

Keith Morton and Sandra Enos. 2002. "Building Deeper Civic Relationships and New and Improved Citizens." *The Journal of Public Affairs*. vol. VI. 83-99.

"To move from service-learning to citizenship requires rethinking service learning."

- There is little clarity about how **service** relates to **citizenship**.
- Service learning fails to show students how **politics** works.
- Students have a hard time understanding how **political questions are relevant** to their future.
- "Why is it that the language and concepts of citizenship continue to have such limited significance even in programs explicitly organized around students?"

Two challenges:

1. Colleges themselves represent places where power is unequally distributed. This model for organizing people's work carries over into the community. Students focus more on becoming part of organizations where power is concentrated (nonprofits, government agencies, etc.) than on forming relationships with the people being served.

- The nonprofit sector concentrates on helping individual clients, thereby insulating the dominant political culture from demands for real change.
- The service agenda is set through dialogue between the staffs of nonprofit organizations and the staffs of funders, not through dialogues with the community.
- Nonprofit organizations have increasingly adopted a corporate management model.
- Nonprofits mute and mask the political and public dimensions of their work.
- Students learn to mute criticism of policy and political decision-making.

2. Disciplinary specialization has frequently been identified as the source of much of the campus disconnect from the community. Even faculty amenable to service-learning see their work as technical and apolitical.

What to do?

1. Shift our focus from preparing students to be active citizens to preparing them to **participate in creating a democratic culture**.
2. Teach our students to **identify and critique their own interests** and to make these interests the foundation for their community work.

3. View community partners differently. **Emphasize building relationships, de-emphasize “getting work done.”**
4. Rethink faculty roles. Move to “active deliberation about what our next steps should be to empower the community to take action.”
5. **Construct a space** in which students can **authentically practice** their civic engagement.