

Infusion of Civic Engagement Into the Curriculum

School of Communication, Illinois State University

Zompetti, J. P., Hunt, S. K., McDade, J. S., Asbury, B. E., Hammond, G. J., Anton, A. N

ABSTRACT
ISU is one of approximately 250 institutions involved with the American Democracy Project (ADP) and one of twelve involved with the Political Engagement Project (PEP). The School of Communication (SoC) is an important element for civic and political engagement. To continue to impact these areas, the SoC must integrate curriculum, provide training and resources for faculty and students, and foster scholarship to assess student learning and develop relevant coursework.

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Cross Endowed Chair for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, the purpose of this assessment is to advance the discipline and the SoC by expanding the role of communication in civic and political engagement through the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL).

METHOD

This project began in the fall 2008

semester in undergraduate courses in the SoC at ISU. This sample includes over 400 students spread evenly between the control and experimental groups. The survey tool, adapted from the Carnegie Foundation measured indicators of student engagement including political skill, motivation to engage in politics, political knowledge, and affective learning.

Coursework in the experimental

group represented infusion of content designed to enhance student engagement in one or more of the following areas: Public Opportunity, Responsible Citizenry, Knowledge Formation, Diverse and Global Perspectives, and Democratic Awareness. As part of the experimental design, instructors attended a series of training workshops designed to enhance their instruction in civic and political engagement

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

•Political disengagement among

the youth of this country is an issue that should concern all of those in higher education (Beaumont, Colby, Ehrlich, & Torney-Purta, 2006; Hillygus, 2005; Spiezio, Baker, & Boland, 2005; Stanton, 2008)

•The withdrawal of a cohort of

citizens from our political system places democracy at risk. (Galston 2003)

•Few colleges and universities

offer programs designed to intentionally develop students' civic and political engagement (Beaumont et al., 2006)

•The best predictor of student

engagement is training in communication skills. Therefore as students become more competent communicators, they become better prepared to participate in our democracy. (Hilligus 2005)

Public Opportunity –
Students will identify the resources and subsequent value of civic and community engagement.

Responsible Citizenry –
Students will develop the ability to function as responsible participants in the social, economic, technological, and political dimensions of life within local, national, and global communities.

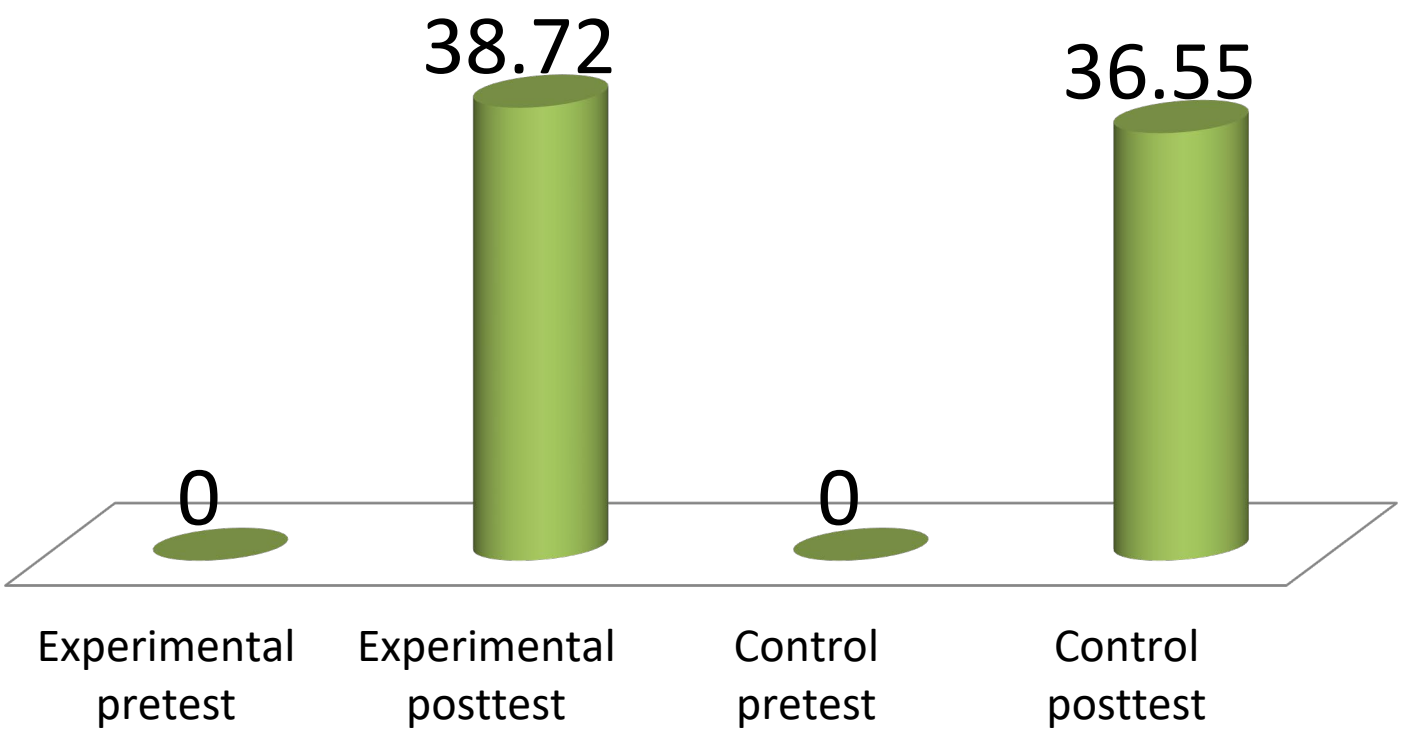
Knowledge Formation –
Students will foster an understanding of the social and collaborative nature of knowledge and learning relating to civic engagement.

Diverse and Global Perspectives –
Students will be exposed to diverse and global perspectives by developing and communicating an appreciation for the impact made in personal and professional lives.

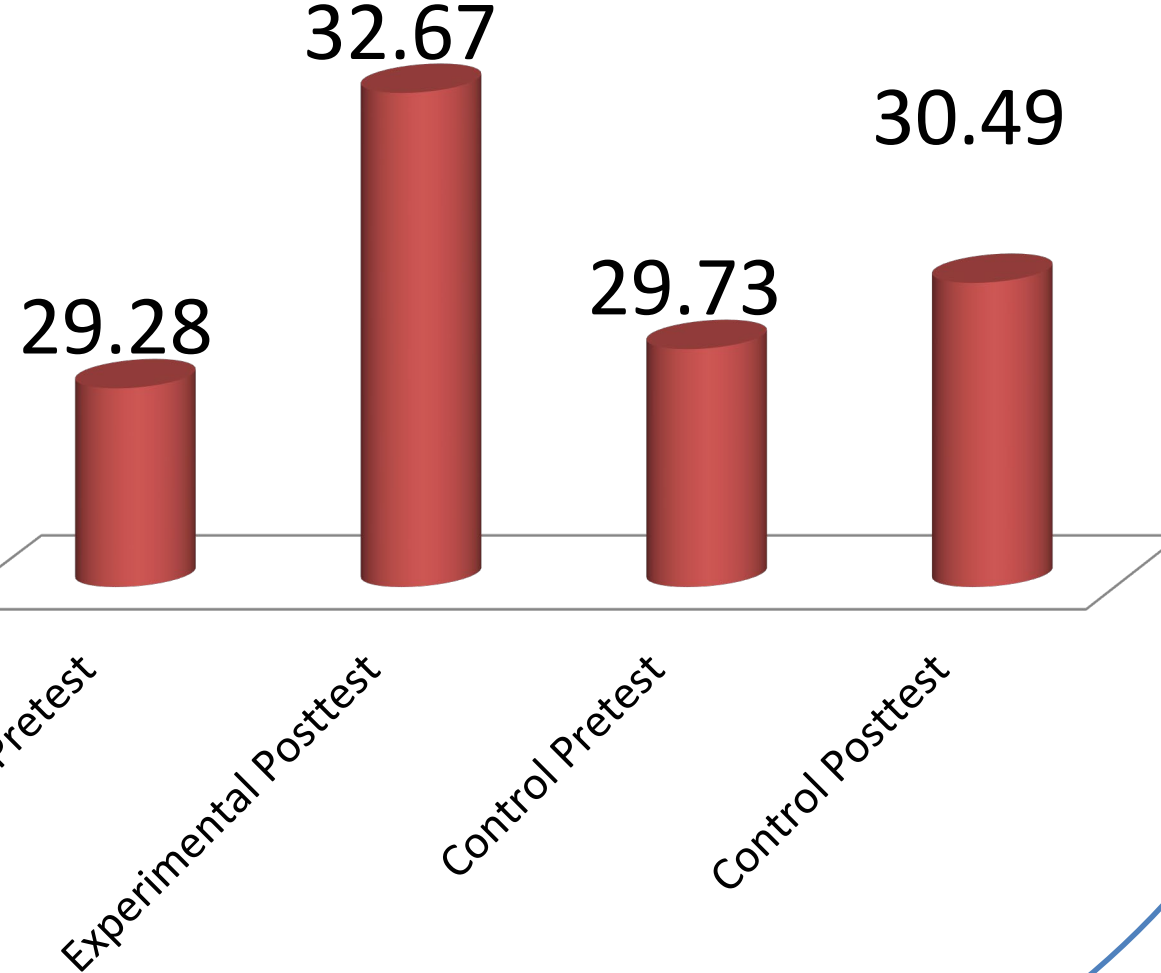
Democratic Awareness –
Students will improve their knowledge and understanding of the democratic process.

Civic Engagement Learning Outcomes

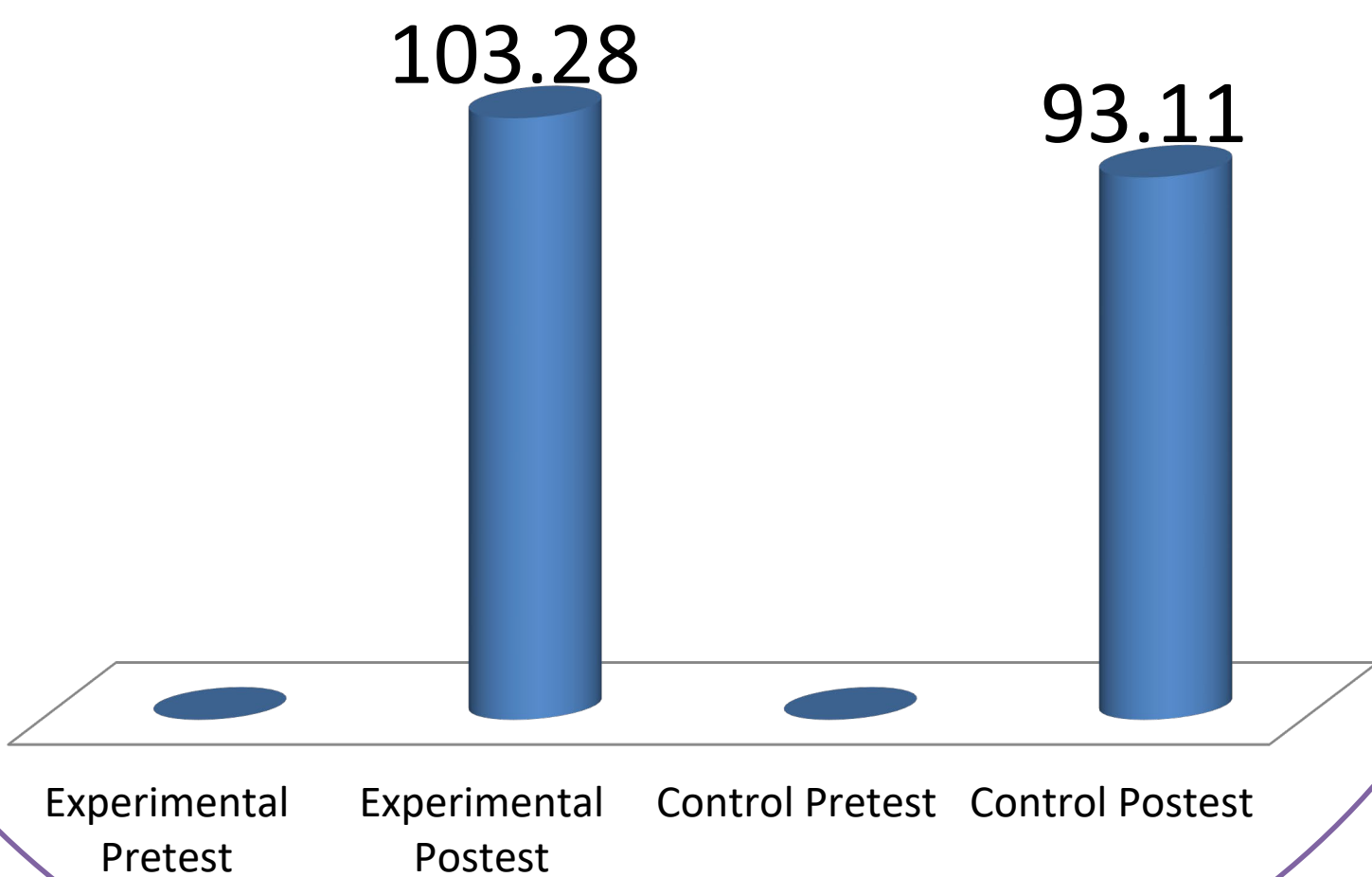
Perceived Engagement (Mean)



Communication Skills (Mean)



Affective Learning (Mean)



RESULTS

•Affective Learning

Students in the experimental sections reported liking the content, instructor, and course in greater numbers than in the control sections. Students also reported that they were more likely to engage in the learned behaviors and take another course of similar skill content.

•Perceived Engagement

Students in the experimental sections perceived the course content to be strongly correlated with the Civic Engagement Learning Objectives

•Communication Skills

Students in the experimental sections reported having increased communications abilities as a result of the course.