth Participate in Politics and Communities” report in typifying groups based on their participation rates in the nineteen core areas. Their approach is noteworthy for the fact that they further divide the groups based on the types of activities they participated in, not just the amount of activities as is done in the “The 2006 Civic and Political Health of the Nation: A Detailed Look at How Youth Participate in Politics and Communities” report. Marcelo, et al.’s classifications include four categories; the “Disengaged” who had not performed two or more types of activities in either the civic or political categories, the “Civic Specialists” who had participated in at

least two forms of civic activities within the year, the “Electoral Specialists” who had participated in at least two forms of electoral engagement within the year, and the “Dual Activists” who would qualify as both “Civic Specialists” and “Electoral Specialists.” Using these definitions it was found that Asian-Americans were the group that had the highest percentages of “Dual Activists” and “Civic Specialists.” It was also found that African-Americans had the highest percentages of “Electoral Specialists” and Latinos had the highest percentages of the “Disengaged” group. None of these findings are surprising and all of them support the data and theory that has already been discussed. They are unique in their classifications and ability to grossly estimate and typify a group and are therefore noteworthy in this regard.

Marcelo, et al. also studied the trends of racial/ethnic groups in following public affairs and the news, as well as trends in discussing current events and the news with family and friends. These studies found young Whites as the group that was most likely to follow what was going on “most of the time,” while Asian-Americans were the most likely to follow what was going on “at least some of the time.” They also found that African-Americans and Whites were equal in being the groups most likely to discuss current events and news with family and friends. Asian-Americans were the least likely to discuss current events and news, a somewhat surprising finding in that this group typically is engaged, yet on this communication domain they are not so.

Lopez, Marcelo, and Sagoff (2007) examined the Current Population Survey data in regards to racial/ethnic trends by state. In 2002 for the state of New Jersey it was found that the voter turnout rates were highest for Black, non-Hispanics (20%), followed by White, non-Hispanics (16%), and lastly Latinos (13%). The sample sizes for Asians and

Native Americans were too small to produce a reliable estimate of their voter turnout rates, and so were not reported. This data for New Jersey is in accordance with the overall national data in regards to turnout rate by racial/ethnic group. It also is in accordance with the previous findings regarding the voter turnout rates from the “The 2006 Civic and Political Health of the Nation: A Detailed Look at How Youth Participate in Politics and Communities” report and the work done by Marcelo, Lopez, and Kirby (2007).

#### Multidisciplinary, Interdisciplinary, and Transdisciplinary Studies

Multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary, and transdisciplinary studies are often used to better understand complex issues and answer involved research questions. These studies most often incorporate individuals from different fields working together on one problem. There are differences in each of these types of study, though the definitions for these studies often depend on who is defining them. Nissani (1995) uses the metaphor of mixing fruits to provide a better explanation of each of the types. A single type of fruit (apple, pear, orange) can be considered as a discipline. When the fruits are combined in a fruit salad the result is multidisciplinary, when made into a smoothie the result is interdisciplinary, and when the smoothie is made into a new dessert the result is transdisciplinary (as cited in Austin, Park, and Goble, 2008).

Austin, Park, and Goble (2008) state that multidisciplinary approaches involve representatives from multiple disciplines, each contributing particular knowledge and methods from their representative fields. By incorporating representatives from multiple fields, these studies are able to go further than if there were only the expertise of one discipline. Dogan and Pahre (1990) found, “the outcomes of such cooperative processes



are generally additive in nature and give rise to both broader, plural perspectives, and potentially, to new subdisciplines” (as cited in Austin, Park, and Goble, p. 557).

Interdisciplinary studies go beyond the surface level collaboration of multidisciplinary studies and require an integration of knowledge and techniques from multiple fields. A common language must be developed and collaborators must learn to incorporate parts of the other fields into their work. Everyone must become a hybrid of the fields involved. Interdisciplinary studies can be defined as, “two or more persons from different disciplines who agree to study a problem of mutual concern, and who design, implement, and bring to a consensus the results of a systematic investigation of that problem” (Bruhn, 2000, p. 59). Furthermore:

It is a process which begins with an explicit plan in which investigators from several disciplines agree on what questions are to be asked, how answers will be sought, and what outcomes are to be expected. Interdisciplinary research is more than an agreement to cooperate, it is a commitment to work through disagreements and barriers in concepts and methods and reach some degree of consensus as to the meaning of the data obtained. (p. 65)

Interdisciplinary studies are common in the medical field where specialists work together to solve a common ailment. They are also used when more traditional methods have been found ineffective in solving problems. Bruhn (2000) presents interdisciplinary research as an alternative for when traditional research approaches are unable to solve problems. Interdisciplinary research has persisted throughout the twentieth century and have become more popular as research agendas have become more complex.

Multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary studies are useful due to their synergistic effect. Trehwella (2009) found that more can be accomplished through collaboration between different disciplines. Brhun describe the synergistic effect as an, “*interaction* between researchers from different disciplines that leads to greater creativity and insights into tackling complex problems” (p. 59). In order for the synergistic effect to occur, multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary teams must develop a common language and frameworks. This language and frameworks allow for communication across the varied disciplines (Trehwella). The interdisciplinary interaction is especially useful when examining broad problems that can not possibly be solved by one scientist (Brhun, p. 59). The interaction includes collaboration, which Schrage (1989) describes as “the process of shared creation: two or more individuals with complementary skills interacting to create a shared understanding that none had previously possessed or could have come to on his or her own” (as cited in Brhun, p. 61). The questions asked during the process of multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary studies are very insightful as they come from individuals with diverse backgrounds who are examining the common problem. Brhun describes the questioning process as, “interdisciplinary ask questions in a different way about phenomena they see from various angles, and believe answers or solutions must come from common findings from these disciplines” (p. 60). Interdisciplinary studies require much dialogue. Brhun describes this as, “a rich dialogue during the entire research process involves all researchers in examining data obtained, data missed, and gaps in knowledge as a result of this collaborative effort” (p. 60).

Multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary, and transdisciplinary studies are often not given the credit they deserve. Much of the lack of credit can be attributed to the fact that they

are not well defined and researched.. Multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary, and transdisciplinary work is often looked down upon in the academic setting due to the traditional discipline specific nature of the collegiate tenure process. Austin, Park, and Goble (2008) found, “in contemporary academia there is tension between disciplinary specialization and the need to acknowledge the complex reality of the 21<sup>st</sup> century” (p. 557). Salter and Hearn (1996) argue, “distinctions between disciplines are often arbitrary and worn as badges of one form or another of a knowledge classification” (as cited in Brhun, p. 58). Therefore academics should reduce their discipline boundaries in order to work in multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary, and transdisciplinary ways. Brhun cautions, “Until scientists and researchers respect each other's work across disciplines there will always be a distrust of the quality and validity of another's work” and so if multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary, and transdisciplinary studies are to be effective a basic level of trust must develop, breaking down the disciplinary boundaries (p. 63). Trewhella argues for “flexible organizational structures that can operate across discipline-focused departments.” Multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary, and transdisciplinary studies are also not always given credit due to their use of both quantitative and qualitative measures. Brhun disagrees with the traditional emphasis on quantitative measures believing that in order to fully investigate and understand a problem both qualitative and quantitative methods are imperative. Though multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary, and transdisciplinary studies are not often given the credit they deserve, Birnbaum (1982) found multidisciplinary studies to be:

Recognized by university administrators as increasingly important: problems are interrelated; problems are more complex to solve; disciplines are growing more

specialized; and the very nature of interrelated and complex problems creates the necessity to integrate the efforts of highly specialized scientists in their solution. (As cited in Brhun, p. 62)

Multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary, and transdisciplinary studies have also been recognized by private and public funding sources. These sources are often focused on getting the best “bang for their buck” and have found that multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary, and transdisciplinary methods are the most economical solution when researching complex issues.

Wituski, Clawson, Oxley, Green, and Barr (1998) examined a summer institute to train individuals in political psychology, an interdisciplinary approach. The American Political Science Association is comprised of 33 divisions, 10 of which are interdisciplinary. One of the largest interdisciplinary divisions is political psychology, which uses psychological theory to understand political phenomena. This division faces challenges similar to all interdisciplinary research. There is a need to develop a common language and set of definitions so that political scientist and psychologist can communicate. Time is needed to develop this language and understanding of the other discipline. Another challenge revolves around determining appropriate methods for data collection and analysis. Psychologists who traditionally focus on quantitative data sometimes have difficulty in accepting the political science practice of gathering qualitative data, and vice versa. Sullivan (2007) examined politics as a career choice for psychologists and found that few psychologists have chosen politics as a career path. For the few that have entered the political arena, their contributions have been unique

based on their psychological background. The collaboration of politics and psychology has been useful in solving complex societal problems.

### Single Case Design

#### *History*

The single case design is by no means a new concept in psychology, in fact Fishman (2006) argues that much of psychology's development during its initial years was through study of single case designs. Piaget, Freud, Skinner, Henry Murray, Carl Rogers, all utilized single case designs to share their approaches with the field.

The case study remained the predominate type of research until after World War II when the field of psychology started to look at more group-based experimental approaches.

Recently there has been a revival of the single case design. Fishman (2005) makes the argument:

The basic unit of psychological practice is the case – be it an individual, a group, an organization, or a community. When a practitioner (or practitioner team) works with a case, he or she deals with the case holistically, looking in context at the problems, goals, situations, events, procedures, interactions, and outcomes associated with the case. Why then does the case as such disappear when it comes to published research underlying psychological practice? (p. 1-2)

Due to work by Fishman and others, single case designs have come into favor again for some practitioners.

*Pragmatic Psychology*

Fishman (2005) argues for case studies to follow a pragmatic paradigm. In order to understand this paradigm it is imperative to understand what other paradigms exist. Fishman explains that currently the main paradigms in psychology are the traditional model and the interpretive model. He describes the traditional model as experimental, group-based, quantitatively focused, and theory-driven, and the interpretive model as, naturalistic, individual-case-based, qualitatively focused, and description-and-discovery-driven. He goes on to advocate for the creation of a third paradigm, an integrative pragmatic alternative in psychology which can complement the other models and be useful in the applied and professional psychology domains . He calls it the pragmatic paradigm and states that this paradigm:

Seeks to transcend psychology's dialectical culture wars by developing an integrative alternative. This approach combines the epistemological insights and value-awareness of skeptical, critical, and ontological postmodernism - here referred to in group as the interpretive paradigm - with the methodological and conceptual achievements of the traditional paradigm. Thus natural science methods and concepts are employed, not only for the traditional goal of discovering general laws of human nature, but also for the practical goal of achieving the democratically derived objectives of particular, historically and culturally situated social groups. (p. 6)

Fishman distills the foci of pragmatic psychology as “the systematic, qualitative and quantitative study of (a) human cases generally; (b) human service program clients, specifically; and (c) the human service programs that serve those clients” (p. 10).

### *Pragmatic Case Design*

This pragmatic paradigm lends itself the creation of single case designs, as Fishman (2005) notes:

Because there are few empirically falsifiable high-level principles that transcend specific situational contexts, to understand and cope with a particular psychosocial problem, it is necessary to assess needs and develop solution-oriented interventions within the context of the particular problem. This means that theory and research should deal with problems as they holistically present themselves in actual situations, and that programmatic interventions administered to single clients (be they individuals, groups, organizations, or communities) should be studied, documented and assessed as whole units for a proper understanding and evaluation of these programs. Thus the pragmatic paradigm argues that actual cases - in all their multisystemic complexity and contextual embeddedness - should be one of the crucial units of study in applied and professional psychology. (p. 7)

Fishman further argues his point based on the work of philosopher-psychologist Stephen Toulmin (1990), who argues for pragmatism focusing on case studies in order to address specific problems in specific contexts. Fishman goes on to discuss the ability of the pragmatic case study to bridge the divide between the traditional and interpretive paradigms, “the pragmatic case study method has a capacity for conceptual integration, incorporating the empiricism and quantitative sophistication of the traditional model with the holistic, contextual, and qualitative emphases of the interpretive approach” (p. 33).

### *Rationale for Use*

Single case designs can be used to develop scientific, psychological knowledge which should be seen as equal and complementary to more experimental knowledge based on groups. Psychologists from many different backgrounds and theoretical orientations have begun to use the single case design for reporting clinical observations, exploring theories, and documenting effectiveness with cases. Fishman suggests that single case designs are accessible, natural, and engaging and can:

Re-inspire the public to become more involved in serious democratic debate about human service programs. Citizens will be able to see that psychologists, through their case studies, value the "real" experiences of individuals. Thus, this work can directly connect with the public's own lives and enhance the connection between their personal world and human service program outcomes and policies. (p. 34)

Single case designs are not limited to psychology, as they have also been used in other fields, such as anthropology, sociology, political science, and program evaluation (Fishman, 2006).

### *Single Case Design and Evidence Based Practice*

Another trend in psychology that has recently been the topic of much discussion is evidence based practice. Goodheart, (2005) examined the single case design in regards to its fit within the framework of the APA Evidence-Based Practice in Psychology (EBPP) Model. The American Psychological Association defines EBPP as “the integration of the best available research with clinical expertise in the context of the patient’s characteristics, culture, and preferences” (American Psychological Association, 2005, as cited in Goodheart, 2005, p.2). Goodheart makes the argument that single case studies are



valuable in creating evidence for practice, “the model provides a broad-based framework that allows for the placement of psychotherapy case study outcomes in a systematic, evidence-based context, complementing the results of group-based efficacy studies” (p. 1). Single case studies are particularly valuable as they can address specific factors seen in the field that may not be addressed in larger group studies. Goodheart presents the argument that single case studies should be used to complement larger laboratory driven studies citing the EBPP Model, “best research evidence comes from ‘scientific results related to intervention strategies, assessment, clinical problems, and patient populations in laboratory and field settings as well as to clinically relevant results of basic research in psychology and related fields’” (Goodheart, 2005, p.2). The argument continues that it is imperative to be able to use multiple research designs in order answer a variety of questions, one such method being the single case design. This design is particularly useful as it is able to incorporate both quantitative and qualitative processes and data.

## CHAPTER III

### PROJECT DESIGN

#### Current State of Affairs vs. Desired State of Affairs of the RU Ready Program

The primary goal of the pilot year of the RU Ready Program was to design a civic education program for high school seniors in order to increase their civic engagement. The YPPP, as directed by Dr. Matto, found a need for a program designed toward the target population based on research of scholarly articles as well as discussion with community leaders, school personnel, and other academics. The established need was for a program targeting high school seniors in order to get them engaged civically. This engagement could take place in a variety of forms, such as those proposed by CIRCLE. Though there were other published civic curricula available, the YPPP felt the need to create something new based on discussions with school leaders. Many of the published curricula involved many sessions and some were designed as a daily class. School leaders stated that they did not have the time or resources to provide civic education in such a time consuming manner. They did feel that civics education was important and wanted to provide something to increase civic engagement, but a program would have to fit in with their already established curriculum. A program would also have to fit within school norms and routines.

Based on the feedback from school leaders, Dr. Matto, the RU Ready interns, and this author (from here on known as the RU Ready Team) set out to write a curriculum based

on the expressed needs. Each part of this group brought skills and abilities that were vital to the design of the program. Dr. Matto brought knowledge of civic education programs and political science. The interns, a group of eight Rutgers undergraduates majoring in political science and enrolled in the Internship/Political Science Course, brought a workforce and ability to do research. This author brought knowledge of schools as organizations, curricula, and strategies with working with minority students and students with emotional and behavioral disabilities. Each part of the group also brought areas that would need further development in order to best design a civics education program. Dr. Matto and the interns needed training in curriculum design for high school students, working with and in schools, and how to work with challenging and minority students. These needs were determined based on discussions with Dr. Matto and the interns as well as an assessment that this author created and administered. This needs assessment was voluntary and five interns participated. The results of the needs assessment showed that the interns as a group had diverse backgrounds yet very little teaching experience, and no experience at the high school level. (See Appendix B for full assessment). This author needed to increase knowledge of civics education and political science, which was accomplished through readings suggested by Dr. Matto.

#### *How Needs Were Met*

##### *RU Ready Intern Trainings*

Once the needs of the interns and Dr. Matto were established, this author met with Dr. Matto to discuss the best way to meet the needs. From our discussion it was decided that the best way would be to provide workshop style training sessions for the interns. This method was decided upon for many reasons. The method allowed for hands on training

with the interns about teaching and working with students. It also served as a model for how to teach a class, as this author would be teaching the interns with methods they could replicate in the high schools. The model was flexible in that it allowed for additions and substitutions of what was being taught based on immediate concerns of Dr. Matto or the interns. Questions and concerns could be promptly addressed during the training.

Once the training session method was decided upon, this author spoke with Dr. Matto about what topics should be addressed. Based on our discussion and the data collected from the needs assessment, it was determined that the interns needed training in writing curricula, teaching practices, classroom management skills, and school culture. This author then decided that the best way to convene this information was through a PowerPoint presentation with an experiential component. It was also decided that Dr. Matto would only be present for part of the presentation. This was decided so that the interns could feel comfortable asking questions without Dr. Matto being there. Dr. Matto had evaluative power over the interns which made some interns uneasy with asking questions as they did not want to present as unknowledgeable. The presentation would occur before the interns had any interaction with the students in the high schools.

The PowerPoint presentation started with the interns assembling around a large oval table in the dining room of the Eagleton Institute of Politics. The training started with a brief general knowledge trivia quiz. During this time this author acted in a very authoritarian way, scolding interns who arrived late, taking cell phones that rang or beeped, not letting interns ask questions, forcing interns to follow my rules, etc. After the interns finished the quiz and corrected their answers we discussed how it felt to take the quiz under the conditions this author created. The interns responded that they did not like

it and some even responded that they felt like they were back in high school. This author explained that the feeling like they were back in high school was exactly the point of this exercise. The goal was for the interns to experience this way of teaching in a negative manner so that they would be more aware of how not to teach. We debriefed this exercise and discussed more positive methods of teaching.

After the discussion of the quiz, the presentation moved into a discussion of school culture. The group discussed why it was important to treat everyone in the building with equal respect, such as by using appropriate titles with all adults (Mr., Mrs., etc.). The discussion then moved into how to dress professionally and it was decided that the interns would all wear their official RU Ready t-shirts and tan pants. This would allow the interns to stand out from the students who were close in age. The proximity in age was a concern for Dr. Matto and many of the interns. We discussed how it could be seen as strength in that the students would be able to better relate to the interns. We also discussed the difficulties that it could present as the students might treat the interns as peers instead of teachers. As a group we brainstormed ways to be professional as a measure of gaining the students' respect. Finally we discussed how to follow standard sign-in procedures for a school, as most of the interns were unaware that these procedures existed. It was important to cover the sign-in procedures, as we wanted to start the program off in a positive way and not experience any difficulties before the lessons even started.

The next slide addressed how to build rapport with students and why this was important. Building rapport was paramount due to the discussion based nature of the program as well as because of the controversial topics that the lessons could cover. The

interns needed to establish a good rapport with the students so that everyone would feel as comfortable as possible during the discussions. The interns worked on a standardized introduction and then practiced in front of each other in order to become comfortable with what they were going to say. The introduction included the intern's name, major, and why they wanted to be involved with the RU Ready Program. It also included a simple icebreaker where students would all state their name and a favorite thing, such as favorite musical artist, favorite thing to do on the weekend, etc. By having students introduce themselves the interns were able to learn some names and bond with the students over shared favorites.

Next there was a discussion of rule setting and norm building for the RU Ready sessions. All school rules would be followed but the interns came up with some other rules in order to facilitate discussion, such as students having to raise their hands to speak, only one speaker at a time, no arguing with others opinions, etc. Once the interns determined what rules would be important, we discussed how to actively listen to the students. As a large part of the RU Ready Program involved dialogue with the students, it was important for the interns to be able to show that they were interested in what the students had to say. In order to demonstrate active listening techniques this author had a volunteer come up to read a children's book to me. This author instructed the rest of the interns to pay attention to how this author listened to the story. As the volunteer read the book this author first demonstrated poor listening skills, such as not having eye contact, having poor posture, playing with my cell phone, yawning, etc. Once he read a few pages this author asked the intern to start the book again and this time this author practiced active listening skills, such as maintaining eye contact, asking questions, making

summary statements, etc. The interns then discussed the differences between the readings and how they needed to act when they were talking with students. Part of this discussion included not giving attention to students who were misbehaving as well as providing opportunities for students to participate in dialogues besides actually speaking. Based on the populations of the high schools we knew that there would be many students for whom English was not their first language, as well as students who were not comfortable speaking to the class and so we wanted to provide equal opportunities for everyone to participate. It was decided that dialogues would take place in both whole group and small group situations and that there would also be opportunities for students to provide written responses as appropriate.

Once the presentation had addressed the basics of school culture and interacting with students it moved into a discussion of how to create lessons for the RU Ready program. This discussion revolved around the ideas of differentiated instruction, the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards, making the lessons relevant for the students, using various teaching approaches, and teaching to different intelligences. The presentation also provided sample lesson plans so the interns would have an idea about lesson plan format. Differentiated instruction was important, as we knew that the students would present with diverse abilities and the lessons would be taught in a variety of classes. We wanted to provide a program that would benefit everyone without making separate lesson plans for each class, as we did not have knowledge of each class' strengths and challenges. It was determined that the best way to meet everyone's needs was to create a lesson plan that would target different strengths for the various types of students we would encounter. The lesson plans would also need to align with the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content

Standards. This was important because the lessons would be taking time away from the normal school day in which these standards were met. Aligning the lessons with the standards also helped to “sell” the program to school officials as they saw it as meeting the needs of the standards. The lesson plans also needed to be relevant to what the high school students were currently experiencing in their civic lives. Civics education research stressed that this was important in order to engage students and create an impact. Besides being relevant, the lessons needed to engage the students based on their strengths. The VAK (visual, auditory, kinesthetic) approach was discussed and the interns spoke about ways to incorporate these styles into the lessons. Lessons would need to include both discussion and hands on activities in order to meet everyone’s needs. Gardner’s theory of Multiple Intelligences was also discussed and the interns worked on ways to address these as best as possible. By discussing the ideas of differentiated instruction, the content standards, making lessons relevant, the VAK approach, and multiple intelligences, the interns had a foundation about how to write the lesson. This foundation aligned with sound educational practice that most school officials were familiar with. By aligning with practice, the RU Ready lessons were developed as a product that school officials could relate to and want to incorporate into their curriculums.

Once how to write the lessons was covered the presentation moved into how to work with “difficult” students, including students with behavioral or emotional disorders. This part of the presentation was based on the text “Succeeding with Difficult Students” by Canter and Canter (1993). The presentation provided the interns with some common reasons that students are disruptive or noncompliant, such as a need for attention, firmer limits, or motivation, as well as how to recognize the need. This author discussed and



demonstrated some of the behaviors that difficult students often exhibit so that the interns could see what they look like. Once the interns seemed comfortable in identifying the behaviors that a difficult student might exhibit we moved into how to deal with the behaviors. It was decided that the classroom teacher would be the first line of defense in disciplining students who were being difficult, yet it was still important for the interns to know how to work with the students in case the classroom teacher was not responding in a timely manner. We discussed basic classroom management techniques as well as techniques to be used if a student confronted one of the interns. Though it was decided that a confrontation would be a highly unlikely occurrence, the interns expressed a desire to know how to handle the situation. Some interns were especially nervous about entering Out of District School based on the population served there. By discussing how to handle a confrontation the interns expressed that they felt more at ease in entering the schools and teaching the lessons. Once the interns learned how to identify difficult students, and how to deal with the behavior, they practiced their new skills. The interns formed small groups to teach part of a sample lesson to the rest of the interns and this author. Small groups were used because that is how the interns would be teaching the lessons in the schools. As the interns taught the lessons, the rest of the interns portrayed various disruptive behaviors and the teaching interns responded. While this was occurring this author provided suggestions to the teaching interns as needed so that everyone could learn how to best use the skills.

The presentation then covered where the students were developmentally. This discussion was based on theories by Erik Erikson, Jean Piaget, David Elkind, and Lawrence Kohlberg. This portion of the presentation provided the interns with a basis in

how to relate to the students as well as how to develop appropriate lessons. Though these theories are psychological in nature it was important for the interns to learn about them so they could understand where the students were coming from.

The next part of the presentation covered cultural competence, as the high schools in which the program would take place were very diverse. This discussion covered bias, how to relate to others, and how the students' backgrounds influenced their outlook on civic engagement. This discussion was based on the civics education literature about how race and ethnicity affects civic engagement as well as materials from the Psychological Interventions with Ethnic Minority Clients and Families course at GSAPP.

The final parts of the presentation were a question and answer session and an evaluation. Interns were encouraged to ask questions throughout the presentation, but this time allowed for any questions that were missed. The evaluation portion of the presentation involved interns providing feedback about how useful they found the presentation. This could be done verbally or interns could write out anonymous comment cards. Overall, the feedback was positive and the interns stated that they felt much more comfortable in writing lessons as well as going into the classrooms. The interns expressed that they were nervous and fearful about entering the classrooms and though they still had some of these feelings they felt much better due to the training. Interns felt that the section about where the students are developmentally was the least useful.

### *Follow Up Training*

During the second semester of 2007-2008 year Dr. Matto requested that this author provide a follow up training to review what was provided in the initial training. Dr. Matto felt that this training was necessary to refresh the interns on the material previously

covered. This training would also be useful as an additional intern was added to the team who had not received the initial training. The follow up training reviewed everything from the first training but was strengthened with more context as the interns already had the experience of teaching a lesson in the high schools. Interns were able to better relate to the material and were able to ask more specific questions based on their teaching experiences. This training also allowed for the interns to practice their newest lesson plan, which had not been taught.

### *Lesson Plans*

Another one of the author's responsibilities as a member of the RU Ready Team was to assist the interns with the lesson plan writing, as they had no experience with this process. Dr. Matto, the interns, and this author first met to decide what the lessons should focus on. We knew that we had limited time to spend with the students, as we would only be entering the classroom three times over the course of the year. We also knew that the lesson plans would need to differ slightly from school to school due to differences in population and class length. With these restrictions in mind we set out to determine what topics should be covered in the three lessons. It was determined that the first lesson would be "Because Politics Matters," the second lesson would be "All Politics is Local," and the third lesson would be "Voting 101." Once the main idea for each lesson was determined the interns began working on developing a lesson to teach the idea. As interns developed the lesson, Dr. Matto and this author would review the lesson and provide feedback. This author specifically checked the lesson to make sure it was "school friendly" and would be appropriate based on students' abilities. As politics is often a touchy subject this author needed to make sure that the material covered would not upset

anyone in the school and therefore would be “school friendly.” This was also accomplished by sending finalized lessons to the school principals to make sure that the topics were appropriate. This author also needed to make sure that the lessons met the perceived abilities of a high school senior. For example, one of the original lessons included a section where students would analyze a political cartoon revolving around immigration. This author met with the interns and Dr. Matto and expressed concern that this section might not be “school friendly” or meet with the students’ abilities. This author also did not feel that it was “school friendly” due to immigration being such a sensitive subject, especially in the high schools that we were entering. This author also felt that the cartoon was very difficult to understand and therefore might not have met with the students’ abilities. After discussion with Dr. Matto and the interns it was decided that the political cartoon idea would not be used and that immigration would be a subject discussed though we would set parameters around the discussion in order to contain possible hostility.

For each of the three lessons a similar process was followed. First, the entire team would meet to discuss ideas about what to include in the lesson. Next, the interns would work to develop a lesson, asking questions or for assistance, as needed. Once a rough draft of the lesson was created, Dr. Matto and this author would review the lesson and meet with the interns to make suggestions. Sometimes before a meeting was held Dr. Matto and this author would review the lesson and make suggestions through email. After the meeting the interns would work on incorporating the suggestions and then would present another draft to Dr. Matto and this author. If no further revisions were needed the lesson plan would be finalized and the interns would rehearse the lesson. Dr. Matto and

this author would observe the rehearsals and work with the interns on their presentation. If further revisions were necessary the interns would incorporate them and resubmit the lesson.

### *Evaluation*

As the lessons were developed the team decided that there needed to be some sort of evaluation built into the lessons. Based on the limited time available in the classrooms the team decided that the evaluations needed to be brief and simple. Through team discussion it was decided that the best way to evaluate the lesson would be to solicit student feedback, and the best way to accomplish this would be to have students fill out comment cards at the end of the lesson. On the card students would respond to the following statements: “One Thing I Enjoyed, One Thing I Would Change, One Thing I’d Like to Know More About, and One Big Idea From Today Was...” The team developed these questions as an easy way to sample what went well, what needed to be improved, what needed more emphasis, and if the students were grasping the concepts discussed.

### *Young Leaders Conference*

In addition to the three lessons taught in the schools, the RU Ready Program offered a “Young Leaders Conference” to select students at the end of the year. This day-long conference was held at Eagleton and further explored youth civic engagement while referring back to the three classroom lessons. Activities included guest speakers, hands on projects, and discussion with the interns, EIOP staff, and politicians. Due to the involved nature of such a conference the team spent considerable time designing the day. This designing took place in the same format as the lesson plans, with the whole team initially deciding on topics, the interns developing more detailed plans, and Dr. Matto and

this author reviewing the plans. Again, most of the review was focused on making the conference “school friendly” and matching the students’ abilities. Once the day was planned a decision had to be made about which students should attend. The team decided to leave this decision to the schools. One school decided on sending their seniors who were involved in a leadership group within the school. The team also decided to not invite the students from Out of District School. This was a difficult decision to make and input about the decision included the opinion of the principal. Ultimately it was decided that there would not be enough supervision available for these students at the conference.

## CHAPTER IV

### PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

Lessons needed to be written and rehearsed before the interns presented them in the high schools. Presentation in the schools was often a multi-day affair in order to reach most of the senior class. For Urban School 1 and Urban School 2 it was determined that the lessons would be presented during an English class. This was decided based on input from the school leaders. Every senior was required to take an English class and therefore this period gave the RU Ready team the best chance of teaching every senior. For Out of District School, the lessons would be taught during a “specials” period because all of the seniors would be in this class at the same time. Before each lesson the entire RU Ready team would meet to determine which interns would teach which class. The lessons were taught by groups of two to three interns at a time, and in some instances there would be more than one class receiving a lesson at the same time. Once the teaching groups were established the interns were responsible for determining who would bring the supplies for each team and how they would get to the high schools.

#### Observation and Feedback Sessions

Dr. Matto and this author made every effort to observe each class that received the lesson. This was done in order to help the interns feel supported as well as to help the interns if they had any difficulty in teaching the lesson. Another reason for the observation was so that we could provide feedback to the interns at the end of the lesson.

Dr. Matto and/or this author would try to meet briefly with the interns directly after a lesson to provide some quick feedback. Dr. Matto, this author, and/or the interns would also try and brief the next group of interns about what went well and what did not go well during the lesson. In some instances sections of the lesson were modified or cut based on prior experience. After the day was complete Dr. Matto and this author would email out comments and suggestions to all of the interns, allowing feedback to be incorporated before the next day of lessons.

A few days after the lessons were completed, Dr. Matto and this author would meet with the interns to debrief and provide feedback. During these sessions interns critiqued the lesson and discussed what went well and what did not. These sessions also allowed for interns to share particularly difficult experiences that they had. During the discussions this author would empathize with the interns, often about how difficult it is to teach without formal training. Dr. Matto and this author shared our observations with the interns about how the lessons went and what could be improved for next time. At times during these meetings this author suggested that the interns share their experience by completing the phrases, “something that went really well during the lesson was...,” and, “something that needs to improve for next time is...” This framework allowed for positive feedback, which at times seemed to be lacking in the discussions. It also minimized negative feedback by turning it into a more useable form of things to work on.

After the first set of lessons was completed this author met with Dr. Matto and discussed the idea of individual feedback sessions in addition to the group format. This author felt that this would be an effective way to discuss individual strengths and weaknesses with interns privately. It would also allow for more targeted feedback, which



would not be appropriate to share in the group setting. Though Dr. Matto agreed that individual feedback sessions would be helpful it was decided that this was not possible due to time and scheduling constraints. Though an individual feedback session after each lesson with Dr. Matto and this author was not possible, Dr. Matto was able to meet individually with the interns towards the end of the first semester regarding their grades for the internship. This allowed for some individual feedback regarding the RU Ready Program and Dr. Matto incorporated feedback that this author provided her about each intern.

### Young Leaders Conference Implementation

The Young Leaders Conference required extra communication among the team as the event would last much longer than the lessons and was much more involved. The students were split into groups that would be led by two to three of the interns. Dr. Matto and this author “floated” throughout Eagleton checking in on all of the groups and making sure everything went smoothly. By not having set assigned tasks, Dr. Matto and this author were able to also speak with the teachers from the high schools that were chaperoning the students. This allowed us to gain feedback as to their thoughts of the day and the program, as well as allowed us to develop rapport with the teachers so that we would continue to be welcomed in their classrooms.

### Barriers to Implementation

The first barrier was developing a common language and understanding between the political science interns, Dr. Matto, and this author. The interdisciplinary approach of combining political science and school psychology needed to be worked out. In order for this barrier to be overcome, the interns and Dr. Matto needed to learn about school

psychology and this author needed to learn about political science. Some of this knowledge was gained through discussion as a team. The trainings provided for the interns also allowed for the exchange of knowledge and ideas in order to create a common language. Everyone worked to not use acronyms, as they were often specific to a field. It was common for individuals to ask for clarification when acronyms were accidentally used. The team needed to develop a comfort level with each other in order to be able to communicate effectively, which took time. Time was limited due to the need to create and implement the program early in the academic year. The process of developing a common language lasted the entire year with everyone finally integrating by the end of the Young Leaders Conference.

Another barrier faced was getting school administrators to “buy in” to the RU Ready Program and welcome it into their schools. Though administrators from each school liked the idea of a civics engagement curriculum, they struggled with how it would fit into their already busy schedules. This barrier was addressed by having the RU Ready lessons fit within the NJ Core Curriculum Standards. By fulfilling these standards, administrators could defend incorporating the program into their schools as it was not entirely replacing anything and would instead supplement the established curriculum.

Once administrators accepted the idea of the program, a barrier developed in communicating with them. Though administrators seemed eager to incorporate the program into their schools, difficulty was experienced when contact was attempted during the school year. Administrators were often too busy to respond to Dr. Matto and this impacted on when the sessions would occur. This barrier was dealt with in a variety of ways. Dr. Matto assigned communication with Out of District School to this author in

order to reduce the number of administrators with whom she was attempting to communicate. Communication with Urban School 2 required numerous calls and emails due to the principal being very busy. Due to the lack of communication with the principal, Dr. Matto began communicating with a teacher in whose class the program would be taught. This teacher was able to champion the program and arranged everything for the program to be administered. Though Dr. Matto was able to find a champion for the program, which allowed for the program to be administered in the school, a tremendous amount of time was spent setting everything up. This resulted in Urban School 2 only receiving two of the three RU Ready Lessons. Another barrier was selling the idea of interns majoring in political science leading the classes, as they lacked teaching skills. This was addressed by training the interns in basic teaching methods and by supporting the interns with Dr. Matto and this author's guidance throughout the program.

Another set of barriers arose regarding the relationships amongst the interns. It was critical that the interns were able to work together and develop professional relationships. This presented difficulties because of the individual personalities involved as well as the varying degrees of work ethic. Some interns took the RU Ready Program very seriously while others did not. This caused tension among the group as deadlines approached and not everyone was working equally. Though the interns did not need to be friends to work together, a basic level of respect for each other and the program was necessary. As the program developed the tension within the group was noticed, though this author held off on intervening as the work was being accomplished and it was hoped that the interns would be able to settle their differences on their own. Eventually a few interns

approached this author to discuss other interns not doing their fair share of work. This author met with Dr. Matto regarding the best way to handle the situation and we decided that she would meet with some of the interns to discuss the situation. Additionally, work would be divided up in small groups that the interns chose. This allowed interns to decide whom they wanted to work with, which helped the interns get along. Though the problems were never entirely resolved, working relationships developed and there was less tension among the group.

Another issue with the interns revolved around professionalism in the classrooms. Though the interns did an excellent job developing as professionals during the course of the year, there were some setbacks to this professional development. One setback involved the interns being relatively close in age to the students they were instructing. This presented numerous challenges, including the students viewing the interns as peers rather than teachers. The interns were susceptible to this view as well and at times tried to relate to the students in inappropriate ways, such as joking with the students about inappropriate subject matter. It was important to develop a professional manner in order for the students to take the interns seriously. This issue was addressed in trainings with the interns and discussed in numerous meetings with Dr. Matto and this author. Overall the interns were able to develop a professional stance from which to teach though there were some difficulties along the way. The close proximity in age should not be entirely seen as a detriment as it was also strength to the RU Ready Program. Civics education literature has found that students are most likely to learn and become engaged when similar peers advocate for them to do so. The interns were able to relate to the students on levels that more experienced teachers simply could not. Interns had a better

understanding of the issues facing the students civically as the interns were often faced with the same issues. By being able to relate to the students on a more experiential level, the interns were in turn able to motivate the students.

Developing rapport between the students and the interns also created some challenges. Though rapport building was stressed during the intern trainings, the initial part of the lesson (where the groundwork for rapport building was supposed to be laid) was at times rushed. This was partially due to the interns feeling nervous and this section being the first part of the lesson. This section involved the interns introducing themselves and then asking all of the students their names and something about them (e.g. who is your favorite musical artist). The section was repeated in a similar format for each of the three lessons with the question changing to another thing that students liked. Students seemed to find this approach a waste of time as they already knew each other and therefore did not need to hear everyone's name. Students also did not seem to enjoy sharing something about themselves. Many students suggested changing the icebreaker section of the lesson on the comment cards. This was a difficult section to modify because the team did not want to spend too much time on a more involved icebreaker, resulting in less time for the actual lesson, yet also wanted to develop a solid rapport with the students. The team also had difficulty developing questions that would be "school friendly." It seemed that no matter what question was asked, some students were not comfortable answering. The interns worked hard to provide a supportive environment, and even answered the questions themselves, yet this section of the lesson always presented some difficulty for the interns.

Basic issues of public speaking, such as speaking loudly and clearly, also became barriers for the interns. In Urban School 2 the heating and cooling units in the classrooms created a great deal of environmental noise and interns had difficulty speaking loud enough. Issues of public speaking were addressed by having Dr. Matto or this author observe the interns in the back of the classroom to provide nonverbal cues regarding volume or how much time was left in the class. Some interns experienced particular difficulty when discussing sensitive topics with the students and at times made jokes most likely due to their feeling uncomfortable. Though these jokes may have made the interns feel better, they reduced the level of professionalism in the room. Professionalism was also reduced when interns did not have a good command of the lesson and needed to depend on the written lesson plan. This made the interns appear unknowledgeable and amateur. Professionalism was also reduced when interns arrived late to teach sessions, or called out at the last minute, which required the lessons be taught by either a substitute intern or with fewer interns than necessary. Dr. Matto and this author addressed all of these issues during feedback sessions with the interns. We reiterated the reasons it was important to remain professional no matter what the circumstances, explaining that we were guests in these schools and need to present in the best manner possible so the schools would continue their relationship with the program. We also advocated for the interns to spend more time practicing the lessons so they would not need the lesson plans. As a team we brainstormed ways for the groups of interns to help each other out if one member forgot what was supposed to be happening. We also worked as a team in brainstorming ways to handle difficult subjects without making jokes.

Though the interns were mostly open to the feedback provided by Dr. Matto and this author, at times they expressed difficulty in accepting what we had to say, citing that they were not teachers and should not be held to that standard. Dr. Matto and this author met to discuss these concerns and then informed the interns that we were not expecting them to be experienced teachers, yet we were expecting them to be proficient in skills taught in the training and to have a mastery of the lesson plan. Some interns had a particularly hard time taking feedback because this author was seen as more of a peer. Though this was a setback it was also a strength as other interns accepted more of what this author had to say based on common experiences. This was extremely reflective of the intern/student relationship that was playing out in the classrooms.

Barriers in evaluation were also experienced. Time ran out in some of the classes so the students were unable to fill out the comment cards. Some students did not want to fill out the comment cards after the lessons, though encouragement from the interns helped convince some initial resisters. Some students also had difficulty understanding how to answer the statements and so the interns helped individually as needed. Another barrier were students who wrote answers that they found humorous. For example, a few students thought it would be humorous to answer the “One Thing I Would Like to Learn More About” prompt with the name of an intern. Though students were encouraged to write serious answers, the team expected some level of less useful answers during the evaluation.

There were also barriers with more formal means of evaluation. Dr. Matto had planned for each student to take an online civics engagement assessment before and after participating in the RU Ready Program, which she developed and hosted online. Dr

Matto met with administrators and they seemed willing to have their students participate in the assessment. Though there was an agreement for the students to be assessed many logistical issues arose. Students' parents would need to fill out a consent form for their child to take the test. Many of these consents were not returned even though teachers continually asked for them. Dr. Matto spoke with administrators about changing the consents to be passive (parents would have to sign in order for their students to NOT take the assessment) but administrators were not comfortable with this idea. Dr. Matto was able to allow students who were eighteen or over to sign the consent for themselves, increasing the number of students who could take the assessment. Some schools did not have the computer resources available for the students to take the test, and at times teachers were not willing to give up a class period to send students to the computer lab. Each student was assigned a random number to identify his or her test. Having students follow the procedure of entering the number to access the assessment was left to the teacher, which was not always successful. Students were supposed to take the assessment prior to the RU Ready Program starting and after completion of the program in order to compare the results to determine if the program had any effect. Not every student who took the pretest completed the posttest due to some of the issues already mentioned.

Another set of barriers revolved around teaching lessons at Out of District School. Some interns were fearful of the population served by Out of District School and did not want to teach there. As there was only one class and therefore one period to be taught, this barrier was overcome by finding three interns that felt at least somewhat comfortable working with the population. This author met separately with this group to discuss their reservations and help them feel at ease with entering the classroom. The group discussed



the population served by Out of District School and what one might expect when working with this population. During sessions at Out of District School this author took a more active role in helping teach to help the interns feel more at ease. Once a group of interns had been established as the Out of District School teachers the author and the interns took a trip to Out of District School so they could meet the students before the day of the first lesson. This was supposed to just be a brief introduction of the interns and the program to the Out of District School class. Some miscommunication with the classroom teacher occurred and she thought that the introduction was going to be an entire class and therefore expected the interns and this author to teach the class, as she had nothing prepared for that day. The interns were uncomfortable with this idea as they had nothing planned and were not expecting to be put on the spot. This author did not want to disappoint the teacher or appear unprofessional in front of the students and so this author met briefly with the interns and told them that this author would lead a group discussion about civic engagement based on limited knowledge and would simply hope that they could fill in where needed. The interns agreed and this author spoke with the students about why it was important to become civically involved. Luckily there were a few very vocal students who engaged in the conversation and the interns and this author were able to appear confident and prepared. Another barrier to implementation with Out of District School was the increased potential for students to become argumentative due to their disabilities. this author spoke with the interns about this potential and reassured them that this author would be there to help if anything went wrong. During one session a student became very upset at what the other students were saying and pushed over a table to try and engage other students in a fight. The Out of District School staff quickly intervened

and removed the student, though this author could tell that the interns were surprised at the action and tentative with continuing the lesson. This author stepped in to turn the negative experience into a teachable moment and discussed the right to disagree in a peaceful way. This provided the interns with a minute to collect their thoughts and prepare for the next part of the regular lesson. Though Out of District School presented unique challenges to implementation, the interns did a great job in running the program and the principal commended the team for a job well done.

According to Rogers (2003) there are a few characteristics of intervention programs that affect implementation, including relative advantage, compatibility, complexity, trialability, and observability. The RU Ready Program possesses these characteristics in a way that was conducive to implementation. Relative advantage refers to the degree that an intervention is seen as better than what it is replacing. The RU Ready Program was not seen as entirely replacing anything, yet it did take time away from the normally scheduled classes. While this was a concern for school administrators, the RU Ready Program incorporated the NJ Core Curriculum Content Standards into the lessons and therefore it was justifiable that the regular class would be replaced. By following the standards the RU Ready Program was also compatible with the overall school mission. Special attention was paid during the design phase of the lessons to make sure they would address some of the English content standards, as the lessons would be taught during English classes. The RU Ready Program would only replace the class three times over the course of the school year, and so administrators did not see the program as a huge interruption to the regular curriculum. In addition to following the standards and not taking up too much time, the RU Ready Program brought with it some degree of “social

prestige” in that schools could advertise their collaboration with Rutgers, the EIOP, and GSAPP. Out of District School went far as to include an article and pictures about the RU Ready Program in their parents’ newsletter.

The RU Ready Program can be seen as a relatively simple program and is run with little support from the school. This added to administrators’ willingness to adopt the program. Because the RU Ready Program was in its pilot year the trialability (degree to which you can try out a program without adopting it entirely) was rather low, though administrators could stop the program after any of the sessions if they did not find it useful. The observability (the degree to which the adopter will see the results of the program) was at first thought of as low for the RU Ready Program, as the main goal was to get students involved civically in their communities. However, the observability increased as the program was implemented. The team found out that students in some schools were incorporating what they learned in their schools. For example, after a lesson on how to get engaged and create change in your community, students from one high school started a petition asking for the privilege to leave the building for lunch. Though the principal of this school could not allow this due to safety and liability concerns, he was impressed that the students learned how to create change and were motivated to do so. The principal met with some students to explain why leaving was not possible and to brainstorm other possible privileges for the senior class.

Specific barriers to the Young Leaders Conference also arose during the planning and implementation stages. There was a lot of work to be accomplished in order for this day to be successful and many things could go wrong if it was not carefully planned. This potential barrier was overcome through hard work and dedication of the entire team.

Work was divided so that everyone was in charge of a particular part of the day. This allowed for all of the events to be developed individually and then amassed as a team. Another barrier was getting the students to Eagleton. This was addressed by Eagleton sending transportation to the schools if necessary. It was important to have solid relationships with the schools by the time of the conference so that they would feel comfortable in sending students to Eagleton. The continued professionalism of the entire team made the schools feel at ease and gained their trust.

Though there were many barriers during the RU Ready Program pilot year, none of the barriers were insurmountable. Through discussion and teamwork the program was able to address both design and implementation concerns. With the guidance of Dr. Matto and this author, the dedicated team of interns was able to create and implement the RU Ready Program in three high schools over the course of a year.

## CHAPTER V

### OUTCOMES AND RESULTS

#### Student Feedback

Approximately 175 students participated in the RU Ready Program, with about 65 students from Urban School 1, 100 students from Urban School 2, and 10 students from Out of District School. The overall student feedback collected after each session was overwhelmingly positive. In general, students were agreeable to filling out the comment cards and a lot of data was collected. This raw data was then analyzed and reported to Dr. Matto and this author by the interns. It is important to note that though the questions on the cards were initially agreed upon as “One Thing I Enjoyed, One Thing I Would Change, One Thing I’d Like to Know More About, and One Big Idea From Today Was” the wording changed as the lessons were taught, though the main concepts stayed the same. This was done to make the questions more applicable to some lessons and because the interns would recite the questions from memory which caused some fluctuations.

Determining the best way to report the data also changed as the lessons progressed. For the first lesson, “Because Politics Matters,” the interns decided to retype many of the comments collected. Comments that were irrelevant were left out (such as asking female interns for their phone numbers). Though this method yielded a great deal of data, it proved to be too time consuming. This method also did not provide a clear picture of how to modify the lessons in order to improve. The team determined that it would be more

useful to synthesize the responses into main ideas and then list how many students responded that way. This method was used for analyzing the second lesson, “Politics is Local” and proved to be less time consuming while providing the richness of information needed to better the lessons. Data for this lesson was also broken down by class in order to determine if students had different reactions to different interns teaching. For the third lesson, “Voting 101,” the interns decided to group responses into four categories: positive response, negative response, no response, and notable responses. Notable responses included information that was especially useful in analyzing the lessons and could be from any of the first three categories. The data was grouped into overall responses for both schools, overall responses by schools, and responses by class. This method proved to be the most useful way to analyze the data, though it was at times difficult to classify a response. Some responses simply did not fit well within the categories and so a judgment had to be made about how to make them fit. This was in part remedied by the notable response category where data could be recorded qualitatively. The combination of quantitative data supplemented with the qualitative data was found to be the most useful approach to analyzing the RU Ready Program.

The least amount of usable data was collected from Out of District School, as these students were the least likely to fill out the card and the most likely to fill out the card with irrelevant information. This may in part be due to some of these students having learning disabilities that affected their ability to understand the question and/or formulate a response. Students may also have been oppositional to filling out the cards based on other disabilities. The small class size of Out of District School’s senior class also contributed to limited data being collected. Though the cards from this school were not as

useful, conversations with the students provided some insight as to how the lessons were being received. Before lessons two and three, interns would ask the students what they remembered from the prior lessons. Students from Out of District School were able to recall main ideas and some details with prompting. Reactions to the RU Ready Program were mixed from Out of District School, with students verbalizing very strong opinions. These opinions ranged from wanting to have the RU Ready Interns teach a lesson every day to never wanting the interns to come back.

For the “Because Politics Matters” lesson provided at Urban School 1 students were first asked, “What topics or issues did you enjoy talking about or want to know more about?” The top responses to this question were war, immigration, education, and poverty. These responses were reflective of important issues in the media at the time, and therefore the RU Ready Program concluded that the students had some connection to news media (an indicator of civic engagement). Immigration is an issue that many of the students deal with on a daily basis and opinions ranged from students who wanted to end immigration to students who wanted more information about filling out paperwork for family members. Students who wanted to know more about education seemed to want to change things in their schools or figure out ways to get to college. Poverty is another issue in the city where Urban School 1 is located and so it made sense that students wanted to know more about how to combat poverty. Students were then asked, “Would you change anything if you taught this lesson plan?” Responses to this question greatly ranged with some students responding that they would not make any changes and other students responding with very specific changes. Overall the responses were positive with many students stating that they would want the lesson to last longer or have more lessons.

Some of the responses, such as have a debate, were already ideas that the interns had incorporated into future lessons. Students also advocated for the lessons to be hands on and activity based. The final question was, “What was the big idea or main theme from this session?” Overall students were able to come up with a response that was within the ballpark of “Because Politics Matters.” Students responded with ideas such as, “to get involved in politics,” “our decisions do matter,” and “get involved with the community.”

For the “Because Politics Matters” lesson provided at Urban School 2 students were first asked, “What is one big idea you enjoyed learning about?” Students had a range of responses, including, “I liked that we all discussed issues that are going on right now,” “You can make your voice be heard,” “We have to remember the only way to make a difference is to participate in the process,” and “Everything, no one really talks about things like this.” In response to, “One thing I would change if I taught this lesson” responses were similar to Urban School 1. Some students made specific suggestions about ideas for lessons that were already incorporated into future lessons and wanted more time for discussion. Students’ responses to things they would like to know more about were also similar to Urban School 1. For the “Because Politics Matters” lesson at Urban School 2, a new question was added, “If you could choose one way to participate in your community, which indicator would you pick?” This question was developed as a way to check on the students’ understanding of the variety of ways one can become civically engaged, which was taught as part of the lesson. It also provided some insight as to the ways that youth become engaged. The majority of students were able to name at least one way to become engaged and their answers were typical of youth engagement.



The questions for the second lesson, “Politics is Local” were more standardized in order to reduce variables in student responses. This lesson was not taught at Urban School 2 due to scheduling and therefore the data is a reflection of the students at Urban School 1. Responses to the first question, “What do you think the main idea of this lesson was?” mainly revolved around learning ways to fix issues and be active in the community. The overwhelming response to “One thing you would change about the lesson” was nothing (74%). Part of this lesson provided the students with contact information for local officials and so they were asked “Now that you have these contacts, do you think it will affect your involvement in your community?” The majority of students responded Yes (66%) with 22% responding No and 12% responding Possibly. Students were also asked if there was any other contact information they would like to have, as only local officials were included due to the main idea of the lesson. Many students asked for contact information for the president, which was shared in a future lesson.

Data collected for the final lesson “Voting 101” was synthesized in a more quantitative manner and therefore was able to be combined across both Urban School 1 and Urban School 2 to provide an overall picture of the lesson and the RU Ready Program in general (Appendix C). The combined school data showed that students overall enjoyed the “Voting 101” lesson with 98% of students providing a positive response. Students also enjoyed the RU Ready Program overall, with 89% of students providing a positive response and 11% of students providing no response. Not a single negative response was given. Responses to “If you were in charge, what would you change about this lesson” were 65% positive (responses such as nothing), 22% negative

(major changes to the lesson), and 13% no response. Responses to “If you were in charge, what would you change about the RU Ready Program overall” were 68% positive (responses such as nothing), 8% negative (major changes to the program), and 24% no response. The majority of students (62%) planned on being involved with the upcoming election (by voting or other ways), with 22% not planning on being involved and 16% not sure if they would be involved or not. Data was also collected on how the students who could vote planned to do so, with 52% undecided, 30% for Barack Obama, 17% for Hillary Clinton, and one vote for John McCain.

When segregated by school, the responses to most of the questions were similar. Urban School 1 had a 97% positive response rate to the lesson compared with 98% at Urban School 2. Urban School 1 seemed to enjoy the overall program slightly more with a 92% positive response rate compared to 87% at Urban School 2. The responses to changing the lesson and the program were also more positive for Urban School 1, with rates of 70% positive, 17% negative and 13% no response for changing the lesson, as compared to 62% positive, 25% negative, and 13% no response at Urban School 2. For changing the program, 73% of responses were positive, 13% negative and 14% no response for Urban School 1, compared to 65% positive, 5% negative, and 30% undecided for Urban School 2. Rates of being involved with the election were similar with 63% involved, 25% not involved and 13% no response for Urban School 1, and 62% involved, 19% not involved, and 18% no response for Urban School 2. Urban School 1 had more of an opinion as to whom they would vote for with 42% voting for Obama, 13% for Clinton, and 45% undecided. Urban School 2 was 22% for Obama, 20% for Clinton, 56% undecided, and one vote for McCain.

Notable responses were also recorded for the “Voting 101” session. These responses provide some detail as to how the students truly felt about the lessons and program. Overall, students enjoyed the active approach of the lesson. Comments included, “I like how we got to experience an actual presidential election,” “it was funny and it gave us practice about elections, I learned a lot,” “being first time voters it taught us what to look out for,” and, “it made me think of things I never really think about.” The RU Ready Program as a whole was also well received. Comments from the “What did you like about the RU Ready Program Overall” question included, “their help and guidance,” “the way they got students involved,” “they have great teaching methods,” “they made learning about politics fun,” “RU Ready is really interactive, they don’t just talk, we actually do things,” “it’s encouraging that Rutgers wants me to get involved in politics,” “the presenters were very knowledgeable about the subject matter,” and, “the program is effective and a good step in reaching out to students.” Though the responses to the lesson were mostly positive, some students had suggestions about how they would change the lesson, including, “need more time,” “more excitement because politics isn’t so exciting,” “it should have been longer and more specific,” and, “I would ask permission to do this type of activity in the auditorium with a bigger crowd of seniors.” Students’ suggestions about how to improve the overall RU Ready Program mainly focused on having more lessons and included, “more time in the classroom,” “have more sessions, more often.” Some students were unable to write a way to improve the program and instead provided positive feedback including, “I couldn’t change anything, RU Ready is a good program, they are fun and they talk about things we face in our daily lives,” “nothing, keep doing things like this, its great,” and, “honestly, nothing, they were good and knew exactly what

they were doing.” Student responses to being involved in the upcoming election were more positive (62% overall stating that they would be involved) and here is an example of where the qualitative data really provides some detail as to how students were impacted by the RU Ready Program. Responses to “Do you plan on being involved with (either voting or in any other way) the upcoming election” included, “no, I believe that a change will not occur,” “yes, thank to you guys, now that I am 18 I will vote and I’ll be the first on in my family ever to vote,” “after today I am going to get involved,” “yes I do, I want to be able to change the world with my candidate,” and, “I will be registering people to vote.” The qualitative data also provides more information about why students picked one candidate over another when asked which candidate interested them the most. Responses to this question included, “Hillary, because she is against the war,” “Barak Obama, because he is Black,” “Obama, an interesting person with a unique background who I believe can make change,” “I’m unsure, I have to pay more attention when they speak,” “Hilary, she is a female,” “I’m unsure, but plan on looking more into it and will know by election day,” and, “Obama because I have looked at his views and agree with them.”

#### School Administration and Teacher Feedback

Administrator and teacher feedback was collected as the RU Ready Program went on. This data was mainly gathered through conversations and a final focus group at the conclusion of the program. The response from teachers and administrators was overall positive. Administrators offered their schools as continued sites for the RU Ready Program based on the success of the pilot year. Had administrators felt that the program was not a benefit to their schools they could have asked that the lessons be discontinued

before completion of the program and would not have offered their sites for future implementation.

Teacher feedback was also positive. The chaperones at the Young Leaders Conference discussed how the program added to their curricula and provided opportunities that the students would not have received had the program not been offered. Teachers often thanked the team for implementing the program.

Out of District School also included an article in their Fall 2007 newsletter. The article detailed the RU Ready Program including information about each lesson.

### Intern Training

Data regarding the training of the RU Ready interns for the pilot year was collected through direct feedback with the interns and Dr. Matto as well as through observing the interns in practice. Dr. Matto expressed that she felt the trainings were very useful and necessary to the success of the program. She felt that the trainings provided vital knowledge and skills to the interns, teaching them how to be effective in the classroom. The interns also expressed that they felt the trainings were useful and necessary for their success in the classroom. The interns found the school culture, rapport building, listening skills, lesson plans, and succeeding with difficult students sections of the training to be the most helpful. Rule setting, speaker power, token economy, developmental levels of students, and implicit bias were less helpful or not helpful at all. Less helpful sections were determined as sections that did not directly relate to the interns work on a continual basis. Ideas such as the token economy were not used due to schools not wanting the interns to incorporate the method.

Observation of the interns provided data as to their progress in being able to effectively teach the RU Ready lessons. Observation also provided insight into the interns' ability to incorporate what was taught at the trainings as well as suggestions Dr. Matto and this author made while providing feedback after every lesson. The interns made tremendous progress during the development of the RU Ready Program. They started out as a group of undergraduate students majoring in political science taking an internship course at The Eagleton Institute of Politics and transformed into teachers capable of leading difficult classroom discussions, engaging students, and writing detailed lesson plans. Teaching skills greatly improved from the "Because Politics Matters" lesson to the "Voting 101" lesson. Interns were more confident with teaching and were better able to handle any unexpected difficulties that arose.

After completion of the program the interns met with Dr. Matto and this author to discuss their thoughts and reactions to the year. The interns recognized their transformation and many expressed a well-deserved sense of pride in their accomplishments.

### Ethical Issues

The American Psychological Association's Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct is a set of practice standards that psychologists must follow. Some of these standards were relevant to the author's practice as a practicum student with the RU Ready Program. The following discussion will outline the standards and their relevance. The standards are broken down into two parts, Ethical Principles and the Code of Conduct.

Principle A, Beneficence and Nonmaleficence, requires psychologists to benefit those with whom they work and take care not to harm them. This was a principle that the author had to follow while working on the RU Ready Team. Part of his responsibility was to train the interns in order to make them better teachers. He also worked to make sure the program would benefit the students. Parts of Principle B, Fidelity and Responsibility, involve developing and maintaining proper relationships with those who the psychologist works with, being aware of responsibilities to the community, upholding the standards of conduct, and consulting and cooperating with others. The author worked to make the relationships that he developed as part of the team professional while being aware of his responsibilities as a team member. He also made sure all of the work performed fit within the standards. Consultation and cooperation were key aspects of the work on the team. Principle C, Integrity, requires psychologists to be accurate, honest, and truthful, all traits that the author expressed while working on the team. Principle D, Justice, states that everyone should be able to have access to and benefit from psychology. This principle was a driving force in bringing the RU Ready Program to traditionally underserved populations. Principle E, Respect for People's Rights and Dignity, requires psychologists to respect the dignity and rights to privacy of all people while being aware and respecting differences including those based on age, gender, gender identity, race, ethnicity, culture, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, disability, language, and socioeconomic status. These differences were all considered and included as part of the intern training.

The code of conduct provides detailed requirements of the principles. Many of these requirements applied to this author's work with the RU Ready Team. Standard 1.03, Conflicts Between Ethics and Organizational Demands, requires psychologists to notify

an organization if there is a conflict between demands of the organization and the ethics code, clarify what the conflict is, make the organization aware of the code, and do the best they can to resolve the conflict. Though no major conflicts arose during this author's work, the author was mindful of issues that created conflict and followed the procedures set forth in the code. For example, the interns would often meet together for social gatherings and at times invited the author to join them. The author felt that this would violate standard 3.05, Multiple Relationships, which requires psychologists to not form other relationships with people when they are already in a professional role with them. Multiple relationships are forbidden as they can impair psychologist's objectivity, competence, and effectiveness. As the author was in a professional role with the interns, and especially because this was a role in which he was required to rate their performance, the author abstained from joining in social activities with the interns. The author explained the requirements of the code and why he could not participate while he thankfully declined. Standard 2.01, Boundaries of Competence, limits psychologists to practicing within areas in which they have received education, training, supervised experience, consultation, study, or professional experience. Remaining within the boundaries of one's competence is especially vital when factors associated with age, gender, gender identity, race, ethnicity, culture, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, disability, language, or socioeconomic status come into importance. As the specific population of students who received the intervention encompassed many of these diversities, the author was careful to make sure he had adequate training in order to work with the population. When situations arose where this author did not feel that his training was adequate he sought out professional consultation. Standard 3.09, Cooperation With



Other Professionals, requires psychologists to work with others in order to best serve their clients. This author worked with the RU Ready Team in order to best develop the RU Ready Program. He also worked with Dr. Matto in developing trainings for the interns. According to standard 3.10, Informed Consent, psychologists are required to obtain consent of the client when conducting research, assessment, or consultation. Oral consent was obtained before providing trainings to the interns and consent was obtained from students' legal guardians before implementation of the RU Ready Program.

Standard 3.11, Psychological Services Delivered To or Through Organizations, requires psychologists to inform clients about what services will be provided, who will receive the services, and the relationship between psychologist and the organization. This author spoke with Dr. Matto and the interns about what services would be provided and the consultation and training relationship that he would maintain.

#### The Future of the RU Ready Program

After the pilot year of the RU Ready Program, Dr. Matto determined that the program should continue based on the positive feedback received from administrators, teachers, and students. Dr. Matto and this author discussed the best way to continue the program based on our observation of the process of creating, implementing, and evaluating the program throughout the year. It was determined that the RU Ready Program would continue much in the same format as the pilot year. Rutgers students would work as interns on the project, though their role would change slightly as the bulk of the lessons were already developed. Interns would work to improve the lessons based on the data collected as well as take on a new role as mentors to the Urban School 1 High School student council. Dr. Matto would continue to oversee the project and supervise the

interns. Though this author would no longer be a practicum student working on the project, this author would provide consultation services and trainings for the interns. A few of the former interns who were still at Rutgers would serve as mentors for the new set of interns. They would help the new interns with the process, reducing some of Dr. Matto's responsibilities so that she could contribute to other projects. The former interns would also work on the RU Ready website.

After the pilot year it was decided that the RU Ready Program would scale down and only work in Urban School 1. The program wanted to be more involved and provide more services to the schools, such as working with student government. It was not possible to provide the desired intensity of services to three schools and so a decision had to be made as to in which school the program would continue. Urban School 1 was decided upon for a variety of reasons. Urban School 1 administration was very open to having the program return for a second year. Their block schedule was more conducive to the program as it provided more time for lessons to be taught. The RU Ready Program also felt that continuing to work in Urban School 1 was an excellent way to give back to the community that is close to Rutgers. The proximity of Urban School 1 to the Eagleton Institute of Politics made it easier for the interns to commute to teach lessons. The student population was broad and so less specialized training would be needed to work with the students. Overall, the RU Ready Program ran the smoothest in Urban School 1 during the pilot year. With all of these factors combined it was determined that continuing the program at Urban School 1 would result in the most effective change in students' civic engagement.

The team also discussed continuing the RU Ready Program at Out of District School. Though there were challenges to implementing the program at Out of District School, the team wanted to make sure that they at least discussed the possibility of continuing implementation, as the program was so well received. It was decided that because the author would no longer remain as a full time member of the RU Ready Team it would be impossible to continue implementation at Out of District School. The training and ongoing support that the interns would require would not be available and so it was determined that the success in implementation would not continue. By not having the necessary team members available the quality of the program would suffer and the team decided that they rather not run the program at a lower standard.

## CHAPTER VI

### DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Differences in Results Between Schools

The RU Ready Program should be considered successful for the impact created in the pilot year, as well as for being developed, implemented, and evaluated in only one year. Equally impressive was that undergraduate interns did a lot of the work and this was their first experience with development, implementation, and evaluation of a program. The collaboration between political science and school psychology created a synergistic effect allowing for such a great undertaking to be completed in one year.

The data collected and analyzed from the student feedback shows that the majority of students enjoyed participating in the RU Ready Program. Urban School 1 enjoyed participating in the program slightly more than Urban School 2 (92% to 87%). Not a single student responded that they did not like the program, though some abstained from answering the question. It is important to note that students in Urban School 1 received all of the lessons and therefore had more information to develop an opinion, which may have resulted in less students abstaining and higher rates of positive responses. Students in Urban School 1 had higher rates of response on every question asked after the “Voting 101” lesson. Students in Urban School 1 responded that they would not change the RU Ready Program more frequently than Urban School 2 (73% to 65%), which collaborates with their more positive feeling about the program. The larger African-American

population in Urban School 1 may have also influenced the positive response statistics.

According to the CIRCLE data, African-Americans are very engaged group and therefore the students may have been more open to the RU Ready Program from the outset.

The data regarding being involved in the upcoming election was similar for Urban School 1 and Urban School 2 (63% and 62%), yet more students in Urban School 1 stated that they would not be involved (25% to 19%). This may be due to Urban School 1 students being more decisive as more students in Urban School 2 abstained from answering (13% to 18%). Which candidate would receive the students' votes was very different between schools. For Urban School 1, 42% of students stated they would vote for Barack Obama, compared to 22% in Urban School 2. Hillary Clinton was the favorite in Urban School 2, with 20% of students responding they would vote for her versus 13% at Urban School 1. Urban School 1 was again more decisive with 45% of students not responding compared to 56% at Urban School 2. Results of this question may in part relate to the demographics of the cities in which these schools are located. The city in which Urban School 1 is located has more than double the percent of Black residents of the city in which Urban School 2 is located (23% to 10%) and therefore the student population also has more Black students. The city in which Urban School 2 is located is 69.8% Hispanic/Latino compared to 39% of Urban School 2. These demographics may have influenced students' responses. In the 2008 New Jersey Primary, 82% of Black voters voted for Obama, while 68% of Hispanic/Latino voters voted for Clinton (<http://politics.nytimes.com/election-guide/2008/results/states/NJ.html>). The data from the primary shows that more Black voters voted for Obama, and the school data shows that the school with more Black students favored Obama. The primary data also shows

that more Hispanic/Latino voters voted for Clinton and the school data shows that the school with more Hispanic/Latino students favored Clinton. Based on the comparisons the school results seem typical.

Though data were not collected that would allow conclusions to be made about how the program affected students with disabilities within Urban Schools 1 and 2, the results of the Urban Schools can be compared with those of the Out of District School. The majority of Out of District School students found the program to be a positive addition to their curriculum, yet some students had a very negative reaction to the program. This reaction may be in part due to the students' disabilities and not necessarily their true feelings about the program. Some students seemed to disagree with the program as a way to engage and challenge the interns or their teacher. Most students participated in all of the activities, though engagement levels were again varied. A major difference between the Urban Schools and Out of District School was the student mobility rates. Students in the class at Out of District School varied from lesson to lesson and therefore not all of the students received all three of the lessons. This presented some challenges as the program progressed as parts of the lessons build on prior lessons. Students who were not in the school for the earlier lesson had difficulty catching up and would at times challenge the interns and refuse to participate instead of seeking clarification. Though this reaction could have been predicted, the team was not prepared to deal with the high student mobility rates, and therefore the negative reactions that some students had to the lessons.

### Recommendations for Continued Success

The Youth Political Participation Program, and the RU Ready Program in particular, need to determine what their goals are for the future. Once the goals are determined an action plan to achieve the goals can be developed. A goal can be as simple as continuing to implement the RU Ready Program at Urban School 1 for one year, yet all goals should be specific, measureable, attainable, relevant, and timely or SMART (Maher, 2000). By creating SMART goals, the RU Ready Program will have a better understanding of the direction they are heading and can then determine the best way to continue.

The RU Ready Program should make every effort possible to continue to include the Out of District School population. This is an greatly underserved population that deserves the same opportunity as their in-district peers. This population is traditionally comprised of minority students who need more encouragement to be engaged civically. Work with this population requires specialized training and supervision of interns, which are the main reasons that the program was not offered at Out of District School after the pilot year. It was determined that the author was not available on a regular enough basis to provide training and supervision for the interns that would work in Out of District School. This situation could be remedied by continuing to have school psychology graduate students as part of the RU Ready Team. Although including another school psychology practicum student would be a good way to continue being able to offer the RU Ready Program at Out of District School, finding a student who is willing to work on the team presents some challenges. After the completion of the author's practicum year he proposed having another practicum student fill his spot for the upcoming year to the RU Ready Program and GSAPP. Both agreed that another intern would be optimal.

Though everyone was on board with having another practicum student on the RU Ready Team, current school psychology students were not as eager to work with the program. It was determined that the student would need to be at least in the third year of study due to the knowledge and skills necessary to be part of the team, and it would be ideal if the student were working towards the Concentration in Psychological and Systems Support for Learning. Of the students who were part of the concentration none had an interest in working within the political science field, and so the search broadened to include any student entering the third year or beyond. The students who met this requirement were also not interested in working within the political science field. This resulted in the author providing consultation and training for the second year of the RU Ready Program as opposed to a new school psychology practicum student filling the role. If a practicum student is going to be secured in the future, GSAPP and the RU Ready Program will need to figure out a way to promote the practicum site that makes it more appealing to students. One way to do this would be to change the emphasis of working with a political science department and change it to the collaboration, working with underserved populations, and program planning and evaluation aspects of the practicum. Another idea could be to reach outside of GSAPP for a practicum student, perhaps looking at other school psychology graduate programs or programs that train teachers. Though a practicum student from the teaching field would not have the same expertise as a school psychology student, the teaching student would be able to fill some of the roles provided by the author, such as teaching the interns how to work with students and write lessons. The teaching student would have to have a special education training background in order for them to work with the interns in working with Out of District School. The author



could also use his experience to put together a brochure delineating the benefits of working as part of the RU Ready Team to be distributed to interested graduate students.

The RU Ready website should be continually updated and maintained in order to promote the program. The internet has the unique ability to reach millions of people across the world and a website can serve as an excellent tool for promoting a program, providing information, and serving as a means of communication. The website currently includes information about the RU Ready Program, the RU Ready team, and the district where the RU Ready Program is implemented. It also includes resources for local and national media, information about volunteering, contact information for public officials, information about how to write a letter to a public official, and information about how to vote and other ways to be involved. The information on the website serves to educate individuals who are interested in the program and provides resources for students who are involved in the program and others who want to be civically engaged. Contact information for the program is also provided. The website is well designed and is a great tool for promoting the program, however, getting to the website is somewhat difficult. When “RU Ready Program” are entered as the keywords for a search using Google the RU Ready Program website is the first result. However, when “RU Ready” are used as the keywords, the RU Ready Program website does not show up within the first ten pages of search results. The phrase “RU Ready” is used by many other organizations, both within and outside of Rutgers University. The RU Ready Program should work to secure the rights to the “RU Ready” phrase in order to be able to best promote the program. If this is not possible they need to focus on developing their brand in order to distinguish the RU Ready Program from other RU Ready sites not related to the program. At a

minimum, the RU Ready Program needs to make sure that the website appears when related searches are preformed, such as “RU Ready” instead of “RU Ready Program.”

The website address could also be simpler and therefore more user friendly. Currently the address is <http://www.eagleton.rutgers.edu/programs/ruready/index.php>. If the address could be shortened to <http://www.ruready.edu> it would be much easier to find and remember.

Boundaries between RU Ready team members need to be made clear. Without clear boundaries team members are confused as to who is responsible for what and this creates tension. Roles and responsibilities need to be explicit so that everyone knows who has power and who does not. This is especially important when adding new roles, such as adding the former interns as current intern advisors. During the pilot year tension developed, as the interns were not sure of the author’s role versus the role of Dr. Matto, especially in regards to evaluation. At times the author ended up playing the role of an intermediary between the interns and Dr. Matto. The boundaries were fuzzy due to the author being a graduate student and not a staff member at Eagleton. The interns had difficulty distinguishing exactly what the author’s job was. As this was the first time a collaboration of this kind occurred, a clear role for the author was not developed and the role evolved over the course of the year. The evolution made it difficult to determine a description of the author’s role. That author worked to inform the interns of his role as it developed and maintained professional boundaries at all times. During the second year of the RU Ready Program, the role of the author was defined as consultant and therefore less difficulty arose. The second year did present with boundary issues, as now the intern advisors did not have clear job roles. Tension surfaced between the interns and the intern

advisors. The author worked with the entire team to develop roles and clarify expectations to resolve this matter.

Trainings for interns will continue to be important for the success of the RU Ready Program. The trainings serve to teach the interns how to interact with students and develop as professionals. As each group of interns is different, a needs assessment should be conducted before each training in order to determine what the focus of the training should be. Feedback should be collected after each training to determine the usefulness of the training. Feedback can provide information about how to improve the trainings and if the interns mastered the content of the trainings.

Observation of interns teaching and feedback about their lessons will also continue to be paramount to the success of the program. As most of the interns have had little to no teaching experience they will continue to need supervision and feedback in order to develop their skills. The feedback should be specific and done individually with each intern in order to provide targeted suggestions. The intern advisors and Dr. Matto should provide feedback, as their perspectives will encompass varying points.

Assessment data of the program needs to continue to be collected through the student assessments. Issues with the online assessment need to be worked out and the assessment should be given before and after the completion of the RU Ready Program. This will create a data set that can be analyzed to determine if the program had an effect with a student. Demographic information should be collected in order for the effect data to be segregated by variables such as student gender, age, special education classification, and which interns taught the student. By segregating according to demographics, the RU Ready team will be able to tell what effect the program is having for particular students

and which interns are creating more of an effect. Students' plans to be engaged civically based on the 19 indicators of civic engagement should also be studied before and after the RU Ready Program implementation. As the data shows that different populations get involved in different ways it is important to assess all the ways that the students' could be involved.

### Civics Education for Special Needs Students

The RU Ready Program was successful in promoting civic engagement with the Out of District School's unique population. The pilot year proved that implementing and assessing a civics education program can be done in an out of district setting. Implementing a civics engagement program similar to the RU Ready Program had not been attempted with this population prior to the RU Ready Program's pilot year. Nowhere in the civics education or school psychology literature are studies involving encouraging this population to become civically engaged. The concluded findings from this year proved that though there are challenges, civic engagement programs can be successful with this unique population. Students in special education programs, who may have learning disabilities or present with behavioral challenges, can be educated about civic engagement and encouraged to participate in the civic process. This often overlooked population deserves the same opportunity as their regular education peers. This population can make a contribution to the civic landscape and needs to be encouraged to do so, as they are often not provided the opportunity to participate in a variety of arenas. These students can make a contribution to society both now and as they mature into adulthood. The federal government has made efforts to include special education students in similar programs as regular education students through programs

and policies such as IDEA. The RU Ready Program can serve to carry out this mission by providing the same opportunities for out of district students as their in district peers are being offered.

Though the RU Ready Program was successful in Out of District School, it would benefit from further modifications to meet the needs of the Out of District population. Lessons need to be engaging and relevant to the populations' unique experiences. The lessons should be as active and hands on as possible to maintain student interest. Student disabilities and accommodations should be researched before the start of the program. By understanding the needs of the students and how the school meets those needs the lessons can be designed to incorporate accommodations. In particular, reading and comprehension levels need to be taken into account in order to make the lessons understandable for the students. The team should also work with the school to determine how to respond to students who do not want to participate in the program. These students should be excused as their presence can create a distraction for the other students.

#### Relevance of Evaluative Data

The RU Ready Program would not have been as nearly successful for the pilot year without utilizing evaluative data. This involved ongoing study and assessment while the RU Ready Program was developed and implemented, as well as taking the findings from the study and assessment and putting them into use during development and implementation. Evaluative data allowed for immediate changes to better the program. It would not have been possible to incorporate these changes using more traditional research and evaluation methods. In more traditional methods the entire program would have needed to be implemented and then evaluated before possible changes were

determined. By utilizing evaluative data, the RU Ready Program was able to adapt and evolve almost immediately to overcome barriers and challenges. The successful implementation of the program hinged on being able to adapt and overcome barriers and obstacles, which would have not been possible without utilizing evaluative data. This data was vital due to the lack of prior research available regarding political science and professional psychology collaborations and civics education with specialized populations. Though a body of research existed about civics education and engagement, the research did not include working with students with disabilities. By utilizing evaluative data the RU Ready team was able to overcome the lack of prior research by developing their own body of research to base decisions on. This research provided the team with the data needed to make informed decisions about how to develop and modify the program. Without the research the team would have made ungrounded decisions, which would not have benefited the program. Without evaluative data, the RU Ready Program could of potentially failed due to design flaws and not being able to make necessary modifications during implementation.

#### Interdisciplinary Studies and the Future of School Psychology Training

The success of the RU Ready Program during the pilot year strengthens the argument for the use of interdisciplinary studies when examining broad issues. The combination of political science and school psychology resulted in the successful development, implementation, and evaluation of a civics engagement program. The problems faced today require broader understanding and many can not be solved solely through a single field approach. Fields must band together to determine solutions to complex problems. Without pulling from the expertise of various fields, problems will never be completely

understood, yet alone solved. It was imperative for the political science faction of the RU Ready Program to seek out guidance with the schooling aspects of the program.

Furthermore, the RU Ready Program would not have been able to be implemented in the Out of District School without the guidance and understanding of the school psychology field.

School psychologists will need specific knowledge and experiences in order to participate in interdisciplinary research. The knowledge and experiences can come from the school psychologist's formal training. Training programs must take into account the value of interdisciplinary research and place an emphasis on training school psychologists to be able to participate in such collaborations. The traditional segregated mindset of many training programs and the larger formal education system must be abolished and collaborative research should be given the same recognition as individual study. School psychology training programs should seek to collaborate with other fields, whether or not they appear to be related. School psychology and political science are not two fields that would be traditionally grouped together, yet though bridging the gap between these fields a program was able to be developed, implemented, and evaluated. Traditional collaborations, such as school psychology and education, will continue to be important, yet the school psychology field should take advantage of the ability to branch out to more nontraditional collaborators.

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## APPENDIX A

## SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY PROGRAM GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Goal 1. To understand and engage competently in the professional practice of school psychology at the individual, group and organizational levels in schools and related settings.

Objective 1.1 To understand and engage appropriately in psychological assessment, so that relevant and accurate information is gathered, analyzed, and used in making decisions in the service of students.

Objective 1.2 To understand and engage appropriately in intervention and prevention so that the psychological development and educational achievement of students may be enhanced.

Objective 1.3 To understand and engage appropriately in classroom and school consultation so that teachers, administrators, parents, and other stakeholders are provided with guidance and advice in support of the psychological development and educational achievement of students.

Objective 1.4 To understand and engage appropriately in program planning and evaluation so that programs, products, and services can be designed and implemented that will add value to students, staff and other stakeholders in schools and related settings.

Goal 2. To understand and apply the scientific method of empirical inquiry as this method relates to psychology and education, in order to foster research-referenced practice and data-based decision making in school psychology.

Objective 2.1 To define and clarify problems, decision situations, or gaps in knowledge pertinent to research and practice in school psychology.



Objective 2.2 To consider alternative methods of addressing problems, decision situations, and/or gaps in knowledge using both quantitative and qualitative frames of reference.

Objective 2.3 To consider the efficacy and effectiveness of alternative ways to solve problems, address decision situations, or develop new knowledge.

Objective 2.4 To draw appropriate conclusions from empirical methods of investigation that are consistent with the quantitative or qualitative framework used, the contextual conditions, and the resulting data.

Goal 3. To understand and apply thinking about systems to school psychology research and practice at the individual, group, and organizational levels.

Objective 3.1 To understand and appreciate the impact of context and systems on problems of children and adolescents in schools and on service delivery.

Objective 3.2 To understand and appreciate how to develop solutions to problems and challenges facing students and schools, which address multiple systemic influences.

Goal 4. To understand human diversity, especially in terms of students in schools, and to develop skill in working with individuals and groups from diverse racial, cultural, ethnic, linguistic, socio-economic, and gender-related backgrounds.

Objective 4.1 To recognize that diverse backgrounds and contexts are basic factors in the influence of behavior in school settings and are fundamental reference points for the design and delivery of school psychological services.

Objective 4.2 To recognize the implications of diversity for working with, respecting, and helping students in schools.

Goal 5. To apply collaborative problem solving and communicative skills within school and community contexts, in the service of the psychological development and educational achievement of children and adolescents.

Objective 5.1 To participate comfortably and effectively as part of multidisciplinary teams with the intention of working to enhance the psychological development and educational achievement of students.

Objective 5.2 To communicate ideas and opinions effectively regarding the nature of student problems and conditions, and about potentially effective solutions.

Goal 6. To understand ethical practice and social responsibility.

Objective 6.1 To understand ethical issues in school psychology practice.

Objective 6.2 To understand and appreciate the importance of schooling and healthy development of all children and adolescents.

## APPENDIX B

### RU READY INTERN TRAINING NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The following is the assessment given to the RU Ready interns. Questions are in bold, summaries of responses are in italics, and full responses are in normal font.

***Please describe yourself in regards to your race, ethnicity, culture, religion, etc.***

*2 White*

*1 Thai-American*

*1 South Asian*

*1 Jamaican descent*

- First generation Thai-American
- South Asian (born and raised in US), Hindu, observes both Hindu and American holidays and traditions
- Jamaican descent, Christian
- White
- White; European: ½ Italian (3<sup>rd</sup> generation) ¼ Polish (3<sup>rd</sup> generation), ¼ Irish, Roman Catholic

***Do you have any sort of teaching experience, if so what sort (grades, ages, subjects taught)? This experience does not have to be formal instruction in a school setting; any sort of experience would be helpful to know about (such as teaching classes at a summer camp, etc.)***

*3 Some experience*

*2/3 with experience with elementary/middle school age*

*1/3 with experience with college age*

*2 No experience*

- Orientation leader for college freshman for 2 years (requires running of discussion groups)
- Taught math and language arts to 1<sup>st</sup> graders, tutor for 6<sup>th</sup> grader, worked in YMCA assisting young children with homework
- None
- None
- CCD assistant teacher (religious studies to elementary school aged students), babysitting at day camps and gyms (children 12 and under)

***Do you have any other experience working with children, particularly high school aged children?***

*All "No" responses*

***Do you have any experience working or dealing with others from backgrounds different from yours? What was this experience?***

*4 Some experience with others*

*1 Experience within family*

- As orientation leader works with people from all over the US as well as foreign students (Saudi Arabian). Practices Capoeira (Brazilian martial art), visited Brazil stayed in a *favela* (shanty-town), had to adjust to culture and speak a different language.
- At YMCA had lots of experience working with people from diverse backgrounds
- Has worked with people from various backgrounds, ages and cultures on different projects, programs and events
- Has worked several different jobs in which co-workers have been of different races and nationalities. This includes current job at the College Ave Computer lab.
- Family is of different ethnicities, share their differences as learning experiences

***What was the high school that you attended like in regards to socioeconomic status, ethnicity, etc.?***

*3 Middle class*

*1 Middle to upper class*

*1 Very well off economically*

*3 White*

*2 Very diverse*

*1 Catholic*

*1 Rural*

- Middle class, very diverse (with students of all backgrounds and religions: Asian, Middle Eastern, South Asian, European, Mediterranean, South American, the islands, etc. and religions such as Judaism, all types of Christianity, Buddhism, Muslim).
- Very well off economically, very diverse
- Middle to upper class, white, Catholic high school
- Middle class, white, rural
- Middle class, white

***Have you had any psychology-related classes in high school or college?***

*4 Intro to Psychology or other psychology classes*

*1 No*

- No
- Psych 101, planning to take another psychology class in Spring '08 semester
- One class in high school and two in college
- Intro to Psychology and Abnormal Psychology
- Intro to Psychology

***Have you had any education-related classes in high school or college?***

*All "No" responses*

***What is your major and current year in college?***

*4 Political Science majors*

*1 Political Science/ Communication double major*

*3 Juniors*

*2 Seniors*

- Political Science, Junior
- Political Science/Communications, Junior
- Political Science, Senior
- Political Science, Senior
- Political Science, Junior



## **GROUP INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

### ***Classroom Management Skills***

1. Do you know of any classroom management skills?
2. Have you ever used any classroom management skills?
3. Can you think of any classroom management skills that were used with you when you were a high school student?
  - a. Were they effective?
    - i. Why?
    - ii. Why not?
4. What do you think the purpose of classroom management is?
5. Do you think that classroom management skills are something that can help you with implementing the RU Ready program?
  - a. Why?
  - b. Why not?

### ***Culturally Sensitive Proficiency***

1. What do you think being culturally sensitive means?
2. What are some ways that you have dealt with someone from a different background (culturally, racial, ethnic, economic) when there has been an argument?
  - a. Were these effective ways?
    - i. Why?
    - ii. Why not?

3. Do you think that being able to relate to someone from a different background in a culturally sensitive manner is something that can help you with implementing the RU Ready program?
  - a. Why?
  - b. Why not?

## APPENDIX C

## RU READY VOTING 101 QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

### “Voting 101”- Questionnaire Responses

Table C1

#### Combined Urban School 1 and Urban School 2 Results

Question	Positive Responses (Question 6: Obama)	Negative Responses (Question 6: Clinton)	No Response (Question 6: McCain or Other)
What did you like about this lesson?	163 98%	0 0%	4 2%
What did you like about RU Ready Overall?	149 89%	0 0%	18 11%
If you were in charge, what would you change about this lesson?	109 65%	37 22%	21 13%
If you were in charge, what would you change about RU Ready overall?	114 68%	13 8%	40 24%
Do you plan on being involved with (either voting or in any other way) with the upcoming election?	104 62%	36 22%	27 16%
Which Candidate in the Presidential election interests you most? Why?	50 30%	29 17%	88 53%

For question six, McCain votes were grouped with the undecided or other votes. Overall McCain only received one vote from a student at Urban School 2. The other 87 votes should be counted as undecided.

Table C2  
*Urban School 1 Results*

Question	Positive Responses (Question 6: Obama)	Negative Responses (Question 6: Clinton)	No Response (Question 6: McCain or Other)
What did you like about this lesson?	62 97%	0 0%	2 3%
What did you like about RU Ready Overall?	59 92%	0 0%	5 8%
If you were in charge, what would you change about this lesson?	45 70%	11 17%	8 13%
If you were in charge, what would you change about RU Ready overall?	47 73%	8 13%	9 14%
Do you plan on being involved with (either voting or in any other way) with the upcoming election?	40 63%	16 25%	8 13%
Which Candidate in the Presidential election interests you most? Why?	27 42%	8 13%	29 45%

Table C3  
*Urban School 2 Results*

Question	Positive Responses (Question 6: Obama)	Negative Responses (Question 6: Clinton)	No Response (Question 6: McCain or Other)
What did you like about this lesson?	101 98%	0 0%	2 2%
What did you like about RU Ready Overall?	90 87%	0 0%	13 13%
If you were in charge, what would you change about this lesson?	64 62%	26 25%	13 13%
If you were in charge, what would you change about RU Ready overall?	67 65%	5 5%	31 30%
Do you plan on being involved with (either voting or in any other way) with the upcoming election?	64 62%	20 19%	19 18%
Which Candidate in the Presidential election interests you most? Why?	23 22%	21 20%	59 57%

For question six, McCain received one vote out of the 59.