TEACHING AND LEARNING

TLC at APSA 2024: Reflections

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Nearly 150 political science educators convened for a one-day "conference-within-a-conference" to share their pedagogical expertise at the 7th annual Teaching and Learning Conference at APSA (TLC at APSA). Held on Saturday, September 7th, 2024, in Philadelphia, PA, "Teaching Democracy: Reflection, Innovation, and Imagination", focused on how political science educators can prepare future leaders and citizens to participate in democratic governance and develop the innovations needed to meet contemporary challenges.

The annual TLC at APSA mini-conference showcases and develops political science teaching practices and advances the scholarship of teaching and learning by creating a welcoming and inclusive academic environment. Scholar-educators who attended TLC at APSA entered a dedicated space to network with fellow practitioners, share best practices, learn new classroom techniques, and build professional relationships to enrich their students' learning opportunities. By building connections with colleagues from a variety of political science subfields, experiences, institutions, and identities, the 2024 TLC at APSA not only produces an exchange of ideas but promotes a rich community of scholar-educators within APSA.

This year's program began with a networking breakfast, then continued with a series of interactive workshops, a luncheon plenary address, and afternoon panel sessions. The afternoon panels followed a track format, following in the footsteps of APSA's first standalone teaching and learning conference held in 2004 at American University. Consecutive track sessions organized around core pedagogical themes enable deeper inquiry while fostering connection. The day's events concluded with an evening reception co-sponsored by APSA, the Political Science Education organized section, and the APSA Committee on the Status of Community Colleges in the Profession.

After breakfast, attendees had the option to participate in the Pedagogy Café. Modeled after the Methods Café first introduced to the APSA Annual Meeting by Dvora Yanow and Peregrine Schwartz-Shea in 2005, TLC at APSA's Pedagogy Café offered small group discussions around a variety of teaching themes, with participants able to move and connect with colleagues around several topics. Attendees also had the choice of attending interactive workshop sessions where political science educators could reflect on a range of issues from teaching in the age of AI, training democracy skills, using census data in community-engaged and project-based learning, teaching qualitative methods, using games and exercises to teaching about political violence, and teaching information literacy.

The plenary address, "Educating for Change: Teaching Race in a Climate of Hostility," was delivered by Nazita Lajevardi (Michigan State University). Her keynote argued that as the promise of American multi-racial democracy faces increased challenges, political science education is not just instructional but transformative. Her keynote reflected on how faculty imagination and innovation in political science education will ensure that the field remains relevant, rigorous, and reflective of our democratic ideals despite our discipline's external threats and challenges. An engaging question-and-answer period followed the keynote address.

The TLC at APSA Program Committee worked with great collegial effort throughout the planning process and during their facilitation of each track. We are grateful for their service: Helen Chang (Hostos Community College, CUNY), Wendy Johnston (SUNY Adirondack), Kevin G. Lorentz II (Saginaw Valley State University), Chapman Rackaway (Radford University), Shyam Sriram (Canisius University). We also thank Michelle Allendoerfer (APSA's Senior Director of Teaching & Learning and Professional Development Programs) for her efforts in steering the program committee and organizing the conference.

SHYAM SRIRAM, CANISIUS UNIVERSITY
"Innovations in Active Learning and Democracy"

The first session of this track, "Games, Simulations, and Tools in Context," was moderated by Shyam Sriram (Canisius University) and examined three approaches to how simulations and games can engage students in complex political science scenarios. Michael Bossetta (Lund University) opened the session with his paper, "Downscaling Simulations and Role-Playing Games with an Element Design Approach." Bossetta's primary hypothesis is that while active learning is frequently mentioned in the literature, there are far fewer studies about simulations as an effective tool of active learning. The challenge, according to Bossetta, is the presence of several barriers to using simulations. To overcome these barriers, Bossetta believes that the most important active learning techniques can be distilled into one assignment, what he describes as element design. Bossetta successfully conducted a simulation in a graduate course where students were placed into one of four groups and asked to think about how social media might have influenced the Protestant Reformation, the American Revolution, the rise of Fascism, and the Fall of the Berlin Wall. He did note during the panel, however, that students should never be forced to assume particular roles during the simulation, particularly challenging roles like Joseph Goebbels (as one of the two roles during the rise of Fascism scenario). Seventy percent of the students voluntarily submitted evaluations after the assignment, and the overall support was strong. Bossetta noted that he was impressed by the level of graduate student engagement

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with the innovative technique in the ungraded assignment.

Bossetta was followed by Petra Hendrickson (Northern Michigan University) who shared her work titled "Play it Again, Sam: The Use of Iterated Games to Illustrate Student Decision-making." This was a fascinating paper that rightly pointed to the lack of scholarship on how iterations are ideal for student learning when used in the context of short board games. Hendrickson provided a thorough analysis of the literature and commented that simply using board games in political science classes is insufficient if the instructor does not have clearly defined goals concerning specific concepts, theories, and power dynamics. Hendrickson also discussed the impact playing board games might have in one or more class periods versus spread out over the semester. Students in her undergraduate classes played three different games: Dice Catan, 13 Minutes, and the mobile app version of Risk. Hendrickson used pre- and post-activity surveys and shared those results as well as her general thoughts about the success of the activity, which she believes worked because it showed the very real consequence of political asymmetry during the Cold War. Students also responded well to the theme of iteration, noting on their reflections that they learned more of what to do versus what not to do as they played more games, but that simply playing multiple times did not always translate to victory.

Iteration was also a learning outcome of the final session paper, Zachary Houser's (Boise State University) published article (*JPSE* 2024) titled, "Making Agreements with Friends: Using an Analogy to Teach Informal Agreements and Bargaining in International Relations Courses." This was another example of a unique simulation that used an unlikely scenario to explain political bargaining: lending money to friends when going out to the bars (though he noted during the Q&A that this specific location could be replaced with any other social activity like going to a concert, movie, restaurant, etc.). Houser was inspired to create Making Agreements with Friends as a form of problem-based learning (PBL) while reflecting on the prevalence of interpersonal agreements among students that could lay the foundation for greater understanding on how agreements work in international relations. He was especially keen on generating student interest in diplomacy, iteration, issue linkage, and coercion. The exercise's template is a list of friends who each have a unique relationship with the student participating in the activity. Students were divided into smaller groups and first asked which of these fictional friends they would spot/financially cover at the pub/ bar. These "friends" range from Gabriella B., the "reliable best friend" who will send you money immediately on Venmo to Noah K, the forgetful "pariah of the group," who always presumes someone else will pay for them. Each fictional member of the group represents a different real-world state and the negotiations represent IR bargaining theory. Making Agreements with Friends was implemented in six sections of an undergraduate course at Florida State University. Post-activity survey results showed huge levels of student interest in the game and how it greatly shaped their learning.

The second session of this track, "Applied and in the Field Active Learning," was moderated by Shyam Sriram (Canisius University) and featured two papers that took a different approach to student learning and engagement compared to the first session. Douglas M. Cantor's (Rutgers University—New Brunswick). paper was titled "The Classroom on Trial: Sending Undergraduates to Court" and outlined an ambitious effort to introduce Rutgers students to the New Jersey judicial system as part of a "Law & Politics" course. Cantor noted that traditional political science approaches to the judiciary have their place, but did not have room for civic engagement and "applied assessment." He redesigned the course and created new learning outcomes for students to learn about the judicial hierarchy (with an emphasis on federal courts) and to ponder about future careers. The activity was built on three "pillars": scheduling court visits; attending court; and reflecting on experiences. It has become so popular at Cantor's campus that there is a real concern that managing the number of students—as large as 225 one semester—who want to participate in the course will exceed the resources of the department and the court. According to his assessment, "almost 99% of the class felt the program would help them make [better] career choices."

Rebecca A. Glazier (University of Arkansas at Little Rock) was the discussant for Sriram's paper, "The Challenge of Using TikTok in a Political Science Classroom." This paper presented the findings from a fall 2022 pilot project that incorporated TikToks at a Jesuit liberal-arts university in the Northeast. A good subtitle for this paper would have been "expectation versus reality;" the author acknowledged the huge disconnect between how he anticipated students would respond to creating political science TikToks ("this is cool!") versus what really happened ("this sucks!"). Despite being massively popular globally and in the United States, Sriram noted there is still little political science literature about TikTok as an assessment tool (while the amount of literature on Twitter is exponentially larger by contrast). Sriram asked students in three undergraduate courses—"Western Political Tradition" (introductory), "Political Campaigning" (sophomore level), and "Political Parties" (upper division)—to each create 10 TikToks over the semester in response to current political issues and as a creative outlet to demonstrate knowledge of course-related topics. But student buy-in was extremely challenging and the instructor had to dangle many incentives to even get students to submit the required number of TikToks by the deadline (including making the final exam worth more points to account for the missed TikToks.) End of semester evaluations were overwhelmingly negative about the assignment including repeated references to how the activity should be dropped from future courses (which it has) and also how uncomfortable students felt "friending" their instructor on social media (which was necessary for grading). Some students also reported on privacy concerns with TikTok's security issues in China.

Both sessions concluded with lively question-and-answer segments, which showed the commitment by APSA TLC attendees. It was also helpful that editors from the *Journal of Political Science Education* (*JPSE*) were in the audience for both sessions, which allowed greater interaction and clarification on what *JPSE* looks for in articles.

CHAPMAN ROCKAWAY, RADFORD UNIVERSITY

"Reimagining Civic Engagement"

The "Reimaging Civic Engagement" track featured two panels focused on new practices educators can use to spur student political participation. The first panel in the track provided five papers with a diverse set of perspectives. William O'Brochta's (Texas Lutheran Univer-

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sity) "Social Benefits Motivate Young Adult Civic Engagement" investigates the driving forces that get students to participate using a survey of students at a southern University. In an intriguing finding, O'Brochta investigates the core issue of what many educators deal with: how to "make" students care about their political milieu and see the capacity to influence the decisions made which affect them. Students do not universally see value in political engagement and countless faculty have tried myriad approaches to inspire those students, only to see their efforts fall flat. The 'transactional' model of college extending from rational choice theory suggests that students see everything in economic cost/benefit terms, and thus the more intrinsic and personal benefits of civic engagement may not be so strong (see Gardner and Fischman's *The Real World of College*) thus the controlling individual question appears to be "what's in it for me?" O'Brochta's findings present a different conclusion, where social benefits appear to be the most significant driver of student relevance, which may help future strategies for student motivation.

Trygve Throntveit's (University of Minnesota) "From Representation to Agency: A Model for Civic Learning in Undergraduate Classrooms" provides a model for what the author terms "Civically Agentic Learning (CAL)." Throntveit's model allows educators to break away from the career preparatory focus that has consumed so many of our universities. Career readiness will not go away, and higher education does have a career preparatory role. But higher education experiences also create whole people, human beings, citizens. Hyperfocus on career preparation is a path to narrow-minded people with credentials, he argues, not leaders in a polity.



Attendees of the TLC at the APSA 2024 Annual Meeting

Abigail Dym's (Providence College) "(Re)Democratizing Civic Education: Making Citizens through Engaged Civic Pedagogy" provides a compelling paradigmatic shift in civic learning towards the state and local level. Using a small sample of high school students, Dym presents the first findings of a new style of engaged pedagogy the author calls "Critical Policy Analysis (CPA)." The CPA approach allows two tracks of work with students, one focused on federal-level policy issues and the other on locally based issues. Since civic engagement emphasizes the ability to effect change directly, shifting the focus to local issues and actors provides students with a new opportunity to deploy civic skills in an environment with a high likelihood of success.

Alison Rios Millett McCartney (Towson University) and Michele Calderon (University of Maryland, Baltimore County) seek to answer questions regarding the capacity of educational institutions to help rebuild and support democratic knowledge and values through a multi-level cooperative partnership focused on global issues in "Equity in Experiential Learning: Creating Inclusive K-16 Civic Engagement Education Opportunities for a Global Community of Democracy." The paper summarizes Towson University's Baltimore County Schools Model United Nations program. This is a robust and award-winning program with more than a decade of history on which to rely. These types of partnerships are particularly salient at a time, as the authors mention, when K-12 civics curricula are at a low point. Universities can either remediate when students arrive on campus, or they can proactively partner with K-12 entities to ensure that students bring a working baseline of civic knowledge, skills, and orientations. As the paper was part of a larger project involving a book, we should expect to see much more detail regarding this valuable project.

Finally, Khristina Haddad (Moravian University) used Timothy Snyder's On Tyranny monograph as a starting point to present a selection of his twenty concepts as organizing principles for leading class discussions and projects. Haddad deploys Snyder's history of authoritarianism in the political theory classroom to ground student training in political dialogue, reasoned debate, and ethical practices. Her presentation argued that teaching civics in the political science classroom must also include core intellectual and social skills to help students self-advocate, identify a political voice, and engage with their peers in an ethical and respectful manner.

During the 4:00 p.m. panel, we saw a collection of intriguing projects all beginning to emerge. Barbara Robertson (Georgia State University) investigated a project encouraging students to volunteer as poll workers. Poll working is an excellent opportunity for students to get hands-on experience in the administration of elections. Even for those who don't go into fields of election work, as a citizen, understanding the processes of administering the vote is important to know for confidence in the democratic system, regime legitimacy, and trust in elections. As poll worker advocacy is nascent, Robertson's work provides a solid framework for implementing similar encouragement models at other universities.

Karen Bird (McMaster University) and Joanna Massie (McMaster University) provided a look at their efforts to build a partnered learning pathway that embeds civic engagement throughout a curriculum. The authors describe the process of mapping a curriculum to integrate a civic engagement themed podcasting model and describe a pilot project that has produced an interdisciplinary civic engagement minor.

Tara Bartlett (Arizona State University) and KaRa Thrasher (Center for the Future of Arizona) presented a set of preliminary results from a program with significant promise. In the project, students become more active participants in organizational budgeting during their K-12 experience. To engage with their governance within the high school environment, students are selected to be part of a participatory budgeting panel which forces the students to confront resource scarcity and conflicting interests. Adapted from a Brazilian program which has been in place since 1989, the results from an initial case study in Arizona suggests the engagement level among high school students is significantly greater when they can actively participate in real-life budgetary decisions.

Phoebe Henninger (University of Michigan), Logan Woods (University of Michigan), and Edie N. Goldenberg (University of Michigan) shared their Dinners for Democracy project in the other paper on this panel. To engage students in constructive

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dialogue across ideological, class, racial, and other differences, students were brought together to interact over meals. The peer-to-peer voter education program, between 2021 and 2022, brought hundreds of students together to learn more about each other and the salience of voting participation. In terms of knowledge and empathy, participants left with improved outcomes across the board.

A. OLIVIA MILJANIC, UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON
CHRISTOPHER LEMERY, UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH

"21st Century Skills: Literacy, Analysis, Research and Writing Track"

The "21st Century Skills: Literacy, Analysis, Research and Writing Track" focused on how educators can improve students' information literacy, critical thinking, and writing skills. All four presenters discussed their use of innovative pedagogies to develop students' skills in a variety of class subjects and formats.

The first session, "New Perspectives and Practices on Student Writing," featured two presentations. "Building Blocks for Learning: Scaffolding Writing-Based Learning Activities" was a presentation from Dale Mineshima-Lowe (Birkbeck, University of London and Parami University). Mineshima-Lowe discussed her approach to student writing in two classes: a hybrid online/in-person Comparative Government class and an online synchronous Introduction to Political Science. The overall goal was to get students to think about writing as a process integrated throughout their learning and not just tied to a large writing assignment. A scaffolded approach was used in the class writing assignments to grow students' confidence in their skills. This was particularly important for the Parami University students, who were in a conflict zone and whose first language was not English. Of note was the use of the "Writing in the Zones" method for essay planning. Each zone focuses on a different portion of the essay and students had only a few minutes to complete each one. After students completed the exercise, they reviewed their work with a class peer for further clarification and refinement of concepts. The students gave positive feedback on this process and the data showed that it increased peer bonding and support.

The second presentation, "Helping Struggling Student Writers: Interactive Strategies to Improve Success," was by professional writing coach and editor, Leanne C. Powner (independent scholar). Powner noted that many students in political science classes come from the humanities and are, therefore, trained in that writing style. If instructors want students to write good political science papers, we have to teach them how to write as political scientists. Powner also stated that students are very practical and efficiency-oriented when it comes to research and writing projects. They care about marginal effort, asking themselves "is it worth my time to do this part of the assignment?"

One aspect of social science research that is particularly troublesome for students is the literature review. Powner led session audience members in an in-class activity meant to help students organize a literature review. The activity featured a collection of notecards with article citations and abstracts. Working in groups, participants evaluated and categorized the articles for use in answering the research question of "What explains the variation in state responses to COVID-19?" The articles came from a variety of disciplines and source types and featured different levels of analysis and dependent variables. After the activity, audience members discussed how it can be used to diagnose problems, particularly with excessive or irrelevant evidence. Some of the article citations given did not address the research question or were not scholarly in nature. It was suggested that if students selected these, that may signal a poor understanding of the research question or an inability to identify different types of sources. Session participants recommended partnering with research librarians since they specialize in source evaluation and information literacy. Participants also suggested giving students a literature review from the instructor's writing as a concrete example, and guiding them through the sources chosen.

The second session, "Preparing Students for New Challenges," also featured two presentations. "Updating Beliefs? Insights from a Course on International Development" was a presentation by Nu Thuy Duong Ton (Central European University) and Cristina Corduneanu-Huci (Central European University). The authors evaluated the impact of a course assignment on deep learning (defined as critical thinking and analytical precision), self-confidence, and empathy. The study was conducted in the context of an Introduction to International Development course in a Masters of Public Administration program at a global university where there is no majority country or culture in the classroom. The course assignment consisted of a short paragraph with reading notes including, among other things, the most important take-away, a one-sentence critique to an argument, one question to guide class discussion that students submitted 24 hours before class on the course Learning Management System (LMS). Content analysis was conducted on LMS course data collected over a period of 10 years, using LIWC-22 (Language Inquiry and Word Count). The study found that student effort in the course and session progression are strongly associated with analytical and causal thinking. Non-anglophone students from the Global South engaged less in critical thinking. A negative correlation was found between a course session with readings from divergent perspectives and student self-confidence. In light of the associations with prior experience, the findings generated discussion around best practices for grading and measuring outcomes with a highly diverse student population. Connections were made with grading models introduced at previous TLC at APSA conferences.

The session's second presentation, "Tools for Reimagining Democracy: Undergraduate Research," was given by A. Olivia Miljanic (University of Houston). Miljanic explored strategies for effectively introducing undergraduate students to research.

The study used data collected by the author from a cross-disciplinary undergraduate course on Global Engagement and Research over the course of thirteen years. In a course open to all majors, the ensuing diversity of academic backgrounds and experiences constituted an important source of learning for all students in the class. The presentation addressed the learning opportunities associated with undergraduate research, the importance of breaking down the research process into building blocks and focusing on organizational and time management skills, and using collaboration and peer evaluation as part of the learning process.

The strategy of breaking down the research process into building blocks and emphasizing organizational and time man-

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agement skills was aligned with Mineshima-Lowe's implementation of "Writing in the Zones." Miljanic's focus on the literature review as a building block was enhanced by Powner's presentation. The use of peer evaluation and feedback and the association with student confidence was aligned with the work of Ton and Corduneanu-Huci, as well as that of Mineshima-Lowe. Miljanic's study also highlighted the links between undergraduate research and career competencies, of particular importance for a highly diverse student body.

The challenges and opportunities of working with a diverse student population were a common theme in the track. The rise of artificial intelligence and its effect on writing was also discussed. Track participants noted that soft skills give students an advantage in the labor market. By focusing on the building blocks of writing, critical thinking, and creativity, instructors can give their students skills that complement computer capabilities and enable the assessment of computer output.

HARLEY ROE, FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY
"Curriculum"

Panelists in this track explored important trends, insights, and challenges in political science education. The three papers on this panel examined the availability of political theory training in political science programs, the unique rewards and obstacles to providing instruction to lifelong learners, and the incentives of undergraduates to declare a major in political science along with their evaluations of the training our discipline offers. Discussion during the Q&A was energetic and the dialogue between authors and audience was engaging.

Matthew Stein (College of Southern Nevada) audits the current state of political theory training among US PhD-granting institutions. We cannot study concepts like justice empirically without simultaneously theorizing about what justice is at its core, he argues, and a "theory-less" discipline is in jeopardy of producing political scientists unversed in fundamental political concepts, which will impact our research and training of undergraduates. Stein highlights an alarming trend: only 62.73% of political science PhD programs offer theory as a major field of study, with several large institutions reducing its availability or eliminating it entirely. Audience discussion extended to what degree have the other subfields absorbed or co-opted theory, what market factors exist that either affect selection into theory or the likelihood of landing a tenure-track position, is there sufficient diversity in theory curricula to attract a growing and diversifying student body, and what departments can do to better safeguard theory as a subfield.

Charmaine N. Willis (Skidmore College) and Keith A. Preble (Miami University) remind us that social science education is essential to the preservation of liberal democracy, highlighting the distinct advantages and challenges that providing civics education to lifelong learners bring. Lifelong Learning Institutes (LLIs) provide continuing education opportunities and often recruit participants over the age of 50. The authors offer their insights into LLI education through their experiences instructing two sessions of Brandeis University's Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (BOLLI) courses. BOLLI participants were more active participants compared with typical undergraduates, were prepared with engaging questions and insights about the material and drew from their wealth of personal experiences to contribute to discussion. At the same time, instruction delivery to lifelong learners is not without challenge, as instructors grapple with varying technological acumen among participants, administrative overload, unique curriculum design, gender dynamics that may influence participation in discussion, and the inexorability of preconceived political beliefs. The authors close by reaffirming the enriching environment LLIs provide for students and instructors.

Janet L. Donavan and Sarah Brown (University of Colorado Boulder) seek to understand both undergraduate motivations for choosing political science as a major and satisfaction with the major at graduation. Universities offering political science instruction will benefit from these principled approaches to program evaluation. Using program assessment data and an original survey of political science majors (N = 92), the authors find that students are attracted to political science not only for skill acquisition, but also in pursuit of normative and societal goals. A majority of students (73.9%) reported declaring political science as a major because they are interested in politics/social justice, while other common rationales involve goals to attend graduate/law school, run for office, or preferences for specific instructors. While most students reported that the program fostered acquisition of communication, methodological, and evaluative skills, responses were divided about the effectiveness and usefulness of quantitative "hard skills" training. Further, most students have an interest in civic participation, with most discussing politics and voting. Discussion involved advice for administering similar surveys at other institutions (notably: get the survey out early!) and if there might be unique challenges or advantages to conducting this research at a state school as opposed to smaller or more teaching-focused institutions where class size might affect results.

JOLYON LARSON, UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT
"Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, Justice, and Accessibility"

Insights and the methods that are used to reveal them are not produced within a vacuum. The educational venues within which they are shared, and the students with whom they are shared, are context-bound as well. Panelists for the "Understanding and Combating Bias, Controversy, and Fear in PS Curriculum & Classroom" session sought to address how political science educators can be more inclusive—even liberatory—in their curricular design by incorporating these contextual factors into the learning process. Through methods of transparency, topic exposure, and intentional dialogue design, controversial topics can be explored and a deeper level of learning for students can be obtained.

Research methods classes are likely to be some of the most commonly taken courses by political science majors. Indeed, Leonardo Falabella (London School of Economics) found that over 82% of political science programs in the US feature this crucial course. However, Falabella argues that it is not enough for students to be able to gather data on and analyze phenomena of interest in these classes. They must be capable of examining "design choices and statistical results with attention to historical context and social scientific theories." While teaching a methods course to undergraduate students, Falabella implemented several anti-racist class activities to facilitate this histor-

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ical and theoretical contextualization. Through these activities, Falabella found students were better able to critically assess the strengths and weaknesses of different quantitative and qualitative methods when provided with examples of when they have been used in racist ways such as during the eugenics movement. Falabella suggests that all methods classes should seek to include anti-racist curricular design and notes that doing so can help students avoid entrenching misconceptions like methodological neutrality and superiority.



Political Science Education Organized Section Award Winners: Patrick McKinlay (Morningside University), Rebecca A. Glazier (University of Arkansas at Little Rock), Juan Carlos Huerta (Texas A&M-Corpus Christi)

Discussion-based, topical classes were also viewed to be important venue for addressing racism and other social controversies in an intentional way. Shannon McQueen (West Chester University) and Corey Lane (West Chester University) note that student discussions of challenging topics have significant value. McQueen and Lane discuss their class "Politics of Diversity," which is designed to encourage students to discuss race, gender, sexuality, religion, and ethnicity in an organized setting. They worry, however, that students may not be comfortable participating in these conversations and cite previous studies' findings that 60% of students report "reluctance" in discussing "political and identity-based topics." Hypothesizing that topic exposure could improve students' comfortability in discussing them, McQueen and Lane used pre- and post-class surveys to analyze the effects of the discussion politics and identity on discussion reluctance. Survey respondents reported being more comfortable discussing gender-based issues after the class discussion treatment and the difference was statistically significant. They also reported being more comfortable discussing religion, politics, and race, but the difference was not significant. Further, when asked whether or not they would respond to a person who was offering controversial views, significantly fewer students (22.7%) said that they would do nothing post-treatment than pre-treatment (70.6%). Interestingly, students did report significantly increased fears that, if they offered a controversial opinion themselves, the faculty member might critique their views or lower their grade. While exposure to discussion of controversial topics does seem to increase students' willingness to discuss challenging topics, concerns about position-specific sanction should be carefully addressed so that these concerns do not unfairly inhibit discussion.

In a similar vein, Rachel Jackson (University of Connecticut) and Ericka MacDonald Laplante (University of Connecticut) favor a dialogue-based learning format, and document their experience in facilitating human-rights centered conversations for students. Noticing difficulties in eliciting student discussion due to students' fear of social sanction, Jackson and Laplante adopted the "Encounters Dialogue Model" within their Human Rights and Action course to organize their conversations. With a focal topic and text, small discussion group sizes, multiple rounds of discussion, binding speaker time limits, and content expert participation in discussions, among other features, Jackson and Laplante found that students who were engaged in these discussions were pushed outside of their comfort zones and began "getting comfortable" in their "pedagogic discomfort." Students also experienced "mutual vulnerability" due to frequent opportunities to connect human rights theory to their own lived experience. Finally, students began to express "strategic empathy" towards one another. Due to students' expressions of personal, lived experience and the influence of those experiences on their perceptions regarding human rights, students began to appreciate participants' perspectives, even ones that they disagreed with, because they better understood how participants' experiences shaped their perspectives.

The papers presented by the panelists were well received by the audience and encouraged conversation. Falabella's inclusion of anti-racism activities within the quantitative methods course that was the venue for his study was genuinely appreciated. Curiosity regarding the expansion of his proposal for emancipatory pedagogy came to define the reaction to his paper. Audience member responses reflected an interest in applying Falabella's recommendations to other methods classes that feature qualitative methods, as well as expanding the discussion of the impact of bias into topic-centric classes so that students could benefit from content contextualization holistically. Audience members also demonstrated significant interest in the dialogue tools presented by Jackson and MacDonald. The development of empathy between students was viewed as a promising learning objective that could be obtained even when discussing challenging and complicated topics like human rights. Further, there was a great deal of interest in the application of the encounters dialogue model in other learning venues outside of the classroom—such as during dorm and campus disputes or between students and other community members—so that moments of intense disagreement could be converted into learning opportunities. Generally, audience members and panelists agreed that helping students to lean into complexity, tension, and disagreement, in constructive ways, should be an important goal for political science education.

CONCLUSION

TLC at APSA provides a space for political science educators to learn from each other, network, and advance best practices for political science education. The success of the 2024 TLC at APSA can be captured by 95% of post-conference APSA survey respondents who strongly agreed or agreed that "the TLC met or exceeded their expectations," and the 85% who expressed they were "very" or "somewhat likely" to incorporate material from the TLC into their courses this year. It can also be captured by the engaging workshops, presentations, and conversations that filled the conference space. We extend our thanks to everyone who made the 7th annual TLC at APSA a success. ■

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