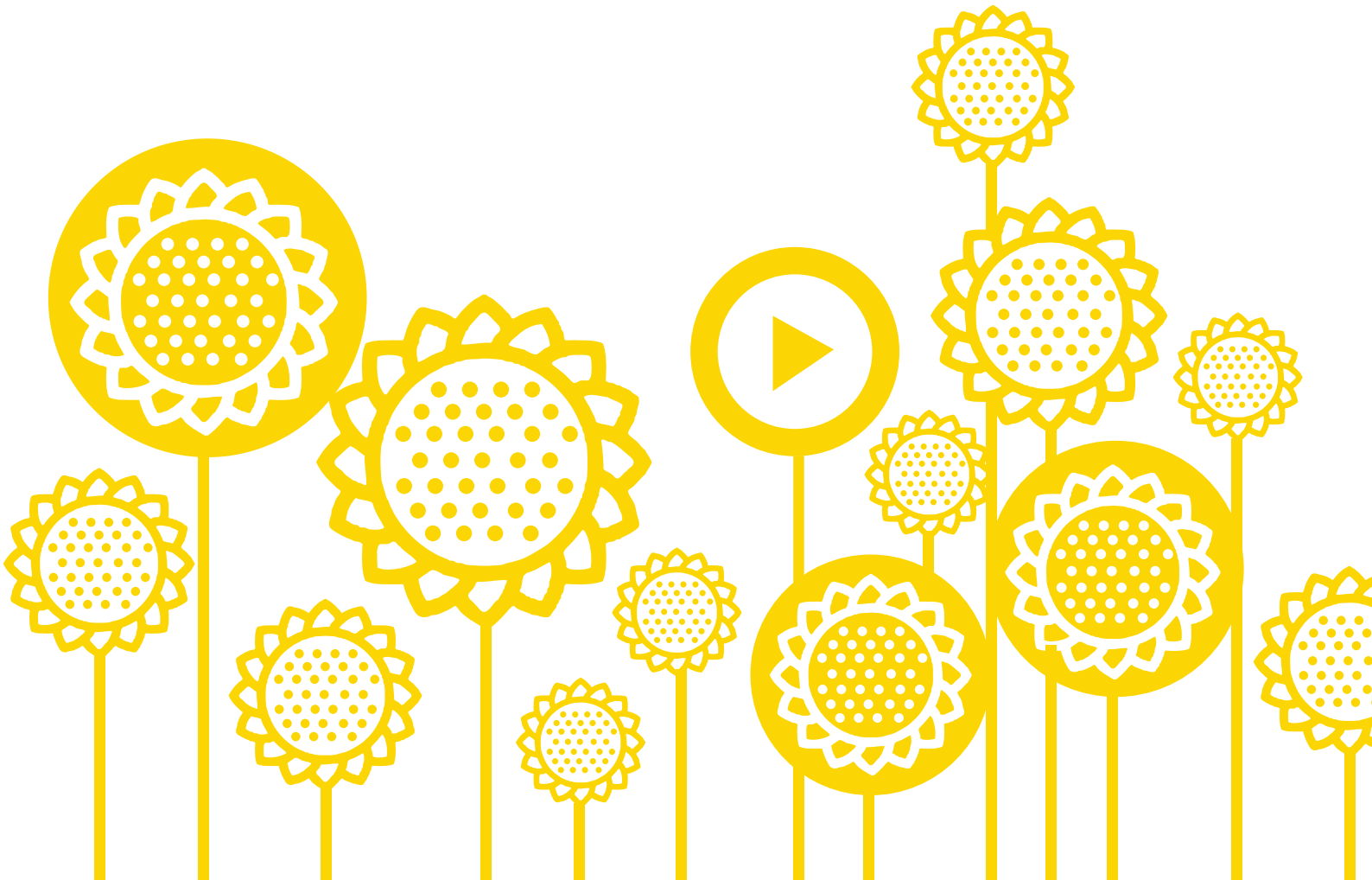


EVALUATION REPORT

DEMOCRA^Y: from Theory to Practice



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DEMOCRA^Y: from Theory to Practice

DR. GREER BURROUGHS
MAY 2019



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

Canada



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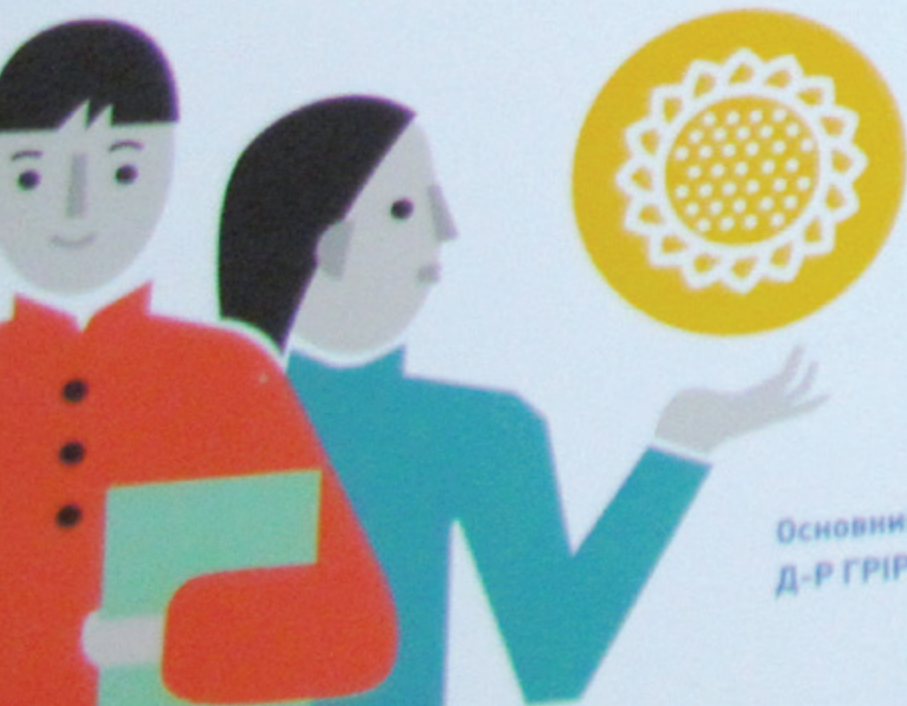
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ПІДРУЧНИК КУРСУ

ДЕМОКРАТІЯ:

від теорії
до практики



Основний автор та редактор:
Д-Р ГРІР БЕРРОУЗ



▀ ▀ Democracy begins with each of us, and if everyone feels that they have power to act, then perhaps the country will become better. ▀ ▀

Student enrolled in the course,
*Democracy: From Theory
to Practice*

INTRODUCTION

A healthy democracy requires that citizens play an integral role. In democratic societies, citizens are called on to make decisions and take actions to advance and protect the interests of the society and the individuals within. However, for citizens to effectively play this role, they must be familiar with the structure of the government, avenues to influence and engage government and what rights they have. Many skills and attitudes that support democracy are also important to ensure a healthy democracy. Concepts such as the rule of law, citizens' responsibility to hold government accountable, and the need to be inclusive and protect and advance the rights of women and minorities, must be understood and valued.

The goal of civic education in liberal democracies is to provide students with opportunities to develop the necessary knowledge and skills to participate as active and engaged citizens. In today's digital age – where the breadth and scope of disinformation are unprecedented and play on real grievances in society – this requires building strong skills of media literacy and logical deduction, alongside the traditional skills needed to be informed, reasoned and responsible actors. The ultimate goal is for individuals to recognize the honor and responsibility of being a citizen in a democracy and be ready to take on that role.

Ukraine is at a pivotal time in its democratic history, less than 30 years post-independence. It has seen two significant social protests that have resulted in political changes at the leadership level and currently faces foreign occupation and regular attempts at interference. Not only have Ukrainians experienced significant changes in their political system within one lifetime, Ukraine is also a nascent democracy that remains one of the poorest in Europe with one of the highest levels of corruption. However, voter turnout is relatively high (over 60%¹ in recent elections) and there is an active civil society. Ukraine stands poised for continued democratic growth and an engaged citizenry will be key to protecting such gains.

¹ / Voter turnout at Ukraine's 2019 Presidential Election, Central Election Commission: <https://www.cvk.gov.ua/pls/vp2019/wp063pt001f01=720.html>

“DEMOCRACY: FROM THEORY TO PRACTICE,” is an innovative and interactive university-level civic education course designed to meet these goals. The course encompasses three key elements:

1. the curriculum and course materials;
2. interactive teaching methods; and
3. a student action project.

The course curriculum and text materials are based on theoretical, historical and practical knowledge. The knowledge-based component of the course is built around four main themes: **democratic governance, human rights, civil society, and citizen engagement**. Cross-cutting themes include: gender equality, elections, minority rights, inclusion of and accessibility for persons with disabilities, enfranchisement, good governance, rule of law, media literacy, digital participation, diversity, the role of money in politics, the role of youth and corruption.

To strengthen students’ skills (including, but not limited to, critical thinking, active listening, consensus building, public speaking, group work and problem solving), IFES’ civic education initiative emphasizes the primacy of interactive teaching methodology that is focused on active learning in the classroom. Course professors receive trainings on interactive teaching methods through a series of IFES-led, continuous professional development sessions with national and international experts.

The capstone component of the course is a student action project. Through a step-by-step, guided process, students identify an issue in society that they recognize as problematic. The students then research the issue and apply course topics to an analysis of the issue. Students then devise an action plan to address the issue. This first-hand experience is designed to foster democratic values and attitudes while strengthening the knowledge and skills necessary for active, informed citizenship in a democracy.

The “Democracy: From Theory to Practice” course is based on IFES’ global, university-level civic education methodology, Strengthening Engagement through Education for Democracy (SEED). Through SEED, IFES has worked with universities and education specialists in Georgia and Ukraine to develop fully-accredited university-level curricula to introduce citizens to fundamental concepts of democratic citizenship, systems of government, civic participation and human rights, while building capacity through hands-on, real-world learning experiences. In Ukraine, the course is implemented through the support of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Global Affairs Canada (GAC) and UK aid from the UK government. In the 2019-2020 academic year, the course will expand to 20 universities from 12 regions of Ukraine.



SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

IFES conducted an evaluation of the “Democracy: From Theory to Practice” course piloted in Fall 2018. Five universities participated in the pilot: Vasyl Stus Donetsk National University, Ivan Franko National University of Lviv, National University of “Kyiv-Mohyla Academy”, Ivan Horbachevsky Ternopil State Medical University and V. N. Karazin Kharkiv National University. More than 800 students of various areas of study (law, political science, philology, international relations, medicine, etc.) and years of study (from 2nd to 4th year students) were enrolled in the pilot semester. Data was collected through course instructor interviews and surveys, student surveys and focus groups, classroom observations and pre- and post-tests to assess knowledge, behavior and attitude changes relating to democratic citizenship following participation in the course.

Table 1




Data Sources

DATA SOURCE	NUMBER
Teacher interviews	7
Teacher Surveys	9
Students Focus Groups	8 (N = 96)
Student Surveys	96
Classroom Observations	10
Pre-tests	394
Post-tests	541







The major findings are presented immediately below, followed by a more detailed discussion of the findings.

Students who participated in the course gained a deeper understanding of democracy and the roles of government and individuals

-  “We thought that democracy was something far above, but thanks to the course, it became clear that democracy begins with each of us and we can influence it.” / *Course Student*
-  “We realized that we are not dependent on government bodies, because through civic organizations, volunteering and direct participation you change a lot.” / *Course Student*
-  “After the course I understand that everyone can do something, change something at the local level and then perhaps, on the state level too.” / *Course Student*

Students enrolled in the course practiced skills associated with effective democratic participation

-  “We learned to express opinions, listen to others, find compromises.” / *Course Student*
-  “We had to think critically and apply our knowledge.” / *Course Student*
-  “In addition to skillful use of facts, [student] discussions started to develop ideas, their thoughts became more profound. Moreover, they learned to express themselves more freely.” / *Course Instructor*
-  “Through the Action Project, students developed the ability to research, analyze information, suggest alternative variants, leave their comfort zone, work as a team, and improve their presentation and project management skills.” / *Course Instructor*

Students enrolled in the course developed attitudes and values that support a healthy democracy

- “Democracy is not when you think only about yourself and your rights, but when you think about others. I spent a lot of time on a project related to inclusion, and this is not to earn points, but in order to really help people.” / *Course Student*
- “You are a part of society, and sometimes it makes sense to give up some rights for the broader, large-scale goals of civil society.” / *Course Student*
- “We often say: “the state must” or “society must”... we seem to be separated from all this. It sounds like someone is obligated to do something for us. My course helped me to understand the role of individual participation of a person as a citizen in the life of the university, city, society.” / *Course Student*
- “Before the course, this sense [that people could work together to make change] was not actualized, it was more an inner belief, now it is better formed.” / *Course Student*
- “I feel I have the power to change something with like-minded people on the team.” / *Course Student*







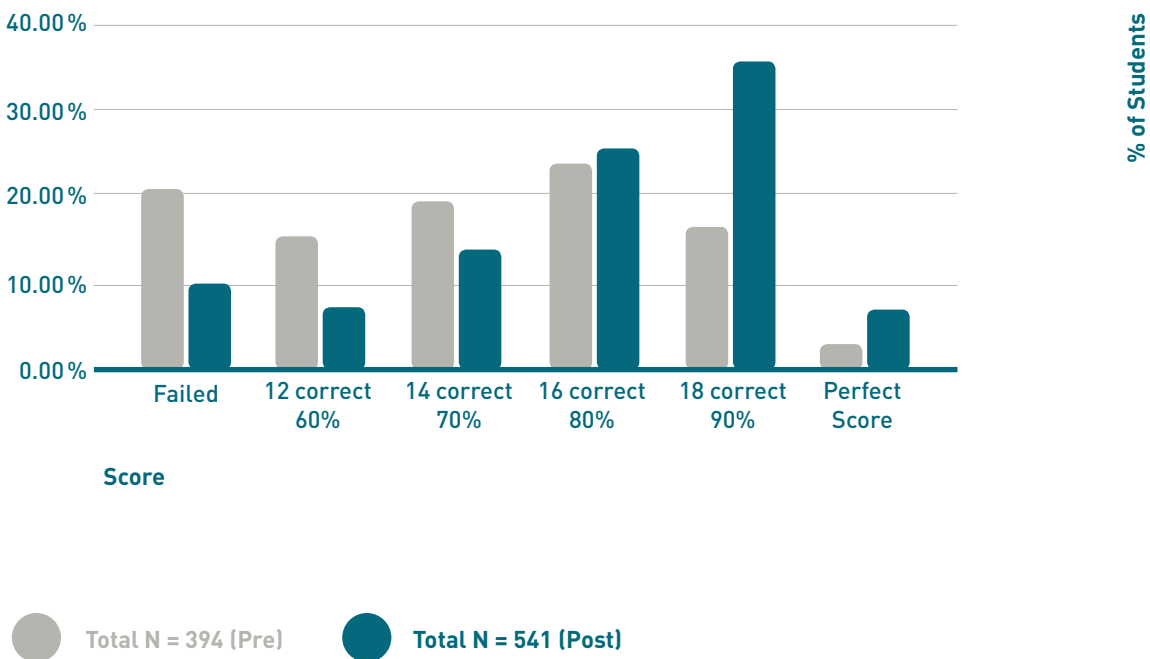
DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The students increased their knowledge of course topics, regardless of university or major, as indicated by pre- and post-tests results, student surveys, teacher surveys and focus group data. Students were administered pre- and post-tests that included 20 multiple choice questions related to the course content. The pass rate rose by 25% between the pre- and the post-tests, with 67% of students passing the post-test.

Table 2

Aggregate Pre- and Post-Test Results

Total (Pre) and Total (Post)



Additionally, ten classroom observations were conducted where observers used a common observation guide and were asked to note students' level of proficiency on the lesson topic as "Exceptional," "Proficient" or "Basic." In seven of ten observations, the observers noted that students demonstrated knowledge at the "Proficient" or "Exceptional" levels. Students were also asked to reflect on their knowledge gains through a survey. In this survey, when asked if they agreed that the course had helped increase their understanding of the themes, 90% felt the course helped them better understand **the role of civil society**, 88% felt the course helped them better understand **methods for citizen engagement**, 87% felt the course helped them better understand **human rights** and 74% felt the course helped them better understand **functioning and principles of democratic governance**. Many of the students enrolled in the pilot study were Law or Political Science students, and, therefore, reported gains in knowledge regarding democratic governance were lower than for the general student population. However, the students in these categories still expressed through focus groups that they benefited from this material by analyzing information from new perspectives and practical applications.

What follows is a breakdown of the findings related to each of the knowledge of each of the four course themes, the skills demonstrated by students and changes in attitudes and values associated with a healthy democracy.

KNOWLEDGE

Change in knowledge levels of participating students was assessed across the four main themes of the course: 1) Democracy and the Ukrainian Government; 2) Human Rights; 3) Civil society; and 4) Citizen Participation.



Theme 1

Democracy and the Ukrainian Government

The students demonstrated strong knowledge and understanding of democracy and democratic governance in Ukraine. During focus group sessions, students regularly described increased understanding of how democratic theories are implemented in government, and increased knowledge of local systems of government. For some students, the knowledge obtained provided new perspectives on how democracy and government had previously been understood. One student stated,

“I thought I knew everything about democracy, now I know I knew nothing,”

and another explained they had learned,

“the role and significance of state authorities, local self-government... I personally did not think about the significance of the powers vested in the authorities in real-life.”

In other cases, students had theoretical understandings of these concepts, however, their knowledge was extended and deepened through the course. Student statements exemplify this point:

“For political science students, there was no new knowledge, but the knowledge became systemized and now we know how to solve problems” and

“As part of the course, we considered democracy not from the perspective of future lawyers, but as ordinary citizens. We understood how to apply the material learned during the previous years to real-life.”

The new understandings often led to critical analysis of current practices in Ukraine, such as,

“I see now that the Ukrainian government isn’t responsive. In the EU countries, people are engaged in decision-making, but not in Ukraine. This needs to change,” and

“I learned that people should not allow the authorities to get corrupt, [they] must monitor it, including through the media.”



Theme 2

Human Rights

The majority of students reported that human rights was a course theme in which they gained new knowledge. This finding was supported by student comments in focus group sessions and in teacher interviews. As a result of the course, students explained they were now familiar with the need to protect the rights of vulnerable populations such as orphans, lower income members of society, and individuals with disabilities. Many students also came to think about their role in protecting the rights of others. One student explained,

“Earlier I understood that I must make a seat available for people with disabilities, but after the course I understood that if it’s not done, it violates their rights.”

However, many students viewed the full implementation and protections human rights difficult to enact in Ukraine and explained the importance of the European Court in seeking remedies for violations. These views were summed up by a student who stated,

“We can defend our rights independently, starting with ourselves, but we have a problem with a lack of guarantees for the protection of these rights, and this somewhat reduces the readiness to really protect our rights.”

Interviews with course professors also stressed that students were greatly impacted by their study of human rights. One professor explained,

“It was the first time students started thinking they had human rights,” and

“students were surprised that they had so many rights.”

Another professor explained that after studying the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the many conventions to protect these rights, students were able to critically assess instances where human rights abuses took place in Ukraine and in other countries.



Theme 3

Civil Society

The students expressed that they now better understand the role that civil society plays in a democracy. Ideas such as the necessity of civil society organizations to monitor government and fight corruption were expressed. A pervading sentiment among the students was the need for individuals to organize and take collective action in order to make substantial change.

It was clear from focus group data that students understood the vital role of civil society to enact the principles of democratic governance they studied in the course and to ensure democratic reform in Ukraine. One student explained,

“Democracy seemed to be one of the most unstable regimes for me, but the course made it clear to me that it is civil society that sustains democracy.”

Students also expressed understanding that working with others towards a common goal is often necessary. For example, one student stated,

“We can change something at the lowest level, but we have to consolidate to bring forth a bigger change.”

Students also recognized that working for the common good might require putting individual interests aside. This sentiment was captured in the comment,

“You are a part of society, and sometimes it makes sense to give up some rights for the broader, large-scale goals of civil society.”

Students also learned the value of collaborating with others through the Student Action Project, where all students had to work in groups, and often with individuals and organizations outside of the university, to implement their plans. For example, students at one university collaborated with local NGOs on a project to address food insecurity in their city. In another example, students worked with school administrators to bring law education to secondary school children. One student commented,

“While working on these projects, we realized that we are not dependent on government bodies, because through civic organizations, volunteering and direct participation you can change a lot.”

In addition, when students were asked in focus groups if they felt they could have a voice in Ukraine, those who said yes often attributed this to the work on the Action Project:

“Before the course, this sense [that people could work together to make change] was not actualized, it was more an inner belief, now it is better formed.”



Theme 4

Citizen Participation

This was the area in which the highest number of students indicated an increase in understanding, both in focus group sessions and on the student survey. During focus group sessions, the students were able to describe many mechanisms available to them

in Ukraine to become civically engaged. Commonly cited examples of these were: to make a request for public information, attend public hearings, organize petitions, and participate in public organizations. Many students described actions they have already taken, such as working with school administrators on anti-bullying programs for children and, in another example, to bring legal education to secondary students. One student formed a group, "Democracy for Mathematicians," while other students have begun work with local governments to create recycling programs and better access to public transportation. At every university in the pilot study, students were active in addressing issues they identified and using knowledge they gained in the course to influence change.

In instances where students had prior knowledge of civic engagement mechanisms, these understandings were enhanced. One student explained,

"We talk a lot about the authorities during other classes and I got the impression that this is a huge bureaucratic machine; that with a lot of these bodies it is impossible to get into them because they are isolated. After the course, I understand that everyone can do something, change something at the local level and then perhaps on the state level too."

Another stated,

"Before the course I thought voting changed nothing, now I see that if you don't use your vote, others will use it for themselves."

Students also expressed realistic attitudes and that change may take consistent and extended work to,

"work up the ladder if necessary," as one student explained.

Course instructors also described instances where they observed students' increased understanding regarding means for citizens to be actively engaged. One instructor explained that, at the beginning of the course, a student explained she would not vote because it wouldn't change anything. However, at the end of the course, she told the instructor she would now vote. Another instructor explained,

"In the beginning, the students were skeptical about making changes, but then they saw changes in themselves. When they learned about the many mechanisms available to citizens to influence government, they realized they had more opportunities than they had understood."

SKILLS

The skills of effective democratic engagement include, but not limited to, critical thinking, recognition of the role of bias, point of view and context, as well as assessment of the credibility of a source, active listening, consensus building, public speaking, effective and rational argument building, group work and problem solving. The data from student focus groups, student surveys, teacher interviews, teacher surveys and classroom observations all demonstrate that students practiced and developed these skills throughout the course through interactive teaching methods and work on the Student Action Project. Course professors noted that students' abilities improved over time when they shared comments such as,

"In addition to skillful use of facts, their discussions started to show the formation of ideas, their thoughts became more profound. Moreover, they learned to express themselves more freely."

In the age of information and technology, media literacy is essential for informed democratic citizen participation. To be "media literate," there are a range of practical and cognitive skills that one must possess. There is the knowledge of how to access various sources and forms of media, the ability to critically assess the media consumed by identifying bias and distortions of truth. Individuals also need to understand how social media can be used as a tool of information sharing and advocacy, but also to manipulate public perceptions of events and even recruit individuals to support extreme positions that threaten the principles of democracy. The traditional skills focused on in civic education lay the foundation for media literacy. In addition, specific lessons were developed to focus students' attention on social media and manipulation.

Nine teachers (at least one instructor from each of the universities in the pilot study) completed a survey where they were asked to note skills they observed among the students and rank the general level of skill development on a scale: high, average or low. Below is a breakdown of the skills observed and the number of instructors who ranked the skill level as high among the students.

Table 3***Skills Most Frequently Practiced & Displayed by Students as Observed by Course Instructors***

SKILLS MOST FREQUENTLY PRACTICED & DISPLAYED BY STUDENTS AS OBSERVED BY COURSE INSTRUCTORS	PROFICIENCY LEVEL	NUMBER OF INSTRUCTORS WHO REPORTED OBSERVING THE SKILL / N = 9
Consider an issue from multiple perspectives	High	8
Work collaboratively with others to achieve a goal	High	7
Analyze information and draw conclusions based on data	High	6
Draw conclusions based on evidence	High	6
Engage in civil discourse	High	6

Students also noted that they used skills in the course that were not often used in their other university courses. They recognized the benefits of this experience when they made comments such as,

“Discussing ideas with peers provided a broader vision,”

“we also learned from each other, changed our minds” and

“we had to think critically and apply our knowledge.”

Students even developed essential skills of listening to one another, learning from one another and looking for areas of compromise.

ATTITUDES & VALUES

Students described changes in how they viewed themselves and their role in society. Many stated that prior to the course they didn't see themselves as having a role, the means or the desire to make change in society. However, after the course, many expressed that they now wanted to be active and felt confident that they could be. One student explained,

"I felt the feeling to change something inside myself and others," and another stated,

"Understanding that you must be an active citizen and young people can change at least something, because now we understand how to do it not only through rallies".

Students also appeared to gain an appreciation for the need to use knowledge in constructive ways to benefit themselves and society as they stated,

"We cannot always change the opinions of others, but we can give information how to protect rights and show the way how to protect yourself," and

"Now I understand that you need to have the knowledge of how to influence the authorities, because without knowledge, you do not know how to make a statement, where to send it."

The above quotes demonstrate that students were developing attitudes and beliefs on the importance of citizen engagement. These insights, coupled with the development of many important skills, indicate that many of the students are becoming informed citizen actors.

Responses on the student survey revealed several positive shifts in behaviors and attitudes before and after taking the course.



Table 4

Shifts in Behaviors and Attitudes Before and After Taking the Course

SURVEY STATEMENT	AGREED OR STRONGLY AGREED WITH ON THE PRE-TEST	AGREED OR STRONGLY AGREED WITH ON THE POST-TEST
I often discuss public issues with others	60%	73%
When political issues or problems are being discussed I usually have something to say	71%	79%
Citizens should join a political party	56%	62%
Members of society should follow political issues in the newspaper, on the radio, on TV or on the internet	76%	86%

The instructors also shared many changes in student attitudes that they observed over the semester. One instructor explained,

“They became more open, willing to share their thoughts and more respectful to each other, willing to compromise and listen.”

Other observations were that the students became more willing to ask questions, they began to think beyond their individual role/interests and of their role as a member of society, and they started to understand that they needed to be a part of any desired change (for example, finding ways to eliminate corruption). Even in instances where students' views on controversial issues were not completely transformed, an instructor noted that as students heard new views, they appeared to grow more tolerant of new perspectives and their language changed and became less offensive over the course of the semester.

Dispositions were also identified during class observations and noted in teacher surveys. The most commonly identified from classroom observations were as follows: a sense of civic responsibility, respect for individual worth and human dignity and tolerance of divergent views and lifestyles. Lastly, topics students chose for their Action Projects indicated a concern for others and the common good. Examples of such projects include: preventing bullying among children; providing assistance in the workplace for people with disabilities; helping people who are food insecure; and reducing drunk driving.



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Додати карту України, віднести
на той мистецтві, який буде
впроваджено курс у 2019-2020, 18

Демо
Правило
Дотримання
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Пункт Б.

ANASTASIA



CONCLUSIONS

The pilot of the course, “Democracy: from Theory to Practice,” yielded very positive results on all measures used to evaluate the pilot – course instructor interviews and surveys, student surveys and focus groups, classroom observations and pre- and post-tests. The results demonstrated that students gained the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to effectively monitor and hold the government and members of society accountable to principles of liberal democracy.

Chief among these skills were the ability to express one’s views, listen to different perspectives, critically assess information and collaborate with others. These skills are needed for individuals to be well-informed citizens who can advocate for their positions and work with others to seek solutions. Beyond the knowledge and the skills developed, the students also demonstrated a desire to be active citizens and a sense of efficacy that they can play a role in moving democracy forward in Ukraine.

The blend of theory and practice that makes the course unique, also appears to be the key to the successful impact of this program. Students and course professors all noted that the material presented in the course textbook is easily accessible to students and made clear with the many examples included. The interactive teaching methods and real-life experiences gained through the Student Action Projects, are identified as defining elements of the course. It is clear from these findings that the course structure should be adhered to. The fact that the findings were consistent across regions and areas of study, also indicates that the success of the pilot can be replicated at other universities throughout Ukraine and there would be significant positive implications on Ukrainian democracy if this course were rolled out more widely across Ukraine.

COURSE BOOK

DEMOCRACY

From Theory
to Practice

DEMOCRACY

