14. CIVIC LITERACY

©Literacies for the Digital Age to Teach in the K-12 Classroom
By Leah G. Stambler, Ph.D.
Developed for the Pier Institute: Global Youth in the Digital Age
Yale University, July 8-12, 2013
"Civic Literacy" is the knowledge of how to actively participate and initiate change in your community and the greater society. It is the foundation by which a democratic society functions: Citizen Power as a check and as a means to create avenues for peaceful change.”

SEE NEW YORK STATE SENATOR GUSTAVO RIVERA TALK ABOUT CIVIC LITERACY ON YOU TUBE, DEC. 5, 2011. HE TEACHES A CIVIC LITERACY CLASS AT THE KINGSBRIDGE LIBRARY IN THE BRONX.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YoSNkOrgGA4
“This report presents an analysis of U.S. data from an assessment of the civic knowledge and skills of 14-year old students across 28 countries and their attitudes toward civic issues. The Civic Education Study assessment was conducted by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA). In the United States, the assessment was administered to a nationally representative sample of ninth-graders in October 1999. The report includes the civic achievement of U.S. students compared to other countries; the school and classroom context of civic knowledge; the demographic, socioeconomic, and out-of-school context of civic knowledge; the students’ concepts of democracy, citizenship, and government; their attitudes toward civic issues; and their current and expected political activities.”

64% of Americans can't name the three branches of government

most of us don't know which party controls Congress at any given time

half can't describe the difference between liberals and conservatives

most can't name their own members or Congress or their US Senators

nearly half don’t know that states have 2 Senators

41% cannot identify Nancy Pelosi as House Speaker -- even in a multiple-choice question

54% cannot name a single Supreme Court Justice

only a bare majority can name even one basic purpose of the Constitution

more citizens can name "American Idol" judges than can name the 1st Amendment rights

66% know at least one American Idol judge, but only 15% can name John Roberts as Chief Justice
39% of us cannot name any of the freedoms in the First Amendment

only one in 1000 can name all five rights in the 1st Amendment

35% feel the First Amendment goes too far. An additional 21% are unsure

almost half think the president has the authority to suspend the U.S. Constitution

60% believe he can appoint judges to the federal courts without the approval of the Senate

50% feel newspapers should not be allowed to publish stories without government approval

only 34% know that it's Congress that declares war

only 35% know that Congress can override a presidential veto

for those under age 40, the number rises to 54%
“The Sandra Day O'Connor Civic Learning Act of 2011 is a vital first step to improving civic education in our nation's schools and would establish a grant program for civic learning at the US Department of Education, stressing innovations and serving under-served school populations. The legislation still has the status of a bill. Its underlying goal, if it is passed as an Act, is “To authorize the Secretary of Education to award grants to promote civic learning and engagement, and for other purposes.” In addition, the bill provides for more extensive NAEP testing. “It is the sense of Congress that the Commissioner for Education Statistics, in administering the National Assessment of Educational Progress, should increase the sample size of students tested to improve disaggregation and analysis of data regarding progress in history and civics.”

http://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/112/hr3464/text
Examples of civic education resources and sites for educators’ classroom use.

- **National Standards for Civics and Government**  *Entire Text*
  These K-12 standards specify what students should know and be able to do in the field of civics and government.

- **CIVITAS: A Framework for Civic Education**  *Executive Summary*
  A comprehensive model framework for civic education in the nations elementary and secondary schools, designed as a resource tool for curriculum developers, school administrators, teachers, and scholars.

- **Comparative Lessons for Democracy**
  A resource book for high school teachers with lessons that feature comparative analyses of emerging democracies in Central and Eastern Europe. *Sample lesson*

- **Project Citizen Resources**
A SUPERB WEBSITE
iCivics  http://www.icivics.org/

An initiative of retired Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O’Connor, this site features online lessons covering

- the three branches of government and
- interactive games that cover citizenship and participation,
- the Constitution and Bill of Rights,
- separation of powers,
- budgeting, and
- the executive, judicial and legislative branches.

Online discussion forums allow teachers and students to give feedback on various topics. Teacher resources include curricula that complement the games, webquests, lessons and activities. Resources are free. Level: Middle and high school
SAMPLE ONLINE WEBSITES WITH RESOURCES TO TEACH CIVIC LITERACY


- Civics Online
  http://civics-online.org/teachers/activities.php
- Bill of Rights Institute
  http://www.billofrightsinstitute.org/
- C-SPAN Classroom
  http://www.c-spanclassroom.org/
- The National Archives
  http://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/constitution-day/
- We the People
  http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/themes/
- Evaluating Websites
  http://www.altn.org/webquests/websites/index.html
“The *Youth Urban Agenda Civic Literacy Project* is an effort to promote activities that educate students in terms of their civic responsibilities with the experience of building a real political agenda. The Project is implemented by the following phases:”

1) **Students generate an urban-conscious agenda.**
2) **Students learn about the political process**
3) **Students become involved in more participatory efforts.**
4) **The schools later meet in clusters**

The heart of the program is the process of agenda building as a key method for preparing youth in their role as participants in a democratic society. The program is a means of sparking student interest for learning social studies, civics and communications.

[http://www.urbanagenda.wayne.edu/index.htm](http://www.urbanagenda.wayne.edu/index.htm)
**Program History**
**Theoretical Overview**
**Introduction to Curriculum**
**American Government**
**American History**
**Economics**
**Geography**
**Sociology**
**World History**
**Agenda Building**
**Agenda Building Process**

**Supplemental Lesson Plans**
**Lesson One**
**Lesson Two**
**Utopian School Lesson**
**Writing Lesson**
**MEAP: Correlation by Strand and Benchmarks**
**Urban Agenda Convention**
## CIVIC LITERACY SKILLS ACCORDING TO The Youth Urban Agenda/Civic Literacy Project

http://www.urbanagenda.wayne.edu/whatiscl.htm

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CIVIC CONTENT KNOWLEDGE

Civic content includes both core knowledge and the ability to apply knowledge to different circumstances and settings.

- Key historical periods, episodes, cases, themes, and experiences of individuals and groups in U.S. history
- Principles, documents, and ideas essential to constitutional democracy
- Relationship between historical documents, principles, and episodes and contemporary issues
- Structures, processes, and functions of government; powers of branches and levels of government
- Political vehicles for representing public opinion and effecting political change
- Mechanisms and structure of the U.S. legal system
- Relationship between government and other sectors
- Political and civic heroes
- Social and political networks for making change
- Social movements and struggles, particularly those that address issues as yet unresolved
- Structural analyses of social problems and systemic solutions to making change
CORE KNOWLEDGE:
THE U.S. CONSTITUTION

NATIONAL or CENTRAL or FEDERAL GOVERNMENT
ARTS. 1, 2, 3

50 STATES’ GOVERNMENTS
10TH AMENDMENT

DIVISION OF POWERS or FEDERALISM

DELEGATED or ENUMERATED POWERS

SEPARATION OF POWERS

IMPLIED POWERS from the Elastic Clause
L.G. Stambler, Ph.D.

RESERVED or RESIDUAL POWERS

CONCURRENT POWERS

Diagram by L.G. Stambler, Ph.D.
The issue: Does the Constitution allow states to segregate schools or other public facilities on the basis of race or sex?

Compiled and organized By L.G. Stambler, Ph.D.
CIVIC CONTENT KNOWLEDGE
Civic content includes both core knowledge and the ability to apply knowledge to different circumstances and settings.

Teacher candidates in ED 440 secondary education professional semester learn how to teach grades 7-12 students who are ELL. FDR’s Four Freedoms speech and Norman Rockwell’s posters are used as the content for this task in Oct. 2012. [Williams group]

ELL STUDENT ANSWERS:
• Who is in the painting? What is happening?
• How does the painting make you feel?
• What freedom is this painting about?
• Is it a freedom to do something? Or a freedom from something?

- Ell student understands short phrases and short sentences;
- Can communicate limited information in everyday situations;
- Can use selected simple structures correctly, but with basic errors.

L.G. Stambler, Ph.D.
Civic Skills as Precursor for Civic Engagement
Definition of Civic Skills

• Intellectual Skills – ex: understanding the history of issues

• Participatory Skills – ex: working with diverse groups

• Research Skills – ex: tracking legislation

• Persuasion Skills – ex: writing letters to representatives

CIVIC SKILLS: INTELLECTUAL

Intellectual civic skills encompass knowing how to identify, assess, interpret, describe, analyze, and explain matters of concern in civic life.

- Critical thinking
- Perspective-taking
- Understanding, interpreting, and critiquing various media
- Understanding, interpreting, and critiquing different points of view
- Expressing one’s opinions
- Active listening
- Identifying public problems
- Drawing connections between democratic concepts and principles and one’s own life experience

http://www.civicmissionofschools.org/resources/civiccompetencies.html
CIVIC SKILLS: PARTICIPATORY

Civic participatory skills encompass knowing how to cope in groups and organizational settings, interface with elected officials and community representatives, communicate perspectives and arguments, and plan strategically for civic change.

- Engaging in dialogue with those who hold different perspectives
- Active listening
- Communicating through public speaking, letter writing, petitioning, canvassing, lobbying, protesting
- Managing, organizing, participating in groups
- Building consensus and forging coalitions
- Community mapping
- Utilizing electoral processes
- Utilizing non-electoral means to voice opinion (protest, petitioning, surveying, letter writing, boycotting, and so on)
- Planning and running meetings
- Utilizing strategic networks for public ends
- Organizing and demonstrating
CIVIC DISPOSITIONS
Civic dispositions encompass interpersonal and intrapersonal values, virtues, and behaviors.

- Tolerance and respect
- Appreciation of difference
- Rejection of violence
- Concern with the rights and welfare of others
- Commitment to balancing personal liberties with social responsibility to others
- Personal efficacy
- Sense of belonging to a group or polity
- Readiness to compromise personal interests to achieve shared ends
- Desire for community involvement
- Attentiveness (to civic matters, the news, etc.)
**Personally responsible** citizen obeys laws, pays taxes, and helps others in need. Education based virtues like integrity, respect, and hard work

**Participatory** citizen is active in civic affairs. Educational programs on learning how public institutions work and on building skills, such as communication skills and group decision-making

- in ppt. *Service Learning for Civic Engagement*, slide 6
Westheimer and J. Kahne, Educating the “Good” Citizen, 2003

Justice-oriented citizen assesses social, political, and economic structures and considers collective strategies for change that challenge injustice and address root causes

-in ppt. *Service Learning for Civic Engagement*, slide 7

Westheimer and J. Kahne, Educating the “Good” Citizen, 2003

Definition of Civic Engagement

“Working to make a difference in the civic life of our communities and developing the combination of knowledge, skills, values, and motivation to make that difference”

“Promoting ” the quality of life in a community through both political and non-political processes.

*Thomas Ehrlich, Ed. Civic Responsibility and Higher Education 2000*

Project Citizen is unlike programs that are unit and lesson-based. It is difficult to understand the full scope and sequence of the curriculum without viewing it in its entirety. Project Citizen uses a process approach for teaching young people how to monitor and influence public policy in their communities.

CLICK ON THIS URL
PROJECT CITIZEN PROVIDES PRACTICE IN CIVIC ENGAGEMENT: Process Steps

- **Identify a problem to study.** You will begin by identifying a problem in your community that you think is important and determine which level of government is most directly responsible for dealing with the problem.

- **Gather information.** When your class has decided upon the problem you want to study, you will need to gather and evaluate information about the problem from a variety of sources.

- **Examine solutions.** Next, you will examine public policies that now are being used by your government. You also will examine policies being suggested by other people.

- **Develop your own public policy.** Next, you will develop a public policy that you think your government should adopt.

- **Develop an action plan.** Finally, you will develop a plan of action to show how you might influence the appropriate government or governmental agency to adopt your proposed public policy.
1. CLICK ON THIS URL and SEE PROJECT CITIZEN PPT>>
http://www.civitas.hu/dokumentum/1052_PC_power_point.ppt

2. CLICK ON THIS URL and SEE Project citizen intro power point - SlideShare
www.slideshare.net/gsagan/project-citizen-intro-power-point
Mar 3, 2012 - We the People: Project Citizen A program of the Center for Civic Education in cooperation with the National Conference of State Legislatures.
CIVIC LITERACY SOURCES

- [http://www.urbanagenda.wayne.edu/whatiscl.htm](http://www.urbanagenda.wayne.edu/whatiscl.htm) “The Youth Urban Agenda/Civic Literacy Project is an international civic education program housed at [Wayne State University](http://www.urbanagenda.wayne.edu/whatiscl.htm) in Detroit, Michigan in collaboration with the City Clerk of Detroit, Wayne County Government and numerous educational institutions.”


- [http://www.citizenslacker.com/civic-literacy-research](http://www.citizenslacker.com/civic-literacy-research) CIVIC LITERACY RESEARCH; song of a Citizen © 2010
CIVIC LITERACY SOURCES

- [http://www.civicmissionofschools.org/resources/civiccompetencies.html](http://www.civicmissionofschools.org/resources/civiccompetencies.html)
  Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools, *Education for Democracy; A Long-Term Effort to Renew and Elevate Civic Learning in Our Nation's Schools*

  Knowledge, Skills, and Values. Civic Skills as Learning Outcomes. Relationship between Service. Learning (SL) and Civic Engagement

  Background Paper entitled *Developing Citizenship Competencies from Kindergarten through Grade 12* provides policymakers and education leaders with information on how to incorporate civic knowledge, skills and attitudes into policies that support effective citizenship education from the early elementary grades through high school (by Judith Torney-Puerta and Susan Vermeer, Education Commission of the States, August 2004).