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Preparation for Civic Life Matters

Understanding the Role of Civic Learning in the Linked Learning Reform

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy
in Education

by

Ebony Cheir'ee Cain

2012

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Preparation for Civic Life Matters:
Understanding the Role of Civic Learning in the Linked Learning Reform

by

Ebony Cheir'ee Cain

Doctor of Philosophy in Education

University of California, Los Angeles, 2012

Professor John Rogers, Chair

There has been renewed concern about American's disengagement from political and civic institutions (Putnam, 2000). This research explores civic learning opportunities in a current educational reform. Through a mixed-method, representative case study analysis, I examine two school sites implementing the Linked Learning approach to educational reform to determine how the reform structure creates opportunities and challenges to civic learning. Linked Learning is a high school reform that many see as a response to stratification by preparing students simultaneously for college, career, and civic participation (Oakes & Saunders, 2008). However, most of the current research and language describing the reform excludes an analysis of civic learning. The Linked Learning reform continues to grow in popularity and is quickly changing the educational landscapes in places like California and New York, thus it is critical to reignite conversations about civics within this reform. For this reason, Linked Learning provides an ideal space to explore the relationship between high school reforms, the civic purpose of education and the academic and social benefits of civic learning opportunities.

The dissertation of Ebony Cheir'ee Cain is approved.

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Living with a chronic illness, dealing with family loss and managing a growing student debt, made the journey toward my academic and educational dreams messy and terrifying, if nothing else this degree stands as proof that education is worth fighting for. In June 2012 I became the first person in my family to graduate from a university with a doctorate degree. I grew up in a single- parent household and watched my mother overcome drug abuse. Each of these facts was used as evidence that I should be modest in my aspiration (academically and socially). For longer than I'd like to admit, I believe the expectations projected on me. I was never the perfect student, but what I lacked in discipline I made up for in stubborn commitment to proving everyone wrong. I have always been passionate about educational access and using myself to demonstrate the challenges and possibility of achieving the American educational dream. While my peers joined clubs and sports, I spoke out and worked hard to highlight high drop out rates and shockingly low numbers of poor minority students (like me) in my advance placement classes. By senior year my world was shaken when my mother's sister died of AIDS, her 2-year daughter came to live with us. As I watched many of my friends get accepted to

Harvard and Yale and many more end up with no plans about next steps the importance of college only became more apparent. I was accepted to a small liberal arts college in California where I had a chance to fall madly in love with learning. When the realities of overcrowded classrooms, overworked and under paid teachers disappeared, I was able to thrive. I was the same person who was told in high school that kids like me didn't go to college but there I was doing well, a campus leader doing the things that I loved. I graduated in 2005 was accepted into a competitive public policy program. Mid-way through the program my health became a concern and I found myself in the hospital for a chronic condition.

As I think back on it I have spent about the same amount of time in the college health centers as I have in the library, and much of my time as a student I felt like an imposter or a deserter but really I was just creating tiny ripples that I hope will improve the life choices and outcomes of those whose lack of access is interpreted as a lack of potential. I am grateful for the opportunity to share my testimony and to privilege students, teachers and community member just like me.

I would like to offer a special thanks to my mother Michellda Ware who reminds me to be brave, honest and persistent in pursuit of all of my dreams and my brother Tremayne Ware who embodies strength. I also want to thank my sister-cousin Michelle who challenges me and inspires me. I am also deeply appreciative of my step- father Norman Brown who always encouraged my inquisitive nature. Through the process of writing my dissertation, I held fast to the many timeless moments and memories of my Aunts (Alberta Haynes, Peggy Hurst and Donna Haynes) and Uncles (Matthew Haynes. Luther Haynes and Sonny Haynes) whom I strive to be more like them in each of my accomplishments. My Futures, Summer Seminar, YEARS, Linked Learning and Council of Youth Research family has been as important to me as my own

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

The creation of civic learning opportunities is not currently at the forefront of educational reform, to the detriment of the democratic preparation of our youth. Instead educational reformers are preoccupied with subjects that directly translate to the production of profit. This trade-off has resulted in a civic silence: a lack of sufficient civic learning opportunities, particularly for the youth who require them most. Advocates, policy makers and practitioners must fight to reclaim a place for civic learning within this hostile climate. *The Civic Mission of Schools* (2003) defines civic learning as a process through which “young people acquire and learn to use the skills, knowledge, and attitudes that will prepare them to be competent and responsible citizens through their lives” (Gibson & Levine, p. 4). Civic learning opportunities can provide students with a working knowledge of the government structures and functions, impart attitudes about ethical political behavior and encourage engagement through voting and service (Barber, 1984; Youniss & Bales et al, 2002). Activities such as these are fundamentally connected to the preparation and expression of democratic citizenship.

Civic learning opportunities during youth can shape the type of impact that individuals will have on the political system as an adult. Researchers have demonstrated that low-income and middle-income youth have fewer opportunities for civic learning than their more affluent peers. This inequality is similar to what can be observed amongst adults. Studies suggest that the wealthy have a disproportionate impact in the political process especially as measured through political influence and responsiveness (Kahne & Maddaugh, 2008). Therefore, targeting the civic learning opportunities of youth has the potential to impact the engagement patterns amongst adults. Civic learning opportunities help students understand and appreciate their membership in the larger democratic society and give young people chances to enact the roles they will one day assume.

The lack of high quality civic learning opportunities is related to larger patterns of civic silence within the educational discourse. These civic silences can best be illustrated using examples from educational policy reforms. The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001 is a clear example of a policy that influenced educational reform, yet failed to emphasize the importance of civic learning. NCLB was a reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965 and one of the largest bi-partisan bills passed in American history. The concept that “no child” would be left behind (irrespective of socioeconomic status, race, or

gender) seems closely linked to the idea of democracy through education. For this reason, proponents may have seen NCLB as an extension of the work of Thomas Jefferson, Horace Mann or even W.E.B Dubois (Meier & Wood, 2004). The benefits of the reform included an emphasis on funding that serves the poor, making sure students are taught by high qualified teachers and holding schools accountable for raising achievement for all subgroups.

Despite its admirable goals, NCLB has fallen short and faces major criticisms in the areas of teacher quality, accountability and access for disadvantaged groups (Meier, & Darling-Hammond, et. all (2004). For these reasons it seems that NCLB did not make use of its democratic potential. In her chapter on *NCLB and Democracy*, Deborah Meier's explains, "The very definition of what constitutes an educated person is now dictated by federal legislation. A well-educated person is one who scores high on standardized math and reading tests. And ergo a good school is one that either has very high scores or is moving toward them at a prescribed rate of improvement. Period" (67). As Meier's quote illustrates, the very definition of a well-educated person and an effective school has become narrowed as a result of NCLB, leaving little room for the robust development of young people into citizens. The lack of civic preparation that occurs when educational policies are silent on the issue of civics has significant implications for our democracy. Public disengagement, political apathy, lack of parent involvement is just a few of the concerns that go unaddressed when educational policy fails to adequately address the civic.

This study explores civic learning in a reform called Linked Learning (formerly known as Multiple Pathways). This policy is changing the way traditional schools prepare young people for life after high school. Like NCLB, in Linked Learning, civic preparation is not an articulated goal. The general inattention to civics leads to questions about the availability of civic learning in these educational spaces. This study represents a research opportunity to learn more about how civic learning is supported or challenged in this reform context.

The Linked Learning Reform

The Linked Learning model was built on the premise that students learn best when they are engaged through hands-on, real world experiences. As a comprehensive reform model it expresses this belief through four distinct components:

1) A Core Academic Curriculum

Students in Linked Learning schools are expected to have access to a high quality academic program that prepares them for the type of materials they may encounter in a college environment. Toward this end,

many Linked Learning sites include dual enrollment or concurrent enrollment opportunities for students. Through these experiences students gain insights into the culture and content that they will be expected to engage with in college.

2) Access to core technical curriculum

The technical core in Linked Learning schools provides students with a vocational preparation that is connected to the material that professionals encounter daily.

3) Work-based learning opportunities

Work-based learning opportunities allow students to apply the academic and vocational skills that they gain through their formal education. Through this application of abstract concepts students are able to make cognitive connections that makes the learning more meaningful and practical.

4) Support Services

Support services allow students to work directly with adults for assistance (Oakes & Saunders, 2008).

Benefits of Linked Learning

Comprehensive high schools face a number of problems that the Linked Learning reform aims to address. One such problem is curricular tracking. Tracking is the practice of placing students in curricular pathways that mirror broader expectations and stereotypes of those in position of power with little attention to the students' actual potential. As a result, students of color are frequently placed on lower tracks while their affluent and White counterparts are placed on higher tracks (Oakes, 1985). This process is masked by a belief in the meritocratic system of public schooling that normalizes disproportionate racial and class inequalities. By prioritizing college and career preparation, tracking policies lead educators to overlook the need for civic preparation. Linked Learning has increasingly been identified as a response to the long history of curricular tracking by questioning the false dichotomy between college and career preparation, arguing that students should be prepared for both college AND career. "Students who combine a strong academic curriculum with an occupational sequence perform better both at school and at work" (Oakes and Saunders, 2008. P. 44). Therefore, educators and policy makers alike can envision reframing schools to create new Linked Learning sites or to reform existing comprehensive high schools using Linked Learning to combat curricular tracking.

Another advantage of Linked Learning includes the positive academic and social outcomes associated with schools implementing the reform. These schools tend to have higher CAHSEE, graduation and A-G completion rates (Stern and Stearns, 2008). Since 2006 there has been considerable attention aimed at advancing Linked Learning as a promising reform to address issues of equity, low academic achievement and disengaged students. In fact, research on career academies has shown some encouraging trends for addressing these problems through fully integrating career and academic education (Stern et al,

2010). Given the high stakes faced by struggling schools under NCLB, locating reform alternatives with demonstrated results for improving student outcomes is critical. With its desire to create a more equitable learning experience for students and the increased attention that the reform is receiving from both the policy and educational community, Linked Learning is an ideal site to explore civic learning. Therefore, this research seeks to push Oakes and Saunders argument for the integration of technical and college preparatory purposes a step further by including civic learning as a goal of the reform. Civic Learning is not a widely recognized component of Linked Learning but has the potential to be a powerful part of the reform. Therefore, the political stakeholders and academics interested in the reform need more information about civics in Linked Learning.

Linked Learning advocates explain that the reform seeks to mend the rift between vocational education and college preparation by proving that the two do not have to be mutually exclusive. Students in Linked Learning schools take courses such as *Physics- Audio Shop* or *Computer- Aided Drafting Geometry* that bring together courses that would be divided into different curricular pathways. Through collaboration between teachers and students are prepared for both college and career. Linked Learning advocates believe that students should be prepared for the widest range of options so when they graduate they can make informed decisions regarding their future. Yet, missing from the traditional Linked Learning reform literature is the idea that an inclusive educational experience must stress the importance of adequate civic learning opportunities.

Integration: It's not a new idea so why isn't it more prevalent?

As early as 1916, John Dewey advocated for the idea of offering an integrating educational experience in *Democracy and Education*. Although Dewey's work highlights the democratic benefits of integration, much of the subsequent work in the literature on real-world learning, has focused less on democracy and more on integrating career and academic learning. Recently, a number of studies support the idea that blending traditional academic and career-technical learning by claiming it has positive outcomes on achievement test results, course-taking patterns and decreasing drop out rates (Oakes & Saunders, 2008). Despite these benefits there is a number of compelling structural and programmatic challenges that make curricular integration difficult. For example, since the division between CTE and academic education is written into the California educational code this impacts teacher credentialing. It is more difficult to find teachers certified to teach across integrated subjects like physic-audio mechanics. There is also the issue of teacher collaboration being strained by battles "to preserve their programs, retain funding, gain prestige or protect their educational beliefs and philosophies" (Oakes & Saunders, 2008, p.51). Additionally there are programmatic challenges that make integration difficult. The most commonly cited is the issue of scheduling. Integration requires flexibility in the schedule so teachers can collaborate to do joint planning and flexibility so classes that would usually be separated between core and elective can be

jointly offered to students. This form of scheduling challenges the traditional 55- minute class period and the competition that occurs for enrollment and the prioritizing of core classes like English, history, mathematics and science over electives, which more often fall with the CTE programs.

These challenges are significant because they add complexity to the notion that integration is a commonsense and simple solution. There is a need for more longitudinal research on how schools address integration challenges. Compounding this problem is the fact that integration research focuses so heavily on academic and technical learning, “civic” or “democratic” integration is overlooked and absent. Montgomery High School (MHS) offers a rare glimpse into a site that is moving toward addressing this absent. This view of integration could inform our understandings of integrating academic, career AND civic learning.

Study Overview

Beginning in the fall of 2008, I worked with a research team from the Institute for Democracy, Education and Access (IDEA) studying schools implementing educational reforms. The larger study focused on the challenges and strategies associated with high school reform efforts in general, and those associated with Linked Learning, in particular. We visited approximately 40 schools that were in various stages of Linked Learning implementation (from a list of over 100), and asked ten schools located throughout California to participate in this study. The study collected 4000 student, 150 teacher and 25 administrator surveys. Additionally interviews were conducted with 200 students, 70 teachers, 50 parents and 50 administrators. From amongst the ten study schools I selected two schools that were geographically, ethnically and programmatically distinctive from one another to explore the Linked Learning reform more in-depth. Both schools also have made a public commitment to community awareness and involvement. This commitment is visible through published materials and aligns well with the civic nature of this study.

Explanation of sites studied

The first site studied was Montgomery (MHS). Montgomery is an urban, multicultural school that enrolls a total of 131 students. The school is located in a large California city. The school is associated with a large network partner that provides professional development opportunities and grant writing assistance. The school places an emphasis on A-G aligned curriculum and gives students opportunity to engage in real world activities like internships. At first glance MHS does not seem to conform to traditional ideas of the Linked Learning model. Some might suggest the initial perception of incongruence with the model may be because MHS lacks a “technical” core. Technical education is often used synonymously with the concept of vocational education. “Vocational education” (as it was once labeled) was supported through the Smith-Hughes Act of 1917. It was defined as education, “ fit for useful employment; ... less than college grade” (Oakes & Saunders, 2008). Pushing on this limited representation of technical education, the organization

ConnectEd: The California Center for College and Career describes the technical component as “curriculum that provides students with a hands-on, real-world context to their learning” (www.connectedcalifornia.org). To understand this re-conceptualization it is useful to defer to research that describes recent efforts to reform career and technical education (CTE). In his Chapter, “*Blending ‘Hand Work and ‘Brain Work,*” Mike Rose finds that Multiple Pathways (Linked Learning) can place emphasis on valued career and college cognitive skills like, “Acuity in perception,” “Analytical reasoning skills” and “enhanced communication” (Oakes & Saunders, 2008. p.24). Using Rose’s cognitive developmental framing of technical education challenges the narrow view that the purpose of mass education is economic. Instead he argues, “[CTE] should be located in a comprehensive view that includes personal development and intellectual growth, the social contract and civic awareness” (Oakes & Saunders, 2008.p.29). This more nuanced view allows MHS to fit within the Linked Learning model.

AT MHS technical skills are provided to students through internships. Through internships, students work with mentors and more advanced students who model behaviors and skills needed to successfully navigate the professional arena. These skills are strategically developed and evaluated by mentors who are affiliated with an internship site and work closely with advisors to reinforce the learning that takes place back at the school site. The second school site studied was Technology High School (THS). THS is another small high school that employs a technology theme and encourages students to utilize technical skills to engage with the project based learning curriculum. The school exposes students to hands-on educational experiences and college preparation. During the study years the school enrolled approximately 315 students.

These two schools in particular were selected from the larger sample of ten because they have similar stated interests in applied learning and a publicized commitment to community engagement. The differences in population and location made selecting these two school compelling. I also worked as the site leader for both study schools and as a result I had more knowledge of these sites than the others.

Problem Statement

Access to quality civic learning opportunities has the potential to create the necessary educational environment to prepare young people for their current and future civic responsibilities. However, the civic learning opportunities available for many public school students are insufficient. In a longitudinal study of California students enrolled in government classes, Kahne & Middaugh (2008) found that, “a student’s race and academic track, and the schools average socioeconomic status (SES) determine the availability of school-based civic learning opportunities.” Using this evidence, they argue that students suffer from a civic learning opportunity gap. (p. 3)” This gap parallels a broader achievement/ opportunity gap between students across race and class. The term “gap” is helpful in indicating the inequalities in access

to civics experienced by individuals because of discrete characteristics. However, the use of the gap does not sufficiently display the extent of the problems facing civic education. More and more, civics is being overshadowed or excluded from the educational reform agenda. According to the Center for Civic Education, civic education is seen as a dispensable subject rather than an integral part of the core curriculum (www.civiced.com).

The failure to acknowledge the critical nature of civics may be related to the depleted interest and attention to electoral politics, an observable dissatisfaction with the decisions made by elected officials and a general ignorance of the structures of governance displayed by adolescents and adults alike. Policymakers, educators and researchers continue to avoid the problem at hand and instead create reforms that target improving education with an inattention to the civic. Given this pattern, scholars need to have a better understanding of how or if civic learning is occurring within these “civic-less” reforms. The concern is that some schools and districts may be implementing reforms that fail to prepare students for civic life and in the process sacrificing their civic educations.

The Linked Learning reform offers an ideal space to consider this important dynamic because it does not prioritize civic learning. Efforts to extend Linked Learning implementation in state wide policies make no mention of civic development or incorporating civic learning opportunities in their stated goals (Bass, 2008; CDE, 2010). Similarly, the “Coalition for Multiple Pathways” which has changed its name to the “Linked Learning Alliance” has yet to incorporate the learning of civics as a priority for the reform. How can we ensure that civics matters in the future of the Linked Learning reform? Authors have begun to explore civic outcomes in Linked Learning schools but more research is needed (Oakes and Saunders, 2008). The Linked Learning reform embraces certain practices that seem well aligned with best practices in civic education. Like Linked Learning, civic education emphasizes the benefits of project- based learning, internships and real world experiences. Such practices could possibly be the foundation for incorporating civics into civic-less reforms.

Purpose of the Study

There are three related objectives for this research study. Firstly, this project seeks to explore the presence and nature of civic learning opportunities in Linked Learning schools. Effective civic learning opportunities include those activities in which students learn about their political and social environment and the structures and systems that maintain them (Kahne & Westheimer, 2002). Secondly, this research will analyze the Linked Learning reform and its implementation at the sample schools to explore if the reform itself creates opportunities or barriers to Civic Learning. Finally, this study will consider what type of preparation for civic life the Linked Learning reform offers.

Research Questions

- How do the elements of LL reform create challenges to and/or opportunities for civic learning?
- What conditions support opportunities for civic learning in Linked Learning schools?
- What kind of preparation for civic life does the Linked Learning reform offer?

Importance

This study is in dialogue with the growing body of literature on youth civic development and civic and political education. It is useful to stakeholders working within the Linked Learning approach and their ability to include civics. For practitioners implementing and maintaining the Linked Learning reform, this research is useful in understanding the relationship between best practices and the civic development opportunities for students. For policymakers this research can provide a reference point for civic learning occurring in Linked Learning schools and suggest ways in which to include “civics” in future policy initiatives.

Definition of Terms

1. Civic Education:

“To help young people acquire and learn to use skills, knowledge, and attitudes that prepare them to be competent and responsible citizens throughout their lives” (Carnegie Corporation & CIRCLE, 2003, p. 10)

2. Civic Learning Opportunities: as a condition to which “young people acquire and learn to use the skills, knowledge, and attitudes that will prepare them to be competent and responsible citizens through their lives”

3. Multiple Pathways/ Linked Learning: The Linked Learning model was built on the premise that students learn best when they are engaged through hands-on, real world experiences.

a. A core academic curriculum.

b. A core technical curriculum

c. Work-based learning opportunities that allow them to apply the academic and vocational skills.

d. Support services allowing students to work directly with adults for assistance (Oakes & Saunders, 2008).

4. Civic Silence: An educational environment that fails to produce sufficient civic learning opportunities for the youth who require them most.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE AND THEORY

To examine civic learning in Linked Learning schools, this chapter is divided into four sections. Each section is intended to assist the reader in understanding and analyzing civic learning. The first section, “*Historical Overview*,” highlights events that shaped common notions of civic learning. The second section is entitled, “*Benefits of Civic Learning Opportunities*” and it describes three broad categories often used to define civic learning opportunities, which are well aligned with the academic, technical, work-based and civic focuses that can be included in the Linked Learning reform. Thirdly, the section entitled “*Challenges to Civic Learning Opportunities*” describes the technical, cultural and normative challenges that are associated with making civic learning opportunities available. This literature review concludes with a discussion of the “*Broad versus Narrow view of Civic Learning*”. The last section argues for a broader view of civic learning that allows its user to detect the nuances in opportunities that Linked Learning can offer. These four areas provide the foundation for investigating the Linked Learning elements that create challenges and, opportunities for preparing students for civic life. The Broad versus Narrow framework will be used in subsequent chapters to analyze the conditions that support civic learning in the study schools.

I. Civic Education in the United States: “ A Historical Overview”

The history of civic education has left a permanent imprint in the American imagination and shaped the debate around democratic preparation. The “Americanization” approach is a popular explanation for the hegemonic impact of civic education (Prinzing, 2004). This review describes how the use of civic education to Americanize citizens and the later reaction to this practice has important implications of civic learning.

The “Americanization” Approach to Civic Education

Americanization has the process included in civic education to address difference by attempting to present a common set of American values. Employing the process of “Americanization,” politicians and school leaders applied an assimilationist approach to educating waves of non-Protestant, Catholic, Eastern-rite Christian, and Jewish recent immigrants¹ (Mirel, 2002)”. “Americanization” involved offering a mixture of English language courses, civics classes, Anglo-American literature classes, and American history courses that stressed the nation's triumphs and ignored, in general, its failings. (Quigley, 1999P. 51)” Randolph Bourne and other critics of this approach disapproving of the imposition of Anglo-Saxon values and beliefs upon minority communities. The emphasis on Americanization combined with secularism was

prevalent in the North yet rejected in the American south. The history of slavery resulted in intentional lawmaking and cultural norms that suppressed civic engagement opportunities for this marginalized African Americans. This would be exemplified in the literacy requirements/ poll taxes that would be used to prevent Blacks from voting. According to Mirel, “The assimilationist impulse that had encouraged northern school leaders to strive to integrate new groups into the broader American culture had virtually no resonance among white southerners whose educational, political, and social policies toward African Americans were specifically designed to exclude them from such integration.” The rhetoric that combined education and civic learning was prevalent in the north, yet in the south this philosophy was overshadowed by the history of slavery and beliefs that Blacks were not truly citizens as a result of racism. The Americanization approach still conjures this painful American history as impacts the discourse on civic education. Civic education and civic learning is often seen as a conservative approach to citizenship that implies inclusion for most at the expense of exclusionary practices aimed at others. Civic learning is less commonly associated with a critical approach to teaching and learning that promotes a more democratic society. The tension created by the remnants of Americanization can be seen in the adage “When in doubt, leave it out.” Doubts raised by the Americanization approach provided justification for the exclusion of civics rather than its re-conceptualization.

“When in doubt, leave it out”: Shifts away from Civics

By the mid to late 20th century the once pervasive idea of Americanization united critics who felt that the idea was incongruent with the efforts to extend equality and diversity. Leaders in the Afrocentrist movement, supporters of bilingual/ bicultural education, and other progressive movements equated "assimilationist" with “cultural imperialists”. Some argued further that the practice was exacerbating educational inequality." These feelings were reflective of a larger distrust of civic leaders which occurred as a result of the Vietnam war and Watergate scandal which left a bad taste in many American’s mouths and undermined the ideal of a dominant set of superior homogeneous American values, that fueled civic education in the earlier century. In an attempt to reconcile this tension, educational leaders opted to follow the adage, “When in doubt, leave it out", limiting civic opportunities. Interestingly, the baby boomers received comprehensive civic education and consequently played a significant role in civic action and discourse between 1960s and early 1970s. The combination of the baby boomers civic activity and comprehensive civic education reinforces the importance of civic education in democratic practice (O’Connor, 2011).

The Current Civic Climate

Even today remnants of the tensions apparent in earlier centuries regarding civic education are present. Despite a continued interest in the subject, efforts to capitalize on this interest have been insufficient. As former U.S. Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor (2011, p. 6) has noted: "... Forty state constitutions mention the importance of students' civic education as the primary purpose of schools" civic education in the United States continues to decline." The choice to exclude civics is still present today. As a result, many students exposure to civics will be limited to one semester of government classes in their senior year of high school (Niemi and Smith, 2001). This troubling history is compounded by the social and political consequences that the lack of civic preparation has had on generations of students. In her discussion of the civic empowerment gap Meira Levinson explains that the lack of civic opportunities has produced stark civic inequality that threatens the fabric of our democracy (Levinson, 2010).

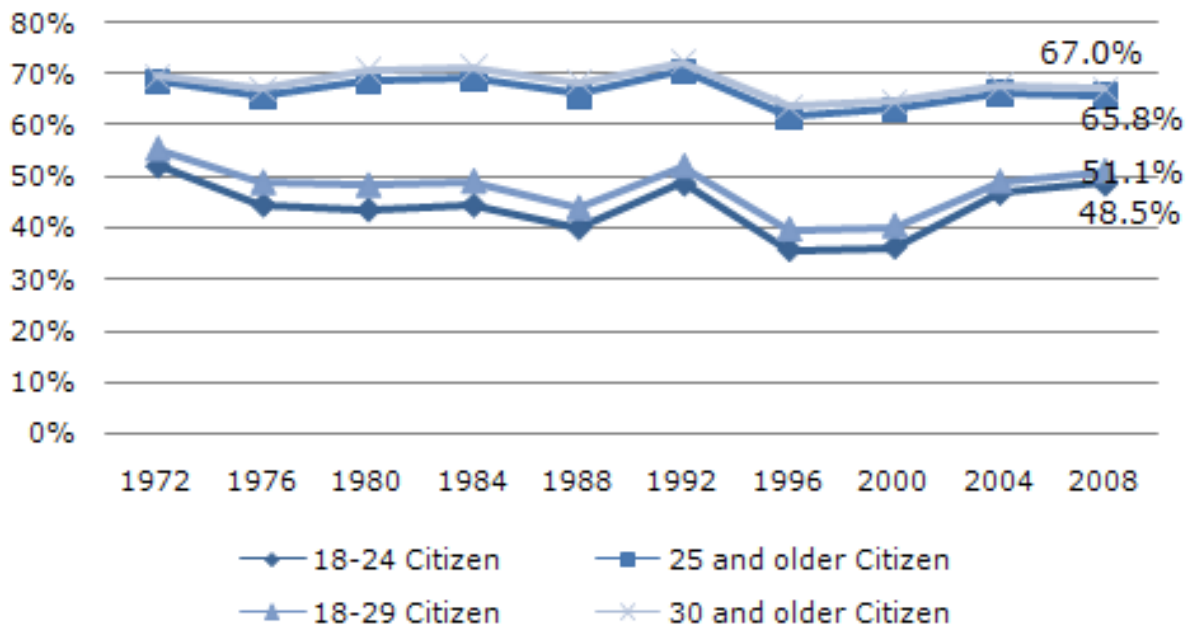
In addition to dealing with tensions about how to reconcile the purpose of education, civic advocates have to address an educational climate that overshadowed the importance of civics. As discussed in the introduction, the No Child Left Behind Act has had unintended negative civic consequences. Efforts to increase accountability have translated into a narrow focus on English, Language Arts and math to the detriment of subjects like civics (O'Connor, 2011). The link between performance in English Language Arts and math and funding, make it cost effective to offer more instruction on these subjects and less instruction in other areas. Offering civic access may address poor performance by American students on civic assessments (Levinson, 2010). On the NAEP civics assessment in 2006 and 2010, more than two-thirds of students scored below proficiency (Niemi and Smith, 2001). Students struggled to identify the historical purpose of the Declaration of Independence and failed to understand the benefits of democracy. The picture becomes even bleaker when race and class are considered. Researchers have discovered a civic achievement gap between poor and middle class students and minority and white students (Levinson, 2007). Immigrant students demonstrate less civic knowledge than their native- born counterparts. These trends become even more alarming because there is a direct correlation between civic knowledge and political participation (Galston, 2003). Youth with less civic knowledge often lack the skills and cultural capital needed to advocate on behalf of their interests. Civic inequality robs communities of the civic agency required to meet their basic needs.

While the civic education climate is far from ideal, there have been some important recent advances. While earlier civics textbooks overlooked the contributions of groups like the poor, African Americans and women (Chiodo, 2004). These oversights failed to acknowledge the struggles for equality that embody the ideal of democracy. Today's civics textbook more accurately describes the history of the United States while asking students to grapple with controversial and contentious ideas (O'Connor, 2011). They also attempt to contextualize social problems in a historical context. Despite these advances civics still has some

persistent problems that the field must address. Civics courses are often still textbook based (Walker, 2002). Students are asked to memorize disconnected facts and events from books that are hundreds of pages long. Civics curriculum nationally needs to be better aligned with the needs of Twenty-first century students (Lewis, 2011). Civic advocates argue that the new civics must be, “ problem-based, interactive and tied to relevant issues (O’Connor, p.9)”.

Many civic advocates still believe that there is great potential for extending civic learning opportunities on the horizon. The 2008 presidential election is often cited as evidence of the potential of engaging youth in civic life. More Americans eighteen to twenty-nine voted in that election than any election since 1972, when eighteen-year-olds first had the right to vote

Graph 1: Voter Turnout by Age, 1972-2008



(<http://www.civicyouth.org/quick-facts/youth-voting/#15>)

The strategies used to engage that group are applicable to high school aged youth. Using tools like digital media and social networking and organizing, civics can experience a renaissance. Groups from across the political spectrum are beginning to advocate for improvement in the quality and access of civic education. In pursuit of this goal, civic advocates must keep in mind the lessons learned from civic history and balance the desire for social cohesion careful with the importance tapestry of people and perspectives. Most importantly it is critical to note that civics is most effective when it moves beyond passive approaches to teaching and learning toward engaging student in real work activities.

II. Benefits of Civic Learning Opportunities

This section explores contemporary educational research that highlights the benefits of civic learning. This section provides an analysis of three broad categories: 1) The civic epistemology, 2) Civic skills, dispositions, and participatory activities, and 3) the development of twenty-first century skills making a compelling case for extending sparse opportunities.

The Value of Civic Learning

Civic Skills	21st Century Skills	Civic Epistemology
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• "...the abilities necessary to participate as active and responsible citizens in democracy..."	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Skills related to "Creativity and Innovation, Critical Thinking and Problem Solving, and Communication and Collaboration."	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• the ... practice of knowledge production and validation that characterize public life and civic institutions in modern democratic societies"

1) From Civic Knowledge to "The Civic Epistemology"

Many researchers have identified the development of civic knowledge as one of the primary benefits of a high quality civic education (Feith, 2011). However, I will suggest that emphasizing the development of a 'civic epistemology' offers a greater benefit to students than simply providing civic knowledge. Civic knowledge is described as, " a fundamental understanding of the structure of government and the processes by which government passes laws and makes policy...[understanding] basic concepts such as separation of powers, federalism, individual rights, and the role of government, ...the history that continues to shape the present, aspects of geography ... understanding America and the world, and economics (Gould, Ed. 2011 p. 16). While these are important concepts, they are offered to students as abstractions. On the other hand, 'Civic epistemology' is defined as "the ... practice of knowledge production and validation that characterize public life and civic institutions in modern democratic societies" (Miller, 2004). The epistemological approach begins with the questions, *what is knowledge? And how is knowledge acquired?* These questions have the potential to shed light on how 'civics' is constructed and how its benefits are disseminated. Teaching civic knowledge content is not

usually associated with critical pedagogy, yet employing civic epistemology lends itself to a problem-posing approach that can be more critical in nature. Civic epistemology is a way of “articulating knowledge claims; the empowerment of societal actors in determining who has expertise” (Miller, 2004). Thinking about civic epistemology challenges the representation of civic knowledge as abstract facts and information that is valued in its ability to be tested on standardized tests. It also encourages student to consider actors who are not traditionally sanctioned, and to challenge normative beliefs.

The 1960 freedom schools provide a useful example of how a focus on civic epistemology can offer students civic content in engaging ways. The purpose of the Freedom Schools was to “make it possible for [students] to challenge the myths of our society, to perceive more clearly its realities, and to find alternatives -- ultimately new directions for action (Perstein, 1990.p. 297)". The Freedom Schools’ approach to schooling is applicable to providing high quality civic education. The stated intent of contemporary civic courses is to help students develop critical thinking skills, “To approach subject matter as historians, geographers, economists, and political scientists, students are expected to employ these skills as they master the content” (CA Content Standards, 2012)^{2 3}.

This idea is very similar to the often-cited quote by John Dewey’s in which he argues, “Democracy must be reborn every generation, and education is its midwife” (Giroux, Hill, 2004). If democracy is to be reborn, civic knowledge must constantly be reconstructed and civic epistemology may offer a way to do just that.

Both civic knowledge and civic epistemology provide students with a democratic foundation needed for engagement. Performance on standardized tests, and promoting civic activity are just two of the well-documented benefits of learning civic content (Gould, Ed. 2011). While standardized civic assessments are inherently flawed, they are useful in providing us with a baseline indicator of students’ access to this valued knowledge. The connection between civic activity and access to this knowledge is another important benefit of civic knowledge and epistemology. “Some programs have positive effects not only on the children who participate, but also on their parents, who demonstrate increased discussion and media use at home when their students have higher civic knowledge” (Gould, Ed. 2011, p. 16). These programs demonstrate the impact this approach to learning is having on not just individual students, but the social network like families and friends to whom they are connected. Most notably, both civic knowledge and civic epistemology support traditional civic activities like voting and activism. These correlations held constant when researchers “controlled for income and race” (Gould, Ed. 2011,p. 16). These findings reinforce the idea that civic learning can increase the knowledge and activity for all students.

2) Civic skills, Dispositions and Participatory Activities

The second category of benefits offered through access to high quality civic learning is the development of civic skills, dispositions and participatory activities. John Dewey's work reminds us that democracy is an active process and education is the important link that makes that activity possible. According to Dewey, "Education, therefore, is a process of living and not a preparation for future living (Dewey, 1987)"¹.

Civic Skills

If civic knowledge is the foundation for democratic activity then civic skills can be thought of as the tools necessary to enact this knowledge. "Civic skills are the abilities necessary to participate as active and responsible citizens in democracy... they include speaking, listening, collaboration, community organizing, public advocacy, and the ability to gather and process information" (Gould, Ed. 2011, p.16' CIRCLE, 2011). The available research including large-scale tests on civic skills tends not to focus on these participatory skills, as they are more difficult to capture. Instead this body of research illustrates that students experience gains in academic civic skills "such as interpreting a written speech." These benefits are still significant because they are encouraged for participatory skills such as making a speech advocating on behalf of oneself or one's community (Comber, 2003; Barr, 2010). Prominent civic researchers Sidney Verba, Kay Lehman Schlozman, and Henry Brady (1995) have made the important point that, "[t]hose who possess civic skills, the set of specific competencies germane to citizen political activity, are more likely to feel confident about exercising those skills in politics and to be effective".

Civic Dispositions

If civic knowledge is the foundation, and civic skills are the tools, then civic dispositions can be thought of as the ways of being that lead people to take action. Democratic dispositions include "concern for others' rights and welfare, fairness, reasonable levels of trust, and a sense of public duty" (Gould, Ed. 2011). Civic Learning can support these dispositions especially learning opportunities when teachers display a respect for students (Flanagan and Galloway, 2008). In *Democracy for Some*, authors Joseph Kahne and Ellen Middaugh describe a study of Chicago Public Schools and argue that engaging civic learning opportunities encouraged the students' commitment to political participation and community improvement (Kahne and Middaugh, 2009). Even civic classroom discussions have been found to be useful in raising student concern about injustice (Flanagan and Stoppa, et al, 2010). Dispositions promote civic action through self-efficacy. Self-efficacy is, "the sense that one's own actions can make a difference, either alone or in combination with peers" (Gould, Ed. 2011 p.17). Civic dispositions are the

blueprint for civic action; therefore civic learning opportunities targeted toward developing these qualities are beneficial to student's self-efficacy and supportive of democratic ideals.

Participation

Civic Participation is perhaps the clearest example of the benefit of civic learning because it is the most visible. Participation is often thought of as “voting, participating in community meetings, volunteering, communicating with elected and appointed officials, signing petitions, and participating in demonstrations”. These are just a few of the important activities that active citizens engage in (Gould, Ed. 2011 p.17; Zukin and Scott Keeter, et al, 2006; Hutchens and William Eveland, Jr., 2009).

3) Reinforcing the democratic purposes in 21st Century Readiness

Placing an emphasis on civic learning reinforces the democratic purposes often under-acknowledged in 21st Century readiness. The Partnership for 21st Century Skills highlights three beneficial skills, “Creativity and Innovation, Critical Thinking and Problem Solving, and Communication and Collaboration.” The general nature of these skills make them applicable to a wide range of learning objectives, yet, for many the benefit of these features are most clearly represented by their connection to economic production. Discussions around 21st Century skills are often dominated by a focus on economic competitiveness, while de-emphasizing democratic readiness. This tendency is understandable when one considers the current climate of economic uncertainty and unemployment. The business community and the general public are increasingly concerned that recent graduates are not prepared enough to meet the needs of our changing economy (Finegold and Schurman, et al., 2010; Crew, 2010). This sentiment was evident in President Obama's remark at the 2012 State of the Union:

I also hear from many business leaders who want to hire in the United States but can't find workers with the right skills. Growing industries in science and technology have twice as many openings as we have workers who can do the job. Think about that -- openings at a time when millions of Americans are looking for work. It's inexcusable. And we know how to fix it. ...Now you need to give more community colleges the resources they need to become community career centers -- places that teach people skills that businesses are looking for right now, from data management to high-tech manufacturing. President Obama SOTU 2012

In some ways the root of the problem may be the way the purpose of schooling has been framed. To many, the purpose of schooling is not inclusive of civic goals. In a recent article published by the Wall Street Journal the authors James E. Davis and Michael Hartoonian Et. Al. (2012) that American public

opinion on the purpose of public education “...signals that America is not so much a culture as it is an economy”. They cite a recent Gallup-Lumina Foundation survey⁴ in which respondents were asked what they view as the purpose of education. “More than half (53 percent) of the adult respondents age 18 and older said, "to earn more money," and another third (33 percent) answered, "to get a good job." While only 3 percent believed the purpose of schooling is “to learn more about the world." Even more alarming is that 1 percent responded that the purpose was for student "to learn to think critically.” Results such as these seem to suggest that ensuring the nation's economic productivity means overlooking democratic preparation (Davis, Hartoonian, Scotter, & William White, 2012). Responding to this sentiment, civic leaders have begun to argue that “there is a high degree of overlap between 21st century competencies such as those listed above and the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that are necessary for democratic citizenship (Gould, Ed. 2011 p.)” These Competencies include:

- Knowledge of economic and political processes;
- Skill in understanding presentations in a range of media;
- The ability to work cooperatively with others, especially those from diverse backgrounds;
- Positive attitudes about working hard, obeying the law and engaging in discussion that leads to innovative and effective civic action in the community.
- Improving School Climate

(Civic Mission of Schools, 2011 P. 20)

Both advocates for 21st Century Skills and civic learning can agree that, learning and innovation skills are what separate students who are prepared for increasingly complex life and work environments in today’s world and those who are not. Both groups support the importance of technology to education and communication and the idea that technology is creating a more interdependent world. Therefore, it is useful to view 21st century competencies in ways that support preparation for democratic citizenship, a benefit offered by increasing and supporting technology is creating a more interdependent world. Therefore, it is useful to view 21st century competencies in ways that support preparation for democratic citizenship, a benefit offered by increasing and supporting access to civic learning.

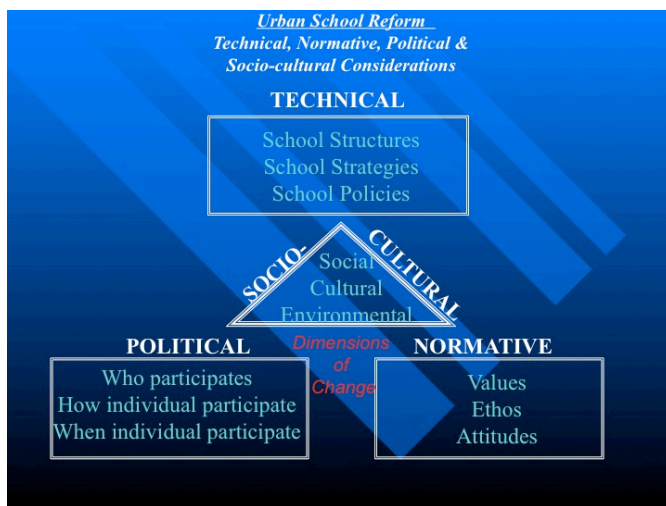
III. Challenges to Civic Learning Opportunities

Efforts to improve education tend to be overly simplified and reductive solutions to complex technical, political, normative and socio-cultural problems. When considering the barriers to civic learning, it is helpful to avoid this tendency by employing the *Oakes–Cooper Typology*: a way of re-thinking school change, reform and policy implementation. In her discussion of curricular tracking,

4

<http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2012/03/07/23vanscotter.h31.html?tkn=VNZFao19vSqIps0FUp4EQ9TKGcNfEUPoO2A&cmp=clp-edweek>

Jeannie Oakes identifies three critical areas of concern for reformers and policy makers (Oakes, 1992). These include, Normative, Political and Technical dimensions of reform and policy implementation. In their work, Jeannie Oakes and Robert Cooper, explain that a normative perspective would consider the values, ethos and attitudes that shape educational objectives. They argue further that the political dimension is concerned with issues of participation and access, and that this is an equally important part of the schooling process. The technical dimension of this typology explores the role policies and structures that impact schooling. Building the foundation laid by Oakes’s tracking work, educational scholar Dr. Robert Cooper contributed an analysis of the role that the socio-dimension plays on efforts to reform schools. This feature places an explicit emphasis on the Social- cultural and environmental factors that impact the policy or reform climate (Cooper, 2008). Together these four elements create a useful analytical tool to explore schooling and the possibility for school change. This framework highlights the challenges that impact civic learning opportunities by offering a more expansive view of the educational landscape in which civic learning opportunities must exist.



(Cooper, R., 2008)ⁱⁱ

NORAMATIVE Challenges

There are two normative issues in particular which must be considered when thinking about how to effectively create and sustain civic learning opportunities. These include how the purpose of schooling is framed and the definition of citizenship that is being represented.

1. Contention in framing of the purpose of schooling

Since its inception, there have been competing purposes of the public educational system in the United States (Tyack, 1974). This struggle to establish “the” purpose of education has been waged in classrooms, across dinner tables and even in the legislative and policy agendas of states around the country. These battles to confirm a singular purpose of public education has left many disillusioned about

the prospect of an effective public education system. Education like other parts of political life falls victim to an emphasis on conflicting interests, rather than common priorities. This dynamic holds true in the relationship between vocational and academic models of education.

Many of the tensions present in education today stem from the tradition of differentiation prevalent throughout the history of public education. Motivated by meritocracy, teachers and counselors placed student on different “tracks” based on perceived ability. These tracks impact access to differing course content and academic and occupational outcomes. In her highly acclaimed work, “Keeping Track”, researcher Jeannie Oakes (1985) explored the origins of differentiation in curriculum and educational opportunities that are present in schools today. Oakes argues that this tradition’s popularity corresponded to the increases in immigrant populations that occurred during the later part of the nineteenth century and vocal appeals by businesses and academia to align schooling with manual training on the one hand and college preparation on the other.

In 2012, some of the public discussions regarding the purpose of schooling are remarkably similar to the educational debates that took place a century prior. The assumption that students are best served by being placed on tracks that are either vocational or academic is still prevalent. However, the stalemate that results from relying on this dichotomous and inaccurate view is slowly being replaced by advocacy organizations that have begun to choose collaboration over contention. Coalitions like California based “*Get Real*” have commented, “High schools should expand career and technical education and stop ‘force-feeding’ college preparation (www.getrealca.com).” However, they have since incorporated the use of language such as, “California should provide a balanced education that includes challenging academic studies and career technical education.” This shift reflects a broader change within the field of education in which there is increased attention to exploring solutions to educational problems that are centered on the idea of building coalitions and working together. When we start from the view that education should prepare all students to make a contribution to society, the debate, which has occupied so much time and energy, may give way to new reforms built on the democratic principal of equity.

Early proponents of public education like Horace Mann argued, “Education, beyond all other devices of human origin, is the great equalizer of the conditions of men, the balance-wheel of the social machinery” (1868). Mann’s argument seems to suggest a belief that education can present the common wo/man with increased social mobility, supporting the argument that through formal education anyone can both participate in and become an architect of our social structures. Horace Mann also believed that the construction of universal public schools was essential in the creation of democratic citizens, providing the skills and knowledge needed to actively participate and perfect the democracy (1868). Despite Mann’s endorsement, civic education is often a footnote in the history of educational reform leaving some to

wonder if it has a place at all. There are fewer and fewer examples of policies that include “civics,” “civic development” or “civic learning opportunities” as an objective. As a result, those who are concerned with the democratic future of the United State must re-evaluate current policies and programs to determine how we can re-insert the civic as a priority for education. The Linked Learning reform provides us with such an opportunity. Linked Learning is an approach to high school reform that aims to prepare students simultaneously for college, career, and possibly civic participation.

2. Competing Citizenship Models

In *What Kind of Citizen?* Joel Westheimer and Joseph Kahne describe an analysis of a 2- year study of educational programs in the United States intended to support students’ knowledge of democracy. Authors Westheimer and Kahne introduce a typology that outlines three representations of a good citizen: Personally Responsible, Participatory and Justice Oriented. In this typology, the personally responsible citizen expresses her/his civic commitment by acting responsibly within their community and by making “good” choices, like obeying laws (Character Counts, 1996). On the other hand, a Participatory citizen would express this capacity by being an “active member of community organizations and/or improvement efforts (Westheimer & Kahne, 2002 p.6; Barber, 1984). Finally, the justice-oriented citizen’s expression of civic commitment is through “analyzing the interplay of social, economic, and political forces” (p. 7) that create power arrangements (Counts, 1932). Westheimer and Kahne argue that these categories “... have significant implications for the politics of education for democracy” (p. 240). Westheimer and Kahne’s work illustrates the wide variation in the way citizenship is interpreted. If there is a lack of agreement about the role of a citizen then creating policies for civic learning will prove quite challenging. While there seems to be no easy solution to these competing citizen models realizing which citizen is being reinforced and which models are being overlooked is a critical starting place for the creation of civic policies and practices. Furthermore, the history of exclusion included in the history of civic education should be a reminder that “inclusion” is a better starting place than “ exclusion.” One useful strategy for teaching students about the normative values in civic is introducing them to each of the models represented in Westheimer and Kahne’s work, and explaining that each has benefits in different contexts. Understanding the contextual differences may require students and teachers to include a political analysis.

POLITICAL Challenges

The political consideration is important in granting access to civic learning opportunities because through this lens policy makers and practitioners can consider the role of equity and access. Oakes reminds us that a focus on a the political dimension helps us understand, “...struggle among individuals

and groups for comparative advantage in the distribution of school resources, opportunities, and credentials that have ex-change value in the larger society...often encompasses highly charged issues of race and social-class stratification” (Oakes, 1992, p.13). Through a discussion of the civic achievement gap, civic participation gap, and civic learning opportunity gap the political challenges that accompany civic learning generally are more apparent.

1. Civic Achievement & Participation Gaps

In her well-known article, Meira Levinson argues that the “Civic Achievement Gap,” is a knowledge gap between minority and immigrant youth and adults and their middle class or white counterparts. According to Levinson, minority and immigrant youth are less “ knowledgeable about politics, history, government, and current events; and [less likely to] be skilled communicators, thinkers, and deliberators” (p.5). Citing National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) data to support her claims, Levinson highlights that African- American, Hispanic and poor students perform worse on civics test than middle class white and Asian students (p.5). At first glance these statistics are disheartening and jarring. Rates of civic participation mirror these trends with affluent and white students being more “participatory” than other groups. However, consideration of these facts through a political lens offers a more nuanced portrait. The indicators for achievement and participation are skewed toward students with access to traditional civic learning. A political analysis of these issues encourages us to consider the measure we use to define participation and achievement and determine in whose interest are these measures. It is important to acknowledge that these gaps represent a real challenge to extending democracy to all groups, yet applying a political analysis reminds us that there are important considerations that may be overlooked in our attempts to create a snap shot of democratic preparation in the United States. Increasing research is finding that young people are engaged in activism via social networking media or equipped with a deep knowledgeable about the justice system, and these activities do not translate into our understanding how knowledgeable or active youth are. *In Democracy for Some*, Kahne and Middaugh (2008) explain, “Broader measures [indicate that] both youths’ and adults’ civic participation—engaging in informal or formal community service, working on a community problem, attending a community meeting, following the news, joining a group, or even just participating in cooperative activity with a neighbor—also seem to be highly unequally distributed by income, educational attainment, and ethnic group.” This research seems to suggest that the issues may be more about opportunity rather than just achievement and participation.

2. Civic Learning Opportunity Gap

Faced with the increasing concern about gaps in achievement, some researchers have attempted to

shift the conversation toward a more structural conversation described as the “opportunity gap” (Ladison-Billing, 2006). Unequal access to learning opportunities can also impact civic learning. Students who are more “academically successful” or white and those with parents of higher socioeconomic status receive more classroom-based civic learning opportunities than their peers (Kahne & Middaugh, 2008). This gap combined with a political analysis allows us to see more clearly who has access to civic preparation and more importantly who does not. In fact, “[h]igh school students attending higher SES schools, those who are college-bound, and white students get more [civic learning] opportunities than low-income students, those not heading to college, and students of color” (Kahne and Middaugh, 2006). This political perspective reminds us that often our discussions of educational realities begin and end at the tip of the iceberg. A deeper view allows us to consider the social and environmental features that shape the trends we are seeing.

SOCIO-CULTURAL & TECHNICAL: Challenges

Two issues that highlight the importance of thinking through the socio-cultural dimension of civic learning are funding and resources. While resources are also a technical consideration, resource inequality effectively illustrates the impact of the role of the larger policy and political environment on civic learning policies and implementation. Funding scarcity is a real concern for schools in general, and has implications for extending civic learning opportunities. According to the Educational Opportunity Report produced by UCLA’s Institute for Democracy Education and Access, “Half a million workers are unemployed and the production of goods and services has plummeted. California is facing its most serious crisis in decades” (Rogers, et al. 2009). Education has been profoundly impacted by the downturn in the economy that has resulted in the firing of teachers, strain on already tight school budgets, and families who struggle to provide their children with the materials they need. As the conversation about 21st century skills highlighted, there is a perception that there is trade-off between civic skills and more “marketable” skills like math and science. These ideas create a socio-cultural concern that shapes administrators’ decisions around which courses to fund. Part of the task facing civic learning is continuing the hard work of advocating its purpose and that often means recasting it in light of the current economic realities.

The political, normative and socio-cultural dynamics included in educational reform and implementation shape the technical civic learning considerations. Reform and implementation effort often offer a more clearly articulated view of technical consideration and this is not different in civic. One of the technical challenges in civics is changing school structures. Many of the best practices highlighted by civic advocates encourage open classrooms, project-based learning and the use of technology. These approaches are difficult to enact in a climate with limited funds for education. They also requires a more

progressive view of teaching and learning that does not often fit within the traditional bell schedules present in many high schools. Technical considerations do not come with any easy fixes. Using each part of the framework as a lens it is more likely that civic learning opportunities will be responsive to the broader educational and social climate.

Together the history and research can seem a bit overwhelming in thinking about how to approach extending civic learning opportunities. While both provide a helpful theoretical foundation, there is also a need for a practical approach. Many have looked to the collaborative work of the Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools, an organization that assembled 50 scholars and practitioners to offer a practical approach to civic learning that is informed by the extensive history and scholarship represented in the field. In the following Chapter, I will offer aspects of their approach as a way of exploring civic learning in Linked Learning schools.

There are a number of important civic learning and democratic benefits for students and society at large when civics is prioritized. Yet, ideological and social challenges often undercut civic learning opportunities. Equipped with the knowledge of both the challenges and benefits, advocates of civic learning are better positioned to meet the civic needs of students in the 21st century. The Linked Learning reform is quickly moving forward with or without civics. This research will be helpful in making a case for moving forward with it.

Linked Learning is often identified by the presence of its four essential components, yet at its very core, Linked Learning, like civic learning, is about “engaging [students] actively in the adult world ...[allowing them to] examine up close ... connections among the workplace, politics and social life” (p.7). As the original name “Multiple Pathways” suggests, there are many paths students find themselves on and often we focus on the different ends where these paths have the potential to lead. But if we step back (for a moment) and consider the underlying goals that resonate with many students, parents and community members across these pathways a new truth emerges. Such a step may make clear that features like “preparation for the future” and “engagement” have the power to unite us all around the “civic”. The possibility of such a shift in the social imagination is possible and begins with a deeper understanding of civic learning.

Narrow v. Broad View of Civic Learning

A civic learning opportunity can be described as; either a space, time, program or policy that provides chances for individuals to improve their civic education. The *Civic Mission of Schools* argues that through such opportunities, “young people acquire and apply the civic skills, knowledge, and

attitudes that will prepare them to be competent and responsible citizens” (Levinson, 2010). The method of evaluating these opportunities has often focused on exploring the presence of six best practices:

1. Classroom Instruction
2. Discussion of Current Events and Controversial Issues:
3. Service-Learning
4. Extracurricular Activities
5. School Governance
6. Simulations of Democratic Processes

While this is a useful starting place in the analysis of civic learning there is a great deal that does not fit within these narrowly defined categories. The earlier conversation about the benefits of civic epistemology highlights the space to broaden the way civic learning opportunities are defined. As you may recall civic epistemology is the process of preparing individuals for democratic participation by encouraging them to construct and analyze the core concepts in civic education like “democracy” and “engagement.” In the article entitled, *Critical Youth Engagement: Participatory Action Research*, authors Madeline Fox and Kavitha Mediratta et al (2010) explain that *Critical Youth Engagement* is a useful methodological tool to explore ideas such as those captured in the concept of civic epistemology. Critical Youth Engagement is “how young people understand conditions of social inequity and negotiate these stresses psychologically and politically” (621). The first two tenets of the research method highlight how Critical Youth Engagement paired with civic epistemology create a broader view of civic learning within the Linked Learning reform.

This broader view acknowledges that young people can contribute expertise on issues like inclusion and exclusion that are at the heart of civic education. Also this approach argues that youth and adults should “work together in serious inquiry around (623) ”historical and contemporary conditions of injustice” (Fox and Mediratta et al 2010). Through the analysis of the two sites in this study, I will argue that the Linked Learning reform is well aligned with the broader view of civic learning. Hence, the Linked Learning features can be used to understand the challenges and potential of the broader view of civic learning in the study schools.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Research Design

Discovering the relationship between the Linked Learning sites and the provision of civic learning opportunities requires an in-depth methodological approach. According to Yin (2006), “compared to other methods, the strength of the case study method is its ability to examine, in-depth, a “case” within a ‘real-life’ context.” This approach allows me to capture the exploratory nature of the research questions and produce firsthand accounts of the reform. The qualitative data collected over the course of the research is best organized through a series of case studies because of the methods’ ability to incorporate multiple methods. Creswell (2009) explains, “case studies can examine programs and activities, comprehensively usually within a specific time frame while utilizing several forms of data collection over time.” This approach allows me to incorporate the use of interviews, classroom observation, and school level data that are an integral part of the overall design of this study. Toward this end, I conducted a qualitative case study analysis of two school sites in California that are using the Linked Learning approach to schooling. These sites represent an important representation of student demographics, school structures and civic potential from a larger study conducted by the Institute for Democracy, Education and Access (IDEA).

The larger study utilized the case study approach to explore Linked Learning schools successfully implementing the five components of the Linked Learning model. These schools demonstrated a committed to full implementation of the model Linked Learning model, used an integrated academic and career core, real-world learning experience, students engagement and additional supports to improve student learning, and most importantly, were implementing programs and policies that demonstrated a commitment to challenging prevailing patterns of school stratification.

The ten selected schools are located throughout California. The overall statewide sample for that study included approximately 4000 students, 150 teachers and 25 administrators for survey data collection and 200 students, 70 teachers, 50 parents and 10 to 50 administrators for interview data collection. I was a part of the seven-person research team that distributed surveys in February/March 2009. The team visited each school once during the Winter/Spring of the 2008-2009 academic years and again in the fall of the 2009-2010 academic years. For each site, a research team member assumed the “site leader” role for data collection and analysis. It is important to note that I was the site leader for both sites included in this research study.

Reiteration of Research Questions

- How do the elements of LL reform create challenges to and/or opportunities for civic learning?
- What conditions support opportunities for civic learning in Linked Learning schools?
- What kind of preparation for civic life does the Linked Learning reform offer?

Sampling

Data Sources

Interviews:

Over the course of the research I conducted informal one-on-one interviews with students, parents, teachers and administrators to capture their perspectives on their experiences within the school setting and on the various elements of the Linked Learning design (e.g., an integrated curriculum, project-based learning, off-site learning experiences). In the interviews with the administrators and teachers, I delved into the challenges that they experienced while implementing the Linked Learning approach, the strategies they employed to overcome those challenges, and the impact that the implementation has had on disrupting patterns of stratification.

Additionally I collected school-level data that included school scheduling, staffing, student characteristics, and outcomes to provide important contextual information in which to situate each school's implementation efforts. All school-level data was collected in the aggregate, and information was not directly linked to individual students. The majority of the data collected was publicly available.

Site Selection

As previously mentioned, Linked Learning is not a one-sized fit all approach to education reform. Consequently, there was considerable variation from site to site when making the selections for both the larger sample and the school for this current sample. For the larger study my research team developed a list of two critical criteria based on the research of Linked Learning models.

The first site selection criterion of the larger study was the presence of all the components of the Linked Learning approach to schooling. A site did not need to meet a specific implementation model for the components, but were required to have each component present for inclusion in the study. Flexibility in the criteria for inclusion allowed us to explore other facts such as location, demographics and academic

performance through the selection process. The second criterion was a stated commitment to challenging the stratification (specifically the practice of curricular tracking) of students within the school.

Larger Study

The selection of sites for the larger study occurred as part of an extensive whittling process that reduced a list of 120 schools to ten. The research team worked closely with organizations and foundations that support career academies and Linked Learning schools to compose a comprehensive list of schools “of interest.” Using their knowledge of the reform and the schools themselves, organizations and foundations worked with us to eliminate half of the schools that did not meet the above criteria. Of the remaining schools, 27 agreed to participate in the study. During the fall semester of the 2008-2009 school year, my seven-member research team visited the schools and created reports based on preliminary impressions. These reports were used to direct a set of discussions to further reduce the list to include only ten schools sites prescribed by the project proposal. The ten sites represented both new, autonomous schools and large comprehensive high schools that had converted successfully into small, theme-based learning communities, career academies, or other Linked Learning structures. It was important that the sample was varied enough to represent the issues that different schools implementing Linked Learning were facing, and large enough to generalize in an effort to create meaningful policy discussions.

Current Study

I sought out schools that represented the Linked Learning features and were implementing the program with demographically distinctive group in distinctly different urban communities. These were also the two sites I was most familiar with. The locations and names of the schools are pseudonyms.

	MHS	THS
Structure	Small School Classified as Alternative	Small, Autonomous School within a large comprehensive high school
Demographics	Asian 3% Latino 49% Af Am 38% White 5% EL 14.5% FRL 68%	Asian 10% Latino 31% Af Am 6% White 53% EL 2% FRL 44%

Theme	Internship Based, College Access and Liberation and Oppression Ideology	Technology

Populations of Interest

I worked closely with an on-site school coordinator to facilitate the data collection. At Northern California this person was the internship coordinator and at THS this was one of the deans of instruction. At both schools, we focused our attention on students, parents, teachers, and staff.

Students: I extended an invitation of participation to all students enrolled at the school and asked them to complete a brief anonymous 10- minute survey. I worked with the site coordinator to conduct interviews with 20 students at each of the two school sites. Five students from each grade level, 9th – 12th, were selected to represent a range of current and past school experiences. I asked the site coordinator to identify a sample of students that represented the range of demographics and achievement levels at each school.

Teachers: I extended the same invitation to all teachers employed at both schools and asked them to complete a brief anonymous survey. I worked with the site coordinator and principals of each school to identify the teachers who had an established record of integrating a rigorous academic and technical curriculum with hands-on, real-world learning opportunities.

Parents/ Guardians: At each school, I interviewed five parents of the students that were selected for interviews. Parents were selected according to their interest to participate and recommendation from the site coordinator.

Administrators/Support staff: All administrators and staff were asked to complete a brief anonymous survey. Two administrators/staff were also asked to participate in an interview based on the following criteria: involvement in the development of the Linked Learning program, its leadership, evaluation, and/or holds administrative responsibilities at one of the study sites. The site coordinator and or other school leader(s) at the study sites helped to identify these individuals.

A. Data Collection

A letter describing the study was sent to each school site inviting them to participate. The letter was followed up by a phone call by me. Each team member was responsible for two of the school sites.

When the school agreed to participate they were informed of the responsibilities of participation. I managed the distribution of the invitation letter to participate in study, student assent forms, parent consent forms, and participant consent forms, to all students, parents and teachers at the school site and with appropriate district personnel. I also asked the school to recommend school community partners and outsider providers who offer services related to the Linked Learning curriculum and objectives to be included in the formal study. These partners or providers once identified were sent an invitation letter by the research team, followed by a participant consent form.

Both my sites provided a Letter of Compliance prior to the initiation of any research activities. The Letter of Compliance indicated that the school/district agreed to the performance of the research and promised to “abide and comply with the UCLA IRB requirements for the protection of human research subjects.”

The instrument development (surveys and interview protocols) and data collection occurred from the fall of 2008 to the spring of 2010. The first round of site visits took place during spring of the 2008-2009 school year, and the second round of site visits taking place during the spring of the 2009-2010 school year.

Round 1- Data Collection

My research team used the Linked Learning components to develop instruments that explored the reform implementation at the school site. The first round of site visits took place during the spring semester of the 2008-2009 school year. Each visit spanned three days and involved three researchers from the IDEA team. During each visit, we conducted ten teacher interviews, and twenty student interviews (also depending on the size of the school). Additionally, at the majority of the sites, surveys were conducted by teachers, students and administrators prior to our arrival and were collected during our site visit.

I worked with another graduate student to develop a set of survey and interview items to capture the connection between students’ school experiences and community engagement/ civic preparation. Some of the questions were adapted from larger national studies so we could compare our responses to the responses of students nationally.

Both the interview questions and survey findings were used to develop the site description discussed in subsequent chapters. Each site leader used data collected at their schools site by the entire research team to develop a preliminary report on each school. These reports were used to develop trends in the responses that required additional inquiry.

For my sites, I used preliminary reports as an additional data source to support my discussion of the schools sites and their implementation of the Linked Learning components. These preliminary reports

acted as building blocks to allow me to frame each school site for the purpose of overlaying the civic analysis.

Round 2 (Visit 2) - Instrument Development

Larger Study & Current Study

The trends identified by team members were used to create follow-up protocol questions. While other topics such as funding and leadership were more prominent in the second instrument created for the research project, “civics” was also a consideration.

Round 2 – Site Visits/Data Collection

The second round of site visits took place during the spring semester of the 2009-2010 school year. These visits were typically 2 days and primarily involved follow-up interviews with the individuals we had initially interviewed during our first round of visits. I asked team members to give respondents another opportunity to respond to the above civic oriented questions. For my current study, I compared responses from the first and second rounds respondents.

II. Validity

Validity is an important consideration for any qualitative study (Maxwell, 1996). To ensure that validity was managed appropriately both the members of the larger group and myself took the following steps. After our second site visit, each site coordinator analyzed all collected data about the site and drafted a case report. To ensure trustworthy accounts of each case, the site leader worked closely in the drafting process with another research team member who was familiar with the site. A third member of our team served as the internal case reviewer. The primary purpose of this protocol is to assess the plausibility of conclusions and authenticity of the case and to the cross-case analyses. At this point, we sent the draft case to external reviewers at the site who represent a cross-section of perspectives also known as “Member Checks”. Joseph Maxwell identified a list of prevalent threats to validity. In the following section I will discuss how I managed two important threats in this study.

Descriptions

“The main threat to valid description, in the sense of describing what you saw and heard, is accuracy or incompleteness of the data (Maxell, 1996. P.89)”. To ensure that our site description would be accurate and complete teach team member audio recorded interviews with respondents. These interviews were transcribed and sent to the site leader. A videographer visited each site to record the setting as well as Linked Learning lesson in action. Each researcher was also given a digital camera to

take still shots of the school and community. Relying on this source of data I was able to create a useful description of the school sites, community and individuals that I engaged with.

Reactivity

Another issue that we were cognizant of was the issue of reactivity. Reactivity is “ the influence of the researcher on the setting or individuals studied” (Maxwell, 1996, P.91). Hammersley & Atkinson (1983) remind us that it is impossible to eliminate the actual effect of the researcher on the environment, yet there are design elements that assisted us in minimizing our impact. By the time I entered both sites I had a solid, working relationship with the site coordinator who felt comfortable bridging the introductions to students, teachers, staff and parents. Also, when visiting school sites, researchers spent time between interviews acmercing themselves into the school culture. There were times when we would arrive before school started and stay well after it ended instead of collecting data leaving and re-entering later. Despite these efforts, reactivity was still an issue because both schools were “small and close knit ” so it was clear when outsiders were present. Although its also important to note that because both school have network partner students and staff are use to having people come in and to learn more about their school.

Limitation and Delimitations

Within my study there are several important limitations that I must address. These include threats to validity that occurred as a result of culture shifts at the school site and issues of generalizability due to the sample size and diversity amongst the reform models. Because we observed the schools over time we experienced first hand changes in student body, staffing and access to funding which had a dramatic impact on the schools. While we expected the change in student body (a normal occurrence due to graduation) the changes in staff due to attrition and small schools unable to create sustainable workloads for committed, young teachers was more surprising.

Also the impact of decreased funding, which resulted from larger district and state educational budget concerns, also impacted cultural observations captured from one visit to the next. Finally, gaining access to privileged information was a process that took time resulting in some information “blockages” which may have skewed our insight into particular phenomena. Lastly, exploring civics in a Linked Learning context is relatively uncharted territory and as such studies in which I can compare my findings are limited. Despite these limits I am confident that the collection process from the larger study produced data that informs our knowledge of Linked Learning generally and civic learning specifically.

Data Analysis

My research team and I used Software to help us manage the data for the larger study. We sent the audio- recorded interviews out to be transcribed. Word documents created from these transcriptions were uploaded to a qualitative analysis program called “Atlas.ti” used by each team member. In the summer of 2009, the research team created codes based on the research questions, which we used to code all of the documents. The codes were then used to create “families” or themes used in the creation of sites reports.

Current Study

One of the most common obstacles in qualitative studies is the loss of data due to waiting too long to commence the analysis process (Manning, 1960; Heinrich, 1984). The preliminary report and site reports produced by my colleagues and myself were useful in limiting that issue. To reanalyze the data for my study, I read and created memos for all of the interview transcriptions and classroom observations from my sites (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

Secondly, I developed codes and themes using the *Broad (Critical Youth Engagement Framework) and Narrow (Civic Mission of Schools Framework)* and other existing Linked Learning literature (Maxwell, 1996). Glaser & Straus (1967) advise researchers to leave room for codes that develop from the researcher’s interactions with the data, some code developed organically from a more grounded approach. While all of the coding in the larger study was done on Atlas T.I, I instead chose to recode by hand using a code list and highlighting relevant passages. The “runs” from the Atlas T.I. process were still a useful data source for the purpose of comparing outputs. Through this process I found that the scope of the inquiry from the larger study limited my ability to describe the type of classroom practices that were highlighted by the Civic Mission of Schools. I was able to employ general themes of Broad verses Narrow to evaluate civic learning in both sites.

Positionality

My Positionality is captured in a journal entry during my high school experience.

“... In high school, I was more interested in protest than attending dances with my friends. On a tour at UCLA in high school I found myself moving from building to building with names I wouldn’t remember, bored. More interesting was the hundreds of students protesting the end of affirmative action on the large grassy area in front of Powell. I jumped out of line and grabbed a sign and began

chanting at the top of my lungs “ No justice, no peace”. Our teachers proud of our activism stood watching and taking pictures. There I stood in my tight black and white plaid pants dressed like a cast-member from *clueless* and waving my sign violently above my head (Cain, 2012)”.

It is difficult to imagine that I would be as passionate about youth civic development if I had not had my own set of powerful civic learning opportunity that transformed me intellectually and socially. During my high school and college careers, I was selected to participate in a longitudinal research study aimed at increasing college access and success as critical researchers and youth organizers (Auerbach, 2002), (Oakes & Rogers, 2006). Through the program I developed my own gendered and racial identity, while challenging structural inequality that shaped my experience as a first generation, low-income student of color (Morrell, 2004). Therefore, my positionality serves as a limitation as much as an advantage to the work that I do. Having been the product of the research process, and now being in a position where I am now producing it, causes me to grapple with what it means to study “other” students like myself.

Studying those within my community is difficult because it reminds me of the structural inequity that has colors my worldview. It’s a form of double jeopardy for the researcher to explore the oppression that they themselves must face. We are forced to experience this reality once in our own lives and again through the narratives of our research subject. The larger part of me realizes that this challenge is what has brought me to this work.

CHAPTER FOUR:

Site I Description: Montgomery

...The air in the school which hours before was filled with voices of students doing cold calls, preparing for internships or discussing writing is by 3:00 filled with the sounds of students rapidly moving into what many describe as the highlight of their day. This school has limited space and teachers do not hesitate to describe themselves as “overwhelmed”. By the close of the day the internship advisor transforms before students eyes into an expert Salsa instructor. Students line the main

The above field note describes Montgomery (MHS) a school with a focus on serving the community. Like many other schools, at MHS teachers and staff struggle to balance the mounting needs of students against finite resources. This school serves students with diverse learning needs, varying skill sets and classrooms with a range of students with varying levels of emotional maturity. This chapter describes school features that represent the academic and technical core, “work-based learning” and “additional services” at MHS. Together these features provide an understanding of both the Linked Learning reform and provide the foundation for analyzing civic learning within this school site.

MHS at a Glance:

MHS serves a student population that is predominately low income Black and Latino students. The school’s demographics are an important feature and attract staff committed to working with students from these backgrounds. MHS’ size and innovative educational practices make the role of staff and community partnerships critical. The school is often described as a “family” where relationships between students, teachers and staff extend well beyond the four walls of the school site and far beyond the traditional school day. According to a school administrator,

We have a staff that’s totally dedicated to the idea that these young people deserve opportunities... and positions in society with middle class and upper

class kids, and the reality of what it means to get them from where they start to there, is so multi-layered and so complicated. (Virginia Arnold⁵)

Students are presented with opportunities to develop academic, technical and civic skills through their exposure to college courses, an A-G aligned curriculum, internships and a curricular theme called “Oppression and Liberation” (that is focused on understanding social stratification). Students at MHS are enrolled in an advisory course where they are offered academic and technical skills. Advisory teachers provide instruction in humanities, like English and Social Studies. They also introduce and reinforce technical knowledge such as professional dress and conduct, and how to create and maintain working relationships.

MHS places an emphasis on “personalization” and “individualized” learning. These approaches mean that every child is not receiving the same experiences, which raises equity concerns. These characteristics make it an important site to consider the role of integration of the academic and technical core, work-based learning and additional supports. Through an in depth discussion of these Linked Learning elements we can learn more about civic learning in this school.

The Academic Core & Technical Core and Work-Based Learning at MHS

AT MHS the academic and technical learning cores are integrated in ways that are representative of the Linked Learning experience. This school uses a social justice orientation as a vehicle to integrate academic, technical and work-based learning. This chapter will highlight three key MHS elements: school theme, the advisory program and racial awareness workshops, to demonstrate how the school integrates Linked Learning.

I. MHS: School Theme(s)

The school theme is complex, because its definition varies. Responses to the question, “What is the MHS school theme?” usually range from “College- Access,” “Internships” or “Liberation Ideology.” Each of these responses is accurate and illustrates how the academic and technical cores are integrated to create a Linked Learning experience for students. “The purposes of the theme [is] to unify commitments, develop an institutional identity, integrate curriculum, and make learning relevant” (Quartz & Washor, 2008. P.64). MHS uses college- access, internships and Liberation Ideology to accomplish each goal.

⁵ All names included in this document are pseudonyms to protect the identity of the research subjects.

MHS's academic core is centered on creating a college-going culture. This is a transformative notion for students that are traditionally marginalized from this valuable experience. This core is supported through strategic curricular alignments and the commitment that all students should be prepared to enter college upon graduation. The school is situated across the street from a local community college, where students are encouraged to broaden their access to course offerings by enrolling in classes not offered at the school. In many ways Haynes College is an extension of the MHS's school curriculum and culture. MHS Advisors work hard to ensure their students develop meaningful and productive relationships with their college instructors and emphasize that college preparation is an important part of the MHS experience.

While the district has a number of graduation requirements that are well aligned with this goal, the strategies employed at MHS were more rigorous than district requirements in 2008-09.⁶ One strategy that makes this possible is the A-G alignment common to all Vision Network schools in California. The Vision Network (which will be discussed later in the supports section) is the schools' national network partner. Working with State University Regents, the Vision Network developed a set of matrices that illustrate the ways in which MHS's students can complete college requirements through alternative approaches to learning. In 2005, Vision Learning's schools in the State were invited by the University Board of Admissions and Relations with Schools Committee and the University Office of the President to create a new, alternative model for presenting curriculum for A-G course approval based on the State academic standards. This work was completed by Vision in 2006 and was officially accepted by the University Committee as evidence that the non-traditional Vision program and its related curriculum met A-G course requirements.⁷ For the first time in its history, the University Committee approved an alternative process for A-G course approval. The matrices consist of learning objectives aligned with the state academic content standards that track student progress and document how standards have been met and mastered. In the Algebra I matrix outlined below, it is noted that a minimum of 50% of the units will be covered in-depth through a variety of instructional experiences that may include internships, independent projects, workshops, individual and small group seminars, college classes, online courses, field studies, traditional research, written reflections, tutoring, student exhibitions and lectures from outside experts.

⁷ (<http://www.bigpicture.org/2008/10/a-g-matrices-addressing-curriculum-standards-in-california/>)

According to the agreement, a credentialed instructor in this subject area will analyze the rigor of the work completed in order to ensure that the learning objectives were addressed with adequate depth. In addition, all students will be expected to demonstrate each unit with the completion of at least two project-based assignments for the course.

First, according to the agreement with the University, assessment of students will be based on an analysis of the rigor of the work completed in order to ensure learning objectives are met (Analyses must be conducted by a credentialed teacher in the subject area). Second, students are expected to demonstrate their skill proficiency and conceptual understanding through quarterly presentations and asked to discuss the reasoning behind the work they have done, as well as the logic behind sequential steps. Third, each student's advisor will ensure breadth of coverage of the standards through assessment of the student's learning plan and detailed project work. According to the Vision website, "Since mathematics is a sequential discipline, often students will be required to demonstrate more basic skills in order to complete higher level units. Students at Vision Schools utilize a variety of resources to demonstrate mastery of sequential skills, from directed instruction with standards-based textbooks and assessments, to standards-based online or software programs and assessments, to college entrance math assessments and courses."

In addition to A-G alignment, Dual/concurrent enrollment is another method utilized by high schools in an effort to expose students to the college-going culture and to expand course offerings. This approach intensifies academic rigor by offering students an academically advanced curriculum in the form of college coursework.⁸ At MHS, students have the opportunity to take coursework at Haynes College when a class is not offered at MHS or when a student would like the added challenge of taking a college-level course. Students who require math courses higher than Algebra II must take these courses at the community college. As such, courses offered at MHS function as an extension of available course offerings. This is particularly important, as mentioned, given MHS's small size and the limited number of courses it can offer students.

MHS produces progress reports for the college courses, but students are expected to advocate for themselves in the case of missing assignments and when questions arise regarding course content. For many of the classes offered at Haynes students are required to take a placement test. The Haynes coordinator on staff at MHS works with the students and representatives from the college to ensure that students receive the tests they need for the classes in which they would like to enroll. In addition to placement into a college-level course, in order to enroll in a Haynes course, the student must have the permission of their advisor and parents. Advisors and parents must agree that the student has the study skills and work ethic to complete the course. During 2008-09, there were approximately 30-35 students from MHS taking a Haynes course.

Students who take classes at Haynes are provided with support from multiple sources. Students receive support from their peers (through design), from mentors, and from the administration.

It is atypical for students to take Haynes courses where they are the only high school student in the class. Instead, students at MHS are often enrolled in classes that other MHS students are taking. This provides students with peer support and allows teachers to more easily coordinate the necessary resources for student success in these courses, namely, tutoring and textbooks. While they are encouraged to enroll in and attend the same courses, allowances are made for students who wish to take courses of interest where they may be the only high school student enrolled. In addition, students are encouraged to develop a relationship with the professor of the college course and sit in the first three rows of the classroom. Developing a working relationship with the instructor through active participation in class and during office hours not only assists in student learning, it allows students to try on roles that have proven to be effective in college.⁹

Both the advisors and the Haynes coordinator at MHS make themselves available to assist students with questions relating to Haynes coursework. This formal check-in system helps hold all parties accountable for the successful completion of Haynes college courses by MHS students. Students enrolled in these classes are also strongly encouraged to take advantage of tutoring opportunities. Haynes College is located across the street from the high school giving students and staff critical access to the school. Teachers and students can relocate from college to high school just by crossing the street. The dual enrollment policy is one strategy to ensure the equivalent of an Advanced Placement curriculum is provided to interested students.¹⁰ While impressive, in isolation from the other aspects of the school theme (i.e. Internships, Liberation Ideology) MHS would not be able to achieve its Linked Learning status. The academic component in conjunction with the other pieces of the theme are integrated together by teachers to highlight issues of stratification. The MHS principal describes college access for the schools' population as a way of addressing stratification. College is presented to students as more than just a means for intellectual or economic advancement but as a social justice strategy to promote what she calls a 'cultural shift'. She explains,

... We know the obstacles that are in front of our kids in terms of the 4-year college path, we're very, very focused on that... the 4-year path is something that just requires a huge amount of energy, its ongoing, to be a cultural shift.

⁹ Karp, 2006)

¹⁰ Courses taken by students at the community college are not weighted on student transcripts while colleges and universities weight grades earned in Advanced Placement courses.

...We're trying to teach a group of kids who show up not that interested in learning academic things, not coming to us with home value on doing academic work for many hours, pushing through frustration...And I think on top of that...we have a cultural societal thing that's ... instant gratification, short attention spans and all of that. ...Added on to that, having a group of kids who are dealing with huge grief and loss issues, who are living in a community and a city where (students) lives are completely unstable and unpredictable, where death is a daily reality, where believing in a future is not a given at all, and where their home models are not of, you know academic, they're not academic home models. So given all of that, ... part of the job of teaching here is to figure out ways to really engage those kids and have our kids take ownership and identify with academic learning, and ... to have those kids really, ... take on what it means to do academic work as well as to do real world work, both of those things together is really hard. ...We're fighting an uphill battle every single day... and it's really emotionally difficult to continue the work often. ...

These Arnold's comments illustrate the connections staff are drawing for students between their lives as students, real world experiences and possible academic goals. MHS is able to make such connections through their use of the internship programs as well.

In addition to their academic preparation, students also have opportunities to broaden their educational experiences through internships. Students are placed in internships beginning in the 9th grade and continue exploring their varied interests well into their senior year. Employing the assistance of the internship coordinator and an extensive database featuring hundreds of internship sites, students are afforded the opportunity to explore fields they hope to pursue in the future and are introduced to new fields and occupations. Most students complete a total of eight internships by the time they graduate from MHS. As one student explained,

We are an internship-based high school. So we do internship twice a week, and we do normal school work three times a week. So we go to school Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays and we go to our internships on Tuesdays and Thursdays. And it's also kind of different because of the classes we take, like,

advisory – well, the humanities, like English and Social Studies, it's called Advisory. It's not called like my English class or something, like other schools. And then we have geometry, and there are different electives. (Cicely Ware)

MHS 's commitment to providing students with real-world learning experiences is evident in its mission statement and the way in which internships are embodied through the structure of the program. Students from 9-12th grade are required to go through the process of pursuing and successfully completing internships. Guided by the internship coordinator and their individual advisors, students navigate their way through the initial contact process, pursuing internship opportunities throughout the Metro Area. Through the assistance of private fundraising facilitated by the school, MHS is able to provide fare for public transportation (bus or rapid transit) that students need in order to travel to internships sites. The school is conveniently located next to a public transportation hub, allowing students to easily travel to internship locations across city.

Through internships students have the opportunity to learn about a particular career or interest, explore its “depth” and possibilities, and to experience first-hand the realities of that career or job. Tenth graders are asked to develop a search portfolio in which they investigate at least one area outside their current interest. In addition they are asked to do five informational interviews and at least one shadow day within a six-week period for a prospective internship site. Through this process students gain a network of contacts in their field of interest and beyond.

Teachers encourage students to use the internship experience as an opportunity to try new things. Students, however, do not always heed this advice. This is a particular concern when students may not have been exposed to the widest range of life choices. As one teacher explains, If they have a really limited ability to imagine what's out there, we're just going to be reproducing people's class status because class is such a huge determiner of what people see as options for their lives, particularly in the world of work. So how do we both respect that students should have a voice in what's happening and they need to be in the habit of taking initiative to pursue learning opportunities, So there needs to be choice, and at the same time they need to find things that they might not otherwise find, because of school.

The process is similar for all students in grades 10-12 (9th grade is discussed below). As students progress through the program they are given more and more opportunities to work at different internship sites. While the opportunities are abundant, finding the right fit for students and the right internship site can be challenging. Many times, for example, the student may have an idea about the internship site and project, but the reality does not match his/her expectations. The internship coordinator and advisor

monitor the student's progress closely to address any issues that may arise – ensuring he/she is learning at the site and is receiving adequate mentorship.

During data collection I observed an intervention between a student, advisor and coordinator where the internship was not going well. The 11th grade student was placed at an elementary school and asked to work with a group of students. The mentor at the site became concerned that the student's attendance was inconsistent. During the intervention the student explained that she was no longer interested in working with the age group of students in the class where she was placed. While she was still encouraged to complete the project that she had started, at the close of the quarter, having learned a little more about what she was and was not interested in pursuing, she was allowed to begin looking for a new internship,

Like this student, many students at MHS use the internship process to explore their interests and learn about which fields and pathways they are or are not interested in pursuing in the future. This situation also makes clear the important role that adults play in the internship process. The adults, especially the coordinator and the advisor, continue to reinforce and teach the student how to remain professional even when the situation is not working out as well as one would have hoped. These invaluable lessons help shape students' actions and directly translate into successful subsequent internships.

Internships range by theme and interest, exposing students to a range of academic areas. One of the more popular internships at MHS partners with an organization called FACES for the Future (see text box below). This science themed program allows students to learn about the medical field and about the underrepresentation of particular populations therein. This rigorous program requires students to have flexible schedules and learn skills like time management and how to conduct themselves in a professional environment. The FACES director explains that these experiences are essential in preparing students for the expectations of a college environment and exposing them to some of the technical skills they might encounter during their first year in college. Like FACES, many of the internships at MHS attempt to introduce students to the skills they need to adjust to a college culture, while also allowing them to build and create an experience that may guide them toward selecting a career. Unfortunately due to space limitations, not all MHS students have an opportunity to participate in the FACES program.

Another feature of the internship process is the fact that students can bring skills acquired in the classroom into the work they produce for the internship site, and vice versa. The MHS curriculum allows students to participate in and learn from projects that are related to their internship experience. Internships provide the context for these (individualized) projects and allow students to integrate experiences and learning from their internship to coursework. For example, one student worked at Casa De Hora, a needle exchange program. The program was dedicated to addressing a reduction in drug use

through education and the distribution of information about safer use. This student conducted a survey of the program's clients that he later analyzed to assess the long-term and short-term impact that the program was having. The student was able to develop useful conclusions by using the data analysis skills he acquired through courses taken at MHS. Through this project, the student was able to fulfill his project-based/science credit because he incorporated scientific vocabulary and methods. Also, according to the student, the life lessons learned through this particular project made a "big difference" in his career and college trajectory. These types of results reinforce the ideas echoed over and over in interview responses; both teachers and students recognize that the curriculum at MHS is intended to do more than just provide students with college and career skills. The curriculum is also designed to help students gain a more global perspective of the world. A description of a few other projects completed by MHS students include the following:

- *A professional map of the city that was sold at stores as a fundraiser for the League of Women Voters.*
- *Organization of a daylong conference on health care and educational access for immigrants.*
- *A brochure for a local Animal Shelter based on research on the deadly Parvo-Virus to help patrons better care for animals and administer medications.*

According to students the most powerful projects are not those that are high profile, but those that change the way they think about themselves and their ability to have an impact on their world.

In the original Vision model, these projects begin in the 9th grade. However, the structure of the projects has changed since MHS's inception, reflecting the way the Vision Network models flexibility accommodates the unique needs of MHS students. MHS, like other Vision schools, started with allowing students to design personalized projects during their 9th grade year. However, this quickly changed once advisors were met with the challenge of shaping individualized projects for a group of students who had yet to acquire the study skills or work habits that would allow them to benefit from these projects. As such, there is a degree of flexibility required on the part of teachers and administration.

MHS teachers found that freshmen needed more time to become familiar with the school culture and to work on their study skills before conducting individualized project work. Due to the lack of preparation of incoming 9th graders, advisors were being asked to plan out each step for 17 individualized projects—an extraordinary amount of work. As a result, MHS decided to deviate from the Vision paradigm and implemented group projects instead. While the decision to move towards group projects was a departure from the Vision, teachers stood by the decision. Like the academic component, the internship component also has important civic implications. Through the process students are encouraged to engage with and appreciate the assets in their community. Narratives of cultural deficit that bombard students daily are challenged by giving them an opportunity to see the work that is taking place

in the community around them and more importantly to play a part in that work. MHS is also helping students reframe their ideas regarding the limits of their community by providing them opportunities to work in spaces they would not ordinarily have access to. During the internship period it is not unusual to see an eager group of students dressed in white lab coats commute to a hospital outside their community. As the executive director of the program explains, these opportunities serve two important functions, to give students new experiences, but more importantly to extend their life choices.

[We hope to] diversify the health care professions by preparing young people who represent the diversity of our communities for entry into health careers and professions and college. But the second issue, and for me, one of the most important, was this idea of addressing adolescent health disparities within communities in which we serve. There are a number of young people coming into our clinics here in the hospital, number one, expressing a desire for alternative life choices. (Mark Santos)

More than the technical knowledge or skills students learn about the health care industry, by the end of their internship they have developed a community which includes doctors, nurses, technicians and a group of high school students interested in leveraging their efforts to make an impact on the world. Built into the internship process are exhibitions of their learning that students must complete. In these exhibitions students present their project and what they learned and in the process they are able to transfer their experiences to the school at large. It would be great if every student in the area had the same opportunity to work at PLACES the non-profit that offers the internship. MHS is the only school without a medical theme invited to participate in the program and they only offer eight spots. The PLACES director explained that MHS was selected to participate in the program because of the flexibility in the master schedule that allows students to attend the program three times a week.

One of the challenges faced by MHS in the administration of their academic and technical core is taking college course or completing an internship like PLACES requires advisor approval. Students who are struggling academically (behind in credits, failing courses) or who

are not considered mature enough, tend to experience a more traditional educational pathway and have less rigorous internship projects. MHS also has a significant population of Aspergers students who are less likely to have internships or college courses. These differences present challenges to civic learning for these students.

The final piece of the MHS school theme that every student in the program encounters is the Oppression and Liberation framework, which it uses to integrate its curriculum. This connecting theme weaves all the courses at MHS together. The school prioritizes students' needs by using the theme to help students contextualize the experience of being marginalized by age, class and race. The incorporation of this framework is based on the idea that inequality and injustice are realities that informed individuals must address directly. Oppression and Liberation ideology teaches that racial, economic and social stratification are obstacles to democratic ideals and, as informed citizens; students should be able to recognize and confront these issues directly. Through this curricular orientation MHS is able to provide its students with a greater sense of personal agency. One teacher explains the benefits of this approach,

...The whole curriculum at MHS is oppression and liberation, which is so amazing, and especially working with minority students, I mean students who are oppressed by age or working with socio economic issues, I mean, it's just a lot of issues going on with these students, that this theme highlights. (Sasha Margolis)

The framework allows students to connect their work-based experiences to their academics in discussions that occur in advisory which are intended to give students space to analyze and reflect on their internships and classroom learning. This framework matches the general belief shared by many of the teachers at MHS, that systems of oppression shape the lives of people in marginalized communities. According to one teacher,

...I love being at MHS and being a part of that because I feel like, through the lens of oppression and liberation our students are learning the writing skills, they're learning the critical thinking skills, they're

learning history by looking back at events and asking ‘Why what happened with Civil Rights applies now?’ It’s very applicable and is better than just going chronologically through the Civil Rights in history class. (Jeffery Smith)

Students have extended the benefit of this approach by incorporating it into their experience beyond high school graduation. One teacher explains,

We have a bunch of kids at the State school now, and they’re like, ‘Oh, my God, we already know this whole curriculum that teaches people about oppression. We’re so comfortable talking and doing presentations because we already know this.’ (Jane Johnson)

While some teachers describe Oppression and Liberation ideology as the theme, others describe it as limited to a pedagogical approach and organizational tool used to integrate learning across advisory classes. Despite these mixed messages, a member of the leadership team believes it is central enough to the school culture to include it in the hiring criteria for new teachers. He explains, “ we have this school-wide kind of theoretical framework around oppression and liberation, we also need people who have already done some thinking about that already... we use it to ground a lot of our units.” Through the oppression and liberation framework, internships and college access efforts MHS is integrating its students learning experiences and providing the benefit of helping students challenges forms of stratification that compromise democracy.

MHS also offers racial awareness workshops to its students. They are encouraged to develop critical thinking skills necessary for an analysis of race and inequality. One student describes how this has impacted her educational experience. She explains,

[When] I came to MHS the first thing I remember learning about [was] Malcolm X. I had never in my life learned about Malcolm X in school. You know, my parents have always taught me about that because they’re both teachers, but I have never learned about Black history in school.

The only thing we learned about is slavery, as if that's the only part of Black people's history. (Imani Pitt)

Highlighting issues of race is a challenging goal for any school and MHS is no exception. The school prioritizes this goal by offering elective courses that are ethnic-specific and through school-wide workshops. In one course, offered in 2008-09, called "Raza studies" an instructor from San Francisco State led a discussion on the Zoot Suit Riots and asked students to draw parallels between that historical moment and present-day issues impacting their community. The dynamic conversation that resulted drew students (who initially appeared tired as they walked to the location where the class was being held) into a competition to see who could respond first. Similarly, a young woman, who was a senior at MHS in 2008-09, assembled a group of African American students into a second floor classroom to discuss the topic of Black History and representations of Blacks in the media. Students described the class as a "safe place where we can talk about our issues."

During data collection, a workshop was held where students were divided into ethnic groups, matched with a facilitator and sent to different rooms to discuss the complexities of race and race relations. While it was unclear how frequently activities such as these take place, one student shared that it was good that the school was talking about "the elephant in the room." These conversations, which often extended beyond the allotted time, generated themes of "powerlessness" "privilege" and "entitlement." In the Black caucus group, the facilitator showed images of individuals who were lynched or killed and clips of a Chris Rock stand-up comedy routine where he describes the difference between Black people and the use of the "N" word. Most of the students were engaged in the discussion topic and actively responded to questions, however a few students chose not to participate.

Students shared mixed reviews of these sessions, expressing their appreciation for the opportunity on the one hand, but complaining that the time constraints limited the depth of conversation on the other. Since the workshops took place during the latter part of the school day, it was unclear from data collection if the conversations continued the following day or week when students returned to school. While these spaces have their limits in addressing the myriad issues with which students are often faced with, MHS emphasizes the development of a social justice orientation and an increased awareness of inequality. As such, spaces like these must exist in order to give students a chance to engage in collective analysis of these themes. As race continues to be a difficult topic to address in our country, it will also be a challenge to fully address it in our schools. Schools like MHS, however, have demonstrated a commitment to issues of social justice and a climate of openness and respect. They invite students to participate in these controversial, but necessary civic discussions.

MHS serves a small population of White students. When asked about that experience one White student explained:

It’s, well, I didn’t actually notice that at first because, I don’t want to sound cheesy or anything but I don’t really notice race at first, and so – but then I started realizing, I was like, ‘Wow, it’s so weird because there aren’t that many White students and it’s strange’. I grew up in an area that was predominantly White, but all the schools I’ve gone to were really racially and ethnically mixed, so, as I came to MHS I was thinking, ‘Oh, this is really neat, it’s so diverse’, and I really enjoy it. It’s not something that I worry about, I’m not uncomfortable being around people of different races, and yeah, it’s something I don’t really think about that often. (Ari Rosenberg)

These remarks demonstrate the difficulties in bringing race to the forefront especially for the few White students. The school’s attempts to cultivate a safe space to discuss issues of race are an extension of the curriculum and a chance to discuss stratification.

The Role of Additional Supports at MHS

When thinking about how MHS manages to accomplish a Linked Learning program with civic implications it is useful to consider the role of additional supports. Some of these include the schedule, the extended role and responsibilities of teachers and staff, flexibility in hiring and powerful network/corporate partnerships.

The Schedule

As mentioned previously, flexibility in the master schedule plays an important role in supporting both Linked Learning and civic learning. It is possible for students to participate in work-based experiences and for teachers to share collaborative times because the schedule is flexible enough to accommodate these elements. The Block scheduling allows advisors to assign projects and other in-depth assignments and for students to have adequate time within the schedule to complete these assignments.

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
8:30-9:45	Advisory	Grade Advisory	Advisory	Grade Advisory	Advisory
9:50- 10:50	A Block	CAHSEE Prep	A Block	CAHSEE Prep	A Block

11:00- 12:00	B Block	Internships	B Block	Internships	Town Hall
12:00-12:45	Lunch	Internships	Lunch	Internships	Lunch
12:50-1:50	C Block	Internships	C Block	Internships	C Block
1:55-2:55	D Block	Internships	D Block	Internships	Active Electives
3:00-3:30	Advisory		After school classes		Advisory
3:30-5:00	Study Center		All Staff Mtg	Study Center	

The extended role and responsibilities of teachers

At MHS teachers have a lot of responsibilities. They are advisors, counselors, subject area instructors, and parent liaisons. One teacher shared,

Teachers...are the primary family contact. They're helping students think about After school programs, summer programs, emotional issues, how they're doing in their other classes, plus they're curriculum planners and instructors for humanities content. (George Gonzalez)

As an advisor, a teacher is expected to ensure that each of the 17 students receives the support they need to produce an individualized learning experience. The student-advisor relationship is a partnership that lasts for at least two years (some teachers have stayed with the same group of students beyond two years) unless the partnership is so impaired that a transition is needed. That said, it should be noted that it is uncommon at MHS for students to change advisors.

In addition to managing what occurs within the classroom, advisors are also responsible for making sure students are successfully completing their work-based internship on Tuesdays and Thursdays. According to one teacher,

The advisors, their job is to teach ...Advisory, but then they also, the rest of their week is meeting individually with students, in small groups with students, and going out on Tuesdays and Thursdays when kids are out at their internships.

The advisors are traveling all over the Bay Area. Their job is to go out and meet with the student and their mentor, and really help pull out the learning that's going on and help the student and mentor develop project work plan that will connect academic learning, academic inquiry research-based stuff with whatever it is the student is interested in at the internship site. (Veronica Goldstein)

As discussed by this teacher, in addition to teaching a formal advisory class, the advisor has the added responsibility of meeting regularly with the student and the internship site mentor to track the students' progress. While s/he has support from other teachers, the advisor wears many hats and is responsible for making sure his/her 17 students are on track to successfully complete the MHS program. Working closely with the family, it is not uncommon to see the advisor guiding students through academic, social or emotional obstacles. Students are invited to communicate with their teachers both before and after school and beyond school hours. One student explained that she feels comfortable calling her advisor at night to ask about assignments or even just to seek advice. In fact, most MHS students have the home phone number of their advisor and use it to follow up or to check-in about assignments, or to call and discuss personal matters.

As described, the role of advisor is very comprehensive. Despite the small advisor-student ratio, many advisors shared that they feel they work just as much as if they were at a large comprehensive high school serving 30-40 students each class period. Between grading papers, visiting internship sites or working with students to enroll in and complete community college courses and working with the student's family, the advisor's job is large and time-consuming. However, advisors expressed appreciation for the fact that they spend less time attending to issues of discipline and more time focusing on the growth and development of their students. Over the two-year process the advisor and their students develop a bond that goes far beyond the traditional teacher-student relationship.

Flexibility in hiring

MHS's leadership team works closely with the principal to fill open positions at MHS when positions become available. According to the principal, job posts are placed through the district. However, the principal also posts the position on Craigslist and a number of other job-posting sites. Once applications are submitted, leadership team members play an active role in weighing the considerations, but the ultimate decision is the principal's.

MHS has an informal recruitment team that consists of members from the leadership teams, comprised of teachers, students and parents that look for applicants who are a “good-fit” for the school. A “good fit” consists of a solid understanding of the mission-vision and goals of the school. For instance, when asked about the recruitment efforts, one teacher on the recruitment team explained the importance of a shared vision, and the importance of preparing students for life beyond high school. The teacher explains,

[We look for] people with a vision for internships, and at this point we have a curriculum where we’re really trying to really introduce literacy skills as a tool for your liberation. It’s that angle, people who have an approach to teaching about how to read and write in standard American English, it’s a tool to gain access to power; it’s not the right way to speak. There’s a certain, political ideology that I think, people should be seeing ... some relationship between education and social change, as opposed to just education for individual competitiveness. But at the same time we recognize that we want, we try to equip the students to be able to get jobs, and succeed in higher education... I do think that in general in the schools in our community, people are social justice oriented, particularly in the District. I mean, teachers get paid worse in our District than I think any other district ...in the state; it’s one of the lowest paid districts, so people are working here because there’s a commitment to these students. **(George Gonzalez)**

The “character” or “fit” of individual teachers is prioritized in the hiring process. Once the school has identified a strong candidate they work closely with the district to make sure they have the appropriate credentials and complete the appropriate paperwork for the position. The principal describes the importance of having a strong relationship with the district, in making this an effective process. The team of teachers and administrators at MHS work closely with each other, and ensuring new hires “fit” with the rest of the team is critical.

Affiliation with a Powerful Education Network

MHS's is a part of the Vision Schools network. The Vision Learning Company (BPLC) is a 14-year-old nonprofit that to-date has helped open 60 charter schools around the nation. These particular schools serve at-risk teens and attract unconventional students that need more individual support and hands on curriculum. The mission of BPLC is to 1) keep schools small, 2) focus on individualized learning and relationship building and 3) place less emphasis on classroom management. Furthermore, a unique attribute of Vision Schools is that students work and learn in real world settings through internships and by applying Project Based Learning (PBL). According to the principal, there are benefits to being part of the network. She shares, for example, that while the school does not receive direct funding from the network, they benefit from professional development, and other forms of assistance and support (including grant writing):

We don't get money regularly from Vision, so we're district funded. We do get things like – we had four people come and visit, three from Seattle Vision school and one from Detroit, and they came and did our Professional Development day and are doing Vision's funding, basically it's a critical friendship group going back and forth, so they pay for that, which is really, really amazingly great. And they've also helped us with some grant writing, so Vision writes grants, like they have the grant for the longitudinal study, which pays for part of our part-time college transition counselor. So we do get, some benefits. (Virginia Arnold)

According to descriptions of Vision Schools, the purpose of using PBL is to ignite student passion, as well as skills attainment that will bolster success in college, career, and life beyond high school. Researchers have observed lack of creative thinking, problem solving, and other essential skills in college preparation for high school students. As a result the Vision Model attempts to tap into the interest of high school students and create projects they can enjoy, but from which they can also learn and master the California high school standards.¹¹ One student shared:

My first project was a paper about symbolism, symbolism from the Navajo, because that's one thing I really got interested in, that's where my foundation is from like for the jewelry and fashion I design. So I did

¹¹ http://www.gse.harvard.edu/news_events/features/2011/Pathways_to_Prosperty_Feb2011.pdf

a project and paper on symbolism used in these cultural artifacts
(Christopher Franco)

The fusion of passion and learning that is unique to Vision schools has allowed for the bridging of a successful high school-to-college model. This is further established by the fact that students have an advisor with whom they work closely with to check-in on their academic and workplace passions¹². According to a MHS administrator:

... As part of the Vision model...we are developing students as whole people, and we're developing them starting from who they are, what their interests are, what their circumstances are, what they want, what their families want for them...(Sandra Chu)

While the Vision network offers little financial support, the in-kind support that is offered through professional development and program models is tremendously useful to the school. The following section highlights the challenges associated with being a part of the Vision network. Vision schools have been successful in attaining a 92% graduation rate and a 95% college admission rate, however these schools face several challenges. Each school site is created based on the needs of the students and the local community.

Independently MHS has done an impressive job of raising funds from the private sector to meet the operational needs of the school. The internship coordinator (a position that was created by the Vision Model) has overseen much of these fundraising efforts. Interestingly, the internship coordinator position, along with the college advisor, is supported by private funds. According to the internship coordinator, they have raised between \$50,000 and \$100,000 over the last two years through grants and individual donations. When asked about how they were able to accomplish this impressive goal, one teacher explained that it is a combination of public interest in the Vision model and taking advantage of the network created by the teaching staff and community partners. As one teacher explains, tapping into these networks provides an opportunity to allow "privilege to trickle into the school."

...It's the model being radical enough, the Vision Company having their name out and about, and having had publications about them, that get people into our doors and interested, and some personal connections. I feel like those have been

¹² Source: <http://www.bigpicture.org/about-us/>.

the biggest factors. And school commitment, like staff commitment, we talk about fund raising, all the staff writes down names of people that they think we should send newsletters with funding donation requests. There's been a couple of other staff members who have had family members and friends who've given money, so I mean, it is one of those things where actually the class background of the staff, having people who have family members who make a bunch of money, ... it's like a way that privilege can trickle into the school. (**George Gonzalez**)

Each teacher and staff member is asked to make a commitment to the fundraising efforts at MHS. This commitment ranges from providing the names of contacts that may be willing to donate in some way (monetarily or through the provision of internship opportunities, etc.) to coming up with fundraising ideas during teacher/staff meetings. Members of the staff reported that they recognize the value of the networks and the social capital with which they enter the school community. These networks, they recognize, have been critical to the school in both fundraising and community engagement efforts.

According to teachers and staff, the hiring committee inquires about applicants' access to these resources and the type of support they would be willing to provide to the school. Fundraising at MHS has been successful because they have been able to add a face to their efforts. They are fundraising for individuals that occupy the positions rather than just generally. If they do not meet their goals for the year, the potential loss of staff is a serious concern that keeps MHS as a school motivated to meet their fundraising goals. In addition to the loss of staff, MHS staff members are concerned with making sure that through funding they can continue to support programming and projects that are critical to enhancing student learning in all areas.

Vision lends support to the school by providing the school with fundraising ideas, the development of joint grants and providing in-kind support such as training. According to the internship coordinator, one of MHS's major donors became aware of the school while she was reading about the Vision model of education. Knowledge of the Vision model and connections such as these make private fundraising possible at MHS. MHS seems to appeal to funders because it is viewed as an alternative to traditional educational methods and because of its positive outcomes. Through its fundraising efforts the school highlights its unique design, the central element of teacher and student relationships and its focus on the individual needs of each student.

Linking Civic Learning: What can we learn from MHS?

The narrative of civic learning at MHS is complex. As students pursue different pathways through the MHS, these differences often result in differing civic learning opportunities. Integration becomes an iterative process that allows teachers to reinforce connections between academic, technical, and civic lessons. Framing these lessons around the idea of stratification is meaningful for students because it allows students to contextualize themselves within the existing hierarchy that shapes their lives. One of the primary purposes of democratic education is to help people find solutions to problems that shape their lives. The idea of collective problem solving is at the heart of civic education. As was discussed in Chapter II, research has shown that African American and Latino students are less likely to have civic learning opportunities than other students. But through workshops, internship and even in the curricular theme, MHS is challenging that fact for these students by centering the issue of stratification. One teacher explains,

... All of these are efforts to really deal with people who have ... been disenfranchised even within the school system... within our school people feel less alienated who have not really exhibited a certain kind of academic identity, and like really creating a space where they can explore a lot of issues that have come into their lives. We noticed at various times intensive [issues], like, gang activity, and I think that's related question, ...what's happening in their neighborhoods, there's a lot more violence, I think there's just a lot more intensity of emotional impact from situations of depravity basically, and students are coming in with a lot more, students from outside the school are coming in with more stuff, and so we've had to deal with a lot more gang related and just general violence, random acts of violence that are happening in and around our community.(Brandon Berry)

The authors in *Beyond Tracking* (2008) argue, “framing the (Linked Learning) approach around democratic purposes has great potential for revitalizing education and civic life [by] forging a normative vision of democracy, economic democracy and the democratic workplace “(Rogers, Kahne & Middaugh, 2008. p.153). When asked directly about civic learning at MHS the principal Virginia Arnold explained, “(Some) Advisors will take students to a court hearing, or a protest march.” While it was reassuring to hear some traditional examples of civic learning, those examples are far less powerful than the cultural shift that occurs when academic, technical and civic learning are linked. One student explained, “so we have norms of how we work together, that involve going to the source, positive intent, listening for understanding, and that's how we're teaching others.” These qualities are difficult to access on a

standardized tests but many Americans would agree these qualities are missing from our current political process.

Using the Narrow versus Broad framework introduced in Chapter II is helpful starting places to understand how these Linked Learning features connect to civic learning at MHS. In one of my final interviews a senior teacher explained, “The transformations that happen here have to do with their exposure to outside, not necessarily exactly what we’re doing in the school, but the connections that we’re making for them to internship sites and summer programs and just activities that get them really engaged in their community and in wanting to do something more” (9th Grade teacher). As this teacher suggest civic learning in Linked Learning benefits from a teachers ability to draw connection between real world experiences and turn them into teachable moments. In this view civic learning is more than facts and concepts it is life lesson that allow students to engage in the democratic process.

The chapter that follows will review the links between these two areas by employing the broader approach to civic learning that allows us to see the civic potential that is incorporated in the MHS experience.

CHAPTER FIVE

Analyzing Civic Learning:

Montgomery (MHS)

In this chapter the analysis of civic learning opportunities at Montgomery will be evaluated through a response to this study's three overarching research questions. In this discussion, the Linked Learning elements, the conditions that support Linked Learning, and the kind of preparation for civic life available at MHS will become more apparent when compared against the Narrow versus Broad civic learning framework.

Question I: How do the Linked Learning Reform elements create challenges and/ or potential for civic learning?

The previous chapter provided a description of MHS that was organized around the academic, technical, work-based and additional support features of the school. This section will consider those features as they relate to the challenges and possibilities for civic learning.

Academic & Technical Core:

The academic and technical core at MHS are integrated through school themes which is an important structural element at the school. The three school themes (college access, internship, and oppression and liberation) illustrate MHS's range of learning opportunities. Many interpret an "internship" as just preparation for a career. A program that makes use of the "college access" theme might seem to contrast with "internships" in the traditional college versus career paradigm. Yet, at MHS these two themes are combined with a focus on oppression and liberation in ways that exemplify the Linked Learning approach. Over the course of this conversation, I will make the case for a view of civics where (multiple forms of) literacy access and technical knowledge can be understood as more than challenges to civic learning. These technical and academic features will be represented as the potential building blocks for increasing the civic quality of schools like MHS.

MHS Feature of Academic and Technical Core: Themes

1. College Access

At MHS college-access is described as more than just educational advancement, it is also privileged for its role as a strategy to address social stratification. The MHS site-description included teachers and students who were able to draw connections between the gaps in college access traditionally available to members in their community and the school's effort to place an emphasis on increasing access to college level teaching and learning. Skills that are emphasized in college access like the ability to collaborate, demonstrate a command of written and verbal communication, and problem solving are as relevant to college as they are for preparation for civic life.

MHS has operationalized the concept of college access through their use of A-G course alignment. Their relationship with the *Vision Educational Network* has resulted in student's access to over 20 A-G approved courses. The alignment between the school curriculum, state content standards, and university entrance requirements provides greater access to high quality academic skills that also offers civic benefits. Even subjects like algebra that would not ordinarily be cited as evidence of civic preparation can be seen as potential sites for civic development when viewed through the MHS A-G learning matrix. At MHS algebra is offered through "... units [that are] covered through a variety of instructional experiences that may include internships, independent projects, workshops, individual and small group seminars, college classes..." (Big Picture, 2011). It is useful to recall the earlier discussion of the difference between civic knowledge and civic epistemology. While both forms of civics are important and useful, at a school like MHS that has a particular focus on addressing social stratification, civic epistemological approaches to civic learning may be particularly relevant. Each of the algebra instructional practices recognizes that there are multiple ways to engage in problem solving. The use of workshops and seminars reinforce the power and importance of collaborative work, which is a key feature of 21st century skills and civic learning opportunities.

2. Internships and Work-Based Learning

Integration of the academic and technical core at MHS is evident in the implementation of their internship program. As Chapter IV explains, technical skills are offered to students through their participation in the internship program. Older peers that help them locate and apply to internship sites support students through the intern selection process. Students learn how to successfully navigate the interview process, develop a project that meets an organizational need and translate the learning and work that takes place within the internship to community members, peers and MHS teachers. Over the course of their experiences at the school, students have the opportunity to engage in work-based learning opportunities by exploring the businesses and organizations around them. Most importantly, MHS

students come to understand their part in the work that these companies and organizations do. Oakes and Saunders (2008) describe work-based learning as, “realistic workplace simulations that deepen students’ understanding of academic and technical knowledge through application in authentic situations” (p.8). Through the internship, MHS’s creates workplace simulations, connects academic and technical knowledge and even requires students to participate in authentic work situations.

One of the concerns raised in the previous chapter is how advisors and the internship coordinator can best assist students in selecting an internship that is a good fit. Because of their varied interests, students complete a wide range of internship projects in a given year. While the diversity of internships can be described as a positive reflection of personalization, it also makes predicting the civic benefits of all internships difficult. For example, students may be eager to enroll in the popular FACES for the Future program (the medical themed internship) because of its notoriety and academic and vocational benefits. However, most of the internships at MHS focused on the more direct civic benefits to students and to the larger community. Even the FACES program is challenging social stratification through community development as a theme in the program. Students are encouraged to consider how developing an interest in the medical field can challenge the notion that students from their communities do not become doctors, nurses or technicians. The program also works to develop students across schools into a network of peers that encourage them to stay committed to rigor and high expectations for themselves and others.

A student’s ability to design a professional map of a neighboring city was developed into a fundraiser for the League of Women voters. Another student’s interest in health was translated into organizing a conference on healthcare and educational issues for immigrant populations. These are just two examples of the ways students are connecting their work within internships to impacting themselves and the world around them. The lack of a civic requirement for the internship means that all students have the same opportunity for civic development. Even in the absence of such a requirement the school is still managing to produce a majority of projects that are related to civics. The reason for such a trend may be partially explained by one student’s insightful observation of the school. *“MHS is a school about serving its community, but I feel like when you give somebody an outlet to do their passion they can find a way to service to community.”* Connecting passion and community service to the internship program illustrate the potential of MHS as a civic learning site.

3. Oppression & Liberation Framework

The final theme used to describe MHS is the Oppression and Liberation framework highlights important challenges and potential to civic learning at the school. While there is disagreement about the extent to which the framework can be described as a school wide theme, it is nonetheless universally accepted as an important feature of the learning at the school. The oppression and liberation framework

encourages marginalized students to problematize current and historical social trends that marginalize some groups at the expense of others. This concept is similar to the justice-oriented view of citizenship advanced in the work of Kahne and Westheimer (2002). From this perspective, civics at MHS has the potential to do much more than grant students access to sanctioned civic knowledge but also to assist them in developing a civic identity that argues that citizens should shape democracy and not just be shaped by democracy.

Question II: What Conditions support Opportunities for Civic Learning in Linked Learning schools?

For each of the Linked Learning features discussed above there are important resources and role considerations that shape the condition of civic learning at MHS

Additional Learning Supports

The diversity of schools within the Linked Learning reform is no more apparent than in their additional learning supports offerings. Because of the different expertise of instructors, school themes, and in their community contexts, schools that can accurately be described as “Linked Learning” may still offer very different learning experiences. Oakes and Saunders provide some guidance on how the 4th component of Linked Learning is most commonly defined. They explain, “...Additional supports meet the particular needs of students and communities, which can include supplemental instruction, counseling, transportation and so on (7).” At MHS Additional supports can be categorized into two broad categories: Structures and Resources. Both of these elements support the implementation of Linked Learning in ways that create challenges and potential for civic learning.

1. Structures

Chapter four discussed a number of structures at MHS that impact teaching and learning (i.e. Scheduling, School Theme and Curriculum). At the heart of these, is personalization, which provides vital assistance to the school’s ability to accomplish its Linked Learning goals and even impacts civic learning potential. Through personalization, MHS students are able to have their intellectual and emotional needs met. The larger *Vision Network* promotes the ideal of individualization, even ensuring that EVERY student in the network is provided with an Individualized Learning Plan (IEP) that describes the program that will best reflect the goals and skills of the student. Comparisons between student experiences raise some important issues related to curricular tracking. MHS considers itself a school that does not track students through their learning process, yet there are some students who benefits from

extensive access to college, career and civic learning and others whose schooling is more traditional in nature due to their actual or perceived needs. The internship program at MHS highlights the importance of the structural flexibility that is required. Participation in the FACES program is extended to schools that offer a program flexible enough to allow students to attend their home school on certain days and the internship program (which includes hospital visits) on other days. The civic benefits of the internship program would be severely impaired, if the school was not flexible enough to offer students drastically different schooling experiences. This is an important challenge for extending civic learning because schools like MHS must be cognizant of how they implement personalization to ensure it does not reflect traditional tracking which is often linked to differing experience of students by race, class and gender (Oakes, 1994).

2. Resources

The school's access to key resources is an important benefit of MHS. All of the schools included in the larger study received financial or in-kind support directly related to their affiliation with Linked Learning. The emphasis on collaboration is just one reason that Linked Learning is often considered a more expensive program to run. Collaborative projects often include intra-grade level learning features, which means that the Science teacher, who would have completed lesson planning alone in a traditional school, must instead work closely with the History and Spanish teachers.

The ability to compensate teachers for their work, provide them with relevant learning tools and even offer students transportation funding (to attend internships) is key to implementing Linked Learning in ways that have civic resonance. Commonly teachers are not compensated for what some administrators' consider "extra" planning time and as a result, issues of sustainability arise. As part of the MHS program, advisors periodically visit student internship sites to monitor student progress. While this aspect of the program is a widely held expectation, it results in some teachers finding themselves traveling around the city from site to site and investing personal time and money (for gas etc) to ensure students have the best possible experience. Unlike MHS, many schools do not have the resources to subsidize transportation costs for students or salaries for an internship coordinator. One teacher explains, *"Through the assistance of private fundraising facilitated by the school, MHS is able to provide fare for public transportation (bus or rapid transit) that students need in order to travel to internships sites. The school is conveniently located next to a public transportation hub, allowing students to easily travel to internship locations across city."* Other important resource considerations at MHS include the role of partnerships and community. During the hiring process, prospective teachers are asked about possible relationships that can be leveraged for school fundraising and student internship sites. Teachers are a crucial part of making

sure that the internship process is implemented effectively, and as a result teachers themselves become an important resource in making MHS possible.

Likewise the community (as a resource) plays an important role in granting students access to experiences that have civic potential. The school is located a short walk away from a public transportation hub which allows students to go to sites around the large metropolitan area. Additionally, MHS is able to call upon members of the community to engage with students during presentations and to support fundraising efforts. If these conditions were to change in ways that made it harder to travel outside of the school or if the community was less supportive of the MHS program, then it would likely negatively impact the civic quality of the site. The resources and structures at MHS help students develop skills necessary for navigating real world experiences.

“Civics” Matters at MHS:

A study of civic learning at MHS requires a deeper inquiry than a discussion that includes only the presence and absence of civics courses. Employing a narrow view of civic learning produces a limited view of civics in this Linked Learning site. However, over the course of data collection, MHS has challenged the notion of what it means to be a citizen through its program offerings and unique learning context. As a result, MHS demonstrates important features (like integration, applied learning, and additional supports) that speak to both their presence as a Linked Learning site but also as a site with civic potential. Many places emerged where an explicit emphasis on civic learning (defined broadly or even narrowly) would clearly be beneficial to the site. In the absence of an explicit discussion of civics, something interesting occurred: a school still actively creating an environment with civic potential. Civic potential is not enough. The cost of denying access to civic skills is too high a social cost for the individual and especially for the collective. These civic skills also have important academic and career applications. MHS serves an important role in its community and offers a useful map of how other Linked Learning sites might do the same.

Yet the question remains, does MHS represent the “average civic experience” in Linked Learning or is it just a very compelling outlier? How would the experience of students in the Linked Learning context change if the demographics, location and even theme shifted dramatically? The following chapters offer an opportunity to engage with

these questions and examine civic learning in a school with important similarities (i.e. size, the Link Learning model, and committed teachers) and equally interesting differences (population, location and theme). In the face of such differences, how will the civic potential and challenges to civic learning appear?

CHAPTER SIX

Site II Description: Technology High School

In one of the largest metropolitan cities in the West is a densely populated community characterized by the juxtaposition of affluent neighborhoods just miles from working class communities. One teacher explained, “ ... until I moved here I never realized how enormous this area is, nor how diverse; economically, racially and every other way.” Students attending Technology High come from throughout the city. Some even travel for over an hour on impacted public transportation to a school that prides itself on welcoming “ every kid, every ability”. Zack Morris is an 11th grade student at Technology High. Zack’s mother describes the benefits that he enjoys as a student at this unique high school.

Zack Morris: 11th Grade

Zack has high functioning autism. We felt like his needs were [best] met within a school with smaller class sizes, and an academic setting that really prepares kids to succeed in the real world. We liked that there are only 400

Nestled within the expansive city is a large learning complex and within it lies a hidden oasis located in one of the largest public school districts in the United States (enrolling just under 700,000 students). Visitors must travel down a series of meandering narrow paved roads to arrive at Technology High (THS). The school has come to be known as a small school with a large reputation featuring an award winning robotics program. THS has a state of the art multi-million dollar building. The school is a district charter that is co-located within the campus of a large comprehensive High School called Lincoln high. Visitors must look closely for the signs that lead to THS. As the school’s name reveals, technology is a central feature that promises to prepare students for college and technical careers. At first glance Lincoln High School, which serves over 3,200 students, seems to dwarf THS, yet THS’s student population of just 315 students still manages to represent forty-five unique zip codes within the district.

In addition to their size, Lincoln High School and THS differ by the racial composition of the students they serve. The majority of THS students identified as either White (50%) or Hispanic (38%). Asian students represented only 8% of the total student population while African American students

composed only 2%. By comparison, at Lincoln the majority of students are Hispanic (71%) followed by African American who compose (12%).

Technology High School (N= 315)	Lincoln High School (N= 3,212)
White: 156, (50%)	White: 394, (12%)
Hispanic: 118, (38%)	Hispanic: 2,283, (71%)
Asian: 24, (8%)	Asian: 171, (5%)
African American: 6, (2%)	African American: 296, (9%)
American Indian: 0	American Indian: 6, (0.2%)

Together these two schools provide a useful comparison; one that represents a traditional high school (Lincoln), and the other (THS) that represents an alternative. Teachers at THS emphasize the importance of literacy, written and verbal communication and encouraging students to meet and exceed high expectations. Technology is the organizing theme used to promote the goal of college access and career readiness. One teacher explains, "...It's really just our expectation that every one of these kids goes to college because they need that degree to be successful in the future. A high school diploma just doesn't do it, and in the future even more so, it just won't be enough. United only in their proximity, these two schools offer their students very different educational experiences.

The discussion that follows will rely upon the narratives of teachers, students and parents to describe key features of the Linked Learning program at THS. The school's mission statement explains:

[THS]... fuses traditional academic subjects with real-world technical applications and problem solving skills. Students are productive, self-directed learners, engaged in rigorous, relevant work that connects the [THS] community to the larger society. (THS Website)

This chapter will describe the academic, technical, work based and civic elements of THS. Examples of these elements will provide the foundation for an analysis of the limits and potential of civic learning within the Linked Learning reform

The Academic Core at THS

Over the course of this research, THS was often described as a school with a rigorous program. This description was often linked to one of the three dominant (and interrelated) features that characterize the

academic core at THS. These include: High Expectations, an A-G aligned curriculum and, a Project-Based Learning (PBL) approach. Each of these features frames the academic core that is intended to illustrate the importance of real world learning to prepare students for college, career and civic opportunities. The academic core is built upon the belief that THS students can excel and should be prepared for a wide range of life options. The role of expectations, curriculum and pedagogy highlight the importance of THS as a linked learning site and an interesting contest to explore the potential of civic learning within this reform.

High Expectations

THS staff, students and parent often described high expectations as a key feature of the school's academic culture and the motivation that students require to succeed. Respondents explained the ways in which THS teachers set these expectations, which help shape student experiences. One teacher explains, "I think that if you set the expectations, you hold the kids accountable, and they know they're being held accountable they do the right thing. They don't want to 'cause they're sixteen and they will kick and scream every step of the way and they will...I mean when I give an assignment they all groan "arrgghhh, not that, ohhhh. They take it seriously and they do it. Because they're ... not just going to stand up there and look like idiots. Teachers explain that the process starts with them holding students to high expectations and eventually shifts into students holding themselves and their peers accountable. High expectations is not just a standard that is reserved for students, teachers are also holding themselves to high standards. "I think its one of the things that's really great about the faculty. We all had high expectations for ourselves. We have a really eclectic faculty, some people who always wanted to be teachers; that's all they wanted to do, some people who have gone through a twisting path to get here." This eclectic group of students and teachers form the THS family and is engaged in work that challenges and encourages them to exceed expectations.

A-G Aligned courses

According to Oakes and Saunders (2008) A-G can be described as " a college- preparatory academic core that satisfies the course requirements for entry into a state's flagship public university through project-based and engaging instructional strategies" (p. 6). A-G alignment is represented in the school's promotional materials and in the comments of research respondents. The website explains that, "All students receive a rigorous college-bound curriculum and must meet or exceed the A-G requirements for entrance into the University of California as their high school graduation requirements." (Website). The benefits of this approach are also featured prominently on the School Accountability Report Card (SARC). The SARC promises that, THS provides a California State Standards-based college

preparatory education for all students, but especially for "low income students, " to meet the A - G requirements for admission to a University of California or CA State University, and develop knowledge leaders in the 21st century digital world." (Citation).

Math and science courses at TH demonstrate the ways in which instructors are offering A- G courses in non-traditional ways. Unlike students in a more traditional public school students at TH begin the 9th grade enrolled in a physics course. In addition to the physics course, students are offered integrated math 1 which includes a discussion of algebra and geometry concepts in a way that requires them to develop math analysis skills. This approach present challenges for a student body that are still expected to perform (proficiently) on standardized tests that expect traditional math progression. Despitess the challenge presented by standardized test, by their senior year THS students can either enroll in calculus or statistics. The fact that students are gaining access to these advanced math courses demonstrates how THS's students are becoming highly competitive for college admission. In addition to classes like math that are considered "core courses", TH has been effective at making elective cores useful in meeting the A-G requirement. One teacher describes the advanced nature of electives by describing photography at THS. She explains, [at THS] ... even though photography is an elective it's a core class. These kids learn a lot of information. When we do the tour and you look through the pictures these kids take, and see that they learn about different photographers, the lighting and how that changes, and ... types of photography. It's a lot of information. Teachers at THS are creating learning opportunities for students that are responsive to the college admission standards and doing so by linking (A-G) content to projects and presentations and through concurrent enrollment in college courses as high school students.

Project Based Learning

Researchers of the small schools movement and Linked Learning reform agree that project based learning (PBL) is a effective pedagogical tool to make learning relevant and prepare student for a wide range of life choices. This includes preparing student with skills like, " cooperation, team problem identification and solving, communication, making decisions, commitment, confidence in abilities, and boldness in developing ideas and approaches (Oakes & Saunders, 2008.p. 8)". For students and teachers at THS the use of PBL is the heart of teaching and learning. This student- driven approach to learning, seeks to engage student by presenting them with a problem and asking them to apply the learning from their classes and the skills developed in classes to create solutions.

THS offers much of its learning through integrated projects that students complete. Both students and teachers cite the projects as one of the most engaging elements of the schools. One such project was an event that the teachers organized called "Pop Day." Playing on the idea of a pop quiz, the teachers designed an all day activity that would allow students the opportunity to leverage their technical,

analytical and collaborative skills to complete a project. One teacher describes, “We call it pop day, like pop quiz, surprise day, and to the end of we need to make this school more fun, we need to differentiate what we’re doing here, we don’t want it to be like a factory here, we’re like an office, it’s more like an office setting than a factory, and we like that, because that’s important, but...that’s funny now that I say that we’re gonna make it like an office more...but we don’t want it to be rote, you know, every day is exactly the same, I mean, we need to do things that are gonna make the kids...shake them up a little bit.” Ultimately, during “Pop Day” the students were given six hours to complete a task that was a complete surprise to them. Upon arrival students were divided into teams of five students and asked to assign roles and then plan, design and present a newspaper that captured current events. Another teacher explained,

We wanted to have more fun at the school and we thought that it would be an interesting challenge for the kids. We thought that it would be sort of fun for us to see what the kids could do, that it would be a challenge for us to sit back and let them fail and not help them. I don’t know; you do it. We wanted to do more where the kids compared outcomes so they could see that effort and organization had a positive effect. You know we do that a lot in our individual classrooms, but we thought this would be a chance to really highlight...like if you do a really good job it will show in your final product and one person working alone is not gonna do as well as if you can get ten people working together.

The idea for pop day was sparked when Peter Spaulding and Katherine Jordan attended a conference. Working together these teachers convinced the teaching staff that it would be interesting to suspend classes for the day and ask students to focus on collaborative learning. The teachers met frequently to hammer out the details and make sure that this new project would be a success. However some teachers still had their doubts.

Waiting nervously for the students to arrive the teacher welcomed our research team to observe the day’s activities. When the school day began the students arrived to find their school completely transformed. They were handed a sheet with instructions on it and asked to assemble themselves into their groups. The room looked like chaos. Then the students hit the ground running, attending workshops led by their teachers, conducting Internet searches and proof-reading drafts of news articles. There were moments of frustration especially when it seemed like the leaders of the group were investing more work than their team members. At these moments teachers acted as consultants and facilitators instead of dictating the course of learning.

When the clock struck three o' clock there was a mad dash to post the finished work on the large dividers positioned in the center of the room. Exhausted and content the students stood proudly before their work waiting to hear whose project had won the coveted prize of free dress passes for their team. When the winning team was announced, the room erupted in cheers and sighs of disappointment. The teachers smiled at the excitement in the room and darted glances of appreciation to each other as the students collected their things and headed home. This is just one example of the types of projects that occur at TH that bring learning to life and ask students to take an active role in their own learning by seeking out information and supporting each other.

Rollercoaster project

While POP day stands out as a powerful project experience it is certainly not the only experience students have with projects. Starting in the ninth grade students are asked to complete interdisciplinary projects, in particular rollercoaster projects. Linking together their English, Spanish, Math, Physics and Photography classes this project brings together all that the students are doing in their individual classes into one cohesive product. The project teachers met frequently before the project began to plan for the activity. The students were asked to build a functional rollercoaster that was connected to what they were learning about mythology. To appeal to Spanish speaking audience they included Spanish in the brochure. Then they did a round robin so they got to the top seed and there were five and we had an assembly and all of the ninth graders watched the five winners. The students were asked to present their final projects to a panel that included teachers, peers and a panel of engineering experts. While the projects themselves were a success there were challenges associated with tackling such a large endeavor. As one teacher explained, one of the challenges was carving out time for the co-planning. She explained, "...[It] took a lot of time [meetings] before school and after and at lunch, but yeah that's the set time. So our common planning time is this hour before school, which is basically donated timeⁱⁱⁱ." Despite the challenges, the rollercoaster project sets the stage for the type of projects that are expected of THS students. Even parents are impressed by the amount of work and dedication that the projects require. One parent explained "... the big project this year was the roller coasters. That was just amazing. I've been listening and hearing about it for like weeks, and I finally got to see the finished products that they have there. It's just amazing. They work together, they work in groups of three, which I think is, you know, wonderful. ...but they had to get up in front of the class and do a presentation for two minutes." When the project is complete students are asked to do a formal presentation where they wear formal attire. These presentations are intended to mirror a college and work environment. The examples of the rollercoaster's were even featured on the Channel 5 News. As a result of these projects students learn to

make connections between the discrete information that they learn in their classrooms and how they might apply it in the real world.

Another example of a PBL assignment at THS was described as the Flash Project. Through this project students are asked to integrate the material they learned in their chemistry and history courses. Students are required to build a flash game (a program that is used to view videos on YouTube or on the Internet). As part of the project, students construct a “choose your own adventure” story in which the viewer is given the option of flipping from webpage to webpage. The backdrop for these stories must be set during World War I and illustrate an understanding of both the time period and the chemistry concept known as stoichiometry (a chemical reaction). The viewer must be asked to solve five stoichiometry problems. One student might use the example of gunpowder reacting during an explosion, while another explains how to weld an axel together and the reaction that is occurring during that process. Projects such as these require instructors to offer opportunities for students to develop technical skills and content knowledge. To complete the flash project a THS students must understand how to balance a chemical reaction and how to create a flash program. It is important to note that at THS the emphasis on projects does not negate the role of traditional teaching, but as one teacher explains, “that does not necessarily mean lecturing” (citation). Offering a program that uses PBL to structure instruction has come with a unique set of challenges. In fact some teachers have sited the PBL approach as their reason for leaving TH. As one administrator explains:

We lost a lot of teachers and we got a lot of new teachers. For the ones that were more experienced and used to teaching traditionally ... I think, its kind of hard to let go when you do a project. You put a lot of planning into it, but while they're doing the project its student directed learning and you're afraid that they're not going to learn something if you don't shove it down their throats. You know you feel a little uncomfortable; I should be in front of the board teaching this and they should be taking notes, but as long as they learn it what's the difference. And it's actually better if they learn it themselves because part of the skill set that prepares them for college or for a career is how to learn things on their own. It's not always going to be shoved down their throats.^{iv} (Michelle Bryant)

As this administrator points, out while PBL can be a challenging approach to teaching it, is also an engaging way to deliver academic content and technical skills in ways that encourage students to take

ownership of their learning. Through PBL students are offered skill sets that can be useful to them in college or a career. Additionally, the emphasis on problem solving presents a solid foundation for civic development. As discussed in chapter II effective civic learning opportunities challenge citizens to see themselves as important and capable to solving problems in their civil society. The use of PBL at THS could provide students with this important foundation.

I. Technical Core

Using Technology to Build Technical Skills:

Technology is an important tool/theme at THS and with it comes tremendous opportunities. From smart boards in almost every classroom, to computer labs and access to laptops to complete class assignments, students at the THS learn to use technology to enhance their education. In an English class we observed students skillfully using their smart board to present on literary topics and math and history classes were brought to life through the use of the Internet. Programs like excel and Photoshop are common knowledge to students who incorporate them in their development of elaborate presentations.

While our conversations with students, staff and administrators highlighted the importance of technology many respondents shared an example of the misuse of technology that left a very wired school disconnected. Students ominously recall the time when the school banned all electronic devices. Several students violated the technology policy and created opportunities for others to do the same and as a result faced consequences. One teacher explained, “We banned all electronic devices. Now the teachers were still allowed to use the active boards because we decided ok we’re not punishing ourselves, but the kids could not use computers in class. They couldn’t...it was sort of like this whole...I can’t remember how long it was, a week or two weeks or something like that, and it was so interesting ...I think the reason that we emphasize technology is not because we think we couldn’t teach the kids without it, but because we’re trying to teach the kids about it. I think if someone came in and said ok we’ve put an electromagnetic field around your school and there is no more technology here; I think we could get the kids where they needed to be. The aspect that would be missing is that they would not be quite as computer savvy and being able to negotiate the Internet and evaluate resources and lots of things that we have them do because we rely so heavily on technology.” Most students at THS have the ability to shoot a video and edit it and often times this skill is required in the curriculum. In their photography class they take pictures and use Photoshop to edit them. Another teachers explains, “ It’s more about giving them access, not using the tools to teach them, but teaching them about the tools that are available.” Teachers emphasize that literacy is the key to learning at THS. When students stand up to give PowerPoint presentations they are evaluated on how elaborate their PowerPoint slides are but it is also important that the words on each

slide are spelled correctly and make sense grammatically. The technical skills acquired at THS at first glance may seem to revolve around the use and manipulation of technology, but upon close review students acquire a wider range of technical skills that technology enhances. Some of these technical skills include

1. Working collaboratively to execute projects:

As discussed above students typically work in assigned groups to complete projects. They hold each other accountable for completing tasks and assignments. Students learn to reflect upon their actions and modifying them to improve task performance. Additionally they are often responsible for grading each other and giving useful feedback about performance throughout the process. This form of collaborative work is reflective of many college environments as well as work and civic spaces. One teacher makes this point by saying, “ I’ve seen projects not get completed because people didn’t know how to negotiate and cooperate and compromise and all that. ... that skill is a very big asset. “

2. Oral and written presentation skills:

The ability to communicate in oral or written form is emphasized in the TH ESLRS. It states, “... Student communication skills are assessed in rigorous reviews by faculty, peers, and members of the community. The Faculty emphasize student writing across all curricular content areas as a focus for program development and assessment.” While students are asked to use technology their ability to successfully do so is function of their communication skills. From the time students enter in the 9th grade they are asked to develop presentation skills.

3. The ability to evaluate different sources of information

Many assignments ask students to conduct research using the Internet, community members and even textbooks. As a result, teachers remind students of the importance of determining source validity to evaluate data. This skill is critical for preparing students to determine if the arguments presented to them are based in concrete fact or in unfounded interpretations. This is an important skills to have in an increasingly information driven society.

Collaboration

There is an assumption that academic rigor is best displayed through a school’s offering of Advance Placement coursework. At THS, in effort to address curricular tracking, the school has eliminated AP courses. Yet, they have done so without sacrificing academic rigor and have found alternative ways of challenging and engaging students, re-conceptualizing ways to provide academically rigorous learning opportunities. At first glance, classroom instruction does not appear any different than

that at an average high school, but upon closer review particular qualities, style and priorities emerge that set the school apart. As one parent describes, “This school is more an academic school. I mean, they don’t have a cheerleading squad, they don’t have a [...] soccer team, they don’t have a baseball, they’re focused on academics.”

Walking into a an eleventh grade American literature class, the students are all seated facing the front of the room with personal copies of Huckleberry Finn resting on their desks. The crowded class begins with a question of the day written on the impressive Smart board in the front of the room. Looks of deep concentration creep across the faces of many of the students and the teacher stands back in silence. As the teacher described, “one of the things we did in order to sum up the novel or get them to think about the novel in a holistic way now that we’ve finished it is I came up with a list of fourteen questions that span the novel.” These critical questions give students the opportunity to analyze the themes in the novel and make connection to their own lives. Unlike many traditional English courses in high school the teacher describes her class as a discussion course that provides students with the opportunity to develop and administer presentations to their classmates. The teacher’s expectations of these presentations are evident in the title and the amount of class time that is allocated to them. “The kids broke up into pairs and chose one of the fourteen questions. They drew numbers out of a hat and then they got to decide which question they wanted to do in that order. “They have to do presentations, which we have nicknamed presentations of brilliance, which you may have seen by the fact that the kids refer to their brilliances as they go up there. It’s a way for them to talk to their classmates about what they understood instead of me standing at the front saying did you get this. Did you get that? They should understand their part of the novel more.”

This form of collaborative student learning mirrors the larger school culture and is intended to prepare students for the college and career environment. Additionally students are presented with alternative evaluation models that extent beyond the common practice of teacher centered evaluation and feedback. “They understand something about the novel because their classmates told them. The idea is to make it student centric, make them do the discovery; make them present and the other kids, while watching it, learn things about presentation. Wow that was a terrible slide. I didn’t understand a thing that was on that slide. I’m not gonna do that when I present. Or make them understand something about the novel that their classmates are telling them instead of their teacher.” This classroom is just one example of how THS is re-conceptualizing academic rigor by emphasizing classroom discussion, leveraging high expectations and encouraging student collaboration and evaluation.

While there is a lack of AP, some teachers have designed honors courses to supplement student learning for the tenth grade. The challenge however, is making sure students are motivated to do the extra work. One teacher explains.

I mean, in terms of English, I really just try to have options for more difficult assignments to throw people. This year I started, and I think it went pretty well, and I'm gonna do it again, you know, they can't get any UC credit for taking an honors class below 11th grade, but I do an honors...I did an honors English this time, and I think it worked really well. They're transcript will read honors English, which is good, you know, I mean, it'll show that they took the most rigorous thing, even if they're not getting the extra points for the GPA, but what was happening...the problem with just trying to throw them more rigorous stuff is they had no incentive to do it, they're kids, they didn't want to do it, you know...you know, several times, you know, I would say to kids, you know, if you have an idea or a proposal for a different novel you'd like to read, or a different...and they would never follow up on that. So, the honors thing worked pretty well." (Sam Gasol)

Another important aspect of the academic preparation of the students at THS is the emphasis on college access. Students and their families seek out the school because they believe that attending THS will better prepare them for college admission and retention. One teacher explains, "A lot of the kids here I believe, come here because they want to go to college. These are the kids that don't say... 'Will I go to college? Maybe I'll go to college'. The kids that are coming here are say, 'I am going to college. I'm here to get the information and the education I need to go to the next step to go to college'. And that's why the kids are here, I see them. And the parents are .. too." This self-selected group of students insist upon a curriculum that is both rigorous and engaging because they believe that it is what is require to be prepared for college. One of many strategies for college access includes the meeting that students and their families have with the college advisor to make sure that students are on track for college admission. She explains,

...they come and sit here, and I go over their different options, I mean, and right after the middle of their junior year. Prior to that we have evenings, we have a ninth and tenth grade college meeting, there's an

eleventh grade college evening, and a twelfth grade college evening, and then we have a financial aid night that's open to all of the students, and there's a special section during that night where I have somebody come in and they actually help the seniors and their parents fill out the FAFSA.

v

In addition to preparing students in school activities, THS has also established out of school activities that stress the importance of college readiness. The school encourages students who are not doing an internship or are not taking a school based elective to take a college class at the local community college. This convenient option gives students the opportunity to receive college credit and provides further opportunities for academic rigor. Together these strategies advance common notions of how rigor can be offered in a high school setting while prioritizing the educational benefits of learning.

Personalized Support at THS

Both personalization and individualized support are important components in making THS successful. Personalization is demonstrated through a school's responsiveness to the emotional needs of students, and allowing them opportunities for intellectual engagement (Oakes & Saunders, 2008). School policies, practices and structures are aimed at establishing connections between student interests and their learning needs. THS places an emphasis on peer group support. Students are often asked to work with other students to complete assignments and projects. One teacher describes, "we do a lot of group work, and I think that's very critical. I know in my math classes that when the teacher says that's the wrong answer, you get one response, but if their friends, if they're sitting there and they're arguing about who...all of a sudden they're arguing about math, and they actually are doing better work through their arguing about who's right or wrong, than I could ever get to them, so that peer part of it...and the other thing is, when they're working in groups, they're self-regulated..."^{vi}. Teachers still provide support to individual students and can more effectively do so by checking in with each group as a whole and making sure that each student in the group can demonstrate competency. In addition the school offers a Boot

Camp that spans a three-day period prior to the start of school and gives students the chance to complete mini projects.

The school also offers Beyond the Bell each day from 4pm to 6pm. This open lab time offers students a space to seek out additional help on homework and assignments from adults. This occurs in addition to the hour immediately following school when most teachers dedicate tutoring time for students who may be falling behind or would like more support. Every teacher has the hour of tutoring, we have a tutoring schedule, they know that they can go to any English teacher for help with English, any math teacher...it's not just their teacher, so between, you know, everybody...there's a tutoring session with a teacher every day, you know, some do it in the morning, some do it in the afternoon.

Although THS does not offer a summer program, the staff work hard to give students the chance to participate in summer programs elsewhere. Working with the college counselor, students can find opportunities to develop their technical skills. Some students are even awarded scholarships to participate in these activities. "A lot of them have gone to the Cosmos programs, you know, at different UC campuses, they've gone to Brown University, they've gone to University of Michigan, summer discovery, they've taken trips, anything that they can possibly get their hands on. From the perspective of the staff at THS support is working with students so they can apply the information that they learn in real world contexts and it is the responsibility of adults to scaffold material in ways that allow students to do just that. However, it is important to consider if these personalized approaches make (significant) connections between students and the larger (civic) world.

II. Work-Based Learning

... initially, our intention was going to be a lot more toward that model of school to work, or more practical applications...Initially we offered more technical classes, like we offered an A++, I think it was, class, and more programming classes, and there wasn't as much student interest as we thought that there might be at the beginning... our kids seemed interested in going to college, rather than getting a technical education. (Stephen Stewart)

In the previous chapters, work- based learning is defined as “realistic workplace simulations that deepen students’ understanding of academic and technical knowledge through application in authentic situations (Oakes and Saunders, 2008. p.8).”At Technology High, there seems to be an over-emphasis on college readiness that has resulted in few examples of work-based learning that reflect the Oakes-Saunders definition. However, there are two instances (Senior-Year Internship and Advisory Charity Project) that respondents identify as examples of work-based learning at THS.

Senior Year Internship:

During their senior year THS students are given the option to participate in an internship in local businesses or organizations. This senior year internship is not required and student may elect to participate in the program if they choose not to complete a community college course or school elective. The fact that the program is limited to senior and optional limits its potential impact as a civic learning tool. Given this limitation the civic potential of the work- based learning opportunities is impaired.

Advisory Charity Project:

The second instance of work-based learning is the Advisory Charity Project. Through this project, each advisory adopted a charity and worked closely with them to fundraise and increase awareness about their mission through the production of public service announcements. Respondents described this program as a successful attribute of the advisory program. According to one teacher, “ I think it was the most successful thing we’ve done in advisory... The best part was we had community meetings with two or three guest speakers from the different charities, and they would come in and thank the kids for raising money, and talk about the issues...it was great.” The program , which included a community service requirement, was later discontinued. As one administrator explained, “... we ditched it ‘cause we just couldn’t quite enforce it and everyone wasn’t quite on board with what advisory should be, like what its focus should be. But that sort of community connection is something that we can for sure improve on, that’s sort of a thing that we need to look at.”^{vii} In addition to these formal school elements parents also

described an informal student-run club that is helping the school tap into the civic potential. In the club called “Dancing for Darfur” [DFD]. A parent explains, “They do fund-raising things like walk-a-thons. They have bake sales to raise money to send to charities. I love it... I really do, because they [DFD] have a sense of community. They’re teaching them a sense of community, which is good, ... you want a sense of community because that means we’re all caring for each other. The few instances of work-based learning may be a casualty of the school’s attempts to reconcile its academic and technical core, which comes at the expense of THS’s waning civic potential. The role of additional support is yet another key feature of the Linked Learning reform.

III. Additional Supports

Each of the previously discussed Linked Learning elements are made possible by additional supports at TH, specifically the school’s access to resources and engaged parents and staff.

A. Resources

Affiliation with a powerful network

The school’s affiliation with a powerful technology institute and its access to technology has provided an invaluable learning asset to THS students. Tech- Incorporated (TI) is a influential educational institute that has successfully provided training and other structural support for schools in its network for the last decade. The TI model creates school focused on preparation for the real world, especially long-term career options. Technology High was created by a group of Lincoln High school teachers and a local community philanthropist interested in creating a small school option in the area that responded to the common issues facing large schools like Lincoln. In THS planning phase the founding teachers traveled to the flagship TI model school and entered into discussion with TI for create a replication site. While plans to replicate the TI model directly were short lived, THS still enjoys a close relationship with the network that has been useful in providing the THS community with name recognition and professional development opportunities for teachers and staff.

Use of Technology

Another important resource enjoyed by the THS community is their extensive access to current educational technology. At TH most large classrooms are equipped with a smart board, class- set of personal computers as well as a number of computer stations that feature a range of advanced computing programs. While the school has a number of textbooks they are required to purchase through categorical funds, many of them remain undisturbed in empty classrooms and storage area. As one administrator explains, “I don’t want textbook based classes. I don’t mind having textbooks around as resources...my God we have technology all over the place... You can’t look something up on the Internet?”

An Engaged Staff

Yet another important feature of the school is a staff that demonstrates their engagement through their hard work and commitment. Many teachers invest long hours in their teaching and planning of projects and assignments. Many teachers can be found in their classroom collaborating with colleagues, hours before the school day begins and well after it ends. Teachers describe the long hours meeting and planning.

We are meeting together early in the morning...talking about the kids and talking about the projects that we’re doing and we’re staying late, some of the teachers we started at 7:45am, at our regular meeting... and then were here until 9pm ... and then back here this morning at 7:45am. I think most people would agree, it takes sort of special educators to do that...you don’t get paid to stay here until 9:00 at night or extra hours of tutoring after school or really any of these things. (Aniyah Smith)

There’s a breed of teachers here...a little bit different than the average teacher. (CITE)

An important difference that set THS teachers apart is their ability to apply prior experience to student learning that often extend beyond traditional education and their willingness to try new things. One teacher explains, “ Most of us did something else before we taught...outside of education. It is still a

lot of effort, but it's easier when you have a group of people, adults that are working together...I think it's the willingness of our teachers to learn new things.. and learn new things from each other, or from the kids.

The teachers participate in a process called critical friends that challenges them to work together and develop new projects. Through this brainstorming process, teachers work with grade level partners or in groups to share ideas and receive critical feedback.

We say I liked this. I don't like this. They come back and say how they might tweak it. Throw out student work, say you know this is what happened; what do you think? Is that rigorous enough? What is rigor? We spend a lot of time talking about that. Is rigor just being hard? Is that rigor, or does it have nothing to do with being hard, but more to do with being thought provoking? How do you measure that rigor? What is fair rigor? What is bullshit rigor?

Conversation such as these are possible through a THS structure and a engaged group of teacher willing to work on their practice to make sure students are receiving high quality teaching and learning.

Linking Civic Learning

Each of the Linked Learning elements discussed above are critical to our understanding of the civic potential of this site because together illustrate the possibility for students to experience a program based in cultivating, skills, relationships and self improvement which is larger than any one of the Linked Learning features and under-developed civic feature.

These teachers are passionate about the kids' ability to learn beyond the classroom. It's not about... text assignments, it's about...when they leave here, what they would do ... when they're out in the street or interacting with other people, how they represent themselves ... the pride comes from cultivating relationships...the staff makes kids want to do more, and makes them want to be better students, better people... (Ginger Ross)

The chapter that follows will discuss in greater detail the challenges and potential for civic learning at this site by using the Broad verse Narrow civic learning framework. If the students' effort in "Dancing for Darfur" and the references to the benefit of the Advisory Program are any indication it would seem that addressing the civic potential at this site is important to students and teachers. The desire to capitalize on this potential is highlighted in one parent's poignant statement,

".... its something that they're going to take with them forever...little things like donating to the Salvation Army... I'd like to see more of it, I understand, you have 300 some kids, and curriculum and Standards and stuff, you can't do everything all the time, but I think it's great that they're doing that... (Marybeth McKay)

Chapter SEVEN

Analyzing Civic Learning:

Technology High School (THS)

In this chapter the analysis of civic learning opportunities at Technology High School will be evaluated through a response to this study's three overarching research questions. In this discussion, the Linked Learning elements, the conditions that support Linked Learning, and the kind of preparation for civic life available at Technology High will become more apparent through the Broad versus Narrow Framework.

Question I: How do the Linked Learning Reform elements create challenges and/ or potential for civic learning?

The previous chapter provided a description of Technology High School that was organized around the academic, technical, and work-based and support features of the school. This section will consider those features as they relate to the challenges and possibilities for civic learning.

Academic & Technical Core

The academic core at Technology high school is characterized by the school's use of high expectations and curricular elements like project based learning and college preparation. Teacher expectations can be described as beliefs about a student's abilities and potential that impact teachers' pedagogy and student's learning opportunities. A dominant expectation operating at Technology High School (THS) supported the view that students should learn through project-based learning. Students were expected to work collaboratively to complete assignments and demonstrate their learning. Project-based learning was often described as an important learning tool for preparation for college. Teachers

would remind students that in the college and even career arenas they would be expected to work with classmates and colleagues and make a meaningful contribution to the end product. The demonstration of the academic core at Technology High serves as useful indication of the challenges and potential that the framing of the academic core can present in Linked Learning schools. College access was presented to students as an end goal rather than, as a means of developing a skill set that would prepare them for a range of life possibilities.

The technical core of THS was often tied to the use of technology to develop skills like oral and written communication and the ability to evaluate different sources of information. Through both collaborative and individual work students were expected to use technology to create, PowerPoint, Smart Board Presentations and even short films. Students at Technology High are encouraged to highlight the skills they develop and the activities completed in portfolios that can be used for college admissions and job placement. Missing from this work was an explicit discussion of the civic value of these skills and activities. In an increasingly technological culture, civic engagement is often demonstrated through the use of technology. From viral videos to Facebook campaigns, civic engagement is more and more becoming a function of an individual's ability to take advantage of this technology. The important role of technology only underscores the importance of a young persons ability to communicate using technology especially for civic learning (Kahne, 2011).

Teachers at Technology High School also stressed the importance of students' ability to evaluate the legitimacy of difference sources of information. In a school where textbooks are almost obsolete, teachers expect students to use the Internet to gather information. These teachers also help students understand the difference between *Wikipedia* and newspaper articles, as a reliable source of information. Drawing connections between the academic and technical skills developed at Technology High School and civic engagement was a reoccurring challenge at this schools. Helping students see these connections is vital to improving civic learning at Technology High School.

Work-Based Learning Opportunities

The examples of work-based learning at Technology High School can seem like an indication of a lack of civic learning, given how few of these examples exist. However upon closer review these examples also represent the overall civic potential of the site. The senior year internship is a program offered to 12th grade students that allows them to work directly with a local company or organization. While this program was described as beneficial to students, the quality of civic learning included in the program was limited by the programs challenges. The school's emphasis on career and college preparation impacted the connections made between to civics and the internship program. Respondents would describe the internship when asked about civics at the school but none of the respondents described a civic emphasis on the learning that occurred in the placements. Additionally, the fact that the internship was only extended to seniors represents a barrier that would need to be addressed to increase civic learning. The fact that the program is optional also makes ensuring the civic preparation of all students more difficult.

The Advisory Charity Program was yet another aspect of the civic story at Technology High School. Through the program, advisory classes worked with a charity organization, selected by the students to raise awareness and funding. Advisory classes created Public Service Announcements for their organizations and were able to apply their academic and technical skills to civic organizations. While it is unfortunate that the program was discontinued, it seemed to have been a beneficial aspect of the advisory program (even being described by one teachers as, “ the most successful thing we've done”). Both the community service requirement and the interactions between the charity organization's representatives allowed students to understand their community as larger than the school. The civic potential of the advisory program lies in the schools ability to demonstrate to students that they can play a role in their local, national and even global communities, thus should be reinstated as key opportunity to support civic learning.

Question II: What Conditions support Opportunities for Civic Learning in Linked Learning schools?

For each of the Linked Learning features discussed above there are important resources and role considerations that shape the condition of civic learning at Technology High School.

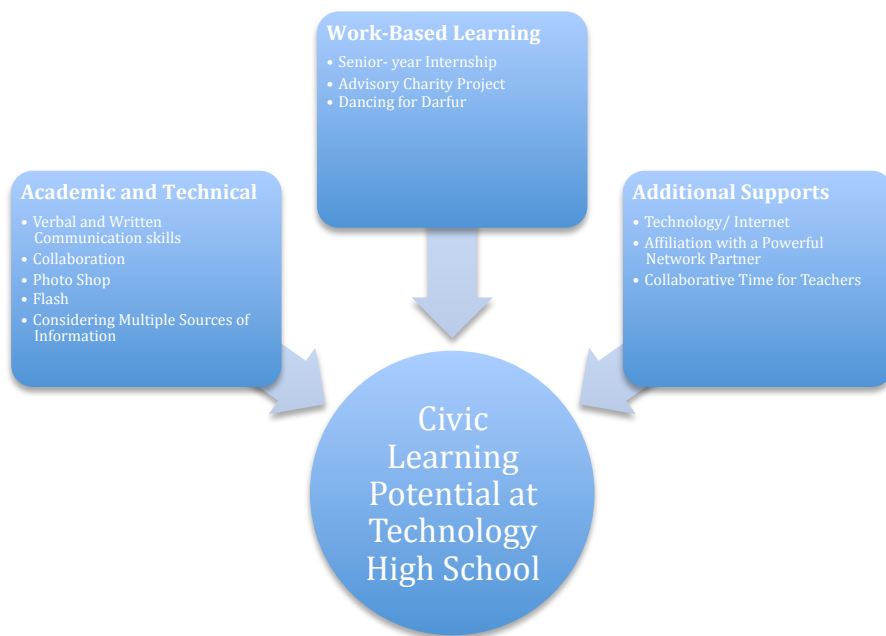
Additional Supports

The last chapter concludes with a quote from a parent who weighs the number of students, the unique curriculum and state standards against the value of civic learning. When describing the benefits that students receive from their affiliation with programs like Dancing for Darfur the parent explains, “.... its something that they’re going to take with them forever... I understand, you have 300 some kids, and curriculum and state standards and stuff, you can’t do everything all the time, but I think it’s great that they’re doing that... This statement represents the challenge in developing a strong civic core in the face of all the other goals of the Technology High program. Like in many urban schools, scarcity of resources encourage teachers and administrators to manage trade-offs between what they would like to do and what they have to do to educate their students. As the parent’s statement suggests many time the provision of civic learning opportunities is presented as a trade-off between meeting the needs of 300 students and even conforming to standards.

Additional Supports

School structures and resources create the conditions for civic learning at a school like Technology High School. While the Internet has the potential to be a key element in the civic learning potential of THS, this untapped potential would not be possible without the support of student access to technology. The school is equipped with a personal computer for each student in each classroom and Wi-Fi, which is available throughout the school. The role of technology is a byproduct of the schools affiliation with *Technology Institute*, which share the emphasis on technology with many of its replication sites and schools like Technology High that have modeled parts of their program from the original site.

In addition to these resources, the school’s schedule allows them to implement the Linked Learning reform in ways that challenge yet adds potential for civic learning. THS includes in its formal schedule time for teachers to collaborate on projects and a Boot Camp for students to understand school norms and expectations. While teachers often felt they needed more time to collaborate and that they were not sufficiently compensated for their work as a result, the collaborative time that does exist allows the school to support the project based learning program. The student Boot Camp seems to be a location for civic learning because the connection between the civic benefits of the academic, technical and work-based learning that is occurring can be drawn during that time. The diagram (below) illustrates the possible relationships between each of these features and civic learning.



Question III: What kind of Preparation for Civic Life does Technology High School Offer?

The civic learning narrative at Technology High School can best be understood through a discussion of “community” and “competing definitions of civic learning.” The section that follows will respond to the final research question by explaining how these concepts manifest themselves within the

Technology High School practices and policies. I argue that the extent to which a school is able to prepare their students for civic life is a function of the ways in they define and relate with the communities around them. The definition of “community” employed by the school through its practices and policies is fundamentally connected to the narrow verse broad view of civics introduced in Chapter II. Employing this earlier discussion allows us to assess the type of civic learning offered at Technology High School.

Definition of Community at Technology High School

The description of Technology High School in the previous chapter begins with a comparison between the school and the neighboring Lincoln High School. These two schools share a campus, yet they are united most powerfully through their differences that include their size, access to technology and even bell schedules. The relationship between these two schools can be helpful in informing our understanding of how Technology High defines community. Many of the students who attend Technology High School do not live within the local community, while many of the Lincoln High School students do. At Technology High, community is often used to describe the Technology High school building and the participants within it. Students at Technology High are not permitted to join sporting or club activities at Lincoln. Both schools operate on different bell schedules with Technology High students starting and ending later than Lincoln students. The staff argues that these policies are an attempt to preserve the autonomy of the schools. Yet the division between the schools has resulted in Lincoln being described by Technology High school students and teachers as “others.” One of the more experienced teachers explains:

“We don’t interact with Lincoln and the students don’t interact, Lincoln starts at 7:45, 7:50, I believe, we start at 8:45, so there’s not really time for the students to go there or the Lincoln students to come here, and the same the time we...that school ends, we end at 3:45 and Lincoln ends at 3:00, I believe, or 2:50, so I don’t...when I get out or I don’t really see the students from here interacting with the students from Lincoln, and I don’t interact with the teachers over there...”

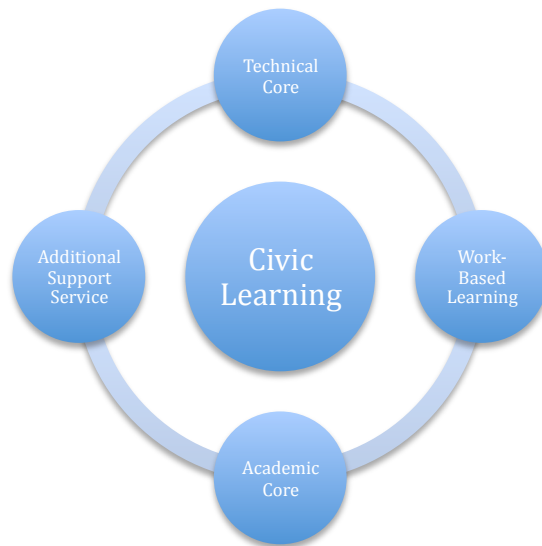
The fact that two schools with classes a few short steps from each other don't interact suggests that the relationship while functional may be strained. The relationship between the two schools affects Technology High's student's ability to identify with those outside of the school (especially those outside of their building, neighborhood or city).

Chapter EIGHT

Conceptualizing “Preparation for Civic Life” in Linked Learning schools

Linked Learning is connected to the belief that young people should receive educational experiences that prepares them for a range of life choices. In earlier chapters I discussed the pervasive dichotomy of college verses career that has plagued attempts to arrive at the purpose of education. Many hoped that employing Linked Learning as a de-tracking strategy would address this tension. Yet the attempts to address this tension between colleges and career potentially can push out subjects like civics. Despite this sobering fact, the civic potential of both THS and MHS casts a ray of light on the goal of preparing Linked Learning students for civic life. The discussion that follows will highlight the multiple ways that Linked Learning features can include preparation for civic learning. As the graphic below illustrates, civic learning represents a goal that can be supported by each of the Linked Learning features working together. This chapter will begin with a discussion of how the Broad and Narrow civic learning framework can be applied to our understandings

Linking Civic Learning Conceptual Model G1



Employing a Narrow and Broad View of Civic Learning

Using the following guiding questions both schools' (THS and MHS) experiences with civic learning can be assessed from a narrow and a broad perspective. My analysis of the narrow view at both schools is guided by the six promising practices supplied by the *Civic Mission of Schools*. These include:

1. Classroom Instruction
2. Discussion of Current Events and Controversial Issues
3. Service- Learning
4. Extra-curricular activities
5. School Governance
6. Simulation of Democratic Processes

Together these practices paint a portrait of student access to civic knowledge. As you may recall, civic knowledge when compared to civic epistemology, tends to be more traditional. It is possible that students can have access to any of these features and still not be well prepared for civic life. For example if students are learning about forms of government in a traditional civics course and does not acquire the skills to participate in government, then the result is, the civic quality of the students' experience is questionable. The following questions when applied to both sites produced useful information about students' civic learning experiences.

Narrow Guiding Questions:

- *Are students learning civic knowledge?*
- *Are civic skills developed?*
- *Are civic dispositions reinforced through the Linked Learning features?*

The following examples of classroom instruction, highlights the limitations of the narrow approach to civic learning and justification for why the broader approach was often relied upon for this study.

Classroom Instruction: During data collection I had the opportunity to observe classes across subjects to determine how the Linked Learning approach was being implemented. I paid special attention to the demonstration of civic skills. Civic skills are the abilities necessary to participate as active and responsible citizens in democracy... they include speaking, listening, collaboration, community

organizing, public advocacy, and the ability to gather and process information” (Gould, Ed. 2011, p.16’ CIRCLE, 2011). While many of these skills were being taught they were not being described as civic or political which would increase their civic potential. At MHS a 9th grade teacher was to describe her classroom lesson she explained,

“We don’t have traditional disciplines here, I teach the equivalency I actually teach...Literacy skills; the Oppression and Liberation framework; and all of the job searching, internship finding, doing well at your internship skills.”

These skills can have important civic potential because they encourage students to engage in civic life to complete tasks and project. While at Technology High School, I observed an English class was students were reading Huckleberry Fin. The teacher ran the class using the Socratic method, calling on students at random to respond to hypothetical questions and literacy concepts. She explains in a later interview:

“Kids are trained in all of the computer skills they need in order to do a presentations, and ... from the moment they’re freshmen they have to stand up and make presentations, by the time they’re juniors the fact that they have to stand up in front of their classmates ... Part of the drive of the curriculum is to be student centric not to have the teacher standing in front of the room lecturing about morality in the novel or what does the Mississippi River represent in the novel and not have them do their own discovery. Most of the learning to be honest takes place not on the day they present, but on the days leading up to it when they’re creating their presentations.”

As students read Huckleberry Fin at THS, they found themselves uncomfortable using the language in the book that is derogatory to African Americans, especially frequent use of the N-word. At MHS the concepts around liberation were combined with teaching students skills to gain and maintain an internship. In both these cases students were exploring the potentially charged topic, yet the civic connections were not explicitly emphasized for student. Discussion of controversial topic is at the

forefront of many civic education strategies but these ideas must be connected concretely to democracy for students (Hess, 2009).

Moving toward a Broader Approach

Civic potential is more accurately captured in the following broad guiding questions. These include:

Broad Guiding Questions:

- *What is students' access to community engagement?*
- *How is the expertise of youth privileged?*
- *How can students address issues of inequality and injustice?*
- *To what extent are students "leaders" and adults "allies"?*
- *Do students have access to learning and utilizing civic epistemology?*

These questions which are incorporated in the concepts of civic epistemology and the Youth Critical Engagement Framework will be the lens used to analyze the Academic, Technical, Work-based and Additional learning supports at both schools to arrive at an understanding of civic learning. Even if we assume that these instances are examples of the imparting civic skills, civic skills alone fall short of what we should see in civic learning opportunities because they do not move the student from civic knowledge to civic epistemology. The discussion that follows will highlight the varying ways students are prepared for civic life through the lens of the Linked Learning features.

Preparation for Civic Life through Linked Learning Features

Academic

Both schools' use of theme often indicated how they framed their academic core. At MHS the internship and "oppression and liberation" ideology was utilized to create civic learning opportunities for students. While at THS the technology focus was seen as more aligned with academic and career preparation at the expense of civic learning. The internship theme was connected with the oppression and liberation ideology to encourage students to take on community-based problems and see themselves as

part of the solution. At Technology High, the theme was not connected to civic learning and not described in a way that encourages students to address larger social problems. At THS, the theme reflected a struggle to balance the need to offer college and career preparation and also demonstrated the sites' potential for offering civics. The fact that the senior year internship is optional demonstrates how civic learning is an option rather than a priority.

Another important academic feature is both schools use of collaboration. At Technology High school teachers created projects that encouraged students to collaborate to complete assignments. Similarly students at MHS learned to receive and give constructive feedback through presentations. At both schools, instructor's role-modeled "collaboration" by working together to address student needs. At MHS, collaboration extended beyond students and teachers to a larger learning community. This point is captured in a field note describing how the MHS community works together to help students complete internship projects.

"Today I met "Sang" an 11th grader who I shadowed during his placement at a local studio called "Trinity". Trinity was commissioned to create a monument in the city to acknowledge the contributions of civil rights and social justice leaders. I interviewed Sang in the back seat of his advisor's car as another researcher navigated to his placement. He shared his love of science and how he struggled over the course of his academics at MHS to maintain a "good" GPA even while being enrolled in college courses where he excelled. He even fondly recalled how he babysat his advisors young children as a side job. When we arrived to the studio a camera crew eager to document the work of the artists constructing what would be a substantial monument, greeted us. Both Sang and his advisor were interviewed about their experiences with the internship site before Sang gave us a tour of the studio, one of his many internship duties. Toward the end of the day the group that included the advisor, the studio artists who acted as Sang's mentors and the organization project coordinator assembled around a large conference table. During this check-in meeting, Sang reviewed his project goals that included creating a sculpture of Gandhi from clay and developing a presentation that described the contributions of the leader to society at large. The critical yet, supportive group provided feedback on his ideas for his final exhibition and talked

through the steps that remained before Sang could present to an audience which would include his classmates, family, teachers and everyone in the room. In a humorous, yet sincere tone one of the artist reminded Sang, “ Remember, now your work represents us”. As the other people in the room nodded in agreement it was clear that collaboration at MHS included not just students and teacher but a much larger community.”

This field note highlights how participants collaborate to help students complete an internship and how the internship project can be framed around civic learning. The monument is going to occupy a civic space and the student is able to observe the artist collaborating with the community to have civic leaders they respect represented in the piece. Through the process Sang learned about these leaders and decided to focus his attention on the work of Gandhi, learning that it will be shared with his classmates through his final exhibition. Collaboration is a powerful tool for civic learning because it reinforces the active role that everyday citizen can play in the civic learning of youth. While the academic core is primarily focused on what students learn, the technical core at both these schools, are concerned with how students can display what they learn. These presentation skills are also significant for civic learning.

What is the civic development significance of the relationship between Lincoln High School and THS? The answer to this question lies at the heart of civic learning; civic education is intended to help people within civil society peacefully and productively co-exist. Within the field of civic education and social studies, diversity is described as a possible benefit to civic learning. Authors Daniel Hart and Ben Kirshnir remind us that racial and ethnic diversity is an important feature of many democratic societies especially the United States. This diversity can promote “a well spring of innovation, creativity and economic expansion (109)”. As a result, these authors argue that racial diversity has important civic learning potential.

Turning our attention back to these two schools, it becomes clear that the divisions between them are not in the civic development interest of the students. At Lincoln High school the population is skewed toward class compositions that are primarily Latino, African American and low income and rarely do student come into contact with the White affluent student like the ones that occupy THS. Conversely,

THS struggles with maintaining a diverse student body that includes many of the student demographics prominent at Lincoln. For example THS has trouble recruiting female students. Together these schools can create a study body more reflective of the American democratic society that many will participate in (fully) as adults. It is the connection rather than the division between these schools that that is best for the civic development of their students.

Technical Core:

As you recall the academic and technical core are integrated within the Linked Learning reform, therefore a conversation about the technical core also requires a conversation about theme and skills.

Themes

At THS the use of technology to promote learning and display learning has civic potential, especially as civic engagement is more and more digitally based and technologically centered. As discussed earlier many civic campaigns are supported through media and social networking. At MHS the relationship between theme and technical skills can be seen in the ways students are prepared to seek out and complete internship. Both schools presented powerful instances of using the theme of college or career access. While this theme promotes the learning of key technical skills, this emphasis becomes problematic when college and career doesn't directly include civic learning.

For example, Chapter Six described Pop Day at THS an experiment designed by teachers, to give students the opportunity to apply classroom learning to the development of a project. The requirement that students work together, assign roles and responsibilities, and hold each other accountable have direct college and career implication. The collaboration, time-management and decision-making skills students relied on to complete their projects are similar to what is expected in many college and career settings. Yet missing from this day was a civic requirement for the project. Students were asked to complete a newspaper, a format that seems to lend itself well to encouraging thought about community impact and civic implications of the stories that the students were developing. This example highlights how to create

opportunities that include learning that is relevant to college and career but could do more to make these projects relevant to civics.

At MHS the range of internship sites (see below in Appendix: A1) illustrates that while most internship sites have a social or community action theme, others do not. For this reason it would be useful for MHS to have an explicit civic learning requirement attached to all internships so students are making connection to civic learning even as they complete internships at design studios and bakeries. The emphasis on integration of college and career preparation has inherent connection to Linked Learning and represents civic potential in these two sites. Connected to both academic and technical skills building, is the opportunity to apply learning through work-based opportunities.

Skills

The skills that students' acquire are another important factor that illustrate their technical core. THS has a strong technology and college access theme and as a result technical core is defined around student's ability to create a portfolio for college admission use technological skills. While these skills also related to civic participation, the college and career application dominate teachers and student attention. At MHS skills are related to the wide range of themes that include Oppression and Liberation, college access and internships. The skills students develop include public speaking, critical thought and the ability to the development of writing. The inclusion of critical thinking as a technical skill is closely aligned with civic learning, yet like THS this connection is rarely explicit.

Work-Based Learning

Student access to work-based learning presented a clear contrast between the two schools that was grounded in civic learning differences. Both schools had a program, which they described as internships, but the programs differed significantly. The THS program offered senior year placement to students who were not interested in enrolling in an elective course. On the other hand, at MHS, every student completes multiple internships over the course of their educational experience and those internship experiences often provided a service to the broader community. THS offered (for a limited time) a program around issues

facing charities and other types of non-profit organization. At MHS the teacher- advisor is responsible for monitoring internships and advisory time is spent developing skills and cross-training students to help them maintain a healthy working relationship at their sites. In both cases (THS and MHS) the advisory space can be used as a site for civic learning. Advisory is a space for community development within the school and can also be the location for conversations about how community is defined and how students can situate themselves within a larger view of society. At MHS academic, technical and work-based content was processed through the Oppression and Liberation framework. Teachers were able to make student experiences in these various areas relevant to their work experiences through dialogue of oppression and the pursuit of liberation. Situating civic learning in advisory is not be a one size fits all model, but could prioritize civic learning. In the Critical Youth Engagement model young people are treated as having expertise and collaborating with adults to acquire more knowledge and to develop the knowledge that they have. I observed this process at MHS in some of its advisory course although it was inconsistent and varied from class to class. For these reasons advisory seems to be an ideal place to locating civic learning. The final Linked Learning element “ “additional supports” often acts as the glue that makes the others possible.

Additional Supports

Structure

Civic learning relies on a strong implementation of the Linked Learning model and the Linked Learning model is only possible through the help of support like structures and resources. As school leaders worry about how to successfully offer their programs with funds that seem to decrease annually, considering the role of additional support in the provision of civic learning is essential. Both MHS and Technology High School demonstrate how school structures and resources are important in navigating challenges. Over the course of the schools’ development, founding members from both sites choose to affiliate themselves with powerful educational networks. The relationships between the networks and the schools has been a work in progress with Technology High being now only loosely affiliated with their

network. Despite the difference in the loose affiliation of THS and the closer affiliation of MHS, the schools' ability to identify with a powerful educational network has translated into professional development opportunities, access to funding strategies and a network of educators doing similar work. In both cases many of the dominant school features of the school were due to exposure to the larger network partners, therefore these network partners can be an important location for shifting the schools relationships to civics. If these networks had more of a civic focus, then it stands to reason, that they could have tremendous impacts on all of their partner schools.

Another important structural element of these programs with implications for civic learning is the way they incorporate flexibility into their programs. At MHS the three-day a week formal school schedule allows students to complete internship projects when they are not attending class. This flexibility makes the school more desirable for high profile internships like FACE who understands that curricular flexibility is necessary to provide students with real world experiences like working in a hospital. It is through internships such as these that Linked Learning sites have a strong civic focus that should be leveraged.

At THS flexibility relates to internal programs rather than external engagement. The school has made allowances and changed the schedule so students are not interacting with Lincoln High School. It seems that that this same flexibility could be applied to civic learning. Yet, THS does not take advantage of its structural affordances to advance civic goals.

Resources

The role of resources illustrates the different conceptions of preparation for civic life operating across these two sites. At Technology High there is an emphasis on students' use of technology. In fact students lost their technology privileges as a discipline strategy enforced by teachers to address its misuse, which shows how important technology usage is to the teaching and learning at the site.

“It was last year, where the kids had misused the computer system and we banned it. So now here we were, it was High Tech LA, and we banned all electronic devices. Now the teachers were still

allowed to use the active boards because we decided ok we're not punishing ourselves, but the kids could not use computers in class. They couldn't...it was sort of like this whole...I can't remember how long it was, a week or two weeks or something like that" (Martha Greenfield).

At THS, students are not included in discipline decision-making. THS could include students in determining appropriate responses to issues like computer misuse as a way of extending civic learning. Their access to this key resource can be the gateway to a range of civic learning applications. At MHS the primary resource is community partners. This resource grants MHS access as mentors, presentation audience members and financial contributors supporting student learning through their relationships.

The availability and use of resources supports the internship program at MHS. An interview with a program representative from the Vision Network revealed that schools like MHS that have a dedicated internship coordinator have more effective internship programs. The internship coordinator is responsible to ensuring that they support the advisor overseeing the internship and that they are available to problem solve when student face difficulties completing their internship project. In addition to subsidizing the role of the internship coordinator, MHS also provides transportation funding for students traveling to and from internship sites. These structures and resource while limited make it possible for the schools to implement Linked Learning and also display opportunity to develop civic learning

Together these examples demonstrate how Linked Learning schools are well positioned to capitalize on the civic learning potential associated with the reform. Neither school has fully adopted a broad view of civic learning, yet both have the potential to do so. In the implication section I will highlight strategies around flexibility and equity that allow these site of potential to be further developed.

Implications

“Flexibility” Matters:

The flexibility of the reform (especially in implementation) is a valued feature because it creates conditions that open space up for civic learning. The flexibility in scheduling, teacher roles and responsibilities and hiring at both schools represents their civic potential. Whether they are making time for internships, offering a Pop Day or allowing for teacher collaboration, these two schools are creating spaces where civic learning opportunities can be developed. Yet, neither school is meeting their full civic learning potential because accountability for civic learning is not built into these programs or the reform, as a result the potential goes untapped.

Conversations regarding accountability in school rarely extend to civic learning, they usually focus on college and career readiness and as a result schools lack adequate civic learning opportunities. Both schools feature their college-going rates and their ability to prepare students for 21st century careers in their marketing materials yet fail to mention their civic achievements. These schools are often responding to expectations of funders and even parents who prioritize and seek out schools that have high-test scores, high rates of college admission and job preparation. While these items are important they often direct the schools’ focus away from leveraging their civic potential. In fairness, schools are not sanctioned for failing to prepare students for civic life, yet they do face consequence for failing to prepare students for colleges and careers.

a. Equity Matters:

The unequal access to civic learning has stark implications for democratic participation. Just as schools in the Linked Learning reform must be cognizant of addressing curricular tracking they must also be aware of how students are prepared for civic life. At a site like MHS this is a particular concern especially because the civic empowerment and learning gap impacts their student population most

directly. Even at THS a focus on equity could mitigate larger issues of segregation and exclusion that were discussed in the description chapter.

Linked Learning is operating under some important assumptions that are relevant to civic learning. Recasting Linked Learning as a de-stratification strategy suggests that meritocracy as a justification for tracking is inaccurate. Similarly arguing that some students deserve more civic learning overshadows the barriers to entry that particular groups face. At MHS some students have civic internships and rigorous college opportunities while their classmates have internships disconnected from civic learning and limited access to college courses at Haynes. The equity concern is not necessary the differences in and of themselves. MHS has noticed these distinctions and has begun conversations about how to address them. An important step is making sure that the internship at an Auto Shop or Bakery is also connected to a larger civic learning goal. If armed with a focus on creating flexibility and prioritizing equity, the civic learning landscape in Linked Learning School would be more promising.

Conclusions: Important Civic Lessons *for stakeholders*

The discussion that follows will describe how various stakeholders can hold schools accountable for preparing students for civic life. At THS, and to some extent MHS civic preparation is occasional, inconsistent and even accidental. Moving toward an expectation of civic learning that is frequent, consistent and purposeful can be a tangible goal for all Linked Learning schools. Unifying the benefits of implementing Linked Learning with access to civic learning opportunities can make both the reform and civics more meaningful.

Lessons for Researchers

Through this research it has become clear that while civic learning is an important Linked Learning goal there is much work to be done to represent it as such. The work of connecting civic learning to Linked Learning must begin by extending our notions of civic learning beyond the narrowly

defined list that are often cited. Using the broader approach to civic learning introduced in this study can assist researchers in understanding the complex learning that occurs with the Linked Learning model and recognize that civic learning is an active, epistemological and dynamic process. Seeing civic learning through the lens of passive knowledge consumption is misaligned with the applied learning emphasis in Linked Learning.

Lessons for Practitioners

Teachers and administrators must make sure that civic learning is still a priority in Linked Learning schools. One strategy I have repeated is including a civic learning requirement on internships and projects. Teachers can utilize the broader definition of civic learning to make sure that students are engaged in meaningful learning experiences that are applicable to their preparation for democratic life. Teachers in the same schools may lack civic learning opportunities for their students, even as their colleagues down the hall provide them. Administrators can support school policies that are equity focused and flexible. The way students and teacher roles and responsibilities are defined can be designed in ways that allow students to engage with community member and in civic learning opportunities.

Lastly, teachers must have a space to share best practices in civic learning. This space can start in teachers' meetings and extend to guidelines produced by foundations like *Irvine* and *Gates* that provide funding for schools that implement the reform successfully. Civic Learning accountability must be part of the implementation strategy and teachers should be rewarded for their ability to prepare young people for civic life.

Preparation for Civic Life Matters:

From technology to internships, Linked Learning advocates are realizing that students are eager to participate in learning that moves beyond abstract constructs toward strategies, skills and information that can inform their ability to navigate social and personal challenges. Both Linked Learning and civic

education are attempts to make schooling meaningful. While it is true that the social, political and technical challenges faced by schools require more than short-term solutions or easy fixes, there does seem to be an answer for the issues of defining community in Linked Learning schools. A possible starting place for schools interested in extending civic learning to their students is by the schools themselves being more cognizant of the ways they are framing school community in ways that promote civic connections. For example, another school (McKinley High School) included in the larger Linked Learning sample offers a useful comparison to THS. McKinley high school (also a technology themed school) created a computer network between its many replication school sites that supported a broad view of community. At McKinley, students and teachers were encouraged to look beyond their four walls to create a broad view of community by sharing their learning through projects across sites via a database of lesson plans. This example highlights the way a school like THS, can re-conceptualize community in ways that have civic implications.

THS and MHS demonstrate the potential of civic learning that can be taught within the larger Linked Learning reform. The reform's potential can best be leveraged by ensuring that preparation for life is connected to access to civic learning. This reform does offer multiple pathways, but each of those pathways should include a view of preparation for life that gives students the tools to renew the promises of democracy through their work. Therefore, ensuring that every student is prepared for academic, vocational and civic opportunities is a compelling unifying vision of preparation for life that should be available regardless of one's pathway.

APPENDIX

A1: Internship List

MetWest Internship Site: 07-08

510 Airbrush	International Community School
A-1 Custom Mufflers	International Rescue Committee
Albany Fire Department	Its Your Move Games
Ameritech Mortgage	Killing MY Lobster
Animal Action	Kiwi Pediatrics
ASCEND Middle School	La Escuela Elementary School
BAY PEACE	Lao Family
Bay Wolf Restaurant	Leadership Excellence
Berkeley High School Project Rise	Linda's Stables
Bret Harte Middle School	LindenDance Studios
California Utilities Commission	Manzanita Elementary School
Californians for Justice	MetWest High School College Advising
Casas Seguras- HIV/ AIDS prevention and Care	MOCHA- Museum of Children's Art
Children's Hospital	Model Garage
Conscious Youth Media Crew	Nii Archetects
Cosmic Chocolates	Oakland Collision Truck Painting
Cruis Mobil	Oaklamd Zoo
Cycles of change - Bicycle Program	OBUGS- Neighborhood Gardening For a Brighter Future
Digital Underground storytelling for Youth	Oliveto Restaurant
Daisy Child Development Center	OUSD office - Meaningful Student Engagement
Erika Huggins	Piedmont Police Department
Evarize Fashion Café	Postive Images- Photography Studio
FACES for the Future	Prudnetial Real Estate
Figureplant- Design and Fabrication	
Filippo's Italian Restaurant	Rock Paper Scissors- Volunteer Run Art Collective
Global Exchange	Rockman Et Al- Innovative Research Firm
Grand Lake Montessori School	Sin- Mex Auto Body Shop
Health Through Art	Studio One Art Center
Highland Hospital	Supreme Interior - Full Service Uppholstery Shop
HOMEY	The AVE- Airbrushing Studio
instructable	The FACTORY / Video Coalition
TIGRA- Transnational Institute for Grassroots Research & Action	
Tumis - Community- based Graphic Design	
UC Berkeley Microbiology Lab	
United for Success Middle School	
University Veterinary Hospital	
Urban Promise Academy	
Walden School	
Westlake Middle School	
Westside Building	
WORLD	
Youth Movement Records	
Youth Speaks - Non profit Poetry Organization	
Zeum- Arts and Technology Museum	
Zza's Resturant/ East-Bay Catering	

A2: Interview Script

Informational Interview Script

Purpose of the Information Interview

- a. Learn about the work in a field of interest
- b. Figure out if you would like to do a shadow day at the site

- c. Make a good impression on adults you speak with for yourself, for NCHS and for the city youth

Basic Script

1. Introduction

Hi my name is _____. Thank you for agreeing to soeak with me today. I really appreciate this opportunity to learn more about the field of _____ from an adult who know so much about it.

2. Your Question

Question 1: _____

Notes on the answer: _____

Question 2: _____

Notes on the answer: _____

Question 3: _____

Notes on the answer: _____

Question 4: _____

Notes on the answer: _____

Question 5: _____

Notes on the answer: _____

Question 6: _____

Notes on the answer: _____

Question 7: _____

Question 8: _____

Question 9: _____

Question 10: _____

Follow- up questions (write these during the conversation based on things you hear)

a) _____

b) _____

4. Their Questions

Thank you so much for answering my questions. Is there anything you would like to know about me of the school

5. Conclusion :

Thank you again for soeaking with me today. I really enjoyed it. I especially appreciated learning about _____. I would like to ask if it would be possible for me to return for a shadow day to give me a chance to watch what you do for a few hours

6. A Gift: Hand them the NCHS Internship Description Sheet

A3: Interview Phone Call Log

Phone call log				
Organization/Business:	Attempt #1 <input type="checkbox"/> Spoke with <input type="checkbox"/> Left message. <input type="checkbox"/> Said I should call back. When? <input type="checkbox"/> Said they would call back. <input type="checkbox"/> No answer.	Attempt #2 <input type="checkbox"/> Spoke with <input type="checkbox"/> Left message. <input type="checkbox"/> Said I should call back. When? <input type="checkbox"/> Said they would call back. <input type="checkbox"/> No answer.	Attempt #3 <input type="checkbox"/> Spoke with <input type="checkbox"/> Left message. <input type="checkbox"/> Said I should call back. When? <input type="checkbox"/> Said they would call back. <input type="checkbox"/> No answer.	Informational interview? <input type="checkbox"/> Not interested. <input type="checkbox"/> Maybe in the future. <input type="checkbox"/> YES! When is it scheduled? Date: Time:
Phone no.:				
Location:				
Organization/Business:	Attempt #1 <input type="checkbox"/> Spoke with <input type="checkbox"/> Left message. <input type="checkbox"/> Said I should call back. When? <input type="checkbox"/> Said they would call back. <input type="checkbox"/> No answer.	Attempt #2 <input type="checkbox"/> Spoke with <input type="checkbox"/> Left message. <input type="checkbox"/> Said I should call back. When? <input type="checkbox"/> Said they would call back. <input type="checkbox"/> No answer.	Attempt #3 <input type="checkbox"/> Spoke with <input type="checkbox"/> Left message. <input type="checkbox"/> Said I should call back. When? <input type="checkbox"/> Said they would call back. <input type="checkbox"/> No answer.	Informational interview? <input type="checkbox"/> Not interested. <input type="checkbox"/> Maybe in the future. <input type="checkbox"/> YES! When is it scheduled? Date: Time:
Phone no.:				
Location:				
Organization/Business:	Attempt #1 <input type="checkbox"/> Spoke with <input type="checkbox"/> Left message. <input type="checkbox"/> Said I should call back. When? <input type="checkbox"/> Said they would call back. <input type="checkbox"/> No answer.	Attempt #2 <input type="checkbox"/> Spoke with <input type="checkbox"/> Left message. <input type="checkbox"/> Said I should call back. When? <input type="checkbox"/> Said they would call back. <input type="checkbox"/> No answer.	Attempt #3 <input type="checkbox"/> Spoke with <input type="checkbox"/> Left message. <input type="checkbox"/> Said I should call back. When? <input type="checkbox"/> Said they would call back. <input type="checkbox"/> No answer.	Informational interview? <input type="checkbox"/> Not interested. <input type="checkbox"/> Maybe in the future. <input type="checkbox"/> YES! When is it scheduled? Date: Time:
Phone no.:				
Location:				

A4: Pop Day Instructions for Students

WELCOME TO THE FIRST POP DAY!

Introduction

Today will not be like any other day at HTLA. Instead, we are suspending all classes to give you and your schoolmates a special project to complete before the end of the day. There will be some requirements, some efforts required and some prizes. There will also be a grade given for the day's work, in case you need some external reason to participate. This packet of information will give you everything you need to make your day work, so spend some time reading and understanding it.

Contents

You should have the following in your packet:

- This piece of paper
- A "Press Pass" (it looks like a name tag you must wear it visibly at all time)
- A Schedule for the day
- Helpful Hints for the day
- A rubric for evaluation

If you are missing anything, go back to the check-in table. On your Press Pass should be your name your group number and your "Editorial office Space". You will need to know all of this information so does not lose it.

Your Project

You have been assigned a group, which you will work with today to design and create a size page newspaper. There are very few requirements but your final product will be judged at the end of the day by a group of faculty and journalism experts based on the enclosed Rubric, and prizes and grade will be awarded. You may organize your however you wish, but you must stick strictly to the schedule set out on the attached schedule page. In the newspaper business, deadlines are serious business and this is no exception.

You should start your day by putting on your Press Pass and going to your Editorial Space. There you will find your other group members, some examples of newspapers and supplies. You need to organize yourself as a group and decide how to attack the problem with resources you have available. We included in this packet a set of "Helpful Hints" that you might want to review in organizing yourself. Make sure you review the schedule- the day is yours to organize, but there are three strict requirements

(1) There are three MANDATORY "editorial board meetings" that everyone in your group must attend, at 9:45, at 11:15 and at 1:30. These require that everyone in your group assemble in your Editorial Office Space. A faculty member will come by to take attendance, so make sure everyone is there.

(2) Your final paper must be posted in The Great Room at 3:00pm - this is an ABSOLUTE deadline. You must also turn in at 2:30pm an online version to Mr. Chiou for him to post on the web

(3) You may not interfere in any way with any other groups

Evaluation

As mentioned above, faculty and industry experts will judge your final newspaper. After you have posted your newspaper, we will have a “ We Met the Deadline” Part in the Great Room. At this part, you will get to see how your world stacks up to the rest of the school and have a snack while you do. Prizes will be given for excellent work. Everyone in your group will receive the same grade and you will be allowed to choose which of your core academic classes (Math, English, Science, or Social Studies) you would like it applied to. Your product will be judged based on the Rubric in this packet

Conclusion

We are expecting this day to be fun and interesting. We will be around all day, but want to leave virtually everything in your hands to see what you can accomplish together when you have few restrictions. We are holding tutorials (as set out on the schedule and will be available to give feedback, but we want this to be your day. Do with it what you will and get out of it what you want.

Signed,

The HTLA Faculty

A5: POP Day Project Grading Rubric

Newspaper : HTLA POP Day Newspaper

Newspaper Name: _____

CATEGORY	4	3	2	1
Layout - Headlines & Captions	All articles have headlines that capture the reader's attention and accurately describe the content. All articles have a byline. All graphics have captions that adequately describe the people and action in the graphic.	All articles have headlines that accurately describe the content. All articles have a byline. All graphics have captions.	Most articles have headlines that accurately describe the content. All articles have a byline. Most graphics have captions.	Articles are missing bylines OR many articles do not have adequate headlines OR many graphics do not have captions.
Contributions of Group Members	The project was completed with effort from the entire group without intervention from teachers.	The project was completed with effort from most of the group with minimal intervention from teachers.	Each person in the group has contributed to the project with some minimal intervention from teachers.	The project was completed with effort from some of the group after significant intervention from teachers or by only a few members of the group.
Graphics	Graphics are in focus, are well-cropped and are clearly related to the articles they accompany.	Graphics are in focus and are clearly related to the articles they accompany.	80-100% of the graphics are clearly related to the articles they accompany.	More than 20% of the graphics are not clearly related to the articles OR no graphics were used.
Articles - Interest	The articles contain facts, figures, and/or word choices that make the articles exceptionally interesting to readers.	The articles contain facts, figures, and/or word choices that make the articles interesting to readers.	The articles contain some facts or figures but are marginally interesting to read.	The articles do not contain facts or figures that might make them interesting to read.
Spelling and Proofreading	No spelling or grammar errors remain after one or more people (in addition to the typist) read and correct the newspaper.	No more than a couple of spelling or grammar errors remain after one or more people (in addition to the typist) read and correct the newspaper.	No more than 3 spelling or grammar errors remain after one or more people (in addition to the typist) read and correct the newspaper.	Several spelling or grammar errors remain in the final copy of the newspaper.
Who, What, When, Where & Why	All articles adequately address the 5 W's (who, what, when, where and why).	90-99% of the articles adequately address the 5 W's (who, what, when, where and why).	75-89% of the articles adequately address the 5 W's (who, what, when, where and why).	Less than 75% of the articles adequately address the 5 W's (who, what, when, where, and why).
Editorials - Worthwhile	The information was accurate and there was a clear reason for including the editorial in the newspaper.	The information was accurate and there was a fairly good reason for including the editorial in the newspaper.	The information was occasionally inaccurate or misleading, but there was a clear reason for including the editorial in the newspaper.	The information was typically inaccurate, misleading or libelous.
Workspace	At the end of the day, workspace is clean, computers are put away properly, tables and chairs are orderly, and all refuse is thrown away.			Workspace is messy.
Extras				

SCHEDULE

<u>Event</u>	<u>Place</u>	<u>Time</u>
Check-in	Great Room	8:00-8:45
Organizational Meeting	Editorial Office Space	8:45-9:30
MANDATORY ED BOARD MTG	Editorial Office Space	9:30
Nutrition	Outside	9:47-10:07
MANDATORY ED BOARD MTG	Editorial Office Space	11:00
Tutorials (See schedule Below)	Various	11:15-12:15
Lunch	Outside	12:12-12:42
Twin Day Competition	Great Room	12:30-12:42
MANDATORY ED BOARD MTG	Editorial Office Space	1:00
Tutorials (See schedule Below)	Various	1:15-1:45
Online Papers Due to Mr. Chiou	Server	2:30
PAPERS DUE	Great Room	3:00 (SHARP!)
Party and Review (COOKIES!)	Great Room	3:00-3:30
Awards Ceremony	Great Room	3:30-3:50

SCHEDULE of TUTORIALS

How to post your paper to the Web	Mr. Chiou	11:15, 11:45, 1:15	Room 8
Proper-like interviews	Ms. Koven	11:15, 11:45, 1:15	Room 7
Creatin' political cartoons	Ms. Perkins	11:15, 11:45, 1:15	Room 2
Publishin' with Publisher	Mr. Siercks	11:15, 11:45, 1:15	P-3
Puzzlin' Puzzlers & Editorials	Ms. Goodman	11:15, 11:45, 1:15	SR
Partly Pictures	Mr. Merrill	11:15, 11:45, 1:15	Common
Excellent Excel Graphs*	Ms. Noyes	11:15, 11:45, 1:15	Room 4
Journalism 101	Ms. Fregoso	11:15, 11:45, 1:15	Room 1
Immigration reflection	Mr. McClenahan	11:15, 11:45, 1:15	GR

*Bring your own computer

HELPFUL HINTS

1. The first thing you should do as a group is make sure everyone knows everyone else's name and decide how you are going to be organized. You should choose someone to be the leader of the group. This doesn't necessarily mean this person is "the boss" or is "in charge" of everyone, but it should be someone that everyone is willing to listen to and who will be in charge of keeping track of what needs to be done. You should choose someone everyone respects, but who is willing to listen to the input of the whole group and figure out how to get everything done. **You must wear your Press Pass visibly at all times.**
2. You will only be successful if everyone in the group contributes and the best way to make sure everyone contributes is to make sure everyone has a role to play (a job to do) and understands what that job is. The faculty is standing by to be referees and to help sort out arguments, but we will not be here to push people to stay on task or to "make sure they are working." That is the responsibility of each individual person and the group as a whole.
3. You might want to start by brainstorming what your newspaper should include (you have examples of newspapers in your Editorial Offices to look at), what you are going to call your newspaper and what you are planning to have as a focus of the newspaper. Only once you have settled on what your paper will include will you be able to divide up the tasks.
4. There are a series of tutorials being offered by the faculty as set out on the schedule. None of them are required and you may use them however you wish. You may send individual members of your group to one or more them to get information and help or you may skip them entirely or your group may go as a whole. It is entirely up to you. There will not be "private tutoring" available if you decide to send no one to any of the tutorials.
5. You have limited resources. The paper in your Editorial Office is all of the paper you have for the day for printing—including printing your final newspaper. Therefore, use it wisely. The computers you have in your Editorial Office are for the exclusive use of your group and you may not use computers from another group without their EXPRESS permission. Mr. Merrill will be available to provide you access to cameras if you choose to use them for photographs for your newspaper. If you need access to other resources, you must go to the Main Office and state your case. PLEASE NOTE: No additional paper will be provided to any group under any circumstances.
6. The only rules in force at HTLA today are no eating in the building and the regular conduct rules regarding use of computers (no games, no proxies, etc.), and treatment of your schoolmates and staff (mutual respect, etc.) Otherwise, you should feel free to use your cell phones and iPods if you think they will be helpful. You may be anywhere in the building or in the front, back or side yards during the day, EXCEPT: you MUST be in your Editorial Offices for each Mandatory Editorial Board Meeting and YOU MAY NOT LEAVE CAMPUS—including outside the front and side gates—AT ANY TIME UNTIL 3:50 PM. If you leave campus without permission, you will automatically fail the assignment.
7. We have given you six sheets of paper. You should use these sheets to lay out your newspaper. Black butcher would make a wonderful background for your layout. Butcher paper is available at the front desk. You will not get more large paper. Don't waste it.

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