

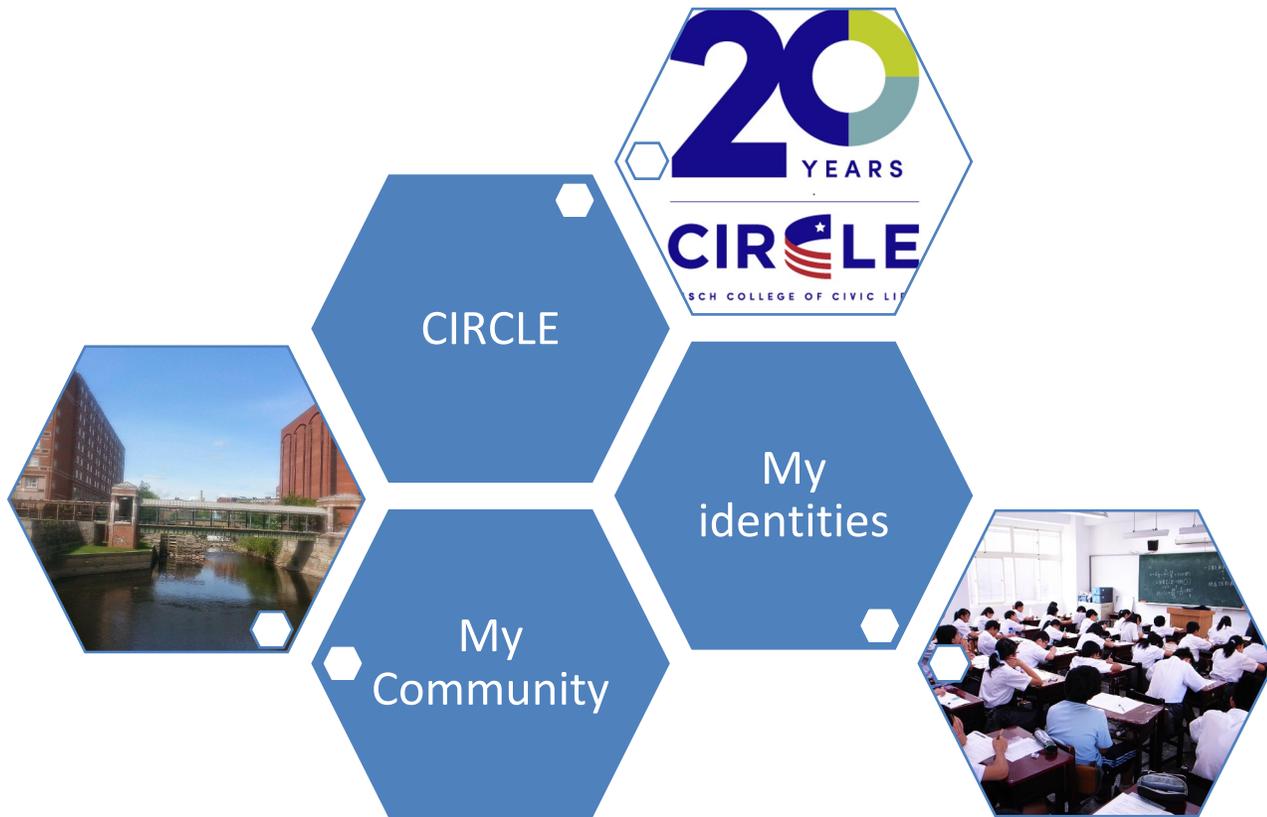


What Is Youth Civic Engagement and Why Is It Important?

MARCH 3, 2022 ILLINOIS QUALITY AFTERSCHOOL SPECIAL TOPIC WORKSHOP
Kei Kawashima-Ginsberg, Ph.D. Director, CIRCLE at Tufts University



Hello My Name is Kei (pronounces “Kay”)!





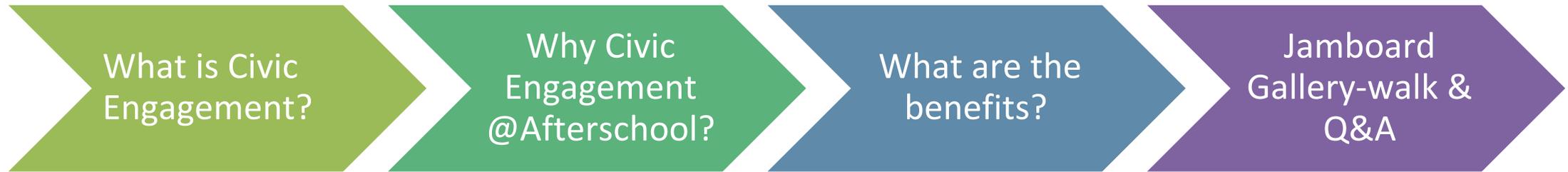
Icebreaker of the Day: Please share in chat

What is one thing you do that cheers you up?

and/or

What is one thing that has calmed your nerves?

Roadmap



I want to hear from you!

- While you are listening, please go to the [Jamboard](https://shorturl.at/hrFX0) (shorturl.at/hrFX0).
- **Page 1:** Post your questions and insights as you listen. Please cluster yours with similar questions.



Page 2: If you are thinking of trying a new project or refining an existing project with a civic angle, please share!

What is Civic Engagement?

AND WHAT ARE SOME KEY TRENDS IN YOUTH CIVIC ENGAGEMENT?



Jonathan M. Tisch
College of Civic Life

What Comes to Mind with “Civic Engagement?”

Voting

Volunteer

Jury duty /
Poll-work

It Takes Many Forms

Helping
neighbors

Voting

Volunteer

Military and
national
service

Jury duty
Poll work

Community
organizing

It Takes Many Forms

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Military and
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Voter
registration/
Get-out the
vote

Jury duty
Poll-work

Service-
learning
projects

Community
organizing
& Protests

It Takes Many Forms

Helping
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Community
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Policy
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Protests

Civic Engagement: What is it?

Civic engagement: is something someone does, through work with others, to solve public problems.

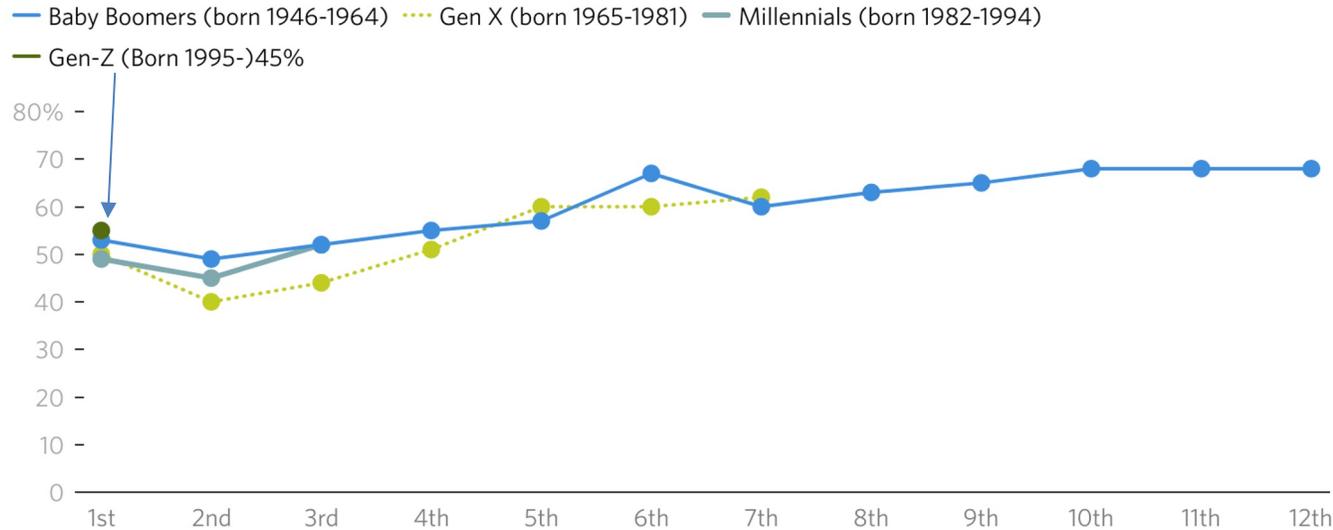


Civic Engagement takes many forms and young people should be intentionally exposed to many strategies of civic engagement and learning about civic and political institutions throughout their development. ***Because these things have to be learned.***

Gen-Z and Civic Engagement – an Overview

Millennials, Gen Xers, and Boomers Have Voted at Similar Rates When They Were The Same Age (Copy)

The voter turnout in presidential elections of each generation (defined by birth years below) in the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, etc. elections in which the entire age cohort (ages 18-24) was eligible to vote.



Note: For Boomers, the first presidential election was 1972, for Gen X it was 1992, and for Millennials it was 2008. 2020 was the first Presidential election year in which a cohort of 18-24 year olds were from the Gen-Z birth years.

CIRCLE Tufts University Tisch College · CIRCLE

Source: CIRCLE's analysis of the Census Current Population Survey Voting and Registration Supplement, 1972-2020

Chart: Alberto Medina, CIRCLE



- Voting rates go up by age.
- **Gen-Z generation has voted at a higher-rate than the Boomers, when compared as same age group.**
- Racial voting disparities smaller Gen-Zs than in previous generations.

Millions of Youth Are Engaged, Looking to Create Change

Engaged Generation

- 83% believe young people have the power to change the country
- 79% say the COVID-19 pandemic has helped them realize that politics impact their everyday lives
- Turnout equivalent to 1972

Civic Engagement through Issues

- **27% of young people say they have attended a march or demonstration in 2020**
- Young people's interest in civic engagement often starts with issues of their interest

Paying Attention to News

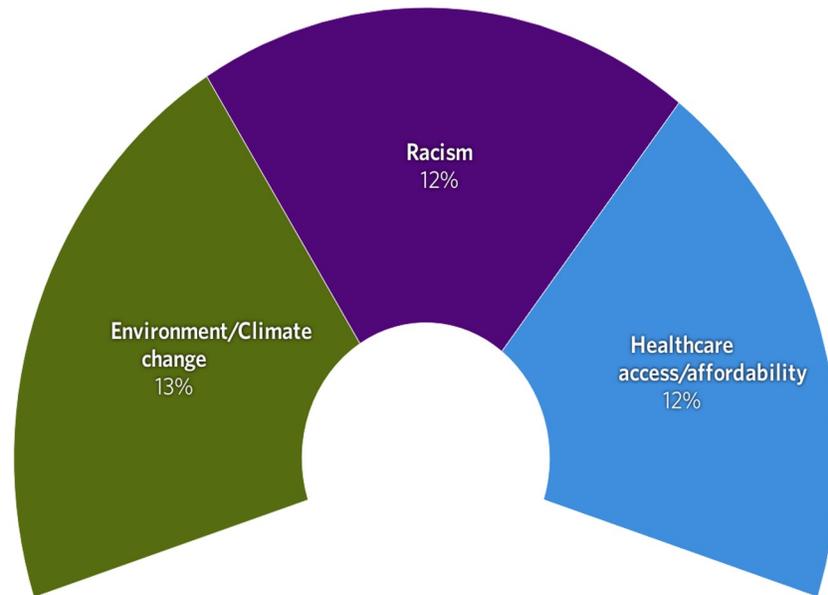
- 75% were paying some or a lot of attention to the 2020 election in June
- High intention to vote.
- Increase in the number of young people sharing news and information using social media.

Is there such things as “the” Youth Issue?

Racism a Top Issue for Youth of Color; Environment and Healthcare Also Top Priorities

The percentage of young people, ages 18-29, who identified each as the top issue in determining their vote in the 2020 election. Click each group below to cycle through top issues by race/ethnicity.

All Youth Asian Youth Black Youth Latino Youth White Youth



Only top three issues included; not to scale and will not add up to 100%

CIRCLE Tufts University Tisch College · CIRCLE

Source: CIRCLE/Tisch College 2020 Pre-Election Youth Poll

- There is no one “youth issue!”
- Climate change and racism rank in top 3 across most groups
- Big issues Local and interactional manifestation
 - E.g., climate change and conservation of a local watershed; “racism” and how school rules are applied to the black students at high school

Diverse Generation, Some Common Priorities

“My generation is very involved on all fronts. Not just political but social — also environmental causes. We want to bring about change by being the change and advocating for the change.”¹⁶

Maya, 21
Charlotte, NC (Conservative)

“There are issues that are impacting us more than previous generations. Gun violence in schools has become more prevalent. Climate change is more imminent. It will probably directly impact us and our children. These issues are more at the forefront of our minds.”¹⁷

Richa, 18
Jacksonville, FL (Liberal)

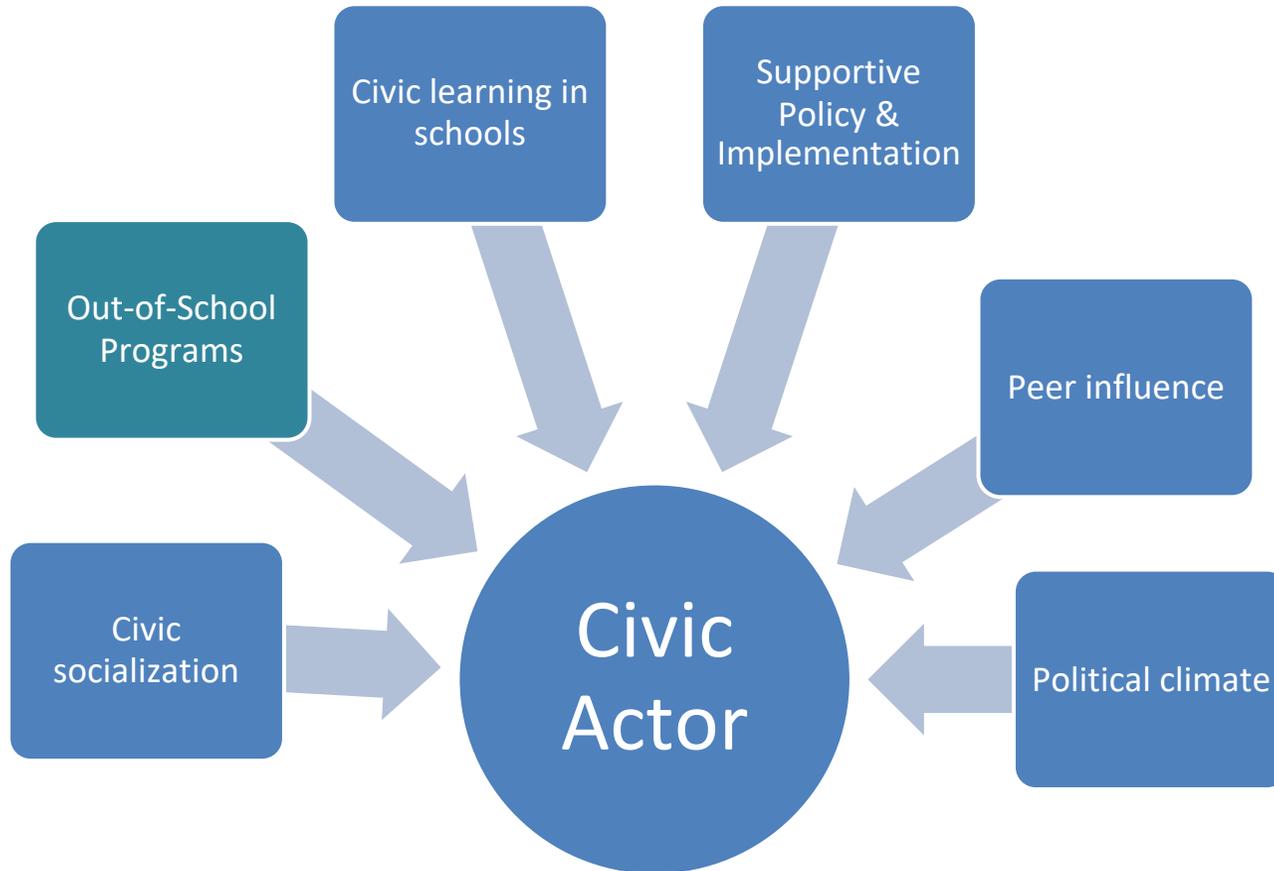
Civic Role of Community-Based Learning Centers

- WHY AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS ARE POWERFUL SITE OF CIVIC LEARNING



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College of Civic Life

Civic Learning is Developmental



- Civic character, competency and experience build over time, through diverse network of structured and unstructured opportunities.
- Some are positive and explicit, and others are negative and implicit.
- **What are some examples of civic learning/lessons in each setting (in chat)?**

Afterschool Programs provide Important and Unique Civic Learning

School-Based Civic Education	Afterschool Programs
Structured content given – can be rigid at times.	Less “direct instruction” time but can be more relevant and localized.
Available to all students but low-income and minority students get less quality	Serves higher % of low-income and minority families and communities than K-12 schools
Routine and structure sometimes more important than student-interest and voice.	More space for student-directed learning and voice
Subject-specific learning – focus on individual achievement	Focus on 21 st Century competencies – learning across disciplines
Highly value on critical thinking	High value on critical thinking

Examples of School-Based Civic Learning in Illinois



Service-Learning

(General Greene Elementary School)



Deliberation/ Discussions

(Mikva Challenge)



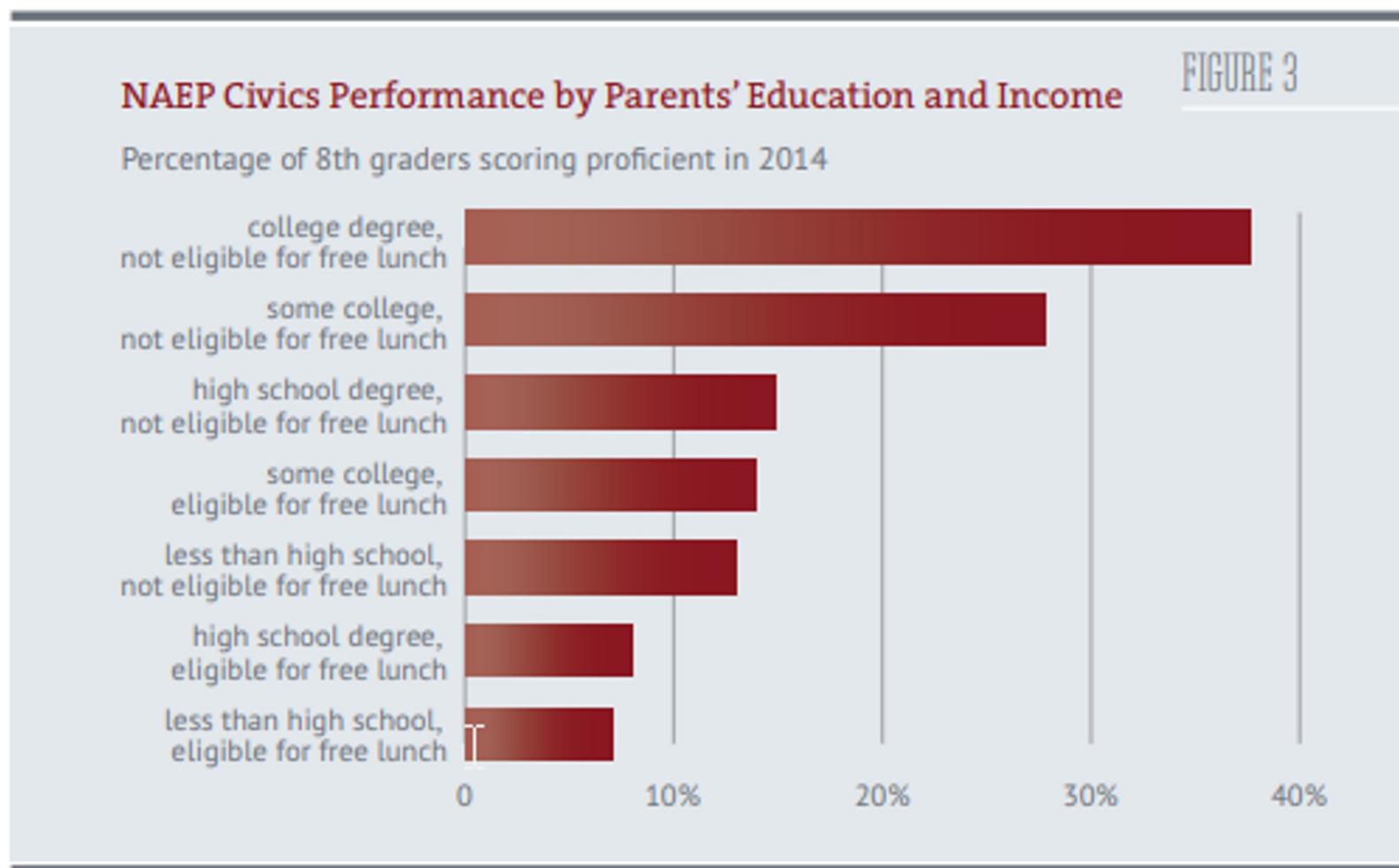
Simulated Democratic Processes

(USA Today)



Direct Instruction

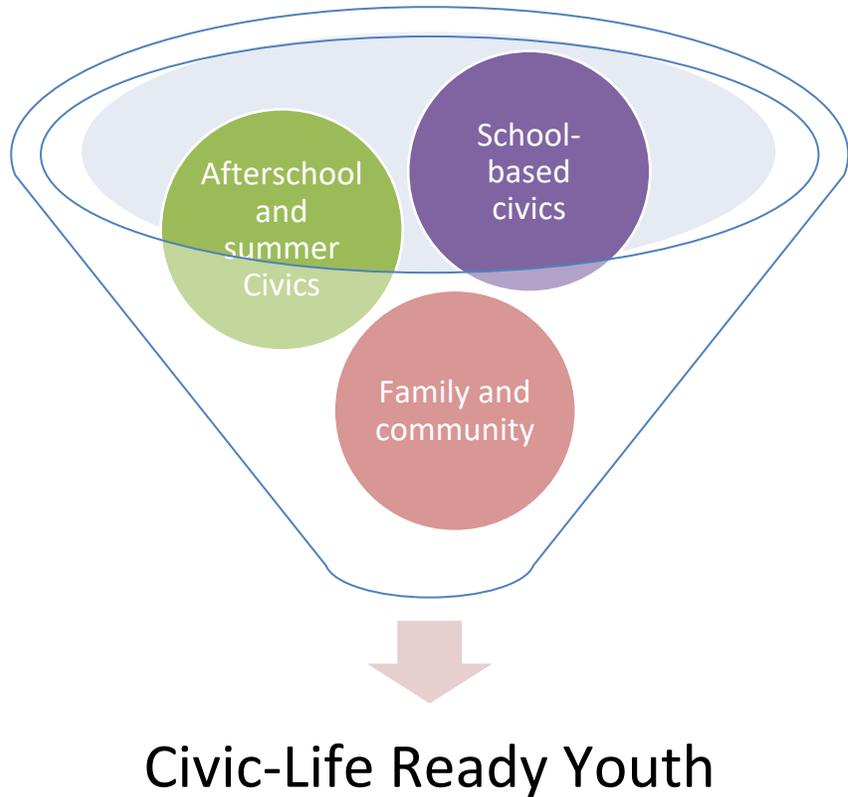
Civic Readiness in Knowledge (and other domains) Shows Disparities



Why Should Afterschool Programs Offer Civic Engagement?

- Young people's passion for social change must be supported by various skills, foundational knowledge of civic and political systems.
- Preparing young people for informed civic participation is arguably harder now than it was decades ago:
 - A larger "public" than this form of government was designed for
 - More diversity, deepening inequality
 - Political polarization with residential segregation
 - Skills that must evolve with time
- Afterschool programs also offer:
 - Local engagement, diverse expertise
 - Chance to leverage youth voice and knowledge which are often overlooked

School-Based Civics is Not Enough for Most



- School-based civic-learning is usually not sufficient for all students.
- Afterschool-based civic opportunities give students a chance to;
 - Apply abstract knowledge to solve problems in real-world
 - Utilize their strengths
 - Connect with community
 - Gain a meaningful sense of accomplishment
 - Use their voice and leadership

Civic Learning as a Driver of Learning

HOW DOES CIVIC LEARNING HELP THE GOALS OF AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS?

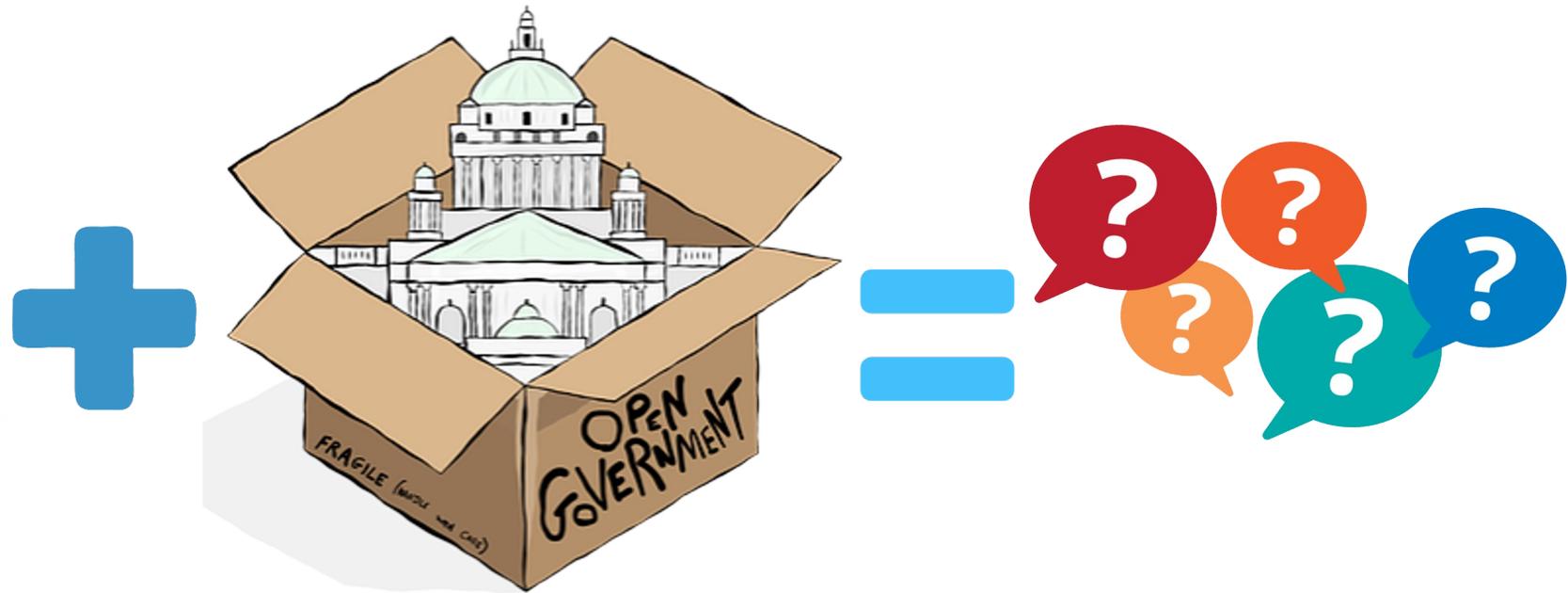


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21st Century Competencies + Civics? Can they Coexist?

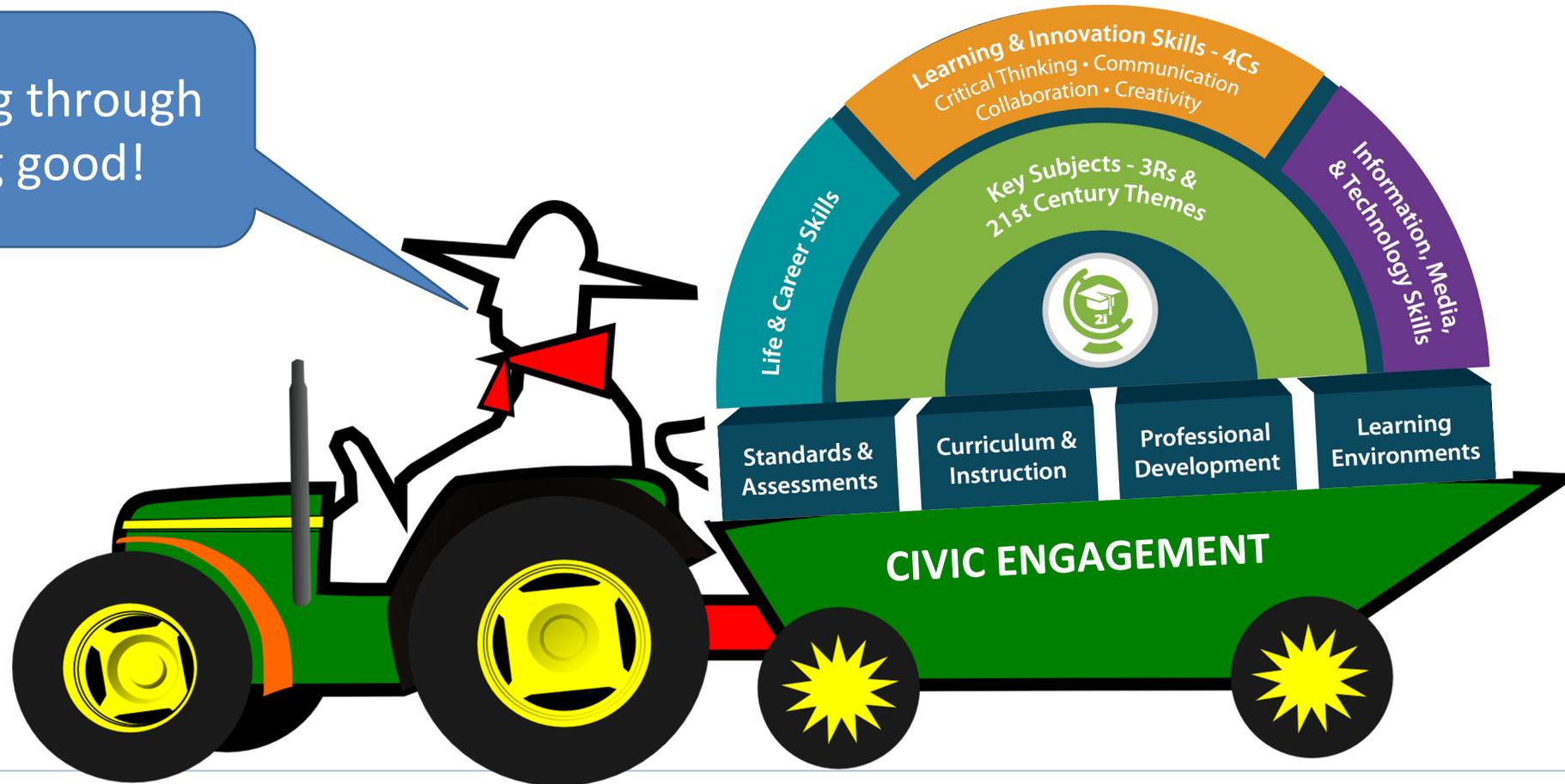


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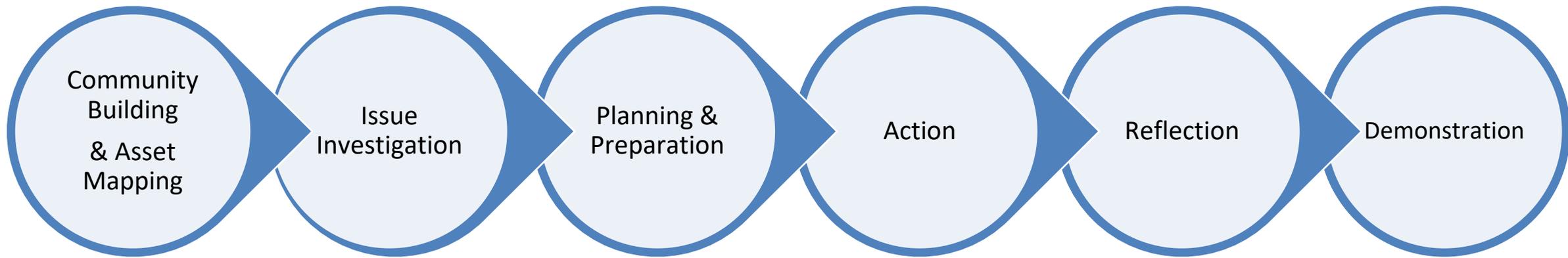


Civic Engagement as an Engine for 21s Century Learning

Learning through doing good!



Using Civic Engagement (and Learning) Projects



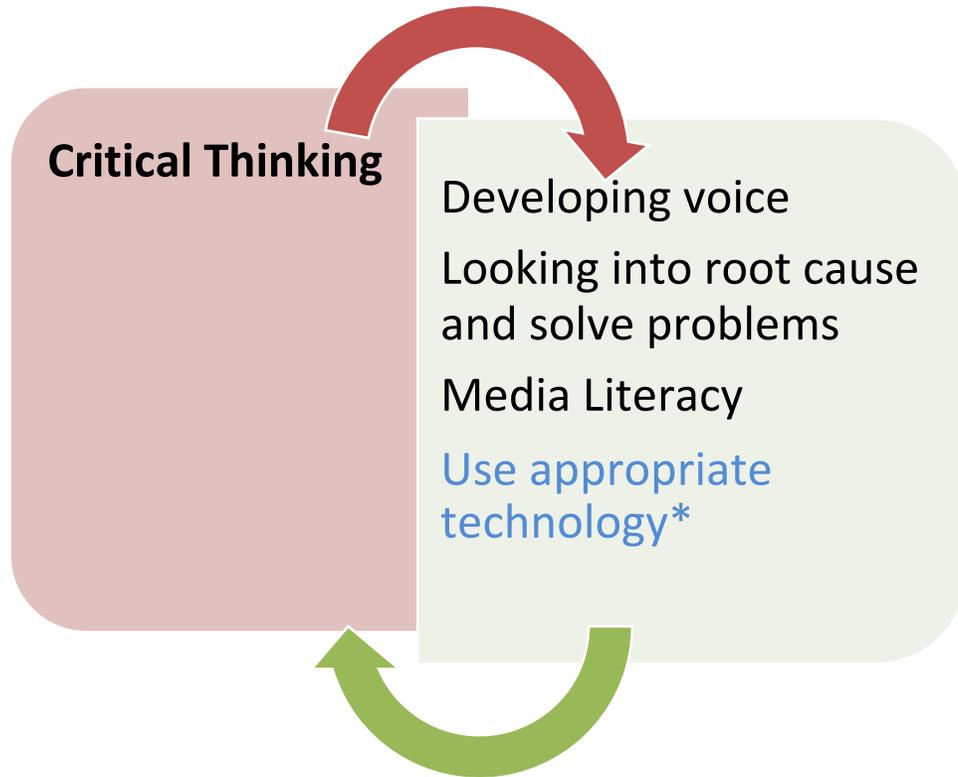
Resources: <https://www.nylc.org/page/resources>, IPARD Model (adapted)

Example Service-Learning: Literacy as a Civil Right



<https://vimeo.com/352136610>

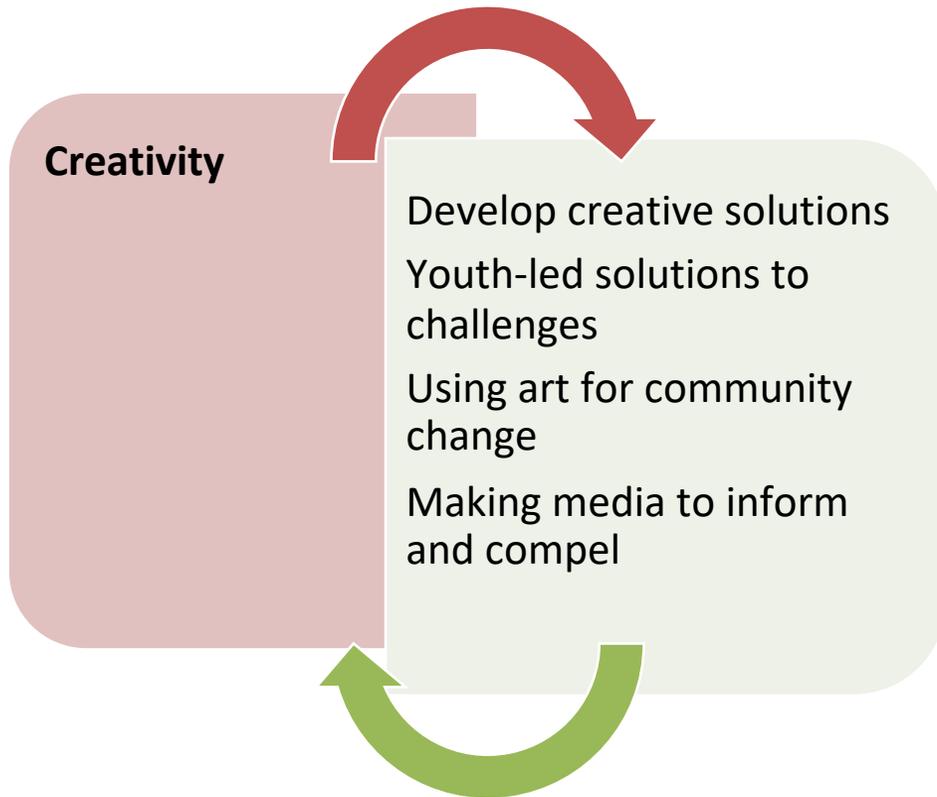
How does Civic Engagement Build 21st Century Competencies?



*entries in a blue font are competencies that develop while engaging in civic tasks.

- Civic engagement projects often start with an everyday experience:
 - E.g., "Hmm my street is always littered with trash...I don't like it"
- Wondering turns into a Civic Question:
 - What should be done, by whom, and how?
- Students should:
 - have a voice in the issues and solutions to target and use what they know from their own experience.
 - be guided to pay attention to *why* the problem is happening to begin with, not just be guided to *fix the problem today*.
 - have opportunities to look into the issue while learning to evaluate resources' credibility and usefulness (relevance).

How does Civic Engagement Build 21st Century Competencies?



*entries in a blue front are competencies that develop while engaging in civic tasks.

- Young people excel at out-of-box thinking:
 - Generate & gather new and creative ideas (radical and incremental ideas)
 - Uplift young people's inventiveness
- The ultimate solutions should be based on:
 - The relevance to the problem at hand
 - Likelihood of success (research about a topic and solutions should guide this)
- **Art is a powerful tool of civic engagement too!**
 - Teach students about arts' role in social change
 - Use students' voices, talents and motivation to make/perform art (e.g., visual arts, music, poem, play, photo voice, narratives, dance, zines).
 - Example - https://youtu.be/b_qXCcgwAn8

How does Civic Engagement Build 21st Century Competencies?

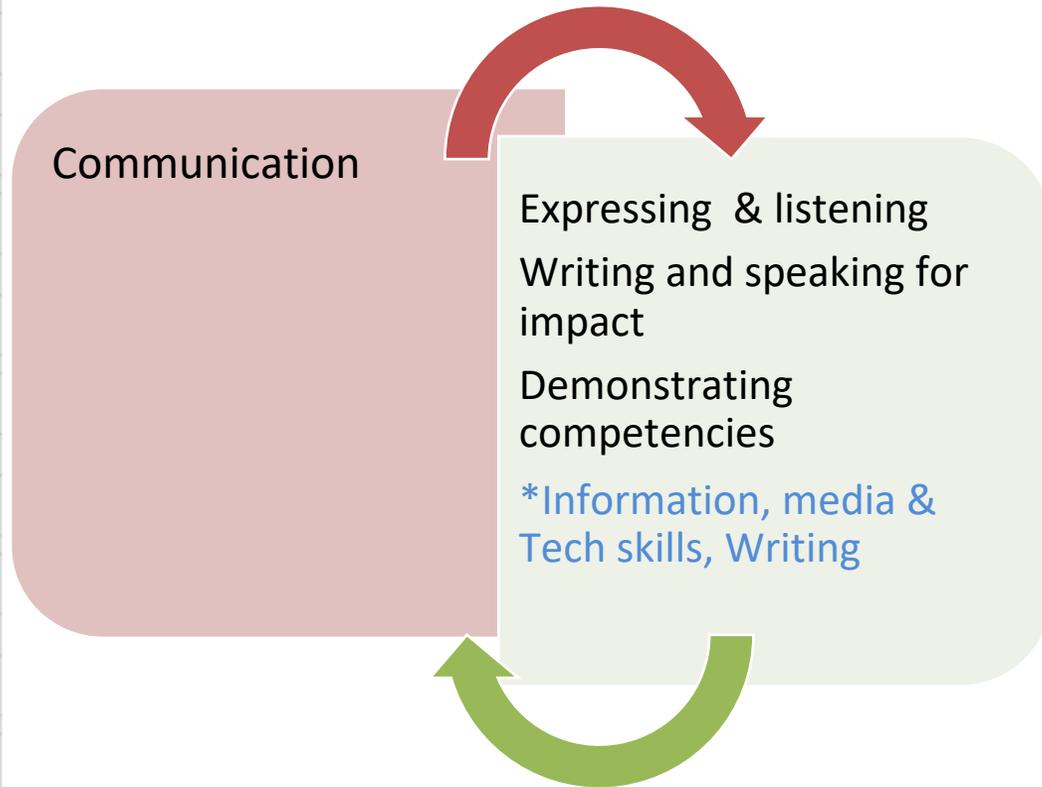
Collaboration

Working others
Deliberations
Asset-based leadership
Diverse opinions and views
Trust-building
**social and cross-cultural skills, Life & Career Skills*

- Deep collaboration is often necessary in effective civic projects. In civics, **collaboration** looks like:
 - Soliciting diverse views using inclusive strategies
 - Making decisions together (deliberation)
 - Delegating leadership to diverse peers based on their unique strengths and assets
 - Making compromises to arrive at a solution
 - Identifying and engaging allies
- Collaboration develops **career** and **leadership** skills
 - Taking notes, facilitating a meeting
 - Strategies for gathering opinions and decision-making
 - Asking generative questions
 - Being aware of social and cultural contexts of members

**entries in a blue front are competencies that develop while engaging in civic tasks.*

How does Civic Engagement Build 21st Century Competencies?

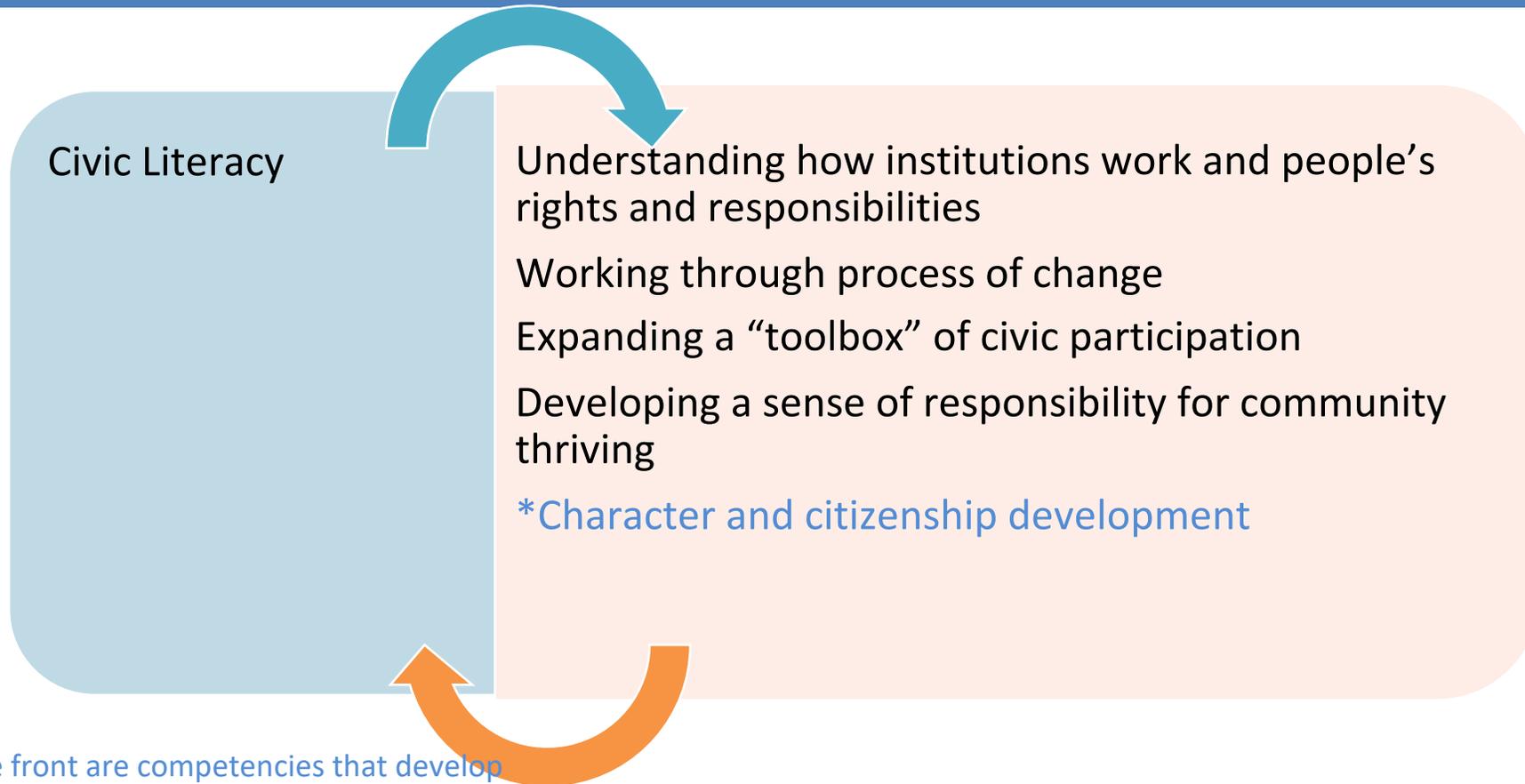


Communications in civic projects:

- Starts with students developing and expressing their views and listening deeply to others' views
- Students' civic communication skills also include:
 - Choosing the mode/medium of communications for impact
 - Building trust and credibility
 - Understanding cultural, social and community context in deciding how to communicate
 - Motivating others to act on solutions

*entries in a blue front are competencies that develop while engaging in civic tasks.

Building Civic Literacy



*entries in a blue front are competencies that develop while engaging in civic tasks.

Planning to Include Civic Engagement in your Programs?

A PRIMER



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College of Civic Life

Where Should We Start?

- Different students may start at different stage
- Approaches that tap into critical thinking and systemic solutions are most often seen as

Least Political ← → Most Political

Personally Responsible

Follows rules
Makes personal choice to help others
Demonstrates good character
Donates goods and food.

Participatory

Joins community improvement efforts
Knows how to work with others
Understands how government works
Can plan collective efforts (food drives)

Justice Oriented

Uses critical thinking to explore root causes
Seeks out and address injustice
Can include systems-level solutions
Explores policy/budgetary solution to community hunger

But Many American are Polarized and Distrustful of Each Other

81% Believe the 2020 election is one of the **most important in my lifetime**

Source: More in Common (2020)

52% A majority of young Americans believe that our democracy is either “in trouble,” or “failing”

71% Worry about the risk of **widespread violence** across America after the results of the 2020 election are announced

Source: More in Common (2020)

What If People Say Civic Engagement is “Political?”

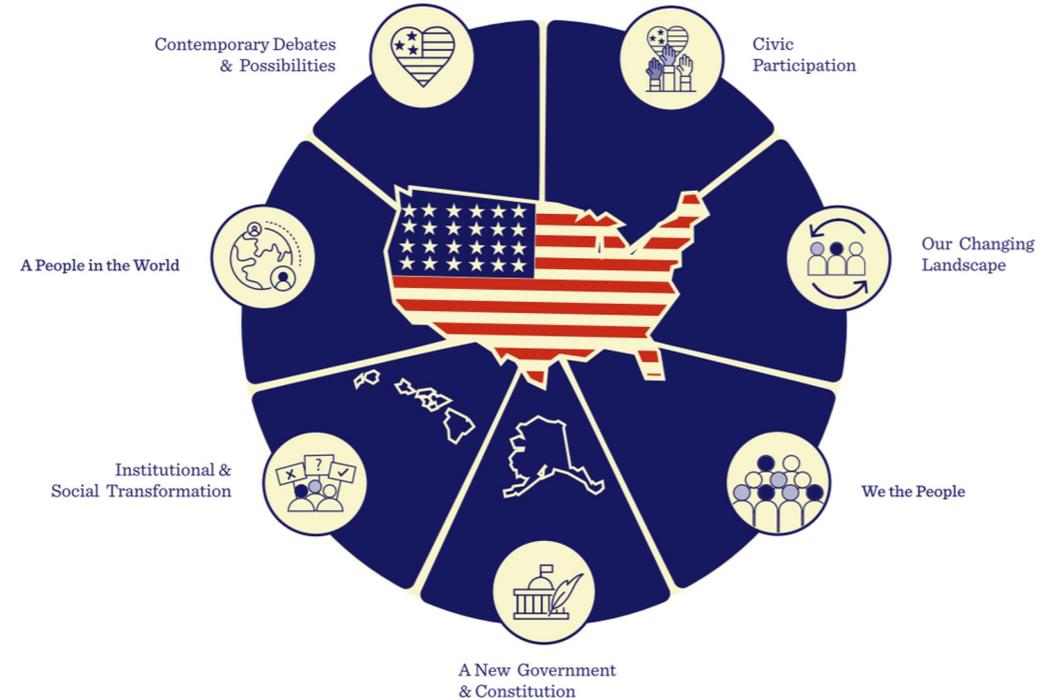
- Research shows Americans are weary of “politics” and some equate civic learning with “activism.”
- People sometimes fear that their family values are actively challenged through social studies and activities.
- **Strategies that work to relieve community fear:**
 - **Young people should have opportunities to learn** about their community through multiple perspectives so they know how to work with diverse people.
 - **Transparency:** Do not use short-hand to describe your program (e.g., student activism, action civics) but share the activities you hope to do with details as soon as possible.

Working with Community Stakeholders – part 2

- **It's about student learning:** Help your stakeholders make connection between what you are doing with your program's core student learning mission (e.g., 21st century competencies).
- **Invite parents in:** Caregivers want to be heard, and most often want to help. When plausible, involve families and caregivers in your project.
- **When conversations turn political:**
 - Reassure families that student civic projects are about addressing real community challenges in a nonpartisan manner, not a way to debate national politics. Students need to learn and want to help solve your community's challenges.

Using Educating for American Democracy as a Design Framework

- **Educating for American Democracy (EAD)** is an initiative that is designed to address the big challenges in civic education by embracing and leveraging this polarization
- 300+ diverse stakeholder voice
- **EAD is an inquiry framework for:**
 - Telling full and complete narratives
 - Cultivating civic honesty and reflective patriotism
 - Teaching abstract and concrete concepts of history and civics



Meshing Best Instructional Practices with PYD

Relationship

- Peer-to-peer support, “Civic friendship,” serious work but lots of fun & joy

Relevance

- Help students develop a good “observational lens” to notice everyday challenges and start an exploration with challenges close at home.

Recurrence

- Incorporate inquiry/critical thinking components with increasing depth and complexity

Reflection

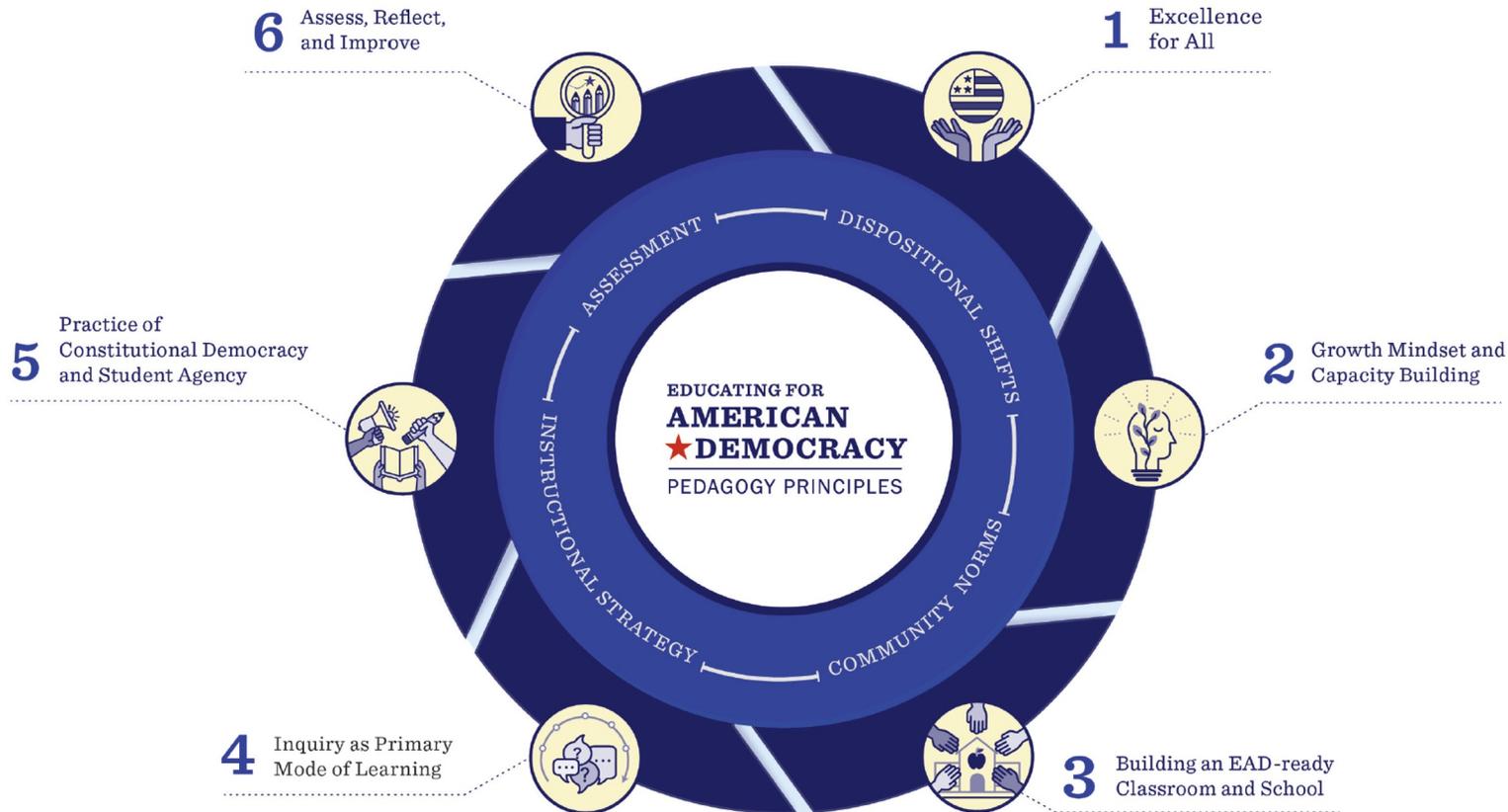
- Reflection and meaning-making for each student – “What, So What, Now What?”

Respect

- Students, no matter how young, can do a lot. Value the assets students bring and embrace their identities so they know they are contributing to the collective work.

Educating For American Democracy – Pedagogy Principles

The EAD Teacher



- Provides guidance for educators and facilitators to help every student be civic life ready.
- Integrates multiple learning frameworks relevant for civic engagement.
- Evidence-based (see attached summary.)

Sharing and Q&A

VISIT [SHORTURL.AT/HRFX0](https://shorturl.at/hrfx0) TO ADD QUESTIONS ADD KUDOS TO OTHER PEOPLE'S IDEAS!

I want to hear from you!

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Questions

21st Century Learning through Civic Engagement



Use sticky notes to ask questions that pop up! It's easy. Click on this icon -->



New Ideas?

Again use sticky note or share your favorite resources!



Put a heart on ideas you like!



Page 2: If you are thinking of trying a new project or refining an existing project with a civic angle, please share!