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DEMOCRACY AND CITIZENSHIP EVALUATION REPORT

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Democracy and Citizenship Evaluation Report

Greer Burroughs

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International Foundation for Electoral Systems



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International Foundation for Electoral Systems
1850 K Street, NW, Fifth Floor
Washington, DC 20006
E-mail: editor@ifes.org
Fax: 202.350.6701

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Introduction

“We are always waiting for someone else to come and fix problem. We realized with our own initiatives that we didn’t have to wait.”

“In Georgia, with our history, we have the feeling that we served government. Now, I realize how many rights I have and what I can do.”

“Government used to be intangible and separate. Now I see that government must serve the people.”

– Georgian university students enrolled in “Democracy and Citizenship”

Democratic citizens are not born, but developed. Major social institutions – such as family, church and schools – play a central role in the development of young people’s knowledge, behaviors and attitudes. Through these channels, students learn their role in society and what is expected of them. In countries transitioning from one form of government to another, there may be a period of cultural lag.

Sociologists explain this as a period of time when social systems are not keeping pace with social changes. What role can a single university course play in helping young people change their perception of their role as citizens and empower them with the knowledge, skills and attitudes they need to be competent actors in democracy?

This research project seeks to answer that question, and the responses from Georgian students provide assurance that a university course can be a major agent of socialization for young people. As the above quotes show, these young people see new possibilities for democracy in their lives and are eager to play an active role in their communities.

Background

A 2010 assessment – conducted through USAID’s Increased Trust in the Electoral Process (ITEP) project, implemented by the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) – reviewed the status of civic education at the university level in Tbilisi. The conclusion of this study was that, in the majority of cases, civic education was not a part of university curriculum. Based on these findings, IFES launched a project with local and international scholars to create a civic education course for university students. The course that resulted, “Democracy and Citizenship,” was piloted in the September 2011 at four universities in Tbilisi and expanded to six in the January 2012. Based on the success of the pilot, implementation was expanded to include six partner universities from the regions and two new partner universities based in Tbilisi.

By September 2012, a total of nine universities offered the course; 16 professors taught the curriculum to a total of 776 students. University partners that offered the course that year and the number of participating students at each university, broken down by gender, is presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1 - University and Student Participation, September 2012

University	Number of Professors teaching course	Number of students who completed the course	Number of females who completed the course	Number of males who completed the course
TBILISI-BASED UNIVERSITIES				
University of Georgia	3	183	140	43
Caucuses University	3	83	49	34
Georgian Institute of Public Affairs	2	96	62	34
Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University	2	91	70	21
Sokhumi State University	1	11	4	7
REGIONAL PARTNER UNIVERSITIES				
Shota Rustaveli Batumi State University	1	227	143	84
Shota Meskhia State Teaching University	1	36	23	13
Samtskhe-Javakheti State Teaching University	1	5	4	1
Iakob Gogebashvili Telavi State Teaching University	2	44	30	14

The course was designed using a three-pronged approach to develop students’ knowledge, skills and dispositions. To provide the necessary foundational knowledge, the course and textbook were structured around four main content areas:

- Section I – Systems of Public Administration

- Section II – Human Rights
- Section III – Civil Society
- Section IV – Democracy and Citizen Participation

The development of skills associated with effective civic engagement is best when students can apply content inside and outside the classroom. Course professors were trained on interactive teaching methods to stimulate this development. The final component of the course is a student action project. The goal of the assignment is for students to identify issues in Georgian society that they care about. From there, they perform research on their topic and relate it to course content. Ultimately, students are challenged to devise an action plan to address their chosen issue. Through this exercise, it is expected that students will develop the knowledge and skills required to be an active citizen.

Course professors receive extensive training and support from IFES prior to and during the implementation of the course. The majority of professors, 13 of the 16, who taught the course from September 2012 to January 2013 attended a five-day summer training. Throughout the year, professors were also supported by IFES through consultations, meetings and workshops. In June of 2012, a teacher's manual was introduced. The manual provided guiding questions for each section of the textbook and detailed lesson plans for each week of class. All lessons corresponded directly with course materials and the goals of building effective democratic citizenship in Georgia. Course professors were urged to follow the text and teacher's manual, although the use of additional strategies and resources was also encouraged.

A survey of course professors indicates that most followed the teacher's manual, but supplemented with activities, readings and films of their own. In general, there was a high degree of uniformity in the implementation of the course across universities and professors. A notable exception was in the implementation of the student action project. At a few universities this project was viewed as a research project and did not provide students with many opportunities to take action. This is a crucial distinction in the experience the students have with the course; the course was viewed as more effective when students could take action in their communities.

Research Design

The primary goal of research on "Democracy and Citizenship" was to determine how the course impacted the development of students' knowledge, skills and dispositions associated with effective civic participation in a democracy. Areas of knowledge were assessed based on the course themes of government, human rights, civil society and citizen participation. Skills and dispositions were determined using the National Standards for Civic Education (1994), the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Assessment in Civics and themes developed by the National Council for the Social Studies. The current report is based on the experience of students taking the course in the period of September 2012 – January 2013. However, focus group sessions were also held with alumni to learn more about the impact of the course one to two semesters after completion. Findings from these two groups will be presented separately.

Multiple methods of data collection were used to gain insight from multiple perspectives and validate findings across data sets. Knowledge gains were assessed through pre- and post-testing students (Appendix A); student focus groups; and class and student action project observations. Findings related to the development of skills and dispositions come from student focus groups, class observations and notes from student projects. Additionally, the pre- and post-test included questions related to students' attitudes and behaviors; a random sample of these results was analyzed to assess student-reported changes. A total of seven focus group sessions were held with students from six universities – four from Tbilisi and two from the regions. A total of 70 students attended focus group sessions representing almost 10 percent of the student population. All students who attended focus groups did so voluntarily. Females were more than two times more likely to attend a focus group session; however, this is consistent with the ratio of male to females who took the course. Sixteen observations of classrooms were conducted at seven universities and 21 student project presentations were observed at five universities. All observations included representation from the Tbilisi-based and regional partner universities. Multiple individuals conducted observations and common protocol was used for recording observations, minimizing the effects of observer bias.

Reflections from Course Alumni

“Since taking this course, I sleep much less. I am always involved in obtaining information about world and Georgian affairs. I share information that I think is important to protect human rights with friends, family and other students.”

During two focus groups, 14 alumni reflected on how the course impacted them. Statements such as the one above were common among this group of young people. Students discussed the role of government, civil society and individual citizens. What was most striking was not what the students knew, but what they have done since taking the course. These accomplishments are highlighted below.

Understanding Citizenship and Democracy

“I thought Georgia was building a democracy, now I realize government was not always following the principles of democracy. It’s not acceptable that government can limit rights such as freedom of expression. Too much rule by one person.”

“Now I understand democracy doesn’t mean complete freedom, we can’t do whatever we like. We have obligations, we must have a consensus.”

“Democracy doesn’t mean equality (of condition), but a system where rights of others cannot be violated.”

These statements from course alumni demonstrate an understanding of democracy and the role of government under such a system. While this is encouraging, the most promising finding is that alumni have acted on their understandings of their rights and roles as citizens. The students see citizens as

having a vital part in the development and maintenance of democracy in Georgia. One student said, “When people don’t participate, then they are giving up their rights for nothing.” Another said, “People must remember that we are the main value, we must work to control government,” and “I realized I am obliged to help protect the rights of others.”

All of the alumni who attended focus group sessions participated in the October 2012 parliamentary elections either by voting or serving as an observer. For many students, participating in the elections meant making tough choices. For one, this meant researching the actions of the representative she previously voted for and deciding to vote for another candidate. For others, it meant choosing to support a candidate that was not the choice of their parents. For an election observer, it sometimes meant traveling to a region against the wishes of one’s parents, and even missing the chance to vote in one’s own region. One young woman explained that giving up the chance to vote at home was a difficult decision, but one she believed was worth it to advance democracy in Georgia by ensuring elections were properly conducted. Other students faced monumental challenges when observing inappropriate practices at polling sites. In two cases alumni protested such practices. One young woman demanded that a recount take place; when the chairperson of the polling station wanted to dismiss her, she threatened to file a complaint. “I realized I had the authority (of the law) behind me,” she said. It was evident from the students’ words and actions that they possessed an understanding of the role of government in regard to the people it served. As one student explained, “Most Georgians see government as above the people making decisions, in reality, government is hired by the people and their job is to serve the people.”

Students described a broad range of actions they have taken since enrollment in the course. The variations of experiences demonstrate students’ understandings of the different ways citizens can be active in democracy. All students directly attributed their experience in the course as the catalyst that led to their involvement. They explained that the course had given them knowledge of their rights, skills needed and the confidence to interact with government and the public alike, even challenging authority along the way. A list of their actions since taking the course is as follows:

- Observing October 2012 parliamentary elections
- Participating in protests for the protection of prisoner rights
- Educating friends and family about their rights and the need to participate in elections and monitor politicians
- Critically assessing actions of politicians and monitoring their actions to see how they are ensuring the rights of minorities and improving conditions and treatment of women, children and the Roma
- Following events on the Internet and other forms of news
- Viewing media more critically
- Voting in the October 2012 elections
- Ordering parliamentary procedural updates to be delivered to cell phone
- Observing problems at the university and organizing to gain rights for students

- Regularly engaging in discussions of political and social issues
- Working with nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) to change laws and gain information
- Starting NGOs to advocate for rights of homeless children and persons with disabilities

Idealism with a Sense of Realism

“I started to wake up and realize I had obligations. There was a moment when I realized I can get past all of the obstacles and express my ideas.”

The alumni were an engaged and motivated group of young people with a sense of efficacy in their ability to be part of the ongoing democratization of Georgia. They were clearly aware of challenges the country still faces in this process. “We are a young democracy, still forming,” one student explained.

However, these students see their generation as central to this ongoing development. “Our generation can initiate change,” said one student. “We will take the knowledge we have gained and continue to work for reform,” said another. Both of these sentiments were frequently expressed ideas. The majority also said they had a newfound respect for the rule of law, and felt a responsibility to improve their society and protect the rights of others in instances of human rights abuses. As one participant said, “This course was the first fact that helped me think I was a citizen and could help make change.”

The alumni present at the focus group sessions embodied course goals. They were knowledgeable about course-related content; they possessed essential skills to be effective participants in society; they reflected the values and ideals of democracy; and they had a desire to be part of their democratic process. While participation in the focus group sessions was voluntary, and therefore not necessarily representative of the alumni in general, these young people have the potential to strengthen democracy in their country.

Results from the 2012 Semester – January 2013

Gains in Knowledge

Pre- and post-tests were administered in order to assess students’ gains in knowledge associated with course content. University professors were encouraged to include scores from these evaluations in course grades to motivate students to do their best. While most professors followed this guideline, some did not. This, coupled with uneven academic preparation across regions in Georgia, led to a wide-range in student performance. However, the overall performance of students is encouraging and indicates they acquired knowledge through the course.

Student scores were tallied and categorized as those who passed the test and those who did not. In order to pass, students needed to correctly answer 60 percent or more of questions. Of the 458 females who took the pre-test, only 9 percent received a passing grade. On the post-test, 444 female students took the test and 43 percent passed. Among the 282 males who took the pre-test, only 9 percent passed; among the 247 males who took the post-test, 33 percent passed. Gains were made among both groups, but females were more likely to demonstrate knowledge gains. This finding is consistent with

the finding from the pilot evaluation in 2012. Figures 2 and 3 present the aggregate pass rates by percentage of the population for males and females on the pre and post-test.

Figure 2

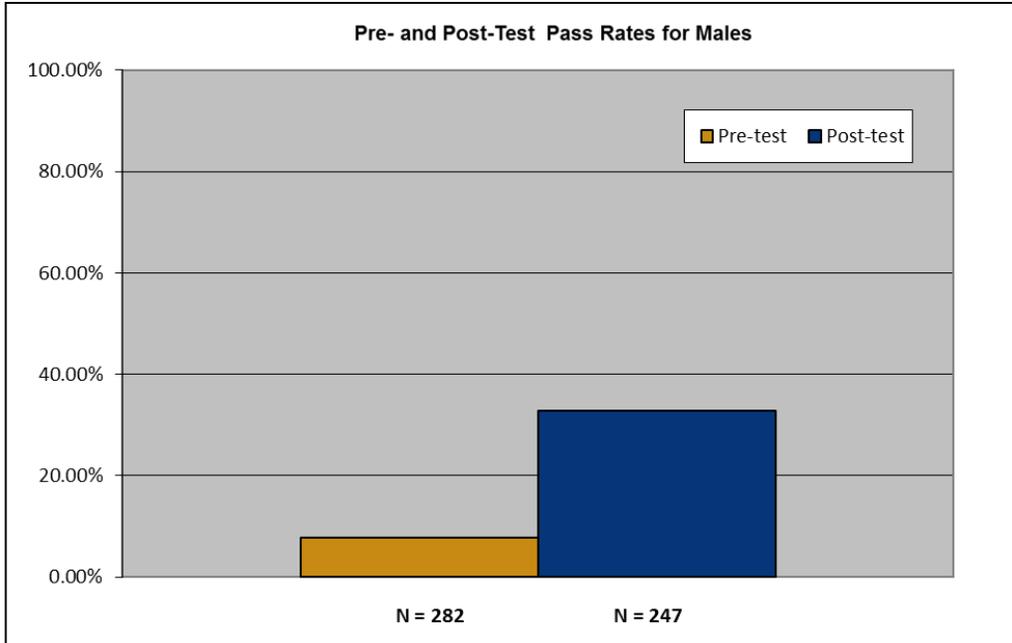
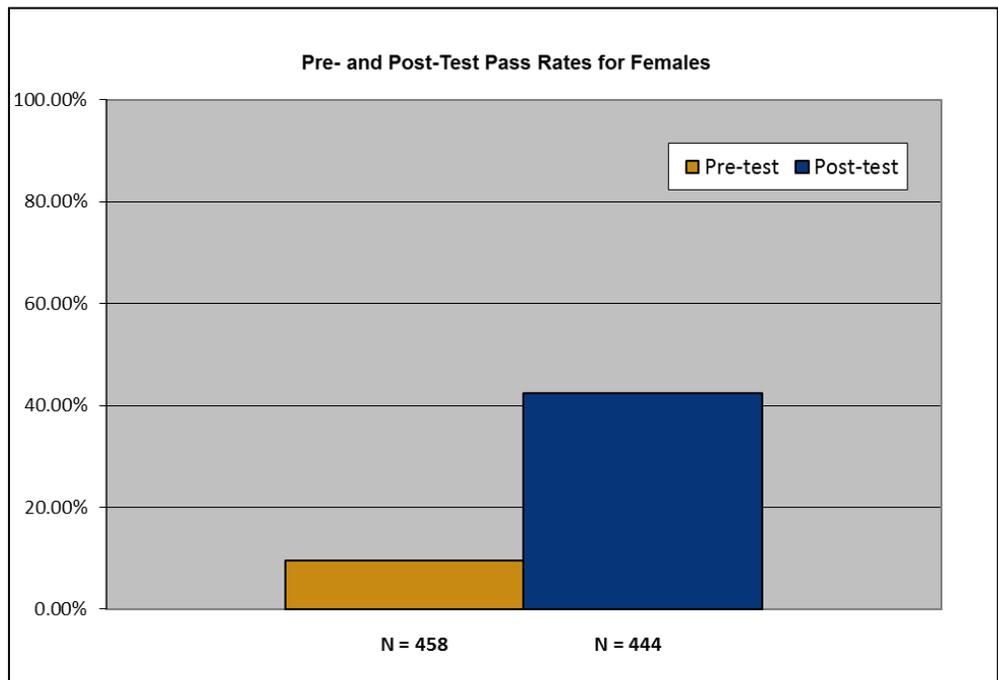


Figure 3



Pre and Post-Test Pass Rates by Region, Gender and Year in Studies

Test scores were disaggregated and analyzed in several subgroups: first year students by gender from Tbilisi-based universities; first year students by gender from regional partner universities; second year and older students by gender from Tbilisi-based universities; and second year and older students by gender from regional partner universities. Figures 3 through 7 represent pre- and post-test pass rate comparisons for each subgroup.

Knowledge gains were made across all groups except for the second year and older males at the regional partner universities. Among this population, 24 males took the post-test and only two passed. This was a decline from the pre-test results, where 25 males took the test and six passed. Data from a focus group held at one of the regional partner universities revealed that there were several males students who spoke competently on the course topics. This conflicting evidence suggests that students may not have taken the test seriously, or that the students are poor test takers. The latter may be true for students attending the regional partner universities in general, where post-test pass rates were below the rates of Tbilisi partner schools across all subgroups.

However, as with the second year or older males, data from the focus groups and observations of student projects suggest that students in the region benefitted from the course in the development of skills, practical application of knowledge and development of dispositions associated with effective democratic citizenship. Another finding based on pre- and post-test data is that females are more likely to pass the test than males. This is consistent with findings from the program evaluation conducted in 2012. The data also indicated that second year or older students come into the course with slightly more knowledge than first year students. However, first year students made the most gains from pre- to post-test results.

Figure 4

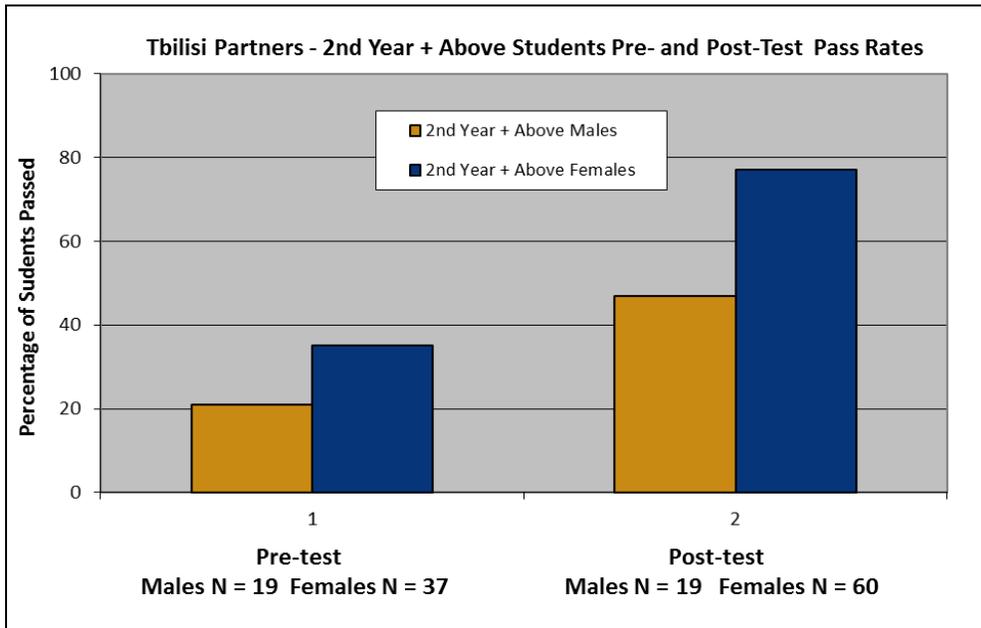


Figure 5

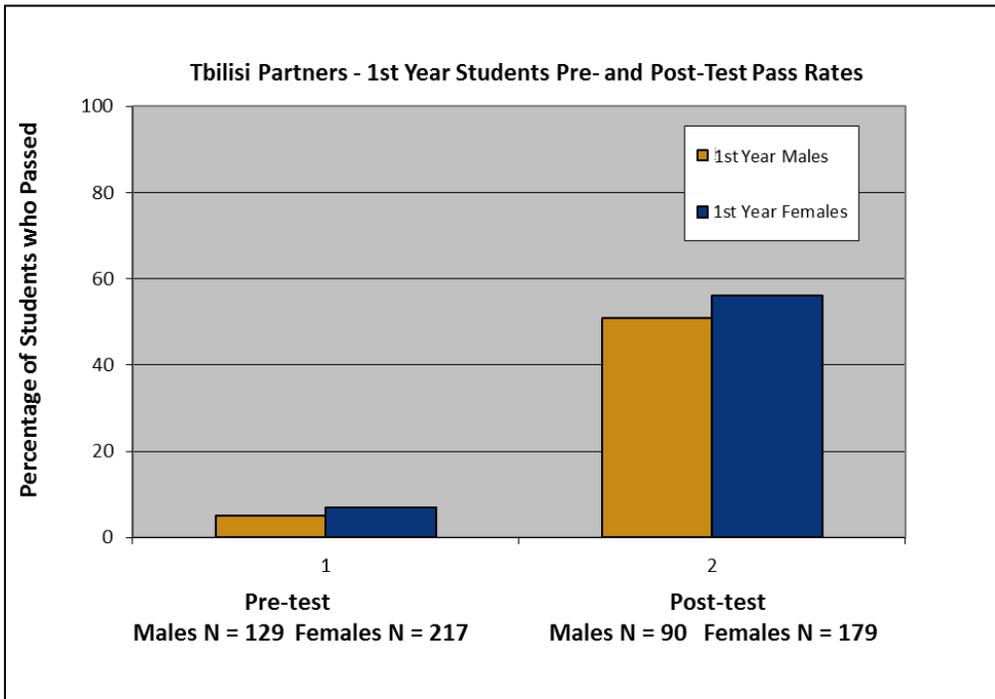


Figure 6

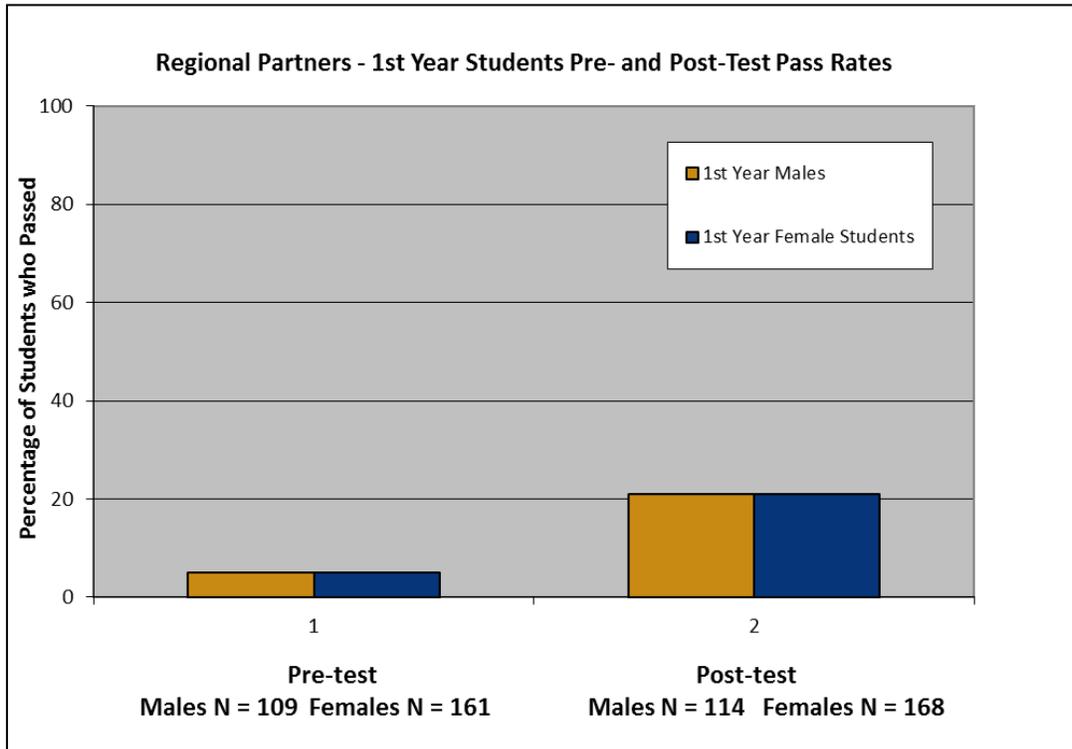
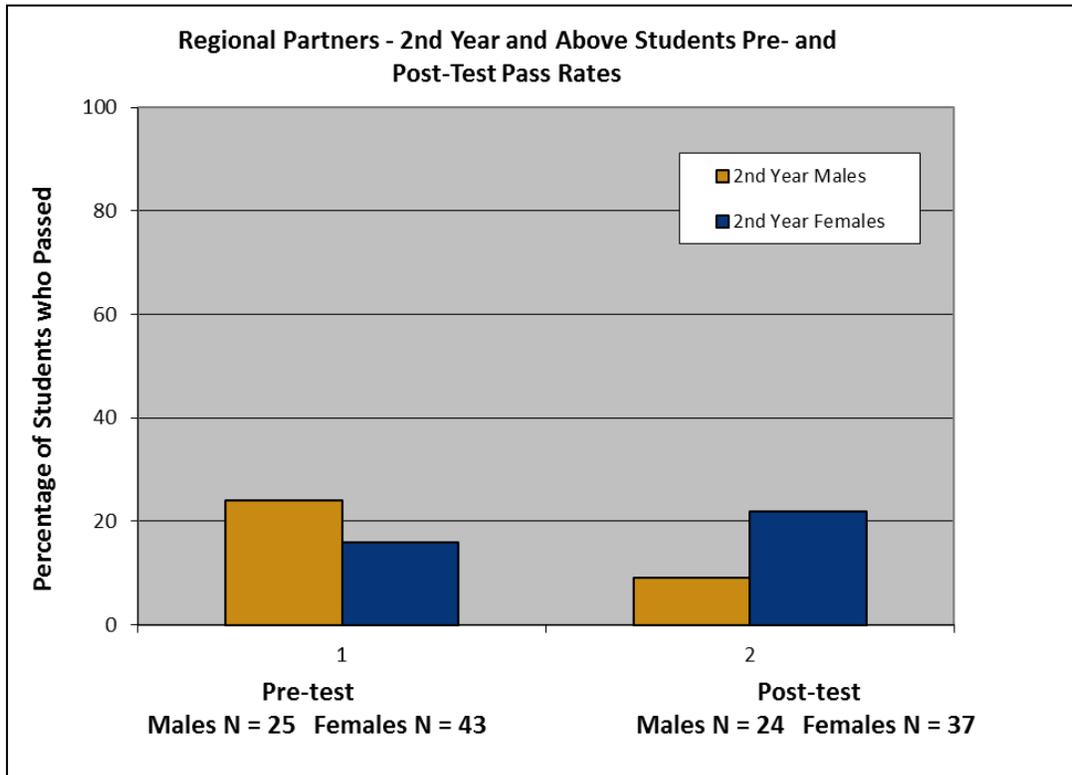


Figure 7



Results from pre- and post-test data indicate that students gain valuable knowledge by participating in the course. However, the pass rates are not as high as is desired. While this may be an issue of how seriously students approached the test or the test taking ability of participants, findings from other data sets indicate the issue is not an unclear understanding of central course topics.

Application of Knowledge

Analysis and Critique

“People, individuals, are of the highest value of the State, and this should be the core value for any democracy.”

“I realized I am a stockholder in government; government works for me. The profit is not in money, but the protection of my rights.”

Observations of students in classrooms and while presenting their action projects provided insight into students’ understandings and views on course topics, as well as to their ability to apply this knowledge in meaningful ways. Focus group sessions allowed for probing students’ knowledge of topics. Analysis of data from these sources reveals that students are developing a sophisticated understanding of the relationship between the individual and government. This knowledge has transformed the way students view government, their role in society and the role of other citizens.

Students developed strong perceptions of government’s obligation to value and protect the rights of the people. Students were often observed discussing ethical, social and legal issues where they had to defend views based on their knowledge of individuals’ rights and the role of government. For example, in a class discussion about good governance, a student said, “government institutions should be decentralized...they should be obedient to the law and not to certain individuals.” In another discussion about government a student said, “I should not have been able to buy cigarettes when I wasn’t even 18, but because the rule of law is not protected efficiently, it was possible for me to get cigarettes.” Comments such as these demonstrate an understanding of government’s role in a democracy, as well as an understanding of the need for limits to power and the importance of the rule of law.

“We say the government is obliged [to the people], but we don’t think about the citizens role to make government better. Citizens have an important role to play.”

“The main goal of government is to protect human rights, and citizens should be critical toward government.”

The comments above illustrate students’ understanding of a relationship where both parties, the government and the people, have responsibilities to fulfill. This is a shift from the more passive view of citizen participation that students described as characterizing Georgian society. During focus group sessions, students described the need for a democratic mentality to develop in Georgia, explaining that this was not the case under Soviet rule. In the aftermath of the fall of the Soviet Union, most people had

an attitude of, “wait for the government to act.” Students vigorously said people must be active in holding government accountable. As one student explained, “If no one is watching, the government can violate rights.”

Other topics where students displayed high levels of knowledge during class observations were human rights and the role of civil society. During discussion, students applied their knowledge to a critical analysis of the current state of civil society in Georgia. One student said, “Civil society should control government.” The student then went on to cite examples of instances where freedom of speech was suppressed and no action was taken by civil society, signifying recognition that civil society may not yet be fulfilling this role. Students criticized civil society for not being active in advancing rights for individuals with disabilities, and sexual and religious minorities. Students clearly understood that all individuals were entitled to protection of their human rights. Comments such as, “everyone should be treated equally” and “the application of law should be the same for all,” were frequent.

Students’ words and actions indicate they understood human rights are the rights of all and should not be violated by any individual or government. Before the course, many said they were not aware of the amount of rights possessed by humans and the means to address abuses of these rights. The knowledge students now possess fueled actions and critiques of Georgian society. During the action project presentations, students frequently criticized the current action or inaction of government, civil society and citizens of Georgia. Students criticized government for failing to fully implement protections guaranteed to citizens when discussing problems associated with the elderly; homeless children and orphans; persons with disabilities; and sexual minorities. In all of these cases, the students cited laws, relevant articles in the constitution and international conventions as a basis for individuals’ rights to health, education, equal opportunity and human dignity. The role of the public defender, Georgian courts and the European Court in protecting human rights were also described. In some instances, students were critical of local enforcement agencies for failing to act when violations of the law were regularly occurring, particularly in cases of prostitution, human trafficking and sale of alcohol to minors. Students also spoke about the lack of attention from civil society to address many of the problems detailed in action projects. In general, students view civil society as weak, although they recognize the vital role civil society can play, as evidenced by the fact that many were already working with NGOs to change laws, ensure the enforcement of existing laws and educate the public.

Action

“With our own initiatives we realized we didn’t have to wait.”

“We couldn’t imagine so few people could make a change.”

“I learned that despite being a student I could do a lot to improve society.”

There is little value in passing a multiple choice test if a citizen is unable to apply their knowledge of government, the role of civil society and the rights of individuals within a democratic framework. Fortunately, the data strongly indicates that students enrolled in the course in the fall of 2012 will not

suffer from this problem. Students confidently discussed options available to them and actions they had already taken to participate as responsible and effective members of their democratic society. An overwhelming majority of students who attended focus groups, or who were observed in class or during project presentations, displayed a sense of civic responsibility and efficacy at being able to make change in their communities. Students cited course activities and the student action projects as playing a major role in the transformations they experienced. As one student said, "Through the project I learned how to be an active citizen."

It is through the student action projects that students' understandings were really enacted. Students worked on projects that called on them to interact with local government and civil society; read and apply laws; and interview officials, local citizens and fellow students. In most cases, students researched issues from multiple perspectives and applied their knowledge to look for solutions and take actions. Students recognized that government had an obligation to protect or advance the rights of others, or to take action to improve the general welfare of society. However, they were not limited to this position. The scope of the students' research included actions taken by civil society, as well as numerous acts that individuals could take. In the majority of projects observed, students participated themselves in actions to address the problem studied. The following list demonstrates the range of actions that students engaged in and illustrates their understanding and enactment of active citizenship.

Student Actions:

- Interviewed individuals and conducted surveys to gauge public opinion related to project topics
- Conducted field research to learn more about issues, including:
 - Researched safety labeling of food
 - Visited stores and spoke with shopkeepers to better understand their perspective.
 - Visited a local orphanage to learn about the experiences of the children there
- Created Facebook page to educate peers about their research topic
- Educated community about issues through printing brochures or flyers (and their own expense) and distributing them in the community
- Organized and initiated training for the use of defibrillators
- Volunteered with the Red Cross
- Organized charity events and raised funds to support for causes, including:
 - Hosted a benefit concert held in Batumi to raise money to aid persons with disabilities
 - Collected donations from businesses for orphanages and homes for the elderly
- Interned with NGOs
- Organized a “Student Club for Social Well-Being” to address issues in the community
- Educated other citizens about their rights so they can protect them, including:
 - Running educational programs for younger students and individuals living in villages where no civic education programs exist
- Collected signatures for local government petitions
- Organized a flash mob to build awareness on different issues among public

Demonstration of Skills**Student Action Projects**

As part of the student action project, all students delivered a final presentation on their research, recommendations and actions to address their chosen issue. During presentations, observers were also called on to cite evidence of skills associated with effective civic participation in democratic societies. These skills are presented below in Figure 8. Observers noted when a skill was observed and cited evidence of such. Figure 8 also presents the tally of skills observed across projects.

Figure 8 - Skills Observed during Presentations of Student Action Projects

Skills to identify (from the observation protocol for student projects)	Observed
1. Ability to think critically	20
2. Make informed, responsible decisions	12
3. Analyze information	20
4. Evaluate information	17
5. Discuss issues and consider multiple perspectives	17
6. Recognize the role of bias and point of view, as well as assess the credibility of a source	7
7. Examine current issues and events	20
8. Formulate questions based on information	11
9. Use effective strategies to locate information	11
10. Summarize information in written, graphic and oral formats	14
11. Work cooperatively with others to achieve a goal	15
12. Provide leadership	11
13. Problem solve	12
14. Build an effective and rational argument	12

The analysis of tallies tells two stories. The first is that the majority of students displayed important skills associated with effective civic engagement in a democratic society. Skills that students regularly displayed are: the ability to think critically; to analyze and evaluate information; to examine current issues; examine issues from multiple perspectives; and work cooperatively with others. These traits are vital to an active citizenry capable of well-informed and reasoned participation.

The second story reflects the need to strengthen many skills among students. Criticisms from observers, and the absence of some skills from the student presentations, indicate that many students need more preparation to understand the role of bias and point of view; assess the credibility of a source; formulate questions based on information; use effective strategies to locate information; and problem solve. Although not on the list of skills, observers also noted that some students need to develop stronger oral and multimedia presentation skills. The ability to effectively and persuasively communicate information is essential for advocacy work. These criticisms should be given attention in future implementation of the course.

In the Classroom

Students also displayed important skills during classroom observations. In many of the classes observed, students were sharing progress on their student action projects to get feedback from the professor and classmates. Prominent among the skills observed in this setting were students' ability to think critically; articulate and defend a position; and listen critically to information presented by others. Students analyzed one another's work and offered comments delivered in a constructive spirit. Even when disagreements arose, students presented differing opinions in a civil manner. In only very few cases did

students did not display these qualities. In such instances, observers noted the role of the professor as a primary factor in not managing the class appropriately and failing to establish the necessary environment for academic learning.

Students were also observed while engaging in group activities, class discussions, analysis of case studies, conducting debates and role plays. In these instances observers noted that students displayed critical thinking, cooperative group work, problem solving, defending positions with data, organization of information, listening to others and formulating questions based on information. Engaging students in these activities appears to help develop some of the skills noted as weak during project presentations. Continued use of these methods is strongly encouraged.

The data collected from classroom observations and presentations of student projects is encouraging and serves to validate the influence the course is having on building civic competencies among students. It is clear from the observations that the role of the professor and the methodologies employed are central to the success of course goals. The completion of the student action project and interactive teaching methods advocated for in the trainings of the professors and the teacher's manual are essential to the development of students' skills.

The Development of Civic Dispositions

New Perceptions of Citizenship

"Before, I didn't understand solidarity and the protection of other's rights."

When someone acts to improve society or protect the rights of others it "shouldn't be seen as a heroic event but should be seen as a part of everyday life."

Perhaps the most exciting finding of current research is the changes in students' perceptions of themselves as citizens and their desire to become civically engaged. Students regularly described themselves as having little awareness of their rights and the opportunities to improve society before taking the course.

Students also confirmed that they understood the role an individual can play in society. As one student said, "Citizens should advocate for their interests." Through discussions of the student action projects, many options for citizen engagement were presented. Students described advocacy work; this included educating others to increase awareness and build support for an issue or petitioning government for change. Many students said that action was a responsibility of society. Views such as, "I think all members of society should be more active in expressing their interests and needs" were regularly voiced.

Students described their own transformation during the course. One group explained that they were very pessimistic when they began their project, believing there was little they could do as 18 year-olds to make a change. However, they explained as they worked on the project: "We saw we could learn to

work to protect our rights and the rights of others. We saw government had to take us seriously.” At first, the students were dismissed by government, but when they showed their knowledge by citing specific aspects of law, government officials began to take them more seriously. Over time, the students worked with local government officials to organize campaigns to educate citizens about their responsibilities to follow laws. At the end of the semester these same students had a new understanding of what citizens can accomplish. This was not the only group that was successful in making change. Again and again students described moments of transformation when they successfully raised money through a benefit concert or delivered items to an orphanage, or felt empowered to work with government and NGOs to change or enforce laws.

“I now have a sense of solidarity with minorities because I understand all are equal under the law.”

“It’s easy to break stereotypes if you listen to the opinions of others.”

“Before, I didn’t pay attention to the rights of others.”

Students also cited changes in their perceptions of others. The above quotes represent change as students became more open-minded and empathetic. Many explained that the experience of analyzing issues from multiple perspectives and hearing opinions of others was essential to becoming more tolerant of different views. For other students it was studying the law from new perspectives that was eye-opening. Several law students explained that they had only learned the content of laws before, but never saw, “the people behind the laws.” A powerful example of change came from a group of students who chose to study problems associated with homeless or street children. This group said that as they researched the problem and began to interact with some of the children, their attitudes changed. They saw the children less as dirty and poor or something to be feared, and instead began to see them “as human.” The students said they now work to educate others and change attitudes toward this population.

Observations from student projects and classroom observations also indicate that students developed dispositions associated with civic engagement while participating in the course. As with the skills, observers looked for evidence of dispositions during presentations of student projects. Figure 9 illustrates the dispositions observed and the number of instances.

Figure 9 - Dispositions Observed during Presentations of Student Action Projects

Dispositions to identify (from the observation protocol for student projects)	Projects Where observed
1. Recognizing the need for individual's to take personal, political and economic responsibilities as citizens	17
2. Respecting individual worth and human dignity	21
3. Respect for and trust in institutions of authority; respect for the rule of law	12
4. Tolerance of divergent views and lifestyles	10
5. A sense of being able to affect change in one's community	12
6. A sense of civic responsibility as seen by promoting a healthy functioning of a constitutional democracy and participating in civic affairs in an informed, thoughtful, and effective manner	12

Prominent among the dispositions were a respect for individual worth and human dignity, and the recognition that individuals need to take personal, political and economic responsibilities as citizens. This finding is consistent with student comments regarding a new understanding of a citizen's role in society and human rights.

Students are required to identify an issue of concern in Georgia as the topic of their project. In the fall of 2012, a few students selected topics such as the need for all citizens to pay for public transportation and better labeling of food products to ensure consumer safety. While these are significant issues that display students' understanding of development and enforcement of public policy, they do not necessarily reflect a deep concern for the welfare of all members of society, even those who are most often marginalized. It is significant that the vast majority of projects did focus on such serious social issues in Georgia today. Common topics that demonstrate this concern were the problems faced by orphans; the elderly; persons with disabilities; sexual minorities; victims of human trafficking and prostitution; victims of domestic violence; children with illnesses; those who lack adequate civic education; and alcohol abuse among teens. If students had only researched the causes of these issues and presented an overview of actions taken by government or civil society, we would not know their level of commitment to improving the common welfare of all.

However, in the majority of cases observed, students took actions to facilitate change. They engaged in activities such as planning and hosting fundraising events; educating peers and members of their communities at their own expense by printing brochures and flyers for distribution; working with NGOs to organize trainings such as in the use of defibrillators and civic education in villages; volunteering with international organizations like the Red Cross; and collecting signatures to advocate for changes in laws. When the students described these actions it was clear they felt a sense of commitment. Many planned to continue the work beyond the course. At one university, plans are underway to make a benefit concert an annual event. Students recognized they could make positive contributions and participate in changes in the communities and lives of others.

A final measure of changes in student behavior and attitude came from the pre- and post-test. Students were given five statements concerning behaviors or attitudes that have been correlated with effective civic engagement. The statements were:

1. I often discuss and express my opinion on public issues with others.
2. Voting in national elections is an important way to participate in Georgian democracy.
3. Individuals must respect the rights of all members of Georgian society.
4. It is important for members of Georgian society to join organizations to pursue common interests.
5. Members of Georgian society should follow political issues in the newspaper, on the radio, on TV or Internet.

On both tests students were asked to assess themselves and respond with “Strongly Disagree,” “Disagree,” “Agree” or “Strongly Agree.” Shifts from pre- to post-test were noted and identified as positive when there was movement from disagreement to agreement. A sample of 20 percent of all tests was drawn using a random sample methodology. Data was compared from pre- to post-test responses based on gender and four subsamples: females from Tbilisi-based universities; males from Tbilisi-based universities; females from regional partner universities; and males from regional partner universities. Figures 10 and 11 demonstrate the shifts recorded for each question by gender.

Figure 10

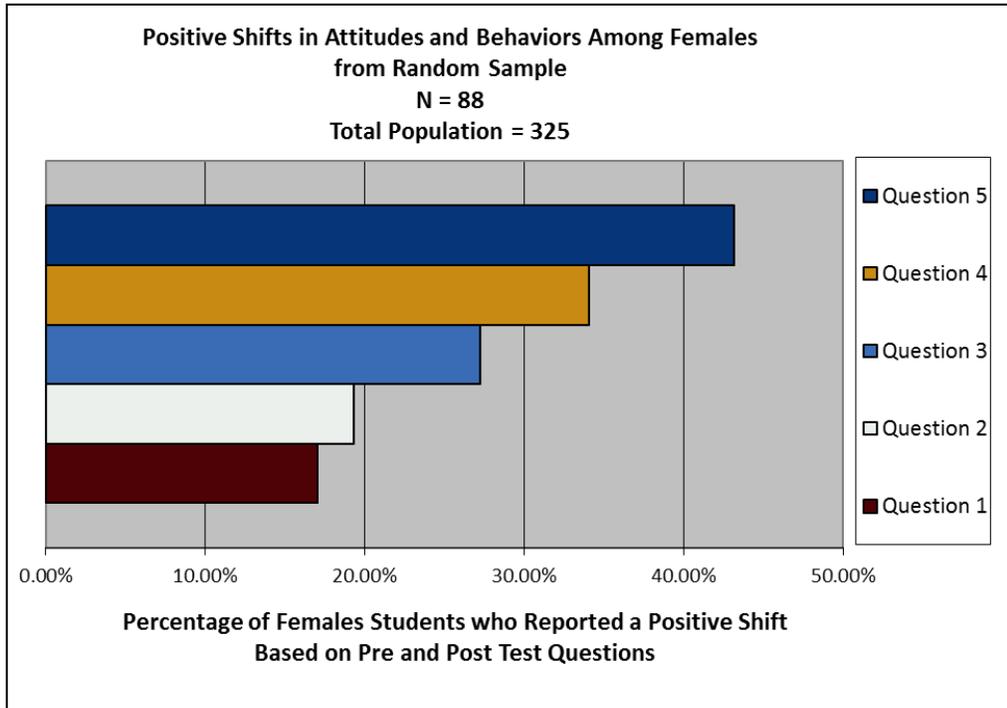


Figure 11

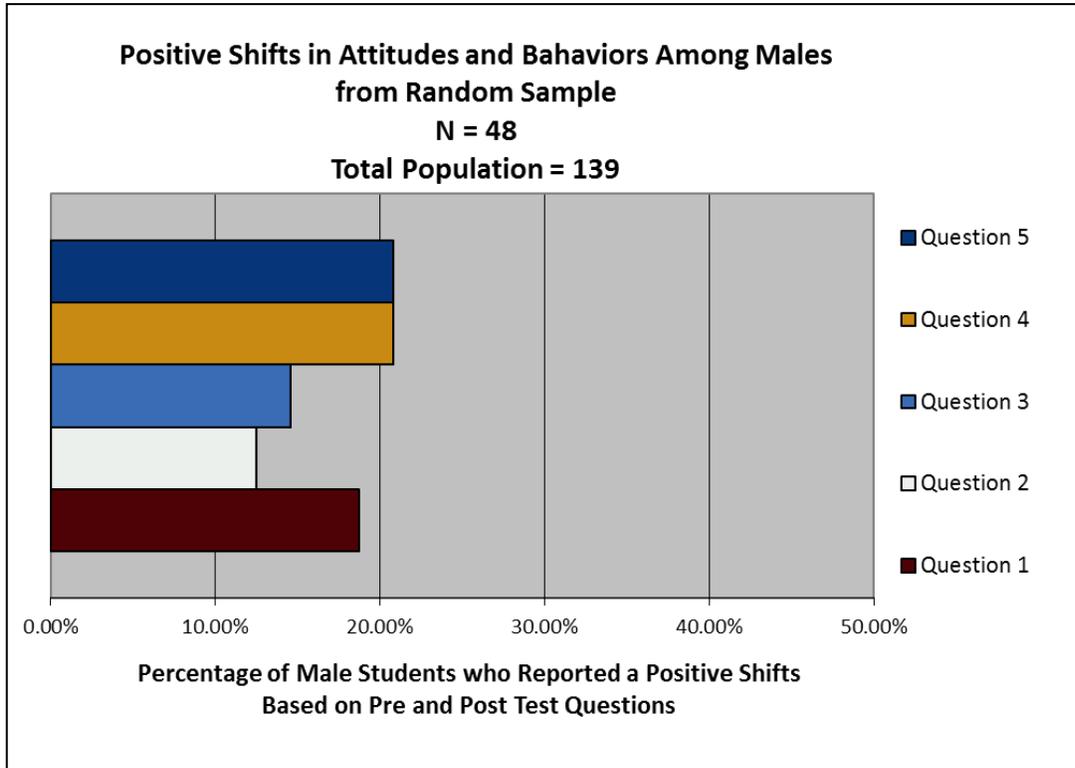


Figure 11 presents data on the percentage of students who reported a shift on a question for each of the four subgroups. For most students, this was a slight shift, most frequently from “Agree” to “Strongly Agree.” In a few instances, it was a more pronounced shift from, “Strongly Disagree” or “Disagree” to “Strongly Agree.”

Figure 12

Question	Tbilisi Universities Females: % Positive Shift	Tbilisi Universities Males % Positive Shift	Regional Partner Universities Females: % Positive Shift	Regional Partner Universities Males: % Positive Shift
I often discuss and express my opinion on public issues with others.	24%	20%	9%	18%
Voting in national elections is an important way to participate in Georgian democracy.	17%	15%	21%	11%
Individuals must respect the rights of all members of Georgian society.	28%	0%	26%	25%
It is important for members of Georgian society to join organizations to pursue common interests	41%	25%	26%	19%
Members of Georgian society should follow political issues in the newspaper, on the radio, on TV or on the Internet	46%	40%	40%	7%

Although most students reported positive behaviors and attitudes on the pre-test, the results presented in Figures 10-12 show positive changes in students’ attitudes and behaviors occurred during the course. Once again, the impact of the course is seen regardless of the region of implementation. Data indicates that females experienced more positive shifts than males. This is consistent with findings for knowledge assessed on the pre- and post-tests where greatest gains are also seen among females.

The greatest areas of change are related to students’ views of the role Georgian citizens should play in society, as indicated by strong positive shifts on the statement “it is important for members of Georgian society to join organizations to pursue common interests” and “members of Georgian society should follow political issues in the newspaper, on the radio, on TV or on the Internet,” with the exception of

the sample of males from the regional partner universities. This shift in student perception of citizen's roles was repeated across all data sets. In the area of least change, attitudes regarding the importance of voting in national elections already had strong support, as indicated by pre-test results. Only 6 percent of students from Tbilisi-based universities and 8 percent from the regional partner universities did not agree or strongly agree with the statement "Voting in national elections is an important way to participate in Georgian democracy." With such strong support for this view before the course, it is encouraging that substantial numbers of students still reported positive shifts.

While pre- and post-test results suggest positive trends in students' attitudes and behaviors, the tests only provide one measure and are somewhat limited due to their self-reported nature. However, when results from other data sets are analyzed, it becomes clear that many students were positively impacted by the course as evidenced from their behaviors and comments in class; during the student action project presentations; and in focus groups.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The extensive collection of data from multiple sources provided an in-depth look at the impact of the course on students' development of knowledge, skills and dispositions associated with effective civic engagement in democratic societies. Highlights and major findings from the research presented below illustrate that the intended goals of the course are being realized among students regardless of gender, area of study, year in school or geographic location. The program has continued to play a vital role in students' development, whether they took the course during the fall of 2012 or during the prior academic year.

Data indicates that students who participated in the course:

- Developed deeper understandings of democracy and the role of government and citizens
- Possessed new understanding of a citizen's role in a democracy, moving from a passive stance to an active one
- Displayed skills needed for effective civic engagement: public speaking, presenting material in a persuasive manner, critical thinking, cooperative group work, problem solving, defending a position with data, organizing information, listening to others and formulating questions based on information
- Described a sense of efficacy in their ability to make change in Georgian society and contribute to the development of their democracy
- Experienced shifts in attitudes regarding empathy towards others, a sense of responsibility to protect the rights of others and to ensure principles of equality
- Recognized the importance of citizen engagement to maintain a healthy democracy
- Became motivated to take actions in their communities to facilitate change and improve the lives of others

Beyond general conclusions, there are still areas for improvement. Recommendations are as follows:

- Efforts should be made to recruit more males to take the course, as females are more than two times as likely as males to enroll.
- The student action project should be implemented as recommended in the teacher's manual so all students gain from the benefits of the project as observed and stated by students. In classes where the project was presented and experienced as a research project without the aspects of problem-solving or student action, there was a noticeable difference in the students' experiences. Specifically, these students did not appear to have the same sense of efficacy and commitment to becoming change agents in the communities.
- To assist with the implementation of the student action project, a student handbook should be created to guide students through the process.

More attention needs to be given to the development of skills noted as lacking in student project presentations. Attention can be given to this issue in the summer training of professors. Further, as part of the recommended student handbook, specific tasks can be included that help develop these skills.

Appendix A Pre- and Post-Test

Section I - Multiple Choice Response Questions

Read each of the questions and the possible responses that follow carefully. Mark the letter of the response that you select for each question on the answer sheet provided. Be sure to write clearly so your answers can be correctly read.

1. According to the natural rights philosophy, the main purpose of government is to:

- a. Create a democracy.
- b. Protect individual rights.
- c. Create a system of separation of powers.
- d. Promote the rights of the ruling class.

2. Which of the following statements describes a constitution?

- a. A list of obligations of citizens.
- b. A priority for achieving particular policies.
- c. A plan that sets forth the structure and powers of government.
- d. A compilation of statutes that have been in effect at least 50 years.

3. Civic virtue is an important concept in a democratic society because:

- a. When people are granted many individual freedoms, it becomes easy to act in self-interest, which can become harmful to society.
- b. When people are granted many individual freedoms, they may become confused by which course of action is best under challenging circumstances; therefore, guidance from the government is important.
- c. In order to secure more rights, all people must be willing to fight for the rights of minorities, which is a virtuous action.
- d. Man by nature is self-interested therefore government has to step in and set limits.

4. A separation of powers in government is important to:

- a. Make the government more efficient.
- b. Allow more people to hold office.
- c. Prevent the misuse of power.
- d. Provide for legislative supremacy.

5. If a citizen Georgia believes that she has been unfairly dismissed from her job what action should she take first?

- a. Present her case to a District (City) Court.
- b. Present her case to the Supreme Court.
- c. Present her case to the Constitutional Court.

d. Present her case to the European Court.

6. Why can it be considered democratic that the Prime Minister of Georgia is not directly elected by the people?

- a. Many democratic systems have public officials in office who are not elected by the people
- b. This is how a parliamentary system works.
- c. Republican forms of democracy rely on methods of indirect democracy to represent the people.
- d. The Prime Minister of Georgia is elected by the people through the election process, therefore this statement is false.

7. If Georgian citizens believe their constitutional rights have been violated which actions can they take?

- a. They can write letters to news media to create awareness among the public of the situation.
- b. They can appeal to human rights organizations to gain their support.
- c. They can present their case to the Constitutional Court of Georgia.
- d. All of these.

8. An independent court is considered essential in a democracy. Which of the factors below helps to ensure the independence of the courts?

- a. Judges are selected based on their political views.
- b. Judges should be elected.
- c. Selection of judges should be free from political goals.
- d. Judges should represent the majority of the public's views in their decisions.

9. Which statement below is most accurate in describing the role of citizens in proposing changes in Georgian law?

- a. The individual may form a civil society organization to build citizen support to lobby the draft law/draft amendment in Parliament.
- b. Individuals may not make direct appeals to members of Parliament.
- c. The individual must engage other interested citizens and hold a protest to get the attention of government officials.
- d. By voting for officials to represent them in Parliament.

10. Which definition below best describes what is meant by "civil society"?

- a. Government organizations that encourage citizens to have an active voice in society.
- b. Associations that all workers are required to join.
- c. Organizations that people can voluntarily join in order to pursue common interests.
- d. Political associations that educate the public about candidates prior to elections.

11. If a democratic system is based on a majority rule, than what obligation do democratic governments have to minorities?

- a. Government mechanisms must exist to protect the rights of minorities to express their views.
- b. Minority groups must be guaranteed proportional representation in government.
- c. Government is only obligated to represent the majority view.
- d. Compromise with minority factions must be achieved in lawmaking.

12. A system of representative government is preferable over a direct democracy because:

- a. It allows for decisions to be made that represent all citizens' wishes.
- b. Most citizens do not have the resources necessary to make decisions in government.
- c. Most people prefer to be told what to do than to make decisions for themselves.
- d. Direct democracy has never proven to be a successful method of decision making.

13. In a system of representative democracy which of the following statements is most accurate?

- a. Government officials should serve long terms so that they can learn the responsibilities of their position well.
- b. Government officials should maintain loyalty to the wishes of political party leaders in order to advance their careers.
- c. Government officials have a duty to represent the views of the electorate.
- d. Government officials should only serve one term in a government office so that all citizens may have the opportunity to serve in government.

14. The structure of Georgian government safeguards against the abuses that may come from a consolidation of power by:

- a. Separating powers among the legislature, executive and judiciary.
- b. Holding regular elections for members of government.
- c. Holding all equal under the rule of law.
- d. All of the above apply.

15. The principle of accountability in a democratic system of governance is important because:

- a. The law must apply equally to all members of a democratic society.
- b. All people should have their interest served in a democratic society.
- c. Democratically elected governments should represent and serve the people.
- d. The people in a democratic society should always be informed of all government actions.

Section II

In this section there are several statements about behaviors and attitudes. Read each statement and choose the letter for the response that best reflects your view.

A = Strongly disagree

B = Disagree

C = Agree

D = Strongly agree

16. I often discuss and express my opinion on public issues with others.

17. Voting in national elections is an important way to participate in Georgian democracy.

18. Individuals must respect the rights of all members of Georgian society.

19. It is important for members of Georgian society to join organizations to pursue common interests.

20. Members of Georgian society should follow political issues in the newspaper, on the radio, on TV or on the Internet.



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