


CHAPTER TEN

THE POTENTIAL OF DELIBERATIVE DIALOGUE TO ADVANCE PEACE AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

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Peace and social justice are inextricably intertwined. By promoting social justice, institutions promote peace. There is widespread understanding that one of the greatest social responsibilities is that of securing peace in our world, built on a firm foundation. While methods of promoting peace are many and varied, there is general agreement that education is the foundation on which a world with the promise of peace can be created.

Deliberative dialogue has emerged as a civic pedagogy in higher education, a tool for solving public problems, and a method of fostering peace. Its use as a method of peace education, however, has not been fully explored. This chapter makes a contribution to such an exploration. After defining the concepts of peace and social justice, we consider approaches to education for peace and outline the nature and purposes of deliberative dialogue. We situate deliberative dialogue in the context of one university’s stated commitment to the promotion of peace and the pursuit of social justice. Then we share student and faculty perspectives on their participation in deliberative dialogue forums held on the university campus. The perspectives are meant to indicate the extent to which deliberative dialogue contributed to fostering social justice in the community.

The Concepts of Peace and Social Justice

There was a time when peace was regarded as merely the absence of war. Back then, proponents of peace emphasized the need for disarmament
and the cessation of conflicts. The recognition that even when there is no war, there is also no peace if social institutions condone and encourage injustice, discrimination, and violation of human rights led to a broader conceptualization of peace in the 1980s (Wenden 2004). Since then, the concept of peace has become more robust, with current definitions reflecting its multidimensionality and comprehensiveness. Salient dimensions of peace include development (Barnett 2008; United Nations Development Programme 2014), human rights (Bhatia, O’Neill, Gall, and Bendin 2000; Isakovic 2001), and environmental or ecological sustainability (Bajaj and Chiu 2009; Harris and Mische 2006; Mische 1994; Reardon 1988; Toh 2006; Wenden 2004). According to Harris and Morrison (2013), peace also means respecting the dignity of each human being, acting without prejudice or discrimination, and sharing material resources to end exclusion and oppression.

Recent discussions of peace have drawn attention to the notion of “positive peace,” as opposed to “negative peace” (Bajaj and Chiu 2009; Grodofsky 2012; also see Reardon 1988, 26). Negative peace is, in essence, the prevention or absence of direct, physical violence such as war; positive peace is the absence of structural violence—that is, unjust social structures and systematic inequities manifested in, for example, racial or gender discrimination (Bajaj and Chiu 2009). In line with the notion of positive peace, we view peace as the presence of norms, policies, systems, and practices that meet human needs, promote human dignity, and uphold social justice.

Social justice is defined as the movement of society towards greater equality, economic fairness, acceptance of cultural diversity, and participatory democracy (Warren 1998). Where social justice exists, people are not subjected to discrimination; they receive equitable treatment, including a fair allocation of community resources. Those who champion peace rightly champion social justice as well. Proponents emphasize the need to create a culture of peace—shared values, attitudes, and modes of behavior characterized by nonviolence; attention to developmental and environmental needs; as well as adherence to the principles of justice, democracy, and understanding at all levels of society (United Nations 1999).

Education for Peace and Social Justice

The field of peace education has grown considerably over the past three decades, as have approaches to peace education. Peace education is not limited to teaching nonviolence and conflict resolution techniques. Rather, peace education is a comprehensive endeavor that encompasses planning, pedagogy, and practice aimed at developing awareness, skills, and values for the pursuit of peace (Bowen 2014; Reardon 1988). Peace education, therefore, includes both education about peace and education for peace, the latter emphasizing the preparation of students for active roles in creating a culture of peace.

Peace education involves inquiry, critical thinking, and dialogue towards greater equity and social justice (Bajaj and Chiu 2009, 241). A scholar of peace education has called it “a dialogical experience conducted through participatory learning, where learners communally and cooperatively grapple with contemporary issues . . . related to local and global contexts” (Kester 2010, para. 6). Johnson and Johnson (2005) have argued cogently that students should be taught “constructive controversy” to ensure that they know how to make difficult decisions and engage in political discourse; and students also should be inculcated with civic values so they will focus on the long-term good of society (280). For their part, Bajaj and Brantmeier (2011) have advocated critical approaches to peace education, aiming to empower learners as transformative agents who analyze power dynamics and the intersectionalities among forms of stratification such as race, class, and gender and who promote participatory citizenship.

Leading peace education scholar Betty Reardon (1988) has outlined three approaches to peace education: (1) environmental education, based on the value of preserving the ecosystem; (2) development education, based on the value of increasing material well-being; and (3) human rights education, based on the value of recognizing the dignity and worth of all human beings. The recommended approaches appear to take into account the multidimensional nature of peace itself. At the core of all three approaches is concern about social justice. Bajaj (2008) has referred to the transformative potential of peace education to engage students in action towards greater equity and social justice.

Based on his recent research, Bowen (2014) has identified distinct similarities between peace education and social justice education. Peace education is process-oriented, inquiry-based, experiential, critical, reflective, value-based, dialogical/conversational and empowering; social
justice education has been described as intellectual and analytical, experiential (with a requirement for critical reflection) and collaborative, value-based, multicultural and activist. According to Bowen, both education for peace and education for social justice may be approached pedagogically as experiential learning characterized by the active participation of students in analyzing social justice issues, engaging in critical reflection, and taking appropriate action. Accordingly, reflection should be so designed that it allows students to consider how educational institutions often inadvertently reproduce rather than remedy social exclusion evident in the wider community. Furthermore, it should prompt self-reflection on their own socialization into attitudes and behaviors that smack of oppressive tendencies so that students will work effectively to combat such attitudes and behaviors.

Among experiential learning approaches, service-learning provides the gold standard of effectiveness. Service-learning is the pedagogy that integrates coursework and community service and requires critical reflection. Several studies have found that service-learning participation helped to improve college students' academic and civic learning; and a few have shown service-learning’s positive effect on social justice attitudes—that is, attitudes concerning the causes of social problems and how such problems can be solved (Moely, Mercer, Ilustre, Miron, and McFarland 2002; Simons and Cleary 2006). Moreover, there are long-standing indications that service-learning can contribute to students' understanding of peace while enhancing their commitment to collaborating with others in the struggle for “a more just and peace-filled world” (see, for example, Weigert 1999, 9). However, it is important to emphasize that the effectiveness of service-learning in this regard depends on its underlying paradigm. Service-learning practitioners typically choose between two paradigms—charity and social change. While the charity paradigm is about providing help, often with a Band-Aid approach, the social change paradigm involves responses, often including legislative advocacy and social action, that address the root causes of social problems. Decades ago, Reardon (1988) suggested students need opportunities to engage in social and political action directly related to the issues explored so they will learn the difficulties of, and the possibilities for, social change.

The Nature and Purposes of Deliberative Dialogue

Deliberative dialogue has been evaluated as one of higher education’s “powerful civic pedagogies” (The National Task Force on Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement 2012, 32), integrating, as it does, two kinds of public discourse—dialogue and deliberation. Dialogue is “a process of communicating with others; a sincere and mutual exchange involving inquiry, reflection, and responsiveness; interactions with one another, rather than to, at, or for others” (Makau and Marty 2013, 250). Dialogue stands in sharp contrast to debate. In a debate, participants aim to persuade; in a dialogue, they aim to reach understanding. Whereas debaters try to win an argument, participants in a dialogue focus on finding common ground, which is marked by shared assumptions, beliefs, interests, perceptions, values or emotional responses (Makau and Marty 2013). Purposeful dialogue requires that participants reveal their own assumptions and respond to others’ assumptions in a nonjudgmental manner.

The process of dialogue can generate several civic benefits. These include “an orientation toward constructive communication, the dispelling of stereotypes, honesty in relaying ideas, and the intention to listen to and understand the other” (McCoy and Scully 2002, 117). Yankelovich (2001) has explained that to engage in genuine dialogue is to create and strengthen values of civil society. Such values include building trust in one another, feeling familiar and comfortable together and knowing how to create the common ground on which successful cooperation depends.

Makau and Marty (2013) define deliberation as “the processes used in efforts to make informed, just, and wise decisions in any given context” and add that “within public sectors, deliberation evokes a spirit of balancing or weighing and thoughtfully considering a matter in consultation with others” (250). Through deliberation, citizen groups can go about deciding how to act, and this involves talking through (not just talking about) issues and making choices together (Mathews and McAfee 2003). Further, deliberation can provide an avenue for citizens to contribute to public policy (McCoy and Scully 2002).

Goals of dialogue and deliberation include building understanding of complex issues, generating innovative solutions to problems, resolving conflicts, inspiring civic action, formulating public policy recommendations, and building community capacity to deal with social problems (Heierbacher 2009). Deliberative dialogue plays a role in building
democratic skills and fostering “robust democratic dispositions” (Harriger and McMillan 2007, 143). Such a role advances deliberative democracy, which requires authentic deliberation before decision making. As Colby and her colleagues have noted,

deliberative democracy particularly emphasizes the value of discussing public problems under conditions that are inclusive and respectful, conducive to reasoned reflection, and premised on mutual willingness to understand others’ perspectives and involve the possibility of refining values around common interests and developing mutually acceptable solutions (Colby, Beaumont, Ehrlich, and Corngold 2007, 30).

Over the years, civic leaders and decision makers have employed deliberative dialogue in addressing a range of issues, from tensions surrounding state education reform efforts to conflicts related to natural resources (Bowen 2014). Yet, not everyone finds deliberation useful or effective. Mathews and McAfee (2003) have observed that some people leave forums frustrated because their expectations are not realized as quickly as they expected. Furthermore, critics of deliberation have mentioned its potential to force homogeneity on heterogeneous communities and to hamper adaptation to change. And some have raised the possibility that stronger, more eloquent, and better informed participants will unfairly influence weaker participants (Bowen 2014). Obviously, there needs to be equitable participation and effective facilitation. The facilitating of public deliberation requires skills in framing the issue, asking thoughtful and probing questions, and encouraging deep reflection. It is important to bear in mind that, in reality, the effects of deliberation tend to be cumulative and can be long lasting.

With regard to peace education, dialogue is considered both a peace-building skill (Kester 2010) and a peace-building method (Bajaj and Chiu 2009), serving to clarify public thinking, contribute to constructive communication, and build mutual understanding (McCoy and Scully 2002; Yankelovich 2001). For Chakravarti (2009), deliberative dialogue is a method for fostering and sustaining “cultures of peace” as it supports open communication, mutual understanding, and social cohesion (267).

**Campus Context for Deliberative Dialogue**

Barry University is a Catholic institution whose core commitments include social justice and collaborative service. The university expects its students and employees “to accept social responsibility to foster peace and nonviolence, to strive for equality, to recognize the sacredness of Earth, and to engage in meaningful efforts toward social change” (Barry University 2008). According to its mission statement, the university experience is designed to “foster individual and communal transformation where learning leads to knowledge and truth, reflection leads to informed action, and a commitment to social justice leads to collaborative service.”

The university celebrates 40 Days of Peace, beginning on Martin Luther King, Jr. Day in January, and including the month of September, celebrated as Peace Month. A major annual event is the College Brides Walk, which raises awareness about dating and domestic violence (Finley 2013). The event is intended to provide a vehicle for the campus and the community to work together to assist victims of violence and to prevent abuse. As Finley (2013) has pointed out, the College Brides Walk has a service-learning component designed to engage students in course-based or co-curricular efforts, including activism, to address dating and domestic violence.

Barry University's Center for Community Service Initiatives (CCSI) organizes a Deliberative Dialogue Series as part of a comprehensive program to sustain institutional commitment to social justice. Deliberative dialogue advances the CCSI's mission—“to foster civic engagement among students, faculty, and staff in the pursuit of social justice” (Center for Community Service Initiatives 2014a). The CCSI has adapted deliberative dialogue as a method of civic learning and engagement. The practice has been to hold 90-minute forums four or five times a year, with the academic year's first forum scheduled for September as a Peace Month activity. However, the deliberative dialogue forums do not focus on peace per se; they cover a range of social justice issues and thus support peace education. The forums bring together campus and community stakeholders to weigh perspectives and exchange ideas about diverse social issues of current concern. Stakeholders work towards a common understanding of such issues, practical approaches to addressing them, and recommendations for workable public policy (Center for Community Service Initiatives 2014b). Students, in particular, are given opportunities to learn democratic processes and practices and to advocate public policy to address specific issues.

Each forum has a specific topic and is structured to include representation from all major stakeholders in civic engagement—students and alumni, faculty and staff members, and community partners. At least one representative of each stakeholder group serves on a panel of lead
participants. Their role is to provide background information, research evidence, experiences, and perspectives on the issue; they also stimulate discussions of different aspects of the topic (Bowen 2014). Participants reflect diversity in terms of race and ethnicity, age, gender, socioeconomic background, education, and experiences. A university faculty or staff member serves as the moderator/facilitator who introduces the topic and the panelists; draws others into the discussion so they are not merely an audience; and encourages questions, ideas, and shared reflection. As part of the facilitation process, the moderator explains the “ground rules” of deliberative dialogue with a view to promoting respectful exchange while exploring the complexity of the issue and the diversity of perspectives.

**Issues and Intended Outcomes**

Substantive issues explored in the Deliberative Dialogue Series have spanned the spectrum from poverty and economic disparities to crime and violence (including the hot-button issue of capital punishment) and civil rights. Educational inequity, environmentalism, and immigration were among other issues discussed (Figure 1). Even though they are not discussed explicitly as part of peace education, these issues all have relevance because they suggest concern about social justice.

For the forum on the “school-to-prison pipeline,” the following questions served to guide the dialogue: What policies in our justice and education systems contribute to increased rates of juvenile arrests? Is there a relationship between race and mass incarceration? What can we do to prevent children from being channeled towards prison and a lifetime of second-class status?

For the forum on human trafficking, some of the contextual information came from the United Nations, which has defined human trafficking as “the recruitment, transportation, transfer ... or receipt of persons, by ... forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception ... for the purpose of exploitation (United Nations 2004, 42). The UN Office on Drugs and Crime estimated conservatively that 2.5 million people are victims of human trafficking at any given time.

As mentioned above, building understanding of complex issues and inspiring civic action are among the general goals of dialogue and deliberation. At Barry University, the CCSI has identified three broad categories of intended outcomes of deliberative dialogue: awareness, advocacy and action (Figure 2). Students are expected to develop awareness, engage in advocacy, and take informed action to address issues explored in the deliberative dialogue forums. By offering students an opportunity to develop and apply civic knowledge and skills, the forums
have supported the development of students' capacity to promote peace and take action in the pursuit of social justice (Bowen 2014).

Figure 2: Intended Outcomes of Deliberative Dialogue

Actual Outcomes of Deliberative Dialogue

A preliminary assessment of the deliberative dialogue forums had revealed that students learned about social justice issues, functions of nonprofit and nongovernmental organizations, roles of citizens in a democracy, and democratic processes (Bowen 2014). The results of that assessment had also indicated that students sharpened their skills in active listening, critical thinking, reflection, purposeful monitoring of public events, and ability to challenge unjust practices. Although deliberative dialogue pointed the way to common ground for civic action, the assessment found few examples of action to address issues discussed.

This chapter draws on data from a survey and informal interviews of students and from personal communication with faculty members on Barry's main campus. The students and faculty members had participated in at least one of 11 deliberative dialogue forums on campus (Figure 1). Our research generated responses that reflect the civic outcomes of the forums and pertinent perspectives of both students and faculty. The outcomes fall into three categories: civic awareness, civic skills, and civic actions (Figure 3).

Nearly all students agreed (with 45% strongly agreeing) that deliberative dialogue made them more knowledgeable about the specific topic of the forum or more aware of the broad social issue. Students also become more aware of perspectives on an issue that were quite different from their own, and some students reported that they learned about the roles and functions of civic institutions. The participation of community-based agencies and nongovernmental organizations in the forums not only allowed them to promote their missions but also provided practical examples of how students and other volunteers can help the organizations
to accomplish their goals. Two comments exemplify the resultant level of civic awareness among students:

Participation in the dialogues has made me more aware of the issues and the organizations that are addressing the issues. The forums fully explain the aspects of the problems, the legal side, the political side, and so forth. Before I attended the dialogue, I was thinking of working with any organization that helped victims. I knew about [human trafficking] before, but I didn’t know about the organizations working to address the problem. Now I intend to apply to these particular organizations after graduation.

As illustrated in Figure 1, awareness is a desirable starting point for deliberative dialogue participants. Similarly, awareness is the primary element of education for peace as a comprehensive endeavor (Bowen 2014; Reardon 1988).

In terms of civic skills, respondents indicated that they learned how to be attentive listeners, effective communicators, critical thinkers, and reflective observers. One student noted: “Listening with an open mind to what everyone was saying helped me see that things were deeper than what I had understood.” Another admitted: “I didn’t know much about the topics before attending, but it’s really better to hear different perspectives rather than read a book about the topic. You see how the subject is getting discussed and learn directly from people about their experiences and struggles.” A third student said: “As a result of my participation [in the deliberative dialogue], one of the key skills that I’ve improved on is listening. You have to really try to understand what people are saying by listening carefully to them. You need to know where they’re coming from.”

Students selected for deliberative dialogue panels understood that they needed to research the topic or issue so they could participate effectively in the forums. Effective participation meant getting to the heart of the topic and making their voices heard:

When you’re a panelist, you have to come prepared and really get in-depth with the topic. You have to think about how things apply to your life to be able to communicate your perspective, so it helped me understand the issue better. When I was on a panel and having to research, it helped me in my class. Since I had done research for the dialogue, I felt more prepared when I had to do research for a class two weeks later. I knew to look for key concepts. Most of my classes don’t require research, so it was really helpful to have gone through that process. It is uplifting and powerful to share your side of situations. I think some people lose track of how much their voice matters and how they can make a huge impact.

The elements of civic awareness as well as the civic skills identified in this research largely match the ones delineated in Bowen’s (2014) assessment of the deliberative dialogue forums.

Regarding civic actions, students reported acts of charity as well as acts of advocacy. Two students provided examples of charitable deeds prompted by their participation in different deliberative dialogue forums:

[The dialogue on college access] made me curious about what my friends were going through with their tuition, so it made we want to talk with them to learn about their situations. It made me want to offer my refund check to my friend. I gave her $250 from my refund check because she couldn’t pay her tuition. [The dialogue] made me more willing to help others who were in that situation.

After [the forum on human trafficking], I was speaking to my parents. The conversation reinforced what we already thought, but they said I should continue to take action, rather than just sitting and thinking about it. Every Christmas, we brought gifts for the Restavek children (indentured servants trafficked in Haiti), but now we are going to bring the children school supplies in the summer as well. My dad is also going to try and find someone to build a house or more rooms for an orphanage they work with.

Although it is unlikely that these acts of charity will lead to long-term systemic change, they do demonstrate students’ responsiveness to the needs of others. Many students said they would do volunteer work with, or on behalf of, local agencies addressing some of the social issues discussed. One student planned a weekend service trip to a youth detention center served by an organization that was represented at the forum on human trafficking.

Following the forum on the “school-to-prison pipeline,” a social work faculty member stressed the “need to get some trauma-informed educational initiatives going in our local school districts.” Some students committed themselves to advocacy activities; they would speak up for victims of abuse and violence, and they would elevate public awareness of specific social issues. One student remarked: “Since the most recent dialogue I attended, I noticed that I’m really becoming an advocate for women’s rights. ... I’m addressing this issue (human trafficking) through school projects, and I’m considering how it will affect my future.”
A few students indicated that they would change their career goals in response to the deliberative discussions. Preferred careers included law and social work:

Being from where I’m from and seeing things that I have seen gives me a different outlook on the situation than a person who is studying the problem [from a distance]. It makes me think about careers like law that would let me help the community. A lot of people do things for cash, but I want to give back to the community. ... [The deliberative dialogue] made me think that I should study criminal justice and become a lawyer.

As a future lawyer, I realize that I’d have the opportunity to work with kids. Before, I was thinking of corporate law, but now I realize that I can also advocate for kids.

Now I really want to go to grad school. I would like to do education or social work. The dialogues helped me to focus and changed my [career] path. I know now that I want to work with human rights organizations or with people who have actually had hardships.

By and large, the students who took part in deliberative dialogue forums desired to become more actively involved in social change efforts, whether as volunteers or as employees. However, while they wanted to take personal action, all students did not necessarily have a realistic view that the action would produce the desired results.

Additional Perspectives on Deliberative Dialogue

Students and faculty members at Barry University shared their views on the Deliberative Dialogue Series in relation to its broad purpose and the objectives of specific forums. The perspectives presented here are meant to indicate the extent to which deliberative dialogue contributed to fostering social justice in the community. Here is a sampling of faculty and student perspectives:

The Deliberative Dialogue Series provides a forum where diverse views can be exchanged. It brings together people with different perspectives on critical issues and gives all who participate a lot of important information to consider. The dialogues encourage a safe space where controversial topics can be discussed and people are encouraged to exchange their views. One of the problems with dialogues is when people come in with closed minds and are not willing to alter their opinions based on new evidence they may gather about a topic. But in participating in and observing several dialogues, I have seen people reach that “aha” moment where new information helps to reshape their views. It does not happen all the time, but when it does, it is a special moment that demonstrates the efficacy of engaging in these exercises.

The Deliberative Dialogue Series creates a space to discuss pressing issues of national and international importance from a variety of perspectives. The expertise of panel members and the high level of student participation these events generate, ensure a deep discussion that goes beyond party platitudes and media sound bites. I highly recommend attending.

We have discussed issues that not only affect us personally [but also] has an impact on the community. Deliberative dialogue is a platform that allows people to come together and share ideas about how to resolve some of the issues or at least lead in the direction to do so.

Deliberative dialogue gives us as students the opportunity to become cognizant of world issues in an environment that facilitates greater analysis. Furthermore, it gives us a chance to play a meaningful role in discussing issues and finding solutions to social problems without experiencing the pressure that exists in a traditional classroom. The dialogue on environmental sustainability really struck me as intriguing due to my keen interest in sustainability for global harmony. One common feature that I have recognized is that the students in attendance left the dialogues feeling re-energized to enact positive changes in their surroundings. This clearly distinguishes this program as academically enriching while action oriented.

Hearing other people’s opinions on different topics is the best part of deliberative dialogues. People are from different backgrounds. Hearing their opinions is beneficial, especially when they’re people that I don’t normally interact with. Barry is such a small school, and I’m mostly around the same students. Deliberative dialogue is a chance to interact with others who are different from me.

Deliberative dialogue gave me a better understanding of my social justice role. I should not only articulate a sense of responsibility to act, but I should identify methods of action as well.

Students seemed to interpret their social justice role as involving direct action to assist people in underserved communities. In addition to immediate action through volunteer work or service-learning projects, students considered career options that would facilitate their desire to contribute to then actually promote social justice.
A faculty member shared her perspective in relation to questions that students asked during the "school-to-prison pipeline" forum:

Two student questions caught my attention. What is poverty and how can I learn about it? Where is the leadership ... and the examples that community members need in order to produce change? These questions reveal a curiosity that our students already possess about the needs of local communities. The student who asked [the question about poverty], although admitting to a privileged socioeconomic status, showed a genuine interest in authentic learning and care for those around her. She also displayed attention and listening skills. She learned that poverty is a major social problem that affects access to education, family support, as well as school retention. The question about community leadership and examples emerged from the student's observation that positive role models and leadership are invisible in poor communities. The student raised an important issue: If we see injustice, poverty, racial profiling around us, where are the leaders and what can we do about it?

That faculty member said students needed to learn more about socioeconomic, civic, and political issues as well as leadership and action for change. She argued for "community-engaged pedagogy based on identifying real needs and matters of concern in the community, which also positions the student to learn about various agents and stakeholders connected to those issues."

While students highlighted their charitable activities and plans for careers focused on assisting marginalized people, faculty members expressed their commitment to using the curriculum to help students understand and respond to social issues. Among them was a faculty member who alluded to ongoing efforts to agitate for an end to the death penalty:

The dialogue on the death penalty was a catalyst for me to write two grants for collaboration between the university and FADP (Floridians for Alternatives to the Death Penalty). ... The intended purpose was to build a community organizing model in South Florida that would train students to raise awareness about anti-death penalty efforts.

The dialogue on hunger and homelessness got me thinking about ways to support students in moving from a charity mindset and looking at service through a social change lens. ... It's one thing to collect and donate food to a homeless shelter; it's quite another thing to help people gain skills and access to affordable housing. ...Clearly, education and advocacy are feasible ways.

It was obvious that the faculty members saw what Bajaj (2008) described as the transformative potential of peace education to engage students in action that would promote social justice.

At the forum on food access, participants expressed concern about the impacts of industrial agriculture, such as confined animal feeding operations and intensive monoculture farming that relies heavily on chemical inputs (e.g., synthetic fertilizers and pesticides) and that leaves the soil vulnerable to erosion. Faculty and students said they would like to see increased investments and better land-use ordinances to support urban agriculture that produces healthy foods.

In relation to the forum on college access and rising tuition, recommendations made by an associate professor at another university resonated with us. Arguing that college professors must do more to address rising tuition costs, Schneck (2013) recommended that faculty add community engagement components to their courses:

The more students leave campus, the more they are able to gain both life-altering perspective as well as career-altering contacts. Every course taught on a college campus can add an element requiring students to leave campus and to increase their exposure to the world in which we will soon be sending them.

Schneck (2013) further recommended that faculty "insert social justice everywhere." In this regard, he wrote:

Faculty cannot be blind to the issues of race and class that are inherently present in the astronomical cost of higher education. It is not enough to foster these conversations in special Town Hall meetings; they must also take place in the classroom. Again, every course taught on a college campus can add an element requiring student engagement on the topics of race and class, from the topic of economic access in the natural sciences to the presence of artists of color in art history survey courses. Faculty must do more to increase students' ability to have difficult conversations about race and class if we ever hope to graduate a population of citizens who can fully flesh out how rising tuition costs affect all segments of our population.

While acknowledging that his recommendations would not translate into an increase in a student's ability to pay for college, he emphasized that faculty should have a voice in the dialogue and should engage in practices that could directly affect the experiences and outcomes of struggling students.
Chapter Ten

Conclusion

The goals of deliberative dialogue include helping students become aware of social issues, engage in advocacy, and take appropriate action. Of course, the full range of outcomes of deliberative dialogue is not guaranteed. Building awareness is a relatively easy task, as our research has shown. It certainly is not easy to produce the actions needed to improve community conditions, redress social imbalances, or achieve other objectives of peace education. As the perspectives shared in this chapter indicate, students at Barry University have begun to develop some of the cognitive and participatory skills required for effectiveness in addressing social issues. It is vital that education for social justice does not end with exploration or analysis of social issues but rather extend to the kind of advocacy that will inform policies and actions that could make a difference in the lives of marginalized members of our society.

Deliberative dialogue holds enormous promise as a vehicle for civic engagement that promotes social justice. It has the potential to advance peace, embodied in policies and practices that meet human needs, promote human dignity, and uphold social justice. Through their participation in deliberative dialogue, college students have an excellent opportunity to practice the role of change agents who challenge social conditions and help to move society towards peace and justice.

References


