



MASTER OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION
Department of Community Development
and Applied Economics



Educating for Democracy

CAMPAIGN FOR THE CIVIC MISSION OF SCHOOLS

THE CIVIC MISSION OF VERMONT SCHOOLS:



LIVING IT!

Exemplars from Vermont Schools

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Abstract

This report provides the reader with an overview of the youth civic engagement practices, projects, and courses undertaken within five Vermont high schools. These high schools have been noted for their leadership in providing students with opportunities to develop a sense of civic and social responsibility and actively experiment in practicing the “democratic arts.” The report includes an overview of each of the participating schools, followed by model practices, projects and courses. The report concludes with an overview of some of the challenges that these schools faced realizing their vision, and the ways in which these challenges were overcome. Readers are encouraged to contact the teachers and school administrators listed for each practice for further information.

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Introduction: The Intersection Between Democracy and Education

The civic mission of public schools in the United States is clear. Thomas Jefferson is credited with asserting that public education should be established for the explicit purpose of educating citizens. He believed that without an informed citizenry, democracy itself is threatened. Horace Mann advocated for compulsory public education within an argument solidly framed in terms of an explicit relationship between education and democracy.

If a definitive history of the link between public education and democracy in the United States were to be written, the State of Vermont would possess a unique place in this history. In addition to being consistently rated as having one of the best public school systems in the union, Vermont has long been known for its attention to direct democracy. The New England town meeting, often pointed to as the last bastion of direct democracy, is still widely practiced in the state. The state's motto of "freedom and unity" is woven into the cultural fabric of the state, long known for its tolerance and plain spoken-ness. Vermont ranks at or near the top of the "social capital" index.

In education circles Vermont is perhaps best known as the birthplace of John Dewey, arguably the most prominent American philosopher of the 20th century. Across his extensive career, Dewey championed the ideals of progressive education, carrying the Jeffersonian banner by reminding us of the essential relationship that education, and the public educational system, has relative to the practice of democracy. His voluminous writings on the subject are still extremely influential today. And it was Dewey's early experiences of attending town meetings in the, then, logging town of Burlington, Vermont, that is credited with instilling a deep reverence for democratic practices in him.

Now, at the beginning of the twenty-first century, the role of public education in educating active and informed citizens is still an assumption driving the practices of countless teachers and students. Although pushes for high stakes testing and curriculum designed to ensure that students are competent in the "basics" persist, the relationship between public education and democracy is still very much alive and well within Vermont's public schools. Yet, as we shall see, teachers, students and communities face significant challenges in their attempt to live out the civic mission of their schools.

This report is designed to provide the reader with some highlights of courses, projects, initiatives and policies taking place in some of Vermont high schools that embody the civic mission of public education. Five Vermont high schools were invited to participate in a two year grant-funded project designed to support and document a variety of civic engagement practices. These practices include service-learning courses in which students performed some community services that meet real community needs and in the process connect these experiences to some academic subject. They also include innovative civic education classes and projects, in which students are afforded opportunities to learn the arts of civic engagement and democratic practices. Examples of placed-based learning are cited, in which students are asked to draw upon local community resources to serve as their living text. Governing bodies in which young people play authentic roles in

deliberating and decision-making regarding matters of importance to their schools and communities are included as well.

Specifically, the youth civic engagement practices in each of the five participating schools could be categorized into one of the following categories:

- Instruction of History, Government, Law or Democracy
- Guided Discussions of Issues and Current Events
- Service-Learning and Community Service
- Extracurricular Opportunities
- Student Participation in Governance
- Simulations of Democratic Processes

The report begins with brief introductions of the participating schools. Examples of exemplary practices are then provided, followed by an overview of the challenges that these schools faced in creating and sustaining these practices. A format provided by the Civic Mission of Schools website is used to structure the overview of each practice. Their website is: <http://www.civicmissionofschools.org/>. Each practice highlighted here has been entered into their “best practices” data base.

The audience for this report is predominantly geared toward *policy makers at the state and local levels*. The practices highlighted should serve as “beacons of excellence” for those looking to better understand and support the many ways that young people may be empowered to make a difference, exercise their rights and responsibilities as citizens, and learn a lot about themselves, their communities and many different fields of knowledge and “vital results.”

For *school administrators* and *school boards*, consideration may be given to the challenges and solutions to supporting youth civic engagement that were surfaced during the course of this research. Educating for and with democracy places certain kinds of demands on teachers’ time, the school schedule, etc.

For *educators*, this document may serve as a brief and very limited overview of some of the kinds of practices being undertaken within some Vermont high schools. They are encouraged to contact their colleagues to gain more information about these endeavors.

For *state-wide education administrators* it is hoped that this document can contribute to the development of a “best practices” database in which youth civic engagement activities of the nature discussed here will be featured.

Uion-32 High School

Written by Erica K. Campbell

Union 32 High School in East Montpelier, Vermont considers itself to be a student-centered school with a progressive learning environment. The school is fortunate to have an organized support network for service-learning and civic engagement that has been built up over the past few years.

U-32 was one of the first schools in Vermont (and in the country) to establish a teacher advisory system. Students call teachers by their first name and the school has a tradition of empowering students to accept responsibility for their actions. The school has a number of service-learning and community-based learning opportunities. These activities are supported fairly well by the school board, in part because of student and faculty presentations that demonstrate their credibility. In the fall of 2005, a total of 14 service-learning opportunities were offered, many of these by teachers through classroom curriculum. The Branching Out program, where students work with community mentors for expanded learning experiences, has enabled many of the engagement initiatives to happen at the school because of the leadership that the program director, Deb Bogart has provided.

Deb Bogart extends her part time director of Branching Out into a support service for the school's service-learning and civic education activities. She organized a group of faculty, staff, students and community members to help sustain and support the many service-learning projects and programs. This Service-Learning Leadership group meets regularly and has been supported by grants written by Bogart. It began as one of the groups which formed from professional development groups set up by the principal. The other groups have since disbanded, but the Service-Learning Leadership group is still active and continues to support many school initiatives. There is also the Sustainability Group, made up of students, teachers and staff that meets weekly to plan school initiatives such as composting and recycling. They collaborate with other high schools in sharing ideas regarding projects and programs and partake in various civic engagement and service-learning activities.

The support and encouragement the teachers have received has allowed many of them to engage their students with these enriching activities within their curriculum and within the framework of the Vermont Framework of Standards. A horticulture teacher and a family and consumer science teacher have connected their class curriculum to a school garden. Students in a physics class have become energy consultants to a nearby elementary school. Teacher Bonnie Stacy has led her British Author's class in a project where students performed for the community raising money for children with cancer and had her Women's Studies class develop relationships with low-income girls from elementary school, working on self esteem issues and goal-making with them. Yearly, a biology teacher has his students organize a large river clean-up. Another biology teacher has her students research and provide public information on Lyme disease, raising money

for the cause as well. For the past few years both French and Spanish classes have been teaching elementary students foreign language lessons on a weekly basis. In Special Education, students are engaged in civic projects such as the food bank and community gardens. The Ninth Grade Academy is a class of “at-risk” students who engage in a place-based learning experience every morning in the woods on school land by partaking in outdoor education activities. Technology education students have designed plans for the school, such as parking lots and a greenhouse.

During the fall of 2005, Deb Bogart held weekly consultations with the teacher of the new civic engagement course, Democracy in Action, in linking service-learning with civic engagement in the curriculum. This course is in partnership with High Schools on the Move through service-learning program and the Civic Mission of Schools project. It serves as a pilot effort that links both statewide projects. This class was created to bridge the successful eighth grade program, Project Citizen, and the high school Branching Out program. Project Citizen, which has been happening for the last four years, is an eighth grade civics class where students connect with the community through project-based research and activities.

Co-designed by students, the Branching Out program was begun nine years ago as a way to expand students learning experiences into the community. About thirty junior and senior students each semester work with community mentors on community-based learning projects. Students create individual learning plans that are based on their own goals and learning styles. The program has been supported by two part time staff with the addition of a third position this year that focused on international service-learning.

In the 2005-2006 school year, at least half of U-32 High School’s students partook in a civic engagement activity or a community-based learning project and 35 faculty were involved or leading these activities. These impressive numbers are the direct result of the support that the teacher’s receive for implementing civic learning into the curriculum. Not only do they have a positive support network, but there is a focus on how to make these activities sustainable into the future. The students are invested in the process of civic engagement and have several opportunities to share the excellent projects that they have worked on at state-wide and national levels. A new principal has begun this year at the school and the hopes are high that there will be an increased administrative support of service and community activities.

Branching Out

School: U-32 High School

Contact for this initiative

Name: Deb Bogart

Address: 930 Gallison Hill Road, Montpelier, VT 05602

Phone: (802) 229-0321

Email: dbogart@u32.org

Grades impacted: 11-12

Approach Type:

Service-Learning and Community Service

Website associated with this initiative?

<http://u32.org/v2files/branch.html>

Subjects impacted:

Arts

Math

Science and technology

Foreign Language

Occupational education

English (Lang. Arts)

Social studies

Lesson and Practice Description:

Branching Out has been in existence for 9 years at U-32, providing service-learning opportunities for students. Led by three part time employees, the program assists students in community based educational experiences. Community mentors are teamed up with students appropriate to their educational and civic goals, and topics studied are very diverse. One recent project was done by a student pianist who felt that young people are not exposed to enough classical music so he organized an ensemble of teens who will then go to all five local elementary schools to introduce young people to classical music. He is also planning on performing at both high schools. A student by the name of Lindsay Richardson has become an incredible hip hop dancer and feels that the school should offer dance. She is organizing and running a free class at the high school for all students who want to participate. Another couple of girls are studying Salsa dance and plan to research the development of the style including the cultural aspects. They will then teach the school Spanish classes about what they learned including the steps to Salsa. There are students studying Irish, German, snowboard building, and sound recording. There is a girl studying holistic medicine and she is also helping the First Response and the Ambulance team.

Students are assessed on these activities by having their student study plan reviewed and connected to the Vermont Standards. The students create rubrics for the standards to say what they will learn. In the end the students do a 45 min presentation that includes references to all of

the standards chosen. The faculty of four aiding in the project and assessment attend the presentation and award credit; it is pass/fail/no grade.

Staff time: Three part time staff, Teacher time:, Mentor time, student time

Staff required to carry this out: Deb Bogart, Caroline Shapiro, Lu Van Zeeland

Cost : Funded through the school budget, but allocated through a community non-profit.

Democracy in Action/Project Citizen
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School: U-32 High School

Contact for this initiative: Name: Deb Bogart, Paula Emery

Address: 930 Galliston Hill Rd., Montpelier, VT 05602

Phone: (802) 229-0321

Email: dbogart@u32.org , pemery@u32.org

Grades impacted: 8, 9, 10

Approach Type:

Instruction of History, Government, Law or Democracy

Guided Discussions of Issues and Current Events

Service-Learning and Community Service

Subjects impacted :

Occupational education

Social studies

Lesson and Practice Description:

Democracy in Action is a course that links service-learning with civic engagement to the curriculum. This course is in partnership with High Schools on the Move through service-learning program and the Civic Mission of Schools project. It serves as a pilot effort that links both statewide projects. This class was created in 2005 to bridge the successful eighth grade program, Project Citizen, and the high school Branching Out program. Project Citizen, which has been happening for the last four years, is an eighth grade civics class where students connect with the community through project-based research and activities.

Democracy in Action failed to happen this year but the teacher is working on a curriculum for the spring semester and will hopefully begin this class again.

Time required: Two teacher's class time, students leaving campus for service-learning projects, community volunteer time, Branching Out Coordinator Deb Bogart also puts volunteer time into the Democracy in Action initiative.

Staff required to carry this out: Two teachers, one for each initiative, and Deb Bogart, Branching Out Coordinator.

Materials required to carry this out: Occasional transportation of students off campus.

Cost (how is it funded?): School Budget for teacher time

Evaluation or learning results: Students are evaluated and graded by their teachers.

Montpelier High School

Written by Erica K. Campbell

Montpelier High School, located in the state's capital, views itself as a leader in youth civic engagement in Vermont. Student involvement in school governance through the Solon Circle is arguably the most unique and powerful example of authentic youth involvement in decision making in the state. The school has an excellent science curriculum that is highly engaged in service-learning through their greenhouse operations and composting efforts, as well as having an active Earth Club that partakes in civic affairs at a state level. Montpelier High School has an excellent guidance department with a full time staff member dedicated to running the Community-Based Learning program where students engage in civic education and service-learning projects.

Began in 2002, the Solon Circle is a school-community action team providing a unique school governance opportunity for students, teachers, staff and community members. The team makes decisions for the school based on consensual processes where discussion of an issue takes place and the group finds a solution that everyone can agree on. Meetings are open to everyone and held weekly. The principal, Peter Evans, has arranged the school schedule so that teachers and students have time to participate in this governance process. Students are seen as equals in opportunity; they have the ability to share decision making equally with all adult members. The Solon Circle assures that curriculum, assessment, school climate and the supporting protocols and systems that support them are consistent with the school mission and initiates action to alter or modify the protocols as needed.

The school has some excellent service-learning initiatives tied to curriculum. Science teachers Karen Smereka and Tom Sabo have integrated the operation of a school greenhouse into the 10th grade biology curriculum. The greenhouse was built in the summer of 2004 by the Community Connections summer math class using fallen lumber from nearby Hubbard Park. The biology students grow greens year round and sell them to the school cafeteria. The money made from the sales goes toward the costs of running the greenhouse and to buy the soil to grow the vegetables. As the state requires all students to take biology class, every student will at some point have the opportunity to partake in this experiential service-learning project.

The Earth Club is also led by science teacher's Karen Smereka and Tom Sabo. This volunteer after-school group is integral to the greenhouse operations as it runs the school composting efforts. The students organize the collection of food wastes and have the waste brought to a local composting company, who makes compost for the school's greenhouse. The Earth Club is also an active civic voice in the state, having proposed environmental legislation that has become a new law. The large amount of tires that were found on river clean-ups near the school spawned the proposal of tire legislation. The students were instrumental in the passage of this tire deposit law.

There are some other active clubs at Montpelier High School that partake in community engagement. The Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA) has been partaking in statewide leadership conferences focusing on school climate. The club acts as a support group, builds tolerance in the school, and they are developing a resource library. The Mir Pace club is made up of students who organized and fundraised for a service-learning trip to Guatemala to build houses for people in poor, rural areas of the rainforest.

The Community-Based Learning (CBL) program is an elective class taken by 70 students in the 2005-2006 school year. Spanning a wide array of academic and vocational subjects, students choose community mentors with whom they intern or volunteer for. Besides working with their mentors, they keep a journal, give a class presentation, and give oral reflections to their advisors. They are evaluated by their school advisor, their community mentor, and by themselves. The program is run by the guidance department, namely Matt McLean, the full time advisor for the program. A wide cross-section of students participate in CBL, as some students are recommended by guidance counselors to take the class and some students take in on their own accord because they want a community learning experience to enrich their education.

Montpelier High School has a traditional student council where students are elected by peers. Some years they are active in engaging in civic activities but this is not always the case. They have two student representatives on the school board who attend regular meetings and represent student voice, yet they are not allowed to actually cast votes.

Another area where students have participated in a civic process is through the Graduation Expectation and School Change meetings. These have been led by an active parent and have included students, community members, parents, teachers, administrators, and staff. Students have had the opportunity to engage in discussion about the school's mission and work collaboratively for positive change in the school.

The many successes of civic engagement at Montpelier High School can be attributed to a variety of factors: the strong support of the principal, a strong guidance department that includes a community-based learning program, teachers who have incorporated civic and service-learning into the curriculum and students who have themselves initiated civic activities. Although the connections to curriculum that do exist are exemplar, one area of improvement at the school could be to find a way a support and encourage teachers to incorporate civic engagement and service-learning activities into the curriculum on a wider scale.

Earth Club

School: Montpelier High School

Contact for this initiative: Name: Tom Sabo, Karen Smereka

Address: Montpelier Drive, Montpelier, VT 05602

Phone: (802) 225-8000

Email: TomS@mpsvt.org or Karen@mpsvt.org

Grades impacted: 9th -12th grades

Approach Type:

Service-Learning and Community Service

Extracurricular Opportunities

Website associated with this initiative:

<http://www.mpsvt.org/MHS/MHSSite/Academics/Science/webcamsplash.html>

Subjects impacted :

Social studies

Science and technology

Lesson and Practice Description:

The Earth Club is led by science teacher's Karen Smereka and Tom Sabo. This volunteer after-school group is integral to the school's greenhouse operations as it runs the school composting efforts. The students organize the collection of food wastes and have the waste brought to a local composting company, who makes compost for the school's greenhouse. The Earth Club is also an active civic voice in the state, having proposed environmental legislation that has become a new law. The large amount of tires that were found on river clean-ups near the school spawned the proposal of tire legislation. The students were instrumental in the passage of this tire deposit law.

Time required: Weekly meetings with two teachers and students.

Staff required to carry this out: Two high school science teachers

Materials required to carry this out: Compost buckets

Cost : small teacher stipend from budget, student fund-raising

Community-Based Learning

School: Montpelier High School

Contact for this initiative Name: Matt McLean

Address: Montpelier Drive, Montpelier, VT 05602

Phone: (802) 225-8050 (Guidance)

Email: Matt@mpsvt.org

Grades impacted: 10th and 12th grades

Approach Type:

Service-Learning and Community Service

Subjects impacted:

Arts

Math

Science and technology

Foreign Language

Occupational education

English (Lang. Arts)

Social studies

Lesson and Practice Description: The Community-Based Learning (CBL) program is an elective class taken by a record of 70 students in the 2005-2006 school year. Spanning a wide array of academic and vocational subjects, students choose community mentors with whom they intern or volunteer for. Besides working with their mentors, they keep a journal, give a class presentation, and give oral reflections to their advisors. They are evaluated by their school advisor, their community mentor, and by themselves. The program is run by the guidance department, namely Matt McLean, the full time advisor for the program. A wide cross-section of students participate in CBL, as some students are recommended by guidance counselors to take the class and some students take in on their own accord because they want a community learning experience to enrich their education.

Time required: Three guidance staff works a variety of hours on this per week. There is many hours of volunteer efforts to help this initiative succeed.

Staff required to carry this out: Three guidance department staff.

Cost (how is it funded?): School Budget funds staff and some transportation costs.

Evaluation or learning results: Students are graded based on self-evaluation, community mentor evaluation, reflective journal entries, and a final presentation.

School-to-Earth Initiative/ Vermont Youth Conservation Corps.
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School: Montpelier and U-32

Contact for this initiative: Name: Lu Van Zealand

Address: Montpelier High School, Montpelier, VT 05602 & U-32 High School, East Montpelier, VT

Phone: Montpelier: (802) 225-8000 and U-32: (802) 229-0321
Lu Van Zealand at 223-1266

Email: Lu Van Zealand, luvz@pshift.com

Grades impacted: 9th to 12th grades

Approach Type:

Guided Discussions of Issues and Current Events

Service-Learning and Community Service

Extracurricular Opportunities

Student Participation in Governance

Subjects impacted:

Science and technology

Agriculture Education, Physics, Forest Ecology, Environmental Horticulture, General Biology

Lesson and Practice Description: This initiative is a collaboration between two nearby high schools, the Vermont Youth Conservation Corps, and the Foodbank Farm at Two Rivers Center. Both U-32 High School and Montpelier High School were pilot schools for the VYCC Summer Farm Pilot Program in the summer of 2006. Students from both schools worked on VYCC crews at a local Community Sustainable Agriculture Farm (Wellspring Farm) and the Foodbank Farm. They earned credit and pay for their work. In addition, two crews of students, teachers and community members (including a team from the Special Education Department) worked for school credit to maintain gardens at the high school and 6 sending elementary schools. These summer programs in community sustainable agriculture provided students with a community-based learning experience and linked students with sustainable farmers in the area. The summer collaboration provided the foundation for a larger collaborative effort that is currently underway called the "School-to-Earth Collaborative." Within this collaboration, superintendents, principals, staff, students, community members, and partners such as the VYCC and Vermont Sustainable Jobs and the Department of Labor are designing a summer institute on sustainability as well as exploring the possibility of creating a "Green Academy" in which students from both schools might earn their degrees or specializations in sustainability.

Time required: Five hours per week

Staff required to carry this out: In process of writing grant for a part-time coordinator. Two-three staff from the schools as well as a staff member from VYCC put in regular hours in support of this work (about 5 hours/week).

Materials required to carry this out: Dirt, solar panels for greenhouse, seeds, etc.

Cost: Small allocation from 21st Century Grant money the school received a few years past. VYCC funded the summer farm pilot program. So far the collaboration's further efforts have been time put in by staff and volunteer time by Lu Van Zeeland. Wrote a grant for funds to support a coordinator and a full-time VISTA; also writing grants to fund the materials we need.

Evaluation or learning results: Students get credit from courses they are enrolled in connected to the program and are assessed by the teacher. The summer farm program includes evaluations of student learning/work.

Participant stories related to this effort:

Vermont Youth Conservation Corps Summer Farm Pilot Program at Wellspring Farm!

Lu Van Zeeland

Wellspring Farm is the site of a brand-new Vermont Youth Conservation Corps (VYCC) summer work/learning experience in community sustainable agriculture for two U-32 students. The goal of the program is to provide students with community-based and service-based learning, valuable work experience and career exploration, and an understanding of the social, ecological and nutritional quality of locally and sustainably grown food.

Starting with a VERY HOT one-week intensive July 10-14, Brice Henes (a senior at U-32) and Ari Erlbaum (a sophomore at U-32) jumped right into harvesting and weeding at the farm. We work as a VYCC "crew," with me as the crew leader. Both students quickly learned the layout of the fields and connected with our farmers, Mimi and Chris. In the midst of the incredible heat, we weeded over 12,000 feet of crops, and as Mimi told me in a phone call on Friday of that week, "saved the farm!" We also helped harvest for Monday and Thursday pick-ups and delivered produce to seniors at sites in Montpelier and Barre.

Another goal of the pilot program is to provide farmers with help in the fields and a chance to spread the learning about the importance of community sustainable agriculture- maybe even help create potential future farmers. After a challenging rainy start to this year's season, the "help in the fields" could not have been more timely for the farm, but also for generating in our crew a clear sense of being a part of something meaningful here at Wellspring Farm. Ari and Brice both began to notice what crop needed weeding next and to help set priorities.

AND we have had fun! There is something about working and sweating and getting muddy together as you tend to and bring in the food from the fields that builds relationships. We have all gained new nicknames, laughed at Ari's unending pirate jokes, appreciated Brice's willingness to squash the potato beetles, learned about my fear of snakes in the hay bales, floated down the current in the Winooski at the farm's swimming hole, and had the BEST root beer floats and maple cremees appear to us like a dreamy mirage on the HOTTEST Friday afternoon ever, thanks to Parker.

Solon Circle

School: Montpelier High School

Contact for this initiative Name: Peter Evans, Principal

Address: Montpelier Drive, Montpelier, VT 05602

Phone: (802) 225-8000

Email: peter@mpsvt.org

Grades impacted: 9th to 12th grades

Approach Type:

Extracurricular Opportunities

Student Participation in Governance

Lesson and Practice Description: The Solon Circle is a unique school governance opportunity for students, teachers, staff and community members to democratically make decisions for the school based on consensual processes. Began in 2002, the Solon Circle offers a weekly town meeting experience that provides a unique school governance opportunity. The team makes decisions for the school based on consensual processes where discussion of an issue takes place and the group finds a solution that everyone can agree on. Meetings are open to everyone and held weekly. The principal, Peter Evans, has arranged the school schedule so that teachers and students have time to participate in this governance process. Students are seen as equals in opportunity; they have the ability to share decision making equally with all adult members. The Solon Circle assures that curriculum, assessment, school climate and the supporting protocols and systems that support them are consistent with the school mission and initiates action to alter or modify the protocols as needed.

Time required: There is one meeting per week which is carved out for students and teachers to be able to attend.

Staff required to carry this out: All of the staff are encouraged to attend the weekly meeting. Principle Peter Evans considers it a duty of the faculty to attend at least occasionally.

Cost: The time is carved out of the day for teachers and students to attend, so this comes out of the main budget.

Evaluation or learning results: The Solon Circle is an example of authentic participatory democracy occurring within a high school. Students are encouraged to come to meetings and learn about the consensual decision making processes at work. This provides invaluable learning experiences for students who are learning communication skills, decision making skills, and action research.

Harwood High School

Written by Erica K. Campbell

At Harwood High School, located in Duxbury, Vermont, there are many students who partake in civic engagement learning opportunities. Student involvement is high and students report feeling supported by adults in the school. There is a student run café that provides food and serves as a venue for artistic performances. The school serves as both a *High Schools on the Move through Service-Learning* pilot school and a *Civic Mission of Schools* youth engagement pilot school. Harwood is tying civic engagement to larger school initiatives such as high school renewal and the development of curricular standards. There are some outstanding civic engagement practices happening at Harwood High School. They are led by a small number of teachers and staff, yet have far reaching effects by serving a large proportion of students. The activities lie within two main areas: the school curriculum and Next Step, a community-based learning program. They are supported in part by the Professional Learning Community, a professional development group dedicated to sustainability and service-learning.

The social studies initiatives are predominately led by teacher Jean Berthiaume, who has led his students in numerous civic education and service-learning projects over recent years. His US History class has been producing local documentary videos in a service-learning project where students interview local residents. The class in past years has produced a local video entitled “From Waterbury to Warren,” an oral history documentary of the communities within the school district. They studied the process of oral history, research historical topics, and then set out to interview dozens of local residents. This year’s class has been working on an oral history documentary focusing on post World War II events such as McCarthyism, the Space Race, and the Civil Rights movement.

Creating Sustainable Communities is another social studies course taught by Jean Berthiaume. Offered to all 10th graders, this course offers students a chance to research and present their findings while working to provide recommendations for sustainability within the larger community. The class content is divided into three areas: environmental justice, economics justice, and human rights. They have focused in issues such as watershed drainage and the use and sustainability of the “common ground”, a parcel of land surrounding the school. They have worked on local recycling, livable wage issues, and social responsibility through consumption. The students have reported that the class offers them awareness of local and global issues, more discussion with their families around those issues, new strategies for conserving resources, and a belief that they can make changes in their school and communities.

A few of Jean Berthiaume’s students from both US History and Creating Sustainable Communities have had the opportunity to give presentations at two state-wide conferences. Students gave the keynote presentation and led a workshop on civic engagement at the 2005 Vermont Rural Partnership conference. Another group of students presented a workshop to state legislatures, educational policy makers, teachers

and community members at the 2005 Civic Education Conference at the state house. Students demonstrated the value of service-learning by demonstrating a civics lesson from their class.

Teacher Steve Rand has students use media literacy information to support authentic dialogue among teens on a talk show they are producing with Vermont Public Television called "For Real." His students also did a presentation and dinner for the community on media literacy. Harwood is one of the schools participating in this project led by Waterbury resident and professional videographer Paul McGowan. Interested students from Jean's CSC class and Steve Rand's media literacy class went to VT Public Television studios for a recording session where they discussed issues facing teens. Kids can give opinions, talk about things they've experienced, express themselves in their own voice, and be heard. Many civic issues were discussed, such as social justice and the influence of the media. The program was broadcasted on VPR.

There are also other classes that have engaged students in civic education and service-learning at Harwood. The science and technology class was created for students who were identified as being "disengaged." The class created educational materials for elementary students about composting and has led the schools composting efforts. The Family and Consumer Science class has helped in development and maintenance of a school vegetable garden. The videography class works with the local cable access channel to do a weekly show called "Harwood Connections." They record this live school newsletter at the school and are working to locate the cable access channel to school grounds.

Next Step is a school-funded program that allows students to pursue career options in areas of interest. It was initiated with School-to-Work funding, but also focuses on community-based learning, service-learning and applied learning. A wide diversity of students participate: some are special education students, some are recommended by guidance counselors, and some are interested on their own accord. Students pursue learning in the community by volunteering, interning, or working directly with community partners such as businesses or non-profit organizations. Harwood's Next Step is run by two full time employees, Ellen Berrings and Rachel McDonald, who are paid through the school budget. Without these positions, many of Harwood's civic engagement opportunities would diminish.

Harwood has established "Professional Learning Community" group that focuses on sustainability, service-learning and civic engagement. The teachers have time one Wednesday morning per month to meet to plan their initiatives. They choose yearly themes to engage the students, such as social justice and equity in education. Involved are some of the key players instrumental to civic engagement at the school: Ellen Berrings, Jean Berthiame, and Steve Rand. This professional learning group provides a support system for many of activities within the school and ensures that these efforts will remain sustainable into the future.

There are also a number of active clubs that engage in civic activities the school. The Interact club is a Rotary sponsored community service club. The Partners club is made up of students with disabilities and without. They participate once a week in after-school physical activities such as snowshoeing, softball, and bowling. The Future Business Leaders of America club partakes in civic-oriented activities in the community. The school also has a student run newspaper that covers both school and community news.

Harwood High School offers many civic engagement opportunities for their students. Service-learning, civic education, and community-based learning are increasingly being offered throughout the curriculum. The Next-Step Program ensures staff positions and funding to directly support student involvement in their community. The Professional Learning Community supports these positive activities and provides a link to future sustainability. With further expansion and support of the civic activities and with an increasing focus on sustainability, they will continue to foster the civic engagement of students.

US History Class

School: Harwood High School

Contact for this initiative: Name: Jean Berthiaume

Address: 458 VT Rte. 100 South Duxbury, VT 05660

Phone: (802) 244-5186

Email: Berthiaj@Harwood.org

Grades impacted: 11th grade

Approach Type:

Instruction of History, Government, Law or Democracy

Guided Discussions of Issues and Current Events

Service-Learning and Community Service

Subjects impacted:

Social studies

Science and technology (videography, transcription, film making)

Lesson and Practice Description:

Jean Berthiaume's US History class is asked to create video documentaries designed to study one particular issue impacting their community. A few of Berthiaume's students from both US History and Creating Sustainable Communities have had the opportunity to give presentations at two state-wide conferences. Students gave the keynote presentation and led a workshop on civic engagement at the 2005 Vermont Rural Partnership conference. Another group of students presented a workshop to state legislatures, educational policy makers, teachers and community members at the 2005 Civic Education Conference at the state house. Students demonstrated the value of service-learning by demonstrating a civics lesson from their class.

Time required: Besides teacher time for the class, the teacher volunteers extra time for the activities that happen outside of class, such as the conducting of oral histories. There are several community members who have volunteered to help with the US History class' projects. There is a local production company who has helped with the making of the documentaries.

Staff required to carry this out: Jean Berthiaume

Materials required to carry this out: Tape recorders, video equipment.

Cost: School Budget for regular teacher time; fundraising and the sales of the documentaries. Recent video projects in Vermont History (Common Ground: The Stories of Waterbury to Warren) and U.S. History (Vermont Stories of Modern America) have been costly endeavors that have required a lot of grant searching and writing. However, the department's budget now includes funds to cover at least half of the required amount. Now that two videos have been produced and premiered within the community, it has become easier to solicit both support for the budget increase as well as more community sponsorship. It is in part minimally funded by the history department budget, more of which will be included in future years to support these kinds of innovative historiography video type projects. A lot of the funds needed came through grants.

Participant stories related to this effort:

From Waterbury to Warren, local documentary video.

For Real

School: Harwood

Contact for this initiative: Name: Steve Rand, Jean Berthiaume

Address: 458 VT Rte. 100 South Duxbury, VT 05660

Phone: (802) 244-5186

Email: berthiaj@harwood.org rands@harwood.org

Grades impacted: 10th to 12th grades

Approach Type:

Guided Discussions of Issues and Current Events

Service-Learning and Community Service

Extracurricular Opportunities

Subjects impacted:

Social studies

Lesson and Practice Description:

Teacher Steve Rand has students use media literacy information to support authentic dialogue among teens on a talk show they are producing with Vermont Public Television called “For Real.” Students also did a presentation and dinner for the community on media literacy. Harwood is one of the schools participating in this project led by Waterbury resident and professional videographer, Paul McGowan. Interested students from Jean’s CSC class and Steve Rand’s media literacy class went to VT Public Television studios for a recording session where they discussed issues facing teens. Kids can give opinions, talk about things they’ve experienced, express themselves in their own voice, and be heard. Many civic issues were discussed, such as social justice and the influence of the media. The program was broadcasted on VPT.

For Real was extra curricular, but support the Creating Sustainable Communities curriculum. The opportunity allowed for some students to engage in dialogue around fundamental issues that are facing teens and are of direct concern for teens. The philosophical aspects of the curriculum were exercised in the preparation and taping of the show for VPT.

Time required: This was a project that involved high school students and teachers, but the bulk of the work was performed by community member Paul McGowan

Staff required to carry this out: Teachers: Steve Rand, Jean Berthiaume, and Maureen Shay.

Materials required to carry this out: Vermont Public Television Space and Equipment.

Cost: Teachers took this on with no extra pay, Grant written by community member.

Evaluation or learning results: No formal evaluation has been done. However, more work is being done and evaluation tools are being considered and developed.

Participant stories related to this effort: Vermont Public Television showing of For Real.

Creating Sustainable Communities

School: Harwood High School

Contact for this initiative: Name: Jean Berthiaume

Address: 458 VT Rte. 100 South Duxbury, VT 05660

Phone: (802) 244-5186

Email: berthiaj@harwood.org

Grades impacted: 10th grade

Approach Type:

Instruction of History, Government, Law or Democracy

Guided Discussions of Issues and Current Events

Service-Learning and Community Service

Subjects impacted:

Social studies

Science and technology

Lesson and Practice Description:

Creating Sustainable Communities is a social studies course taught by Jean Berthiaume. Open to all 10th graders, this course offers students a civic engagement opportunity where they research and present their findings while working to provide recommendations for sustainability within the larger community. The class content is divided into three areas: environmental justice, economics justice, and human rights. Many issues have been focused on over the years, such as watershed drainage and the use and sustainability of the “common ground”, a parcel of land surrounding the school. They have worked on local recycling, livable wage issues, and social responsibility through consumption. The students have reported that the class offers them awareness of local and global issues, more discussion with their families around those issues, new strategies for conserving resources, and a belief that they can make changes in their school and communities.

Last year’s class created the Kaleidoscope Project on human rights and discrimination. The project was a careful study at the root causes of discrimination and a look at power, privilege and differences within society. Students were then encouraged to write about their own discrimination story. They then share them with the class after a lot of work around norms and sharing of these stories. Even after all that preparation students don't have to share these stories with the class, but they need to consider sharing it with either a

smaller group with in the class or simply with me (their teacher). After sharing a discussing their stories and relating it to our study students are challenged to think about taking action with our school community. They selected and advocated for the stories that were shared by their peers to be shared with the greater community (school) with the permission of the student, of course. Students then developed a campaign for their school. In the end they created, with the help of a senior student graphic designer, four discrimination stories that challenged all students to face personal discrimination issues such as: socioeconomic discrimination, racial discrimination, transgender discrimination, and handicap discrimination.

This year student's are in engaged in a Green School Audit and they hope to shape policy that makes Harwood a more "green" school in areas such as cafeteria, solid waste management, printing and paper services, and energy consumption.

Time required: There is varying community volunteer time and the teacher volunteers extra time beyond the scope of his in-class work to make this initiative successful.

Staff required to carry this out: One Teacher

Materials required to carry this out: Regarding materials and resources used beyond the scope of the school budget, teacher Jean Berthiaume claims that “service-learning often makes more possible when students are able to apply their learning in conjunction with the work and mission of non-profit and profit organizations within the community.”

Cost: School History budget, student fundraising

Evaluation or learning results: Try to get examples of assessment tools; standards covered, etc.

Standards covered in Creating Sustainable Communities:

3.9 Sustainability

4.1 Service

4.2 Democratic Processes

4.5 Continuity and Change

4.6 Understanding Place

6.3 Analyzing Knowledge

6.9 Meaning of Citizenship

6.11 Institutional Access

6.12 Human Rights

Next Step

School: Harwood

Contact for this initiative: Name: Ellen Bearings and Rachel McDonald

Address: 458 VT Rte. 100, South Duxbury, VT 05660

Phone: (802) 244-5186

Email: berringe@harwood.org

Grades impacted: 9th to 12th grades

Approach Type:

Service-Learning and Community Service

Extracurricular Opportunities

Website associated with this initiative? If yes, provide web address:

<http://www.harwood.org/huhigh/departments/services/nextstep/homepage.shtml>

Subjects impacted:

Arts

Occupational education

English (Lang. Arts)

Social studies

Math

Science and technology

Lesson and Practice Description:

Next Step is a school-funded program that allows students to pursue career options in areas of interest. It initiated with School-to-Work funding, but also focuses on community-based learning, service-learning and applied learning. A wide diversity of students participate: some are special education students, some are recommended by guidance counselors, and some are interested on their own accord. Students pursue learning in the community by volunteering, interning, or working directly with community partners such as businesses or non-profit organizations. Harwood's Next Step is run by two full time employees, Ellen Bearings and Rachel McDonald, who are paid through the school budget. Without these positions, many of Harwood's civic engagement opportunities would diminish.

Time required: how many hours are required to prepare and implement (estimate)

Staff required to carry this out: Two full time staff members

Cost: School Budget for two staff

Evaluation or learning results: Students are evaluated and graded by their teachers when there is a curricular connection.

Twinfield Union School

Written by Jean Lathrop

Twinfield Union School is a Pre-K through 12 school situated in rural Central Vermont with a student population of about 450. It sits on a hill overlooking US Route 2 that connects the two towns it serves, Plainfield and Marshfield. The school is led by a head administrator (a graduate himself of the school) and three teacher leaders who represent 1st through 5th grade, the middle school and high school.

Twinfield's first curricular civic engagement initiative was a fully credited course, Rights In Action that started in 1999. Since then the number of civic engagement initiatives has increased to encompass both curricular and extra curricular activities. Key to this development has been the head administrator and a core group of teachers' belief in the importance of civic engagement for students. Staff are given the freedom to experiment and the head administrator reserves time to listen to their successes and their frustrations and to encourage reflection and offer feedback. He finds the resources such as people, materials, extra money for civic engagement endeavors. Civic engagement classes are in the center of the curriculum rather than incorporated after the traditional and required courses have been scheduled. Also vital to the success of the initiatives has been commitment to continually recognizing and celebrating the initiatives and their participants. This has resulted in a school culture that values civic engagement. Students understand how everyone benefits and this helps make a stronger community. As a result students and faculty are proud of their school as a caring community. The teachers of civic engagement courses collaborate with other teachers to design and teach classes with a civic engagement component and participate in numerous extra and co curricular civic engagement activities with students.

The Rights in Action is a course open to 9th through 12th graders. The class begins by students studying popular education theory and action research. Students then brainstorm a list of problems in the community and then chose a few to research. Considering what they discover from the research, the class uses consensus to decide which issue to pursue based on its value and impact on the whole community. As students develop and apply solutions to the chosen issue, they strengthen their problem solving, leadership and organizing skills. They learn how to work together and with the larger community. They learn to write grants, to negotiate and appreciate differences and to understand issues from different perspectives. In 2003-2004, the class went through the complicated and challenging process of establishing a teen center in the community. This included negotiating with town officials, researching and applying for grants and coming up with a staffing plan. Most recently they made a video about socio-economic differences.

Since 2000 8th grade students have participated in Project Citizen, a national curricular program, that teaches students how to monitor and influence public policy. Twinfield Project Citizen students have received national and state recognition for their projects. One team worked for a national policy that resulted in banning cigarette ads from student editions of news magazines country wide. A student, Emily Lester, continued her team's

project for several years until the Vermont Legislature enacted Emily's Bill H. 171 a law which provided educational assistance to foster children. In 2006, Twinfield's Project Citizen students won the top three places in the state competition. One of their teams will represent Vermont in the national competition.

Another way students have opportunities for civic engagement is through the Renaissance Program, an innovative program in which students conduct individually designed studies with community mentors. Working in a soup kitchen, making a documentary through the local radio station,, coaching 7-8 boys basketball, organizing materials to counter military recruitment, and teaching Spanish to elementary students are a few examples of studies with a civic engagement focus.

Middle and high school students are actively engaged in the governance and the well being of the school. Since 1999, high school students have been members of the school board. In 2005 high school students began facilitating weekly community meetings instead of the lead administrator. Students have sat on a school cabinet that was composed of school staff and community persons. They have had an active role in creating a dress code and participating in individual appeals about its enforcement. They participated in the school's decision to have a free period rather than teacher monitored study halls. Recently the Rights in Action class worked on making the teacher advisory groups more effective for everyone , creating more quiet places for students to study (a challenge in a school building with limited space), and in facilitating students ' transitions from middle to high school.. Students were active organizers, facilitators and participants in a conversation spanning five session about the school involving 12 groups of more that 80 members of the two communities served by the school. Many students report that they feel empowered and that they have a strong voice that is listened to and considered.

The student council, class officers and other groups raise money that they then award after considering the merits of proposals submitted by groups of Twinfield students and/or individuals. Two examples are a grant awarded to a student for study in India and a grant supporting a book drive for students in Ghana organized by two Twinfield graduates. Recently students have developed a planned giving system for alumni to support the school.

In the middle school students are developing their civic engagement skills and opportunities. In 2005 the guidance counselor began working with all middle school students in developing and using their leadership skills. She has paid particular attention to include students who are not so called "natural leaders" and to giving leadership opportunities to students from an array of socio economic backgrounds. These students now lead meetings and have formed committees to work on such issues as lunch food, celebrations, school climate, discipline policies, etc.

Civic engagement is so well established and such a growing part of Twinfield culture to the point that it is sometimes taken for granted. When students have gone outside the Twinfield Community they have been shocked to discover that their level of civic engagement is unusual.

Evaluation or learning results: After students have studied popular education and action research practice, and focused on what they want to do, each of them and the teacher set expectations for what they will do and learn. At the end of the class they then evaluate in terms of expectations the degree to which they met them.

Students receive regular credit based on the following Vermont Standards:

- Students take an active role in their community. This is evident when students: Plan, implement, and reflect on activities that respond to community needs; and use academic skills and knowledge in real-life community situations.
- Students participate in democratic processes. This is evident when students work cooperatively and respectfully with people of various groups to set community goals and solve common problems.
- Students demonstrate understanding of the cultural expressions that are characteristic of particular groups.
- Students perform effectively on teams that set and achieve goals, conduct investigations, solve problems, and create solutions (e.g., by using consensus-building and cooperation to work toward group decisions).
- Students interact respectfully with others, including those with whom they have differences.
- Students use systematic and collaborative problem-solving processes, including mediation, to negotiate and resolve conflicts.

Sustainability 3.9 Students make decisions that demonstrate understanding of natural and human communities, the ecological, economic, political, or social systems within them, and awareness of how their personal and collective actions affect the sustainability of these interrelated systems.

Participant stories related to this effort (if already completed—articles written about it, pieces of student writing, etc.

The course includes technology integration – employing Web tools. It is highly organized and scheduled with supports for each step of the process. It encourages student contact with experts and variety of viewpoints. The teachers and the students create many of their own materials and methods.

Examples of what Twinfield 8th graders have worked on recently: adults smoking in cars with children present, deaths and injuries during hunting season, Vermont’s civil union law being “separate and unequal”, Vermont’s bottle return bill ‘s inadequacy in the face of “new age” beverages, and the role of fossil fuel consumption in the face of climate change.

Twinfield Project citizen students have also received national and state recognition for their projects. One team worked for a national policy that resulted in banning cigarette ads from student editions of national magazines such as *Newsweek*. A student, Emily Lester, continued her team’s project for three years until the Vermont Legislature enacted Emily’s Bill H. 171 a law which provides educational assistance to foster children attending Vermont colleges and universities. In 2006 Twinfield’s Project Citizen students won the top three places in the state showcase. The state championship portfolio from Twinfield represented Vermont in the national competition at the NCSL National Convention.

Twinfield students know and expect that there is a “tradition” in Twinfield’s eight grade that this is important and significant learning and that they have a gained local, state and national respect for their hard work.

Time required: how many hours are required to prepare and implement (estimate)
4-8 prep initially, but many more hours organizing parts of our local program like the speaker’s forums that we do to get the students to understand Public Policy as a working concept. allow for 90 min / day

Staff required to carry this out: two teachers + ideally, but certainly can be done in a single-teacher setting

Materials required to carry this out: technology, PC text, web, materials such as binders, tab dividers, display boards

Cost: Teacher’s budget and support from Vermont Project Citizen

Evaluation or learning results: Students do daily evaluations. Teachers evaluate their writing and speaking. PC rubrics are used. Students’ work is also evaluated through judging panels comprised of community, state and sometimes national panels.

Students learn about action research, how government works at local, state and national levels and then how to advocate for policy change.

Vermont Vital Result Standards for Communication, Civic/Social Responsibility, Reasoning and Problem solving, and Personal Development. See at:

http://www.twinfield.net/project_citizen/pc_vt_standards.pdf for details on these standards.

Professional development & resources related to this practice (if applicable):

Availability of state training sessions, Center for Civic Education printed and web-based resources, support from experienced teachers, attending week-long summer institutes held around the country. (these are free with all expenses paid including travel)

Participant stories related to this effort:

Senator James Jeffords meet with Project Citizen students to discuss public policy and citizenship. He has this to say: “ After spending the morning with some very engaging 8th graders at Twinfield Union School, my belief is reinforced that Project Citizen offers kids more than a course in civics education. It gives them a real-life opportunity to develop and sharpen their decision-making abilities. I hope, for our country's sake, that some of these Project Citizen students opt for a career in public service.”

<http://www.twinfield.net/newsletter/news.htm>

http://www.twinfield.net/project_citizen/

“Washington World”, 5/24/2006

“Marsh Plain Twinfield Notes”, March 2006

“Seventeen”, May 2006

Holt, Rinehart and Winston new textbook *Holt Civics in Practice: Principles of Government and Economics* © 2007. Twinfield’s 8th grade Project Citizen curriculum is a main feature in chapter one, “We the People.” The letter accompanying the framed sample page featuring Twinfield students from the Removing Tobacco Ads from *Newseek* team states, “On behalf of HRW, thank you for your contribution to civic education and service learning.”

Thetford Academy

Written by Jean Lathrop*

Thetford Academy, located in Thetford, Vermont, is a "private school with a public mission." Founded in 1819, it is Vermont's oldest secondary school, and has maintained independent governance while serving local communities in the role of a public school. As in many rural communities, the school has historically reflected an active tradition of service, with school and community members working together on projects of mutual benefit.

Integration of civic engagement throughout the curriculum began with a deliberate commitment to strengthen the tradition of mutual support and service in our community. Since its inception in 1992 with funding through the National Corporation for Service Learning, the program has grown from a single pilot project (Primary Partners, linking Academy seniors with kindergarten "buddies" in arts and literacy projects) to include more than twenty initiatives, including sponsorship of elementary-school partner projects in Thetford and the nearby community of Strafford, Vermont.

Projects are designed, implemented, and evaluated using a locally-developed service-learning model to ensure a focus on student responsibility for planning, action, and reflection; effective collaboration among school personnel and community partners; and wise use of human and material resources. The essentials of this model are set forth in nine principles:

1. frequent, regular service
2. meaningful work with clear goals
3. related study and preparation beyond the service site
4. student responsibility for planning activities, including preparation, implementation, and closure
5. frequent, structured reflection in discussion and writing
6. integration with the school curriculum and schedule
7. small, intensive, and manageable scale
8. frequent communication and reflection among adult supervisors
9. public reporting and/or exhibition of accomplishments in schools and the larger community

Examples of civic engagement include a variety of community-wide development activities, including local recycling programs, public horticulture and community gardens, recreational trails, community arts and drama, intergenerational programs linking children with senior citizens, and general support for schools and children. Community agencies including the Thetford Solid Waste District, Senior Citizens, Friends of Thetford Trails, Historical Society, and two village Garden Clubs have been active partners.

No longer an isolated and marginal activity, civic engagement is now an accepted and regular component of Thetford Academy's curriculum. It is integrated with the core curriculum in English/language arts, drama/performing arts, sciences, mathematics, industrial arts/technology education, consumer & family sciences, agriculture, and social studies. It is part of the expectations, planning, and vocabulary for students, teachers, administrators, and community members. In 1998 it assumed a new international dimension, with the Operation Day's Work and Global Buddies projects, both student-directed efforts to apply service-learning principles in study, aid and communication with other nations. Civic engagement classes educate themselves and their communities about countries that include Haiti, Ethiopia, Nicaragua, and Rwanda and to raise money for projects that benefit young people.

More than 90% of high school students in grades 9-12 participate in at least one often more service-learning/civic engagement project in a course. The Academy also includes grades 7 and 8. Middle-level students' experience with service-learning/civic engagement is also an important preparation for its broad-based integration in the older-grades: all seventh-graders complete a service-learning/civic engagement unit in one of their classes. Over half of Thetford Academy's teachers participate in some aspect of service-learning including all 5 of the administrators.

The "integration with the school curriculum and schedule," has been a key standard; the school has chosen to concentrate personnel and funding resources on classroom-based initiatives. Block scheduling has allowed civic engagement classes to go for 80 minutes instead of 43. Co-curricular service has grown and thrived in the same period, however, as parents, coaches, and club advisors have supported parallel service opportunities. Each year, over two hundred community members and students join in hosting cross-country meets that combine athletic competition with celebration. Hundreds of students provided volunteer labor in major school renovation projects between 1995 and 1998: designing, moving, building, planting, and raising funds. There is no mandated service requirement, but a Community Service Recognition program honors a wide range of activities, and students in grades 9-12 keep service records as part of the STW Career Portfolio system. Teacher-advisors sponsor small-scale service projects for their student advisee groups, and athletic teams and clubs such as the National Honor Society design their own projects, from youth sports clinics to food drives. Like the more structured service-learning in courses, these volunteer efforts show the Academy's fundamental principles in action, especially the precept: "We care about each other and about the larger community."

Students are involved in school governance and evaluation. Up to 12 students are active members of the board of trustees and its various committees. Starting in 1996 students began a five year process of crafting a process for student evaluations of classes which is now a twice a year established procedure. Students feel empowered and have learned a constructive procedure to approach the staff about issues they want addressed and/or changed.

Key to civic engagement initiatives being so unusually integrated are the principles Martha Rich, Head of School, promotes.

1. You can't mandate what matters.
2. Change is a journey, not a blueprint.
3. Problems are our friends.
4. Vision and strategic planning come later.
5. Individualism and collectivism must have equal power.
6. Neither centralization nor decentralization works.
7. Connection with the wider environment is critical for success.
8. Every person is a change agent.

**This case draws heavily on two pieces by Martha Rich, Head of School, Thetford Academy: "Sustaining Service Learning" and "Service Learning at Thetford Academy"*

Human Geography

School: Thetford Academy

Contact for this initiative Name: Steve Niederhauser
Address: Thetford Academy, PO Box 190, Thetford, VT
05074
Phone: 802.785.4805

Grades impacted: 12th (11th with permission) grade

Approach Type: Local projects

Instruction of History, Government, Law or Democracy
Guided Discussions of Issues and Current Events
Service-Learning and Community Service
Action Research

Subjects impacted:

Social Studies (Human Geography)

Lesson and Practice Description:

In Human Geography students explore the relationship between place and human activity. The first and most important area of concurrent study is a thematic approach to a study of global human activity. Population, migration, popular/folk culture, religion, language, economic development, ethnicity, political geography, and natural resources are all topics that are covered. The second component is a study of the Earth's various regions. Students learn the location and the important physical, political, and cultural characteristics of countries around the globe. The third component of Human Geography is the completion of Local Geography projects by small groups of students who collect data outside of school.

The principal result of a Local Geography Project is a well-researched and well-prepared, self-explanatory, professional-looking, student-generated exhibit or short video documentary that purposefully informs or advises the local community. Project exhibits are examined by the public at town meetings, school functions, or in the lobby of the town office or library.

These projects use data collected in the community and present a spatial analysis of that data. Projects are conducted in groups of two or three students and comprise 20% of each student's final grade in Human Geography. In addition to time spent on the project outside of class, two class periods during each of eight weeks are available to students to conduct research in the community, update journals, analyze data, prepare their exhibits, written reports, and presentations, and consult with the instructor. Each project group 1) keeps a project journal, 2) makes an oral presentation of findings and analysis to the class, administrators, other teachers and guests from the community, 3) creates an attractive standing exhibit of results, and 4) submits a written report that includes detailed findings, analysis and a summary of the process.

Public response to the exhibits has overwhelmingly been positive; special interest in some projects has been expressed by the town police department, the historical society, the planning commission, and a local mountain biking club.

The goals of Local Geography Projects are to:

1. serve the informational needs of local communities by providing valuable analyses of a wide variety of local geographic features,
2. enhance students' connectedness with the community (and reap all other various benefits of service learning),
3. reinforce and enhance student understanding of the geography (or other social studies) curriculum through fieldwork - observation, investigation, and inquiry.

Some examples of Thetford Academy students' local geography projects:

- Movement of Houses in Thetford Caused by Construction of Interstate-91
- Analysis of the Locations of Motor Vehicle Accidents in Thetford•
- Changes in General Stores in Thetford
- Water Mills in the History of Thetford Development
- Changes in Town Origin of Thetford Academy Students, 1960 - 2000•
- Business Changes in East Thetford, 1800 - 1990
- Analysis of Bike Trails in Thetford
- Analysis of Solar Powered Houses in Strafford, VT
- What Happens to Your Soda Can? - Current Recycling Realities in Thetford•
- Changes in Town Origin of Thetford Academy Students, 1960 – 2000;
- Changes to Thetford Schools, 1880 - Present (digital video documentary)
- The Future of Thetford: Proposed Housing Development Locations;
- The Future of Vegetable Farms in Thetford;
- Don't Leave Me Here: The Elizabeth Copper Mine Superfund Cleanup in Strafford VT (VIDEO)

- Impact of global warming on local area

Nearly all of the above Local Geography Project exhibits have been displayed at annual Thetford Town Meetings. A selected few have also been displayed elsewhere. All of the exhibits have included either a base map with overlays or a progression of maps.

Time required: 80 minute classes five days a week

Staff required to carry this out: teacher

Cost : \$500 a year from teacher's social studies budget

Evaluation or learning results: Students are assessed by weekly regional studies, quizzes, unit tests emphasizing essay responses, class participation, and the quality of Local Geography projects.

Students learn to think geographically. They learn to answer geographic questions by acquiring, organizing, and analyzing geographic information. In addition to text and other readings, students in Human Geography also learn from world music, current events, frequent visitors, and field trips. They learn about history of area, impact of changes and how to plan or predict future. Learn how to work with local people on projects.

Students are assessed by weekly regional studies, quizzes, unit tests emphasizing essay responses, class participation, and the quality of Local

Vermont Framework Standards this course meets:

Vital Result 4.1 Service: Students take an active role in their community. This is evident when students a) plan, implement, and reflect on activities that respond to community needs, and b) use academic skills and knowledge in real-life community situations.

Vital Result 4.6 Understanding Place: Students demonstrate understanding of the relationship between their local environment and community heritage and how each shapes their lives. This is evident when students evaluate and predict how current trends will affect the future of their local community and environment.

Field of Knowledge 6.7 Geographical Knowledge: Students use geographical knowledge and images of various places to understand the present, communicate historical interpretations, develop solutions for problems, and plan for the future. This is evident when students.. identify, research, and interpret how geography influences historical and contemporary events.

Participant stories related to this effort:

see Vermont Community Works for a thorough description

<http://www.vermontcommunityworks.org/vrp/curriculum/units/humangeo/humangeo.htm>

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students. Course is usually over subscribed and teachers select students partially on the basis of how to have a diverse class of students.

Time required: how many hours are required to prepare and implement (estimate) daily 80 minute block

Staff required to carry this out: team taught by a history and an English teacher

Materials required to carry this out: books (generated own materials to make bracelets, sell them and then donate money raised.)

Cost: teacher's budget

Evaluation or learning results: Students learn about the world, how to write compelling letters, the importance of research (for example how to evaluate different international projects), to take and appreciate different perspectives and that they can make a difference.

Vermont Standards addressed are:

Vital Result 4.1 Service: Students take an active role in their community. This is evident when students a) plan, implement, and reflect on activities that respond to community needs, and b) use academic skills and knowledge in real-life community situations.

Participant stories related to this effort (if already completed—articles written about it, pieces of student writing, etc.): see Vermont Community Works <http://www.vermontcommunityworks.org/>, newspaper articles in the Connecticut Spectator, Valley News

Women's Literature

School: Thetford Academy

Contact for this initiative

Name: Barbara Sorenson
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Grades impacted: 11th & 12th grade

Approach Type:

Discussions of Issues and Current Events
Service-Learning and Community Service

Subjects impacted:

English (Lang. Arts)
Social Studies, Arts

Lesson and Practice Description: In this credited English course students read works by such contemporary authors as Barbara Kingsolver, Maya Angelou, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, Danzy Senna, Julia Alvarez, and Grace Paley. Students explore the diverse literary traditions, as they read short stories, novels, poetry, and plays by female authors from many cultures. They write personal observations, stories, and essays, not only to gain greater understanding of the literature, but also to acquire insight into their own identities and voices. The course is run as a seminar. Students participate as members of a literate community, reading out loud, talking about books, ideas, and writing. Students are encourage to take the lead in all aspects.

As a result of their reading, writing and discussion, students become engaged in hands-on-activism. Recently the students decided to help found a local Amnesty International chapter and since then they have been part of urgent action letter campaigns to free political prisoners. (TA graduate went on to found another chapter in another state.)

Two Thetford Academy graduates went to Ethiopia and returned to the class which after listening to them, decided to support an orphanage there. The class educated themselves and then the school about the project and raised \$900 dollars. Because of their educational work in the school, Operation Day's Work chose the Ethiopian project to support and raised another \$3000.

Out of the readings discussion related to the readings and students' personal reflections, students decided to educate themselves and the community about domestic violence. They wrote a grant which was awarded for a program, Have Justice Will Travel, that helps victims of domestic violence.

Time required: daily 80 minute block

Staff required to carry this out: teacher, students and community

Materials required to carry this out: nothing out of the ordinary

Cost: teacher's budget and fundraising on the part of students

Evaluation or learning results: Kids are very proud of learning about and helping out HIV orphans. They develop awareness of world and that they can be informed and involved. They learn how to educate others and to fundraise (everyone in the school is proud at how much TA students do if even when not directly involved)

Grading has to do with participation, and work accomplished. Students engage in evaluation/reflection. For final product, students take all their writings (includes personal writings, writings about the literature, the hands-on- activism and their reflections) and turn these into a performance for the whole school.

Vermont Standards addressed include:

Vital Result 4.1 Service: Students take an active role in their community. This is evident when students a) plan, implement, and reflect on activities that respond to community needs, and b) use academic skills and knowledge in real-life community situations

Participant stories related to this effort (if already completed—articles written about it, pieces of student writing, etc.): see Vermont Community Works <http://www.vermontcommunityworks.org/>, newspaper articles in the Connecticut Spectator, Valley News

Primary Partners

School: Thetford Academy

Contact for this initiative:

Name: Barbara Sorenson

Address: P.O. Box 155 Thetford Center, Vermont
05075

Phone: 802 785 4805 ext 204

Email: barbara.sorenson@thet.net

Grades impacted: 11th and 12th grades

Approach Type:

This is a credit bearing course that in includes the following aspects -

Local project

Service-Learning and Community Service

Subjects impacted:

Social studies
Child Psychology
Art
Occupational education (child care, teaching, child development)

Lesson and Practice Description: This course was started in 1994 by a high school English teacher and a primary school teacher with the aim of promoting a partnership between Thetford children in the primary grades entering school and 11th and 12th grade Thetford Academy students about to leave public school.

Through application of academic skills and knowledge in a primary classroom setting, students assume responsibility for planning literacy projects, cooperative games, and classroom projects, and for making child development observations. Students participate in classroom discussions, maintain an updated journal of classroom observations and reflections, and share a research project. The course includes Global Buddies which has connected students with children at sites in Haiti and Nicaragua, and promotes goals connected to building literacy, self-esteem and intercultural friendship. Recently they produced “Self Portraits and a Sense of Place: An Exhibit in Collage and Poetry,” and made an installation at the local library. A newspaper, the Connecticut Spectator, featured the exhibit in one issue.

The Nicaraguan project is an example of how students’ participation in hands-on-activism continues after they graduate and even comes back to Thetford Academy. A former graduate traveled to Nicaragua, and then came back to TA with a project for students to learn about and then ultimately support through fundraising and correspondence.

The teachers in this course have deliberately recruited and designed the course so that it appeals to a high school students from a range of social class and academic backgrounds. Some students continue their work with elementary children and in child development as an independent study the next semester. The teachers believe that a successful class evolves in the following progression. 1. Create community within the class, 2. Develop empathy for first each other and 3. Take action. They also always encourage students to take the lead in deciding what activities to do and how.

Time required: daily 80 minute block

Staff required to carry this out: an elementary and high school teacher

Materials required to carry this out: materials to make art, books, jewelry to sell, etc

Cost: teachers’ budgets

Evaluation or learning results: Students learn and hone a variety of skills such as planning, implementing and evaluating (reflecting), writing and researching, interacting

students did final consultations with faculty, the procedure became established. Course evaluations are done twice a year.

Time required: Twice a year students are given about 15 minutes in each course, teachers spend about one hour reviewing and writing their reflections, 4 hours clerical support to collect and print up to be given back to all students. Once a year Head of School prepares a report.

Staff required to carry this out: all

Materials required to carry this out: paper

Cost: school office budget

Evaluation or learning results: Students realize that evaluation and reflection are not just asked of students but can also be part adulthood. This process also helps them reflect on their own learning and what teachers do and don't do to that enhances that.

Professional development & resources related to this practice (if applicable): Teachers responses to the course evaluations indicate that most find it a valuable opportunity to reflect on their teaching and to continuing to fine tune their teaching.

Participant stories related to this effort. Below are some quotes from teacher responses to course evaluations.

Latin Teacher: "Thank you for your comments: I have had fun too. As always, you help me see that I need to pay better attention to individual learning styles and I will try to do that."

English Teacher: "Thank you for taking the time to fill out the course evaluation forms. I found the feedback both instructive and useful; as a result, I have begun to consider some modifications to my units and lessons for next semester."

Design Technology Teacher: "As an educator I would have appreciated more constructive criticism. Next year I will push for this and try to have the students focus on the question "what could have been better?"

Algebra Teacher: "The answers that most interested me when looking over the course evaluations dealt with the relationship between the course and real life applications. This issue is one that I am concerned with and look for ways to improve. I enjoy looking through the evaluations and getting feedback that will help me improve the courses that I teach."

Materials required to carry this out: Students are required to find the materials as part of the course; funds are supplied by the school.

Cost: teacher's budget. This is up to the teacher - set an arbitrary spending limit for each group.

Evaluation or learning results: Performance on written tests, and the completion of engineering projects, laboratory work and homework assignments. In addition students present their work to a panel of community persons who evaluate the students work. Vermont Standards including

3.9 Sustainability: Students make decisions that demonstrate understanding of natural and human communities, the ecological, economic, political, or social systems within them, and awareness of how their personal and collective actions affect the sustainability of these interrelated systems.

4.1 Service: Students take an active role in their community. This is evident when students: Plan, implement, and reflect on activities that respond to community needs; and use academic skills and knowledge in real-life community situations.

7.19 Designing Solutions: Students use technological/engineering processes to design solutions to problems. This is evident when students:

Recognize that there are several steps in planning solutions to technological problems; and

Recognize that several steps are usually involved in making things.

Create a design solution:

- Build on specifications, with an understanding of the constraints (e.g., cost, weight, environment), and tolerances that affect performance; Include mathematical and/or mechanical models of their design;

- Include steps and sequences for efficiently building a prototype that conforms to the specifications;

- Test the prototype;

- Use the results to modify the design; and

Understand that the sequence in which these steps occur is critical to the efficiency and effectiveness of a solution.

- Use the results to modify the design; and

Effects of Prejudice

Solve increasingly complex problems

Participant stories related to this effort:

see Vermont Community Works for a thorough description

at <http://www.vermontcommunityworks.org/vrp/curriculum/units/humangeo/humangeo.html>

[http://www.vermontcommunityworks.org/exemplars/exemp9-12/physics1/g, etc.\):](http://www.vermontcommunityworks.org/exemplars/exemp9-12/physics1/g, etc.):)

**CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS TO SUPPORTING
YOUTH CIVIC ENGAGEMENT**

Compiled by:
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Additional schools that were not a part of this study, but that were known to have overcome the challenge, are provided in () parenthesis.

Challenge	Solution	School Implementing Solution
Lack of time for teachers to plan and implement complex projects	1. Release time is given to free up teacher time one hour per week for planning 2. Monthly, 2 hours are set aside for all faculty to meet in study groups of their choosing. Some have formed groups to support and develop CE in their work with students 3. Professional learning community of teachers devoted to youth civic engagement is created 4. Summer workshop led by teachers that incorporate CE in their classes 5. Staff coordinator supports service-learning projects 6. VISTA volunteer coordinates service-learning projects	1. Montpelier 2. Thetford 3. Harwood 4. Thetford 5. U-32 6. Thetford; Twinfield; Harwood
Lack of financial resources to support civic engagement practices	1. Pursue external grant funding opportunities	1. Harwood; Thetford; Twinfield; Montpelier; U-32

	<p>2, Integrate support for civic engagement into the annual budget</p> <p>3. Use resources differently, e.g. combine roles and responsibilities (Guidance and civic engagement; alternative programs and civic engagement)</p> <p>4. Consolidate federal grants and align them with district goals and civic engagement</p>	<p>2. Montpelier; U-32</p> <p>3. Harwood; U-32</p> <p>4. Montpelier</p>
<p>Only elite students engaged in youth civic engagement activities</p>	<p>1. Teachers who offer civic engagement activities go out of their way to recruit diverse students who aren't engaged and aren't part of the "elite".</p> <p>2. Guidance counselor for 7 through 12 students specifically designs her leadership training and civic engagement involvement to develop the leadership skills of students who aren't part of the academic/social elite.</p> <p>3. Teacher leads students to address the issue of diverse inclusion while engaged in civic engagement.</p> <p>4. Physics teacher leads students to understand severely disabled students and then asks class to invent devices that would be useful or pleasurable for them.</p> <p>5. Alternative programs are offered to under achieving or students or students with different learning styles and integrate civic engagement practices</p> <p>6. Student from across a broad spectrum of groups are invited to participate in governing bodies</p> <p>7. Civic engagement courses are offered that extend to students from</p>	<p>1. Thetford; Twinfield</p> <p>2. Twinfield</p> <p>3. Twinfield</p> <p>4. Thetford</p> <p>5. Montpelier; Harwood; U-32</p> <p>6. Montpelier</p> <p>7. Harwood; U-32</p>

	<p>across the spectrum of learning needs and abilities</p> <p>8. Civic engagement initiatives are consciously linked to truancy and drop out prevention efforts</p> <p>9. Capstone projects are required of all students, in which a civic engagement component may be added</p>	<p>8. (Brattleboro; Lemoille)</p> <p>9. (Cabot; CVU)</p>
Class time isn't sufficient to involve students in meaningful ways	<p>1. Extended class periods to 80 minute blocks.</p> <p>2. Flexible scheduling is instituted</p>	<p>1. Thetford</p> <p>2. U-32</p>
One semester is too short to carry out in depth civic engagement.	<p>1. As a way of having more time and carry over, during the second semester there are celebrations and closure events of the work done in the first.</p> <p>2. Tried but abandoned EOD (every other day for two semesters) schedule. Very difficult to coordinate with others outside CE course with that kind of one day on , one off.</p> <p>3. Offers a course that spans two semesters (Rights in Action)</p>	<p>1. Thetford</p> <p>2. Thetford</p> <p>3. Twinfield</p>
Lack of continuity in sequencing and scaffolding civic engagement experiences for students	<p>1. Institute department-wide integration of civic engagement into the curriculum</p>	<p>1. (Hardwick Elementary)</p>
Senioritis, i.e. difficult to engage many seniors in their final semester.	<p>1. Build in an active component to a class that requires students to take on real responsibilities (Physics)</p>	<p>1. Thetford</p>
Lack of teacher knowledge and expertise	<p>1. Offer comprehensive faculty development and training opportunities</p> <p>2. Provide mentoring opportunities for teachers—link experienced with inexperienced teachers</p>	<p>1. Thetford; U-32</p> <p>2. Harwood; Thetford</p>

<p>Difficulty in sustaining and supporting civic engagement activities from year to year.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. School and outside organizations with grants, workshop and conferences continue to support even after well established. 2. Connect school to a network of others schools with a similar mission (for instance, Vermont Rural Partnership) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Thetford; Twinfield 2. Thetford
<p>Difficulty in legitimizing, gaining acceptance of civic engagement classes across the school and wider community.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Celebrate frequently activities, get local paper to write about, write stories about for school/ community publication, students and teachers engaged in CE give presentations to school board. 2. Create a newsletter that documents civic engagement activities within the school 3. Offer on-going professional development and training for faculty 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Twinfield 2. Thetford; Harwood 3. Thetford; U-32
<p>Difficult to find time for teacher/school reflection.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Use grant writing as an opportunity to reflect and assess 2. Create professional learning communities explicitly for service-learning and youth civic engagement 3. Stipend teachers to attend trainings and set aside time to reform their curriculum to align with civic engagement 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Thetford 2. Harwood; Thetford 3. Montpelier
<p>Limited number of staff incorporating civic engagement into their teaching</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Promotion of civic engagement is always an invitation not a mandate. 2. Create opportunities for those not involved in civic engagement to bear witness to the work 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Thetford 2. Twinfield
<p>Community partners are not engaged</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide funding to partners to work with students 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Montpelier; Twinfield

	<p>2. Draw upon school staff with local ties to support civic engagement work</p> <p>3. Solicit community input into action planning process</p>	<p>2. Twinfield</p> <p>3. Twinfield; Montpelier</p>
<p>Sense that the school is not doing enough, and that if it can't do civic engagement well, it shouldn't do it at all</p>	<p>1. Taking incremental approaches to civic engagement; taking a long haul perspective</p> <p>2. Working to build an ethos of civic engagement over time</p>	<p>1. Thetford; Montpelier; U-32; Harwood; Twinfield</p> <p>2. Thetford</p>
<p>Lack of documentation and data concerning the extent of civic engagement and its impact on student learning</p>	<p>1. Use of assessment tools designed by the Kids Consortium of Maine</p>	<p>1. Harwood</p>