
Abstract
Yonkman and Bridgeland (2009) and Nesbit (2011) have each offered studies in recent years in which military veterans reported possessing skills and values that facilitate civic engagement. I investigated these claims by exploring basic training in one branch of the United States (U.S.) military, the Marine Corps. I conducted semi-structured, in-depth interviews with 10 enlisted Marine Corps veterans and 7 drill instructors to ascertain their perceptions regarding the didactic aspirations and pedagogies of their service's basic training related to skills and values development. I utilized a civic capacities model developed by Verba, Schlozman, and Brady (1995) and Kirlin (2003) to examine whether Marines’ entry training could be classified as civic in character. According to this study’s participants, Marine Corps Basic Training did teach skills and values that qualify as civic dispositions. I also explored several pedagogical strategies utilized by the Marines, such as learning communities, role modeling, narrative pedagogy and the use of a capstone exercise, which could be applied by civic educators. Topics for future research of the sort undertaken here include both national and international comparative studies of entry-level military training, the effects of combat on veterans’ civic dispositions and whether and how community involvement can aid in veterans’ transitions to civilian life.

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