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DEMOCRACY FOR HOMEWORK:
A REVIEW OF CIVIC ENGAGEMENT IN
URBAN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

by

AMANDA B. ROSENBLUM

A master's thesis submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Liberal Studies in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts, The City University of New York

2020

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This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Liberal Studies in satisfaction of the thesis requirement for the degree of Master of Arts.

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ABSTRACT

Democracy for Homework: A Literature Review of Civic Engagement in Urban Public Schools

by
Amanda B. Rosenblum

Advisor: Deborah L. Vietze, Ph.D.

Civic engagement education prepares students to actively engage in social and political processes and influence community change. Many educators believe that civic engagement ought to be a central mission of schools because: 1. Adolescent civic engagement predicts adult civic engagement; 2. Schools may be able to reduce the inequity in political participation between individuals of different ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds, and 3: Civic engagement orientation and competencies can be developed through any and all content courses and extracurricular opportunities. This literature review on civic engagement education in urban public middle and high schools over the past 15 years explores: 1. Theories and approaches to civic engagement education; 2. Current challenges facing civic engagement education; and 3. Insight into the efficacy of current civic engagement education curricula and pedagogy, based on research findings. Further research into predictors and outcomes of civic engagement is needed due to significant limitations that exist. Very few overarching models exist that describe what inputs influence and what outcomes result from youth civic engagement. A new model is offered in this thesis that can guide future development and implementation of civic engagement curriculum, teacher training, and environment.

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Chapter I

Introduction

“Words like ‘freedom,’ ‘justice,’ ‘democracy’ are not common concepts; on the contrary, they are rare. People are not born knowing what these are. It takes enormous and, above all, individual effort to arrive at the respect for other people that these words imply”

— James Baldwin

Purpose and History of Civics in Public Education

Civics has a storied connection to public education in the United States. Founding fathers viewed America’s schools as distinct from European schools because of their focus on and preparation for political life (Jamieson, Levine, McConnell, & Smith, 2011). Schools are academic institutions but have also been “social and political institutions as well” (Bischoff, 2016, p. 91). Our schools have been used to assimilate and unify students from many backgrounds and beliefs. The common schools were founded in the early 1800’s by Horace Mann and provided civic education to all students no matter their financial status or country of origin (Bischoff, 2016). The strength of the American democracy depended on the strength of the schools according to Mann (Rebell, 2017, p. 3).

Civic education was a core component of the curriculum and central mission of all public schools in the 1800’s (Jamieson et al., 2011). Many individuals looked to schools to protect our democracy and several State Constitutions committed to civic education in schools in the nineteenth century. Students commonly took three civic and government courses in high school until 1960 (Jamieson et al, 2011, p. 12).

Over the past fifty years, civic education has become largely absent from the conversation on the mission and goals of public schools (Bischoff, 2016; Rebell, 2017). Some educators have blamed this on political pressure and a loss of faith in government in times of war, crisis, and scandal. These educators view the decline of civic education as possibly exacerbating the

disconnection between citizens and government (Jamieson et al, 2011). The U.S. Department of Education explicitly identified civic education disappearing from the public-school curriculum as a challenge in a 2012 report. The report stated that civics and service-learning has become an ancillary part of elementary and secondary schooling and is viewed as less important than the tested subjects like math and English. The report's authors viewed this as an unfortunate consequence of the focus on college-level academics (U.S. Department of Education, 2012).

Robert Putnam (1995; 2000) argues that there is decreased civic participation with each generation and he is often credited with engaging researchers in studying the effects of youth civic engagement on our democracy (Morimoto & Friedland, 2013). Others argue that there isn't a decline and civic participation simply looks differently today. A debate concerning what the root causes of the issues are and how to address the issues sparked a movement among educators.

The landmark *Civic Mission of Schools* report in 2003 is often credited with launching a renewed focus on civic education in schools (Gibson & Levine, 2003). It was a call to action and a blueprint for what schools can do to improve civic outcomes from fifty leading civic education experts (Levine, 2003). The report claims that civic participation is alarmingly low even though civic literacy may be the same as in past generations. The *Civic Mission of Schools* authors offer promising practices from the research. A survey of California's public schools echoed similar promising practices for increasing the types of civic opportunities that can best prepare students in necessary civic skills and encourage civic commitment (Kahne, Middaugh, & Croddy, 2007). McNeil (2002) wrote that our nation currently had the most troubling disconnection between democracy and public education right before the release of the report. There has been an increase in the number of research studies and published essays on the topic of civic education in schools since the release of the report. Renewing civic education has gained national attention.

With the start of the 21st century, educators have called for resources to bring civic education into the modern era (Youniss, 2011). Civic education has diminished in public schools and has not adapted for the times. Civic online reasoning, meaning the application of critical reasoning to social and political reporting online is an important civic skill for citizens to develop (Rebell, 2017). Schools require funding for curricular adaptations and teacher training in order to modernize and implement civic education.

This thesis presents a review of research and scholarship on youth civic engagement education in 6th-12th grade public schools in major American urban cities over the past fifteen years (2004-2019). This period immediately follows the release of *Civic Mission in Schools* and the launch of the modern area of advocacy for civic education in public schools (Gibson & Levine, 2003).

Key Term Definitions

There are no universally-accepted definitions for key terms used in civic education literature. The definitions offered in this section describe how the terms are used in this review. Civics is defined as local, state and federal social and political systems as well as inherent individual rights and duties. Civic literacy education and civic engagement education are two forms of civic education. Civic literacy is defined as the knowledge to participate effectively in civic life. Civic engagement is 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. Much of civic education has been teaching and assessing students on their civic literacy. This review argues that civic engagement education, which prepares students for effective civic participation and develops their civic commitment is what schools should focus their curriculum on. For a full list of key terms and definitions, see Appendix A: Key Term Definitions.

Brief Overview of Current State of Civic Engagement in Schools

Schools are an important factor in creating an engaged citizenry because adolescent civic engagement predicts adult civic engagement (Duke, Skay, Pettingell, & Borowsky, 2009).

Education and civic participation are intimately linked. Research has shown that there is a strong correlation between increased years of schooling and higher civic participation (Flanagan & Levine, 2010; Youniss, 2011). There are not yet conclusive answers for why this occurs. Many educators hypothesize that this correlation is related to open and positive school culture, access to academic and extracurricular activities that prepare students for civic engagement, service learning, and respectful political debate (Kahne & Middaugh, 2009). Educators cannot choose the resources given to schools nor the political environment the school is situated in but they can choose how to offer and prioritize civic education (Youniss, 2011).

There is not yet clarity on the best model for offering civic education to adolescents and what is needed to effectively prepare engaged citizens. Schools are not equally preparing students to be poised to combat the major issues of our time, such as racism, climate change, and voter suppression. The goal of public education should be to help students realize their potential (Castellanos & Cole, 2015). Having a deep understanding of the way government works allows individuals to choose when and how to operate within governmental systems to effect change and how to dismantle and revolutionize systems that aren't working for all.

Democracy depends on amplifying diverse voices and engaging everyone in social and political life (Verba, 2003). Practice is the best teacher of political participation. Political participation is a necessary part of civic education. Political and educational leaders should feel morally responsible to ensure young people participate in political processes and decision making (Fusarelli, Kowalski, & Peterson, 2011). Advancing civic education today does not mean returning to an era fifty years ago when civics was an integral part of the public-school curriculum. Schools

must go beyond civic literacy to provide knowledge, skills, and values to shape students' attitudes for full participation in civic life. This may help students bring about social change they care about the most.

Limitations in Knowledge about Civic Engagement

There has not been a current large-scale study published on civic engagement in U.S. public schools. Far more essays have been published by educators sharing their opinions and recommendations than by researchers studying current civic engagement education and what impact it has on young adults. Few quantitative research studies about the strength and effects of civic educational approaches exist. Published literature on civic engagement education in college is much more extensive than the literature on K-12 schools.

This review will provide a synthesis of what viewpoints educators are offering about civic engagement and what educators believe are the necessary and ideal components for effective civic engagement education. This review will also explore the predictors of youth civic engagement and the outcomes of civic education on a young person's academic, identity, and social-emotional development as well as on the community at large. Additionally, the review will compare civic engagement research across diversity categories such as race, ethnicity, and gender.

Research on school efficacy has focused almost entirely on academic outcomes that prepare students for college or the workforce (Bischoff, 2016). Limited attention is sometimes given to socioemotional learning. It is only recently that attention is being given to study the predictors of effective civic engagement and civic commitment outcomes. The majority of civic engagement education articles in peer-reviewed journals are opinions that focus on why civic engagement should be prioritized or not in schools and recommended teacher training and pedagogy for successful student civic outcomes. There is a focus on bringing awareness to the *civic empowerment gap* that exists between students of different racial and socioeconomic categories.

This gap has been identified by many educators as an inequality divide mirroring other educational equity divides. The *civic empowerment gap* exacerbates inequalities among social groups and may marginalize some groups (Morimoto & Friedland, 2013). This thesis will explore what can be included as civic engagement and the various ways youth can demonstrate civic action. A key goal is to better understand how to support civic participation in low-income youth of color.

Civic engagement education's goal is to arm young people with the knowledge and tools to make positive change that drives our society forward (Godfrey & Cherng, 2016). This review explores factors that motivate and discourage young people from civic engagement and the learning opportunities that develop effective civic participation. This review may be a helpful civic engagement resource for researchers by justifying future research studies. This review may also be helpful for practitioners by making recommendations for schools and other youth-serving institutions.

Chapter II

Notes from the Field: Educator Approaches to and Theories on Civic Engagement Education

"The only title in our democracy superior to that of President is the title of citizen."

— Louis Brandeis

Introduction

The purpose of civic education in youth from 11 to 18 years-of-age is grounded in various theories of educational, youth, and community development. A student with access to quality civic engagement education may gain the tools needed to develop a civic identity. It is assumed that this identity encourages several actions. Four behaviors categorize civic engagement. A civically engaged person: 1. Participates in meaningful conversations; 2. Is tolerant of diverse perspectives; 3. Participates in activities to foster positive social change; and 4. Appreciates that her actions have consequences for others and the community. There is no current overarching model or theory that foundationally guides civic engagement education in middle and high schools. There are, however, several educational perspectives on approaches to and benefits of civic engagement education. These viewpoints, and their significance for educational models of civic engagement, are shared here in the following three categories: 1. The educational context for civic engagement; 2. Curricular approaches to civic engagement education curriculum in schools; and 3. Expected outcomes of civic education. The majority of peer-reviewed articles on civic engagement education are educator opinions versus research studies. This chapter offers critical insight into the field by organizing these opinions into a coherent summary. A new model is proposed, based on this summary, that creates an overarching framework for understanding the cause and effect of civic engagement education.

The Educational Context for Civic Engagement

The literature in this area presents a disjointed picture of many educational components related to civic engagement. Many educators share the viewpoint that civic engagement ought to be a primary function of schools and that democracy is dependent on informed and participatory citizens. There is no coherent educational model that describes approaches to civic engagement educational interventions however. This chapter explores educators' opinions on ideal school context, curriculum, and teacher training to adequately prepare civically informed and engaged students. This chapter provides insight into educators' opinions on the following: 1. Elements of the school environment that are important to advancing civic engagement 2. School-based approaches to advancing civic engagement; and 3. Additional civic engagement education outside of academic coursework.

The Civic Mission of Schools

The role of schools in civic education is becoming increasingly less potent as civics are eliminated from the school curriculum in favor of regularly-tested reading and math skill. Some educators suggest it should be mandated as a core goal in the National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies (Moore, 2012). This opinion echoes other requests for universal standards and accountability in civic education (Macedo & Finn, 2004).

Most educators seem to agree that civics be taught but disagree on how and where. Some educators view schools as critical to civic education while others question if schools are the best environment to cultivate civic empowerment. Youniss (2011) and Levinson (2012) suggest that more years of schooling leads to higher civic participation. They argue that educators in schools could thus influence future civic engagement simply by keeping students in school longer. Many schools attempt to keep students in school longer via strategies to increase high school retention, graduation rates and college acceptances (Levinson, 2012; Youniss, 2011).

School is a primary social institution where persons from diverse backgrounds come together. It is possible in school to learn to tolerate differing viewpoints through rational discussions. The experience of learning tolerance develops a critical skill and the experience necessary for civic engagement (Rebell, 2018). Some educators suggest that civics should be part of the fabric and core mission of the school as schools may be able to reduce the inequities of current civic participation (Kahne & Sporte, 2008). Many educators argue that the number one goal of public schools should be increasing responsible and capable civic participation (Rebell, 2018; Youniss, 2011; Haynes, 2009). Rebell (2018) and Levinson (2012) view urban public schools as ground zero for ensuring equal civic readiness in young people because these buildings have experienced the largest cuts in time and funding devoted to civic education. Additionally, urban public schools have a large population of low-income students who are currently underserved by civic institutions and political decisions. Students in urban public schools are most in need of preparation to effectively civically engage (Levinson, 2012; Rebell, 2018).

Elements of the School Environment

Some educators emphasize the importance of reaching all students in the school, as passivity and disconnection from civics is a threat to democracy (Lannegrand-Willems et al., 2018). Because of this threat, many contend that the goal of civic education should be to ensure as many students as possible become civically oriented (Lannegrand-Willems et al., 2018). School leaders can foster youth civic action across all courses by offering opportunities for exposure to diversity and opportunities for open dialogue on critical issues (Jain, Cohen, Kawashima-Ginsberg, Duarte, & Pope, 2019; Kahne & Sporte, 2008). School practices such as democratic homerooms and protocols that encourage student voice in class can increase civic engagement skills (Jagers et al., 2017; Linzi et al., 2014). Implementing fair, trauma-informed disciplinary practices that treat students equitably and with respect also creates a democratic culture in the school building

(Castellanos & Cole, 2015).

Educators can empower students to overcome negative perceptions from adults and contribute to their school climate and community by naming and combating the barriers to engagement and success (Jamieson, Levine, McConnell, & Smith, 2011). Students should be taking part in school governance at all levels, including participation on school committees (Checkoway, 2009). One way to center student voices is to enable students to lead participatory action research activities that engage students and other stakeholders in the process of school vision setting and continuous improvement. Students should be an integral part of evaluating practices as leaders not just participants, critiquing school practices, and offering solutions without consequence. These conditions strengthen civic engagement skills (Checkoway, 2009; Mirra & Morrell, 2011). Ideally students see an active role in school improvement as a welcomed purpose of civic development and their school legacy (Castellanos & Cole, 2015; Checkoway, 2009; Mirra & Morrell, 2011).

Civic Engagement Education Across the Curriculum

Some educators contend that civic engagement education is interdisciplinary and should be developed through multiple classes and activities. This cross-course civic focus interspersed across the school day and in afterschool activities ensures full civic education access (Malone, 2008). Civic topics are then taught in all educational curricula. For example, teaching about poverty in economics class helps students engage critically in this social problem (Haynes, 2009). Some educators also suggest that civic engagement is more effectively taught through extracurricular activities than during in-class time. Sports can teach values such as discipline, obedience, social engagement, and moral character experientially, all of which are aspects of civic engagement education (Stacy, 2015).

Civic Engagement Education Outside of School

Youniss (2011) argues that schools are essential but are not the only civic education setting.

Some educators share a less popular perspective that community groups are more capable of providing civic education than schools. Chaebong Nam (2012) advocates for same-age peer civic education instruction by those in the community who are experienced community activists. She poses that young community activists have the ability to teach and inspire critical civic engagement more powerfully than teachers in traditional classrooms (Nam, 2012). Ginwright and Cammarota (2007) agree that African-American and Latino youth best learn civic engagement from youth-serving community organizations after school. These organizations provide students opportunities to become active participants in addressing real-world neighborhood challenges, thereby increasing their agency.

The Teacher's Role in Civic Engagement Education

Civic engagement education is a complex and ever-changing educational approach that involves increasing knowledge and developing skills, values, and attitudes. This section explores three areas that educators suggest about the teacher's role in civic engagement education: 1. Teacher professional development; 2. Empowerment theory; and 3. Teacher-student power dynamic relationship.

Teacher Preparation

According to Nogueira and Moreira (2012), adequate teacher preparation is organized in four categories: 1. Content knowledge; 2. Pedagogical practices; 3. Understanding the justification for civic engagement education; and 4. Teacher characteristics, including personal, emotional, values, and attitudes. Teacher characteristics interact with and depend on school context and student characteristics. Nogueira and Moreira (2012) suggest teachers consider the developmental stages of each student when implementing civic education goals. Other educators emphasize a need for professional development and the sharing of best practices across the profession, which applies to all pedagogy (Castellanos & Cole, 2015). Civic engagement education can include difficult and

controversial topics. It is therefore suggested that teachers consider students' academic abilities, emotional development, and motivations in lesson planning and delivery (Nogueira & Moreira, 2012).

Empowerment Theory

Empowerment theory builds on the concepts of personal growth and positive self-identity to prepare persons to apply personal strengths to solving community problems. It focuses on enhancing self-worth, sense of initiative, and the ability to act. Empowerment theory includes a focus on building student confidence and knowledge. A major assumption of the theory is that confidence-building occurs when teachers assume the role of collaborator rather than as authoritative expert (Naidoo, 2015). An active learning process is described as critical for civic engagement based on empowerment theory. Students become empowered as they develop citizenship skills such as collaboration, consensus-building, and conflict resolution. Achieving these skills results in a *civic identity*. *Civic identity* is defined as the way in which one perceives herself as participating in political and community affairs.

Teacher-Student Dynamic

A positive teacher-student relationship is critical to effective civic education. Rubin and Hayes (2010) argue that student trust in a teacher and the perception that a teacher cares about students results in an effective partnership to identify and openly discuss social injustices and their solutions. Teachers can develop civic skills in students by ensuring that all have a sense of power and voice in the classroom, particularly those students most impacted by social problems. Formal civic education in schools should encompass the multi-dimensional facets of civics while focusing on allowing students to be active participants in both the curriculum and creating real change outside of the classroom (Jagers, Lozada, Rivas-Drake, & Guillaume, 2017). Teachers can become civic engagement role models by becoming entrenched in local school communities and

collaborating with students to activate change (Haynes, 2009; Mirra & Morrell, 2011). Ginwright and Cammarota (2007) contend that incorporating real-world civic engagement into the curriculum allows teachers to work in solidarity with their students to help them have an impact outside the walls of school.

Pedagogic Approaches to Civic Education

Different approaches to developing civically engaged youth have focused on the overall development of the student and developing leadership skills. These approaches, while not called “civic engagement education,” have similar goals and encourage similar outcomes when compared to those of civic engagement theory and assumptions. This section describes three interrelated educational approaches to youth development that are similar to civic engagement education. These approaches focus on developing leadership and empowerment skills to create social change. Included are three topical areas: 1. Positive youth development; 2. Community youth development; and 3. Liberation psychology. These concepts have not been associated specifically with civic engagement education but recommendations are suggested in Chapter 5 to connect these approaches to an overall model representing key stages of civic development.

Positive Youth Development

Positive youth development (PYD) is an approach to youth education that recognizes and employs the inherent strengths of youth to achieve positive developmental outcomes. It is a method that uses a young person’s relationships and communities to ensure the support needed for positive transition to adulthood. PYD posits that all youth, no matter their circumstances, resources in life, or education level, can be assets to society (Flanagan, Syvertsen, & Wray-Lake, 2007). PYD theory argues that the work of learning and developing one’s identity are inextricably linked.

The core elements of PYD are the “Five C’s - Competence, Confidence, Character, Connection, and Caring (Crocetti, Erentaitė, & Žukauskienė, 2014).” When students have mastered

the five C's, they can take on a sixth C: Contribution (Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003). Contribution can include civic engagement and youth activism that provides an opportunity to critique and challenge the status quo and inequities that are barriers to thriving (Flanagan, Syvertsen, & Wray-Lake, 2007).

Community Youth Development

Youth who want to be changemakers require opportunities to serve their communities to develop social impact skills. Often youth are denied opportunities because of a lack of knowledge, skills, or resources (Skinner, 2009). Active participation becomes the means by which students build capacity and develop personal awareness and skills for civic engagement (Warburton, 1998). Community youth development (CYD) theory is a philosophy focused on community change that encourages youth educational organizations to partner with community-based organizations to foster a young person's participation in real-world civic engagement (Skinner, 2009). Youth organizations provide social and educational support while community-based organizations connect students to civic opportunities.

Liberation Psychology

Watts and Flanagan (2007) imagine a framework for civic engagement called Liberation Psychology that goes beyond PYD and CYD to include youth organizing and social justice activism. Inherent in the argument for liberation psychology is a criticism that current civic engagement education maintains, rather than disrupts, social and political systems by focusing on civic literacy and civic duty. They assert that young people, particularly youth of color and other marginalized youth, need to develop critical consciousness so they may be at the forefront of desperately-needed institutional change (Watts & Flanagan, 2007).

Curricular Approaches to Civic Engagement Education

Educators recommend a series of principles to guide what students should learn and be able

to do in civic engagement education curriculum to result in adequate applications of student learning in civic life. Students require multiple civic experiences, opportunities to build knowledge and skills, and an environment that models and develops civic engagement in order to build civic commitment, civic identity, and civic competencies (Jain et al., 2019; Jagers, Lozada, Rivas-Drake, & Guillaume, 2017; Kahne & Sporte, 2008). There are multiple ways schools could infuse civic education into existing programs and policies and, by so doing, develop a commitment and orientation to civics within their students. Following are the suggested ideal forms of civic engagement curricula in schools classified into five categories. These approaches are drawn from research on promising practices across the country and frequent educator recommendations. Together, they comprise a well-rounded civic educational experience (Jamieson et al., 2011).

Classroom Instruction

An ideal civic engagement curriculum is: culturally-responsive, formed around students' lives, backgrounds, and context; assets-based; experiential; and connects what is being taught in the classroom to what students are experiencing out of school (Levinson, 2013; Mirra & Morrell, 2011). Civic role models and field trips to local political institutions are weaved into the class day (Kahne & Sporte, 2008). Interactive formats with open-course dialogue, rather than traditional lecture formats, are proposed to better engage students. Many educators argue that students require critical civic praxis, the Paolo Freire concept of "critical reflection and action," as a consistent element of civic and personal identity development (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2007, p. 698). Schools can foster youth civic action by offering opportunities in coursework for students to be exposed to diversity of all kinds, including diversity of thought, and providing the space for open dialogue on critical issues of our time (Jain et al., 2019).

Discussions of Current Events

Educators suggest that teachers be trained in developing students' facilitation skills so that

current events discussions result in high levels of civic engagement. Students must be allowed to select topics that are relevant and important to them. All should have the opportunity to speak (Haynes, 2009). When students are taught the principles of effective and respectful advocacy, argumentation, and debate, they are able to apply these principles in all courses and towards real-world civic action (Zorwick & Wade, 2016). Students learn civility through practicing positive and respectful dissent with each other on issues they care about. Students can practice citizenship through deliberative democracy which can be taught through respectful debate (Mcintosh & Milam, 2016; Moore, 2012). In debate, everyone participates and shares power, and all should be open-minded and focused on reaching consensus (Fusarelli & Peterson, 2011; Youniss, 2011). Zorwick and Wade (2016) argue that respectful dissent can teach students the importance and value of citizenship and is a sign of a strong democracy. Ideally, class discussions and debates would be led by peer mediators who are trained in resolving conflict and facilitating conversations on challenging ethical topics (Haynes, 2009).

Extracurricular Activities

Educators recommend providing extracurricular opportunities on issues students care about that build meaningful civic skills and enable real-world impact. Brokering opportunities for young adult civic engagement can be a function of educators in schools. Students can develop agency through taking part in community action (Watts & Flanagan, 2007). There are traditional forms of civic engagement for young people prior to voting age, including involvement in local and national politics through activities with political parties, community advocacy organizations, trade unions, as well as participatory budgeting (Jain et al., 2019). Extracurriculars are limited in that they are opt-in and not mandatory for all students, and are often the first school budgetary item to be dropped if funding decreases. However, extracurriculars provide more civic development for interested students.

Service Learning

High-quality service-learning can develop civic identity if it is connected to real-world civic impact and linked to time for debriefing (Kahne and Sporte, 2008). There is a strong civic foundation to build upon because 41% of youth actively participate in community service on a regular basis (Zaff et al., 2008). Community service should be explicitly designed by schools and students together so that the opportunities are both relevant to students' lives and aligned to current curriculum (Jamieson et al., 2011). Community service provides students the opportunity to move past feelings of hopelessness and victimhood to self-views of becoming a change-making, visionary and reformer. Participating in organizations as volunteers has been associated with voting when students turn eighteen years-of age (Jamieson et al., 2011).

Challenges associated with service learning include: 1. More students are doing service occasionally, rather than regularly; 1. Service connected to justice-oriented civic action is infrequent compared to broad actions to help others that are not civically-focused, and; 3. High-quality service opportunities are difficult to measure and track (Levine, 2003; Youniss, 2011). Locating solutions for these challenges could be one avenue towards developing more effective civic engagement education.

Simulations of Democratic Processes

Encouraging students to participate in civic simulations and governance practices allows them opportunities to practice and master their skills, gain comfort and confidence in civic processes, and develop the muscle of future engagement (Jamieson et al., 2011). Simulations can encourage young people to participate in traditional civic actions by providing first-hand exposure to local, state, and national government processes, positions, and institutions. The theme of these democratic simulations should directly connect to students' experiences to provide them opportunities to address social and economic barriers getting in the way of their advancement and

freedom (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2007; Rubin & Hayes, 2010).

Expected Outcomes for Students and Communities

Adolescents' commitment to civic engagement is positively associated with both adult civic commitment and civic engagement (Kahne and Sporte, 2008; Linzi, Vieno, Sharkey, Mayworm, Scacchi, Pastore, & Santinello, 2014). Many educators believe that it is urgent to prepare for civic engagement during middle and high school because this developmental period is most sensitive to social development and social issues (Flanagan & Levine, 2010). The section below describes what educators see as the ideal outcomes of civic engagement education. These three outcomes are categorized as 1. Academic; 2. Personal development; and 3. Systemic community change.

Academic Outcomes

Civic participation requires academic proficiency in many subjects taught in school, including history, politics, economics, science and technology (Balsano, 2005; Jain et al., 2019; Rebell, 2018). Students develop literacy and ethics through civic practice (Haynes, 2009; Rebell, 2018). Civic practice can develop: 1. Civic literacy; 2. An ability to defend one's own beliefs; and 3. Open-mindedness towards others (Fusarelli & Peterson, 2011). Civic engagement education builds students' intellectual curiosity and critical analysis and research skills. Understanding citizen rights and responsibilities provides the foundation for future civic engagement and for cultivating appreciation of individual freedom and meaning throughout life (Nam, 2012; Rubin & Hayes, 2010).

Personal Development during Adolescence

Identity development is a core feature of adolescence. Civic identity is defined as the way one perceives herself as participating in political and community affairs. Civic identity development begins with building awareness around what civic engagement entails so students can define where they currently sit on the civic identity spectrum (Jain et al., 2019). Students who feel

a sense of belonging in civic life are able to connect to their communities (Duke et al., 2009). This understanding may enable a confident civic identity. Students who do not feel that traditional institutions are responsive to their needs and experiences may lose faith in traditional institutions and experience a decline in optimism about the future. Civic engagement educators postulate that youth need to feel a sense of belonging and inclusion to develop a commitment to bettering society (Wray-Lake, Rote, Gupta, Godfrey, & Sirin, 2015).

Systemic Community Change

Civic education curricula are developed to create systematic community change. Such curricula can go beyond teaching about civic duties and prepare students to engage by taking individual action for change (Jain et al., 2019). Civic engagement education may lead to young people leading transformative social change to solve social challenges and increase individual and community well-being (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2007; Watts & Flanagan, 2007). Civic engagement can lead to community and structural changes such as: 1. Reducing community violence; 2. Increasing participatory voice and representation in political life; and 2. Augmenting resources and promoting well-being for marginalized communities (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2007; Jain et al., 2019; Kahne & Sports, 2008).

Models of Civic Engagement Education

There is no current model available for civic engagement education. Students are assessed on state tests of civic literacy knowledge but there is no shared understanding of what educational interventions effectively prepare a student for civic engagement. Four civic engagement models, of the very few previously offered by educators are described here. A new model is proposed to explain an overarching approach to civic engagement education.

The first model, shown in Figure 1, shares the relationships and pathways among school climate, academic self-efficacy, school connectedness, and civic engagement in middle schoolers.

This is the only model presented in this section based on study results as opposed to hypotheses. It demonstrates that more positive views of school climate are related to greater school connectedness, which is in turn related to higher student civic engagement. “School climate was significantly and positively associated with greater academic self-efficacy, but academic self-efficacy was not significantly associated with civic engagement,” so there are no arrows between academic self-efficacy and civic engagement. “Standardized coefficients for significant paths” are included (Guillaume, Jagers, & Rivas-Drake, 2015, p. 327).

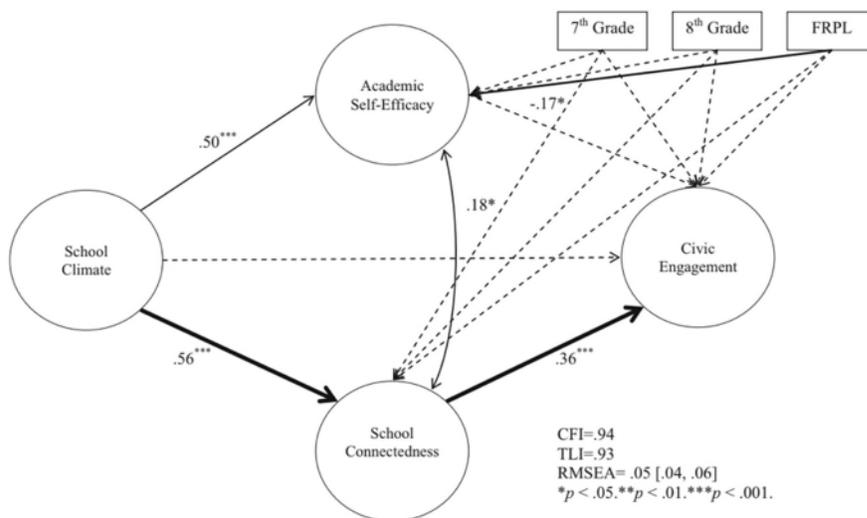


Figure 1. “A concurrent model of school climate, academic beliefs, and civic engagement. Note: FRPL = Free/Reduced Price Lunch status. Standardized estimates shown. Bold lines indicate a significant indirect path, and dashed line represents non-significant path.” (Source: Guillaume, Jagers, & Rivas-Drake, 2015, p. 326).

A second model, shown in Figure 2, focuses on initial family background input. Family background in this model directly influences adult civic engagement and is mediated by college and HIP, meaning high impact educational practices such as seminars and internships, to influence these outcomes. This model is used in a longitudinal study of 6,440 students over a ten-year period beginning in 10th grade. It identifies the causal pathway between education, considered part of a student’s environment, and outcomes. It also accounts for the influence of family and background on a student’s civic engagement. The model requires a longitudinal study with at least three time

points: “Time 1 input characteristics (I), Time 2 educational environments and practices (E), and the later Time 3 outcomes (O) that are a function of inputs and environments (Myers, Myers, & Peters, 2019, p. 89).”

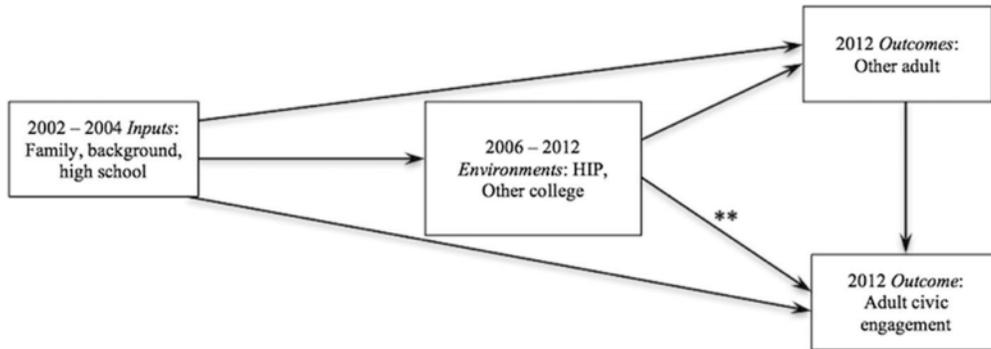


Figure 2. “Input–Environment–Outcome conceptual model linking college environments with adult civic engagement: ELS:2002–2012” (Source: Myers, Myers, & Peters, 2019, p. 89).

The third civic engagement model (Figure 3) explains the relationships between school context and promoting civic action in undergraduate college students. The hypothesis is that college diversity experiences can increase a student’s understanding of and empathy for cultural difference. This proximal outcome then leads to subsequent outcomes, including engaging in civic action and developing leadership skill. Diversity experiences impact pluralistic orientation, which then leads to leadership skills. Attitudes towards civic outcomes impacts students’ beliefs about civic action which impacts behavioral changes in civic action. Diversity activities and diverse peers may also impact civic commitment and engagement (Bowman, 2011).

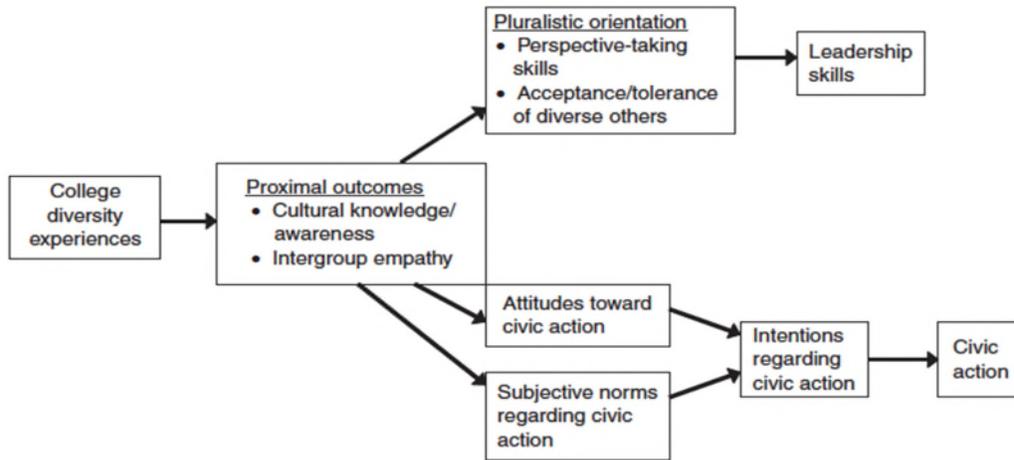


Figure 3. “Conceptual framework of the relationship between college diversity experiences and civic outcomes” (Source: Bowman, 2011, p. 35).

Figure 4 is a civic engagement model from Hope and Jagers (2014) that operates under the assumption that the skill of critical analysis is the way educators can develop civic engagement in students. Critical analysis skill development and experience allows students the chance to deepen their viewpoints about the world. The model hypothesizes an alternate possibility that civic education develops *political efficacy*, meaning the “personal belief that one has the capacity to bring about community change” (Hope & Jagers, 2014, p. 461). The model suggests that either critical analysis or political efficacy leads to civic engagement.

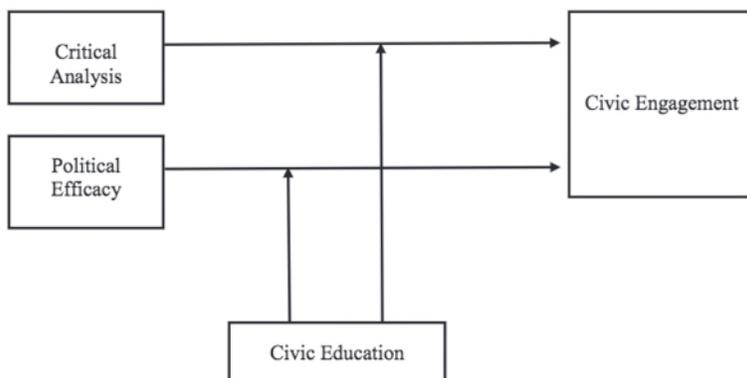


Figure 4. “Conceptual Model of critical analysis, political efficacy, and civic engagement” (Source: Hope & Jagers, 2014).

A new model of civic engagement education and its outcomes (Figure 5) considers the

influence of: 1. School and political climate; 2. Access to opportunities that influence commitment to civic engagement and 3. Civic engagement curriculum on three outcomes: A. Commitment to civic engagement that leads to civic engagement activities and finally to an overall engaged community; B. the individual and community effects that result from that commitment; and C. an engaged, strong community. Figure 1 references the school climate but not the broader climate impacting policy, curricula, resources, and more. Figure 5 is the only model that addresses the educational and political climate influence on civic education, as well as the impact of civic engagement on communities.

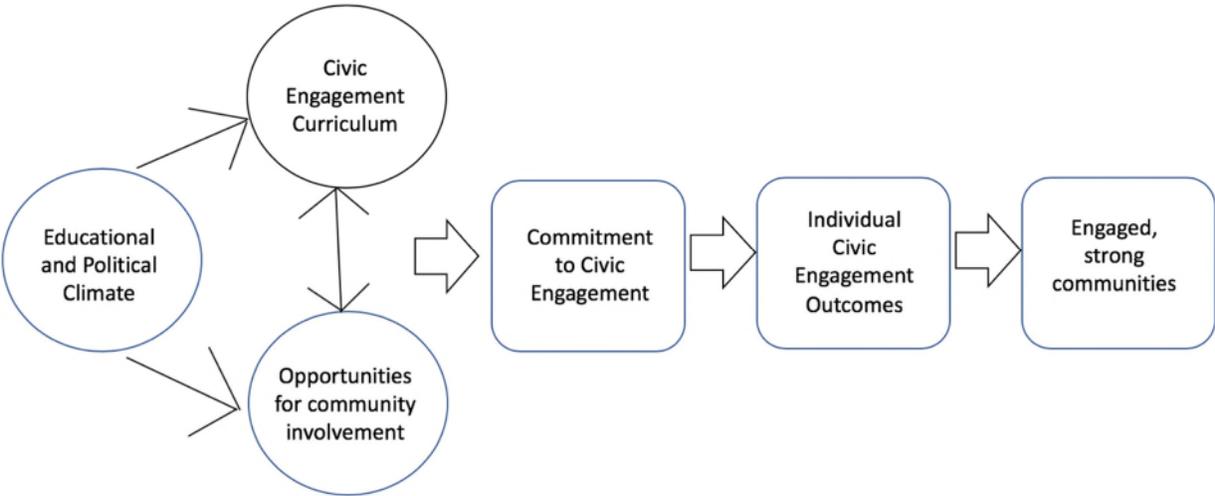


Figure 5. A Dynamic Multi-Outcome Model of Civic Engagement.

Summary

Much of the literature on civic engagement education in middle and high schools shares educator opinions, theories and approaches to engagement in civic activity. Little research is published about what is currently being implemented in schools. This review of civic engagement curricular design, pedagogy, and school processes endorsed by educators provides a critical framework for describing and evaluating the current state of actual pedagogy occurring in the field. There is great synergy among the opinions proposed. Very few overarching models exist that

describe what inputs influence and what outcomes result from youth civic engagement. A new model is offered at the end of this chapter.

This chapter provides a synthesis of curricular and pedagogical approaches and related theories describing key components of civic engagement. The next chapter will explore the current challenges facing implementation civic engagement in schools, including the student disparities and teacher training gaps that persist.

Chapter III

Challenges to Implementing Civic Engagement Education in Public Schools

“There are striking inequalities in political voice that currently characterize our democracy. [...] What happens in classrooms can have a significant impact on students’ commitments to civic participation.”

— Joseph Kahne and Susan E. Spote, 2008

Little is known about currently available civic engagement education at different grade levels and to what extent it is useful. Standardized exams exist to assess civic literacy. Civic engagement is a more complex concept that has no currently accepted educational goals or methods of assessment. Civic education reports often focus on disparities among students from different cultural backgrounds and challenges to implementing effective civic engagement education. This chapter explores the current state of civic engagement education in public schools and the issues that threaten the offer of universally-accepted and equitable civic engagement education.

Overview of Civic Engagement Challenges in Schools

This section provides an overview of the current civic education challenges in some urban public schools. This overview: 1. Describes civic engagement practices in public schools; 2. Compares school priorities and missions; and 3. Discusses the gaps in teacher and student civic engagement knowledge among different cultural groups.

Civics and Other Educational Priorities

A variety of factors in public education hinders current civic learning. There is an intense focus on math and English language skills due to a national trend that encourages global competition in these areas. These changes in math and language result in less attention to other educational content areas such as social studies and government (Jamieson, Levine, McConnell, & Smith, 2011; Kahne & Spote, 2008). Seventy-one percent of school districts across the country

reduced annual time devoted to other content areas to allow for the increase in preparation for math and English language arts testing (Center for Educational Equity, 2017). School districts have most heavily reduced social studies, the broad content area that includes civics (Kahne & Spote, 2008).

Current civic literacy rates are low. Only 20% of high school seniors were able to describe how citizen participation is necessary for democracy in recent national surveys (Rebell, 2018). Civics are no longer included in most educational assessments. School leaders place civic learning on the back burner, at best, but still meet expected standards (Jamieson et al., 2011). 16 states required meaningful assessment in social studies in 2011 and civic learning and social studies are not required in the *No Child Left Behind* federal regulations (Jamieson et al., 2011). Civic education is primarily absent from educational accountability at all levels of public education. Teachers and principals may believe civic content is not important because course program requirements and educational standards do not require civic content.

Student Civic Knowledge and Disparities in Civics Education

Guardian of Democracy is a 2013 successor report to the landmark *Civic Mission of Schools* report authored by Gibson and Levine (2003). *Guardian of Democracy* summarized eight years of research on the current and ideal state of civic education in American schools (Jamieson et al., 2013). The research supports the views of many educators that the impact of civic education is vast and long-term. According to the report, students who receive adequate civic learning are more likely to: 1. Vote and engage in political discussions at home; 2. Volunteer and work on community issues; and 3. Be confident in their public speaking (Jamieson et al., 2011). Students are 3-6% more likely to vote if they complete a one-year government or civics course than if they don't take a course (Jamieson et al., 2011). This section explores what is known about student civic education and literacy.

Limited Civic Literacy

Low civic literacy rates persist in the United States over the last decade. Fewer than a quarter of 18-year-olds were civically proficient as assessed by the 2014 *National Assessment of Educational Progress Civics Exam* (Center for Educational Equity, 2017; Jamieson et al., 2011). Fewer than 20% of 18-year-olds could describe the benefit of civic participation for advancing democracy (Jamieson et al., 2013). Only 9% of *Advanced Placement* high school students distinguished between reliable and unreliable Internet sources in a study of 8,000 students (Center for Educational Equity, 2017). Statistics available are mostly limited to civic literacy. Few smaller-scale surveys ask students about civic skills and civic confidence. Civic skills are much more strongly linked to actual participation than civic knowledge (Jamieson et al., 2011).

Quality and Accessibility of Civic Education

The District of Columbia and 47 states include civic education as an educational provision in state statutes. Proficiency requirements and educational standards are most frequently written as either civics or social studies. This effectively ensures that civics education is not mandated (Rafa et al., 2016). Jamieson (2013) argues that we have very little evidence of civic education availability or its efficacy because federal and state governments have not made civics a priority. It is apparent that civic education is far from universal for students. The *Guardian of Democracy* report found that only a quarter of ninth-graders receive civic education (Jamieson et al., 2011). Most civic education teachers do not have training in civic education, according to Nogueira and Moreira (2012). Current social studies textbooks do not support developing critical thinking skills that build civic competencies. The majority of schools do not have stand-alone courses in civics but may provide civics content in other courses. Most states do not assess civic skill. This makes civic learning difficult to track and assess. Knowledge about how and where civic education occurs is limited (Rebell, 2018; Watts & Flanagan, 2007).

Challenges to the Non-Civic Benefits of Civic Education

Civic education can have a significant influence on other school priorities such as improving school climate and reducing drop-out rates. Schools that have high-quality civic education are reported to have safe, more respectful, and more inclusive school climates (Jamieson et al., 2011). It is difficult to identify the cause of these positive outcomes and difficult to determine high quality outcomes. Eighty percent of school dropouts reported they may have stayed in school if given access to experiential learning (Jamieson et al., 2011). A curriculum with real-world impact may increase a student's sense of belonging in her community (Jamieson et al., 2011). Students in traditional civics courses and open-discussion civic education formats score highest on both civic assessments and assessments of other related skills such as critical analysis and work ethic (Jamieson et al., 2011, p. 7). Civic education can accelerate achieving school goals rather than be just another responsibility for educators to bear.

Disparities and Civic Engagement

Jamieson and her colleagues (2013) have described the disparities in civic literacy among groups based on race¹ and income. Black and Latinx students score below proficiency on national civic literacy assessments at double the rate of their White peers. This disparity similarly occurs between wealthy and poor students (Jamieson et al., 2013). A more significant concern among educators than disparities in civic literacy is the difference in opportunities for civic engagement that exist among demographic groups and the impact of these disparities for marginalized students. Rebell (2013) describes a decline in civic participation for all students. He further states that this decline is most acute for Black and poor students. Many educators view these disparities in civic engagement as a matter of urgent concern (Levinson, 2012 & 2013; Kahne & Sporte, 2018; Rebell,

¹ It is acknowledged that use of the term "race" is misleading. The term has been used to describe variations in human phenotypical skin color and cultural differences because there is only one race, human.

2018; Youniss, 2011). Levinson (2007, 2010, 2012) likens this disparity to the academic achievement gap that led to the landmark *No Child Left Behind* legislation. She identified this disparity as a *civic empowerment gap*. This section will explore: 1. How the civic empowerment gap is defined; 2. Views on why these disparities exist; and 3. Educators views on solutions to decrease the gap.

The Civic Empowerment Gap

Levinson (2012) coined the term the “Civic Empowerment Gap”: a gap in civic education, based on standardized test scores and surveys of civic knowledge and skills, between Black, Latinx and low-income students as compared to White, Asian, and middle-income and wealthy students. Levinson (2012) cited evidence from standardized tests and surveys of civic knowledge and skills to support her observations, which she started writing about in 2007. Levinson (2013) argues that it is challenging to quantify civic and political participation of young people prior to voting age. She instead focuses on adult participation in voting, volunteering, community meetings, and political causes because of the connection she sees between mastering civic concepts as a student and effective civic participation as an adult. Her research and conclusions may be limited because there are many possible predictors of civic empowerment other than civic literacy. In addition, standardized tests that asses civic knowledge may be limited and often biased in favor of wealthier students. Views on why the civic empowerment gap exists are described below.

Unequal Learning Opportunities

Educators recognize unequal learning opportunities for students based on race, socioeconomic, education level, and immigration status (Malone, 2008; Flanagan & Levine, 2010; Levinson 2012, 2013; Kahne & Sporte, 2018; Rebell, 2018; Youniss, 2011). There is a pronounced absence of student government, student participation in school decision making, after-school civic opportunities and debate, service learning, and experiential activities in schools serving poor and

low-income students (Kahne & Sporte, 2008; Levinson, 2013, Youniss, 2011). The lack of civic engagement activity is thought to account for the gap in civic literacy. Nam (2012) points out that the gap may also exist because students experience prejudice from their teachers and from Eurocentric textbooks.

Disparities in School Resources

Rebell (2018) suggests that resource disparity, racism, other prejudices, discrimination and distrust in institutions are primary causes of the civic literacy and participation gap. Schools predominately serving underserved students do not have equitable learning resources that support achievement. Nor do under-resourced schools have experiential learning activities which are often the first to get cut when funding limited. Rebell (2018) also argues that all aspects of a school's curriculum and resources impact civic education. He contends that a working knowledge of many content areas, from history to science to economics, is required for being an informed voter, juror, and/or creating effective community change. Educators need resources to provide students meaningful experiences to develop their skills in all content areas. Therefore, when school resources are unequal, civic empowerment is unequal (Rebell, 2018).

Disparity in Voting Rates

Low voting rates are often discussed as a result of poor civic education efforts (Flanagan & Levine, 2010). According to Levinson (2013) voting participation rates are double for those with at least Bachelor's degrees compared to those with less education. Only half of Hispanic and Asian eligible voters voted in the 2008 presidential election. Levinson (2012) states that the disparities extend beyond voting to other civic participation activities including: 1. Volunteering; 2. Group membership; 3. Attending meetings in the community; and 4. Working on community issues. Disparities in participation in these activities also exist by educational experience and ethnicity (Levinson, 2012).

No Citizen Left Behind: Ending the Civic Empowerment Gap

Levinson (2007, 2012, 2013) and Rebell (2018) fervently argue that educators and lawmakers should view the civic empowerment gap with as much concern as the academic achievement gap. These gaps expose inequalities suggesting the need for a national call to action (Levinson, 2012). Many educators believe that educators can intervene in our current political state. Through civic engagement education, educators might be able to equalize the trend of more privileged citizens being more politically active than less privileged citizens (Verba, 2003). Civic engagement can have a great impact on public policy by increasing political equality (Verba, 2003).

Levinson (2013) and others stress that school leaders should be taught the critical importance of civic education in order to advance our democracy (Rebell, 2018; Youniss, 2011). According to Levinson (2013) research shows that civic engagement activities strengthen a student's positive identity. Reading and math scores are used to evaluate school progress, yet the future of our democracy depends on also teaching civics. A school's mission can prioritize civics and result in a civic cultural orientation in the building (Levinson, 2012).

Can we ensure that “no citizen is left behind,” a phrase Levinson (2012) uses to draw a parallel to the *No Child Left Behind* legislation? Youniss (2011) asserts that the practices to train students well for citizenship are well-known. The path to increase citizenship education is clear if it is a priority, he suggests. Civic education that Levinson (2012) defines as teaching civic knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors, is best when it is: 1. Broad and dynamic; 2. Current; and 3. Incorporates school and community contexts. Unfortunately, this dynamic does not easily fit into current rigid and static educational standards and accountability systems (Levinson, 2012). Educational systems need to adapt to offer useful civic lessons.

Educators can best serve marginalized students by increasing their belief in the value of

societal institutions. Increasing students' belief in civic institutions potentially increases future civic engagement (Rubin & Hayes, 2010; Watts & Flanagan, 2007). Many educators share the need to offer students high school-based civic opportunities that allow a real-world impact to occur in their community. These opportunities provide all students with a sense of belonging and self-efficacy. Widening the definition of civic engagement provides entry for all students. This is particularly true for those who belong to families who are ineligible to vote, experience voter suppression, or are otherwise marginalized from civic participation. Being a civically engaged adolescent proffers a lifestyle with: a social orientation; psychological engagement; membership in organizations; commitment to serve; encouragement to participate in political discussion; legal and illegal activism such as protests/boycotts, and; communication on the Internet and elsewhere (Lannegrand-Willems et al., 2018). Community-based forms of engagement are more motivating and interesting for youth, particularly youth of color (Kahne & Sporte, 2008). Increasing student awareness of civic engagement opportunities and preparing them to effectively and safely create change may significantly broaden and diversify civic education and civic engagement.

Climate and Context Challenges of Civic Engagement Education

Educators offer differing opinions on key challenges facing the delivery and impact of civic engagement education in urban public schools. These challenges include political climate, current educational policies, and digital technology. The challenges are ever-changing and this dynamic influences priorities and opportunities for educators. Context influences civic engagement educational methods and outcomes as described in the sections above. Context such as political and school environment often mediates civic education methods and civic engagement outcomes. The challenges can be categorized into four areas: 1. Reliability of Internet information; 2. Local educational policy; 3. The contemporaneous political climate; and 4. Negative perceptions of youth civic engagement. These challenges are briefly described and considerations for civic educators

discussed.

Reliable Information in the Internet Era

Rebell (2018) argues that preparing young people to discuss controversial topics, fact check, and educate themselves prior to voting are educational practices that advance democracy. These classroom practices are often missing from schools. Civic participation relies on developing the ability to disentangle relevant facts from non-facts and compare information gleaned from reliable sources so students not only consider self-confirming but also alternative views (Dhawan, 2016). Developing media literacy and an engaged interest in news and current events critically supports the development of civic engagement skills (Hobbs, Donnelly, Friesem, & Moen, 2013). Developing these critical analysis skills are an essential part of civic engagement education requiring teacher training and consistent support, and a regularly-updated curriculum.

Educational Policy and Civic Education Action

Civic education is not a state-tested or mandatory discipline and is thus often not the priority of teachers or school leaders. Civic education also covers a plethora of topics requiring integration across the school environment (Levine, 2003). If school leaders plan to prioritize and effectively implement civic engagement education, they must overcome the challenges of teacher commitment and experience (Haynes, 2009; Levine, 2003).

High-stakes testing is a barrier to civic engagement. School funding and educational decisions often rest on reading and math test scores. This often results in time given to reading and math dominating the school day. Teacher professional development is often focused on high-reading and math rather than civic education. Teachers are often ill-equipped to prepare for or guide contentious or political discussions (Levine, 2003). School leaders need to refocus on teacher buy-in for incorporating civics as a primary goal of education.

Insufficient Teacher Training and Support

Teacher commitment is key because civic outcomes are not tracked by the school system and teachers are not measured on civic outcomes specifically. Many teachers opt out of discussing civic topics involving politics and current events because to do so could cause conflicts between students, teachers and students, teachers and administrators, and between teachers and parents. Most teachers are not prepared to navigate these conflicts (Jamieson, Levine, McConnell, & Smith, 2011). Teachers are also often unprepared to address student apathy or disenfranchised attitudes when leading a discussion. Teachers have to navigate the inconsistency between preparing students to address challenging and sometimes overwhelming social problems while also offering a hopeful future (Rubin & Hayes, 2010). Teachers need support from district-level administrators and principals to enable students to talk about issues that matter most to them in an open and brave way (Levinson, 2012; Rebell, 2018). Teachers may need to develop their own civic competencies in teacher training programs in order to best model skills for students. These professional development modules could include: encouraging diversity of thought in a respectful manner; being able to share one's opinions in a coherent way; and discussing current events with a focus on impacting social change (Mirra & Morrell, 2011).

Funding and Accessibility Limits to High-Quality Civic Engagement Education

Providing quality civics education is stunted by the fact that it is not a high priority for local, state, or federal governments (Jamieson, 2013). There are a multitude of roadblocks to offering high-quality civic engagement education raised by educators. Focusing on the real-time outcomes of getting students to participate in civic life is a different goal than civic literacy. Civic engagement requires more time and resources than civic literacy (Dhawan, 2016). Basic textbooks do not help students develop civic skills, which many see as foundational for effective civic engagement. Nor do textbooks engage students with current civic debates in ways that students

might find interesting (Haynes, 2009; Jamieson, 2013; Levine, 2003). Textbook companies consider civic topics too political and controversial and avoid them because to include them would impact sales. Textbooks instead focus on political processes rather than topics affecting students' experiences (Levine, 2003). Civic engagement education and its curricular resources and texts need to evolve as the demographic composition of schools and society change (Jamieson, 2013).

Civic education is often inaccessible due to funding cutbacks in schools serving lower-income students (Jamieson, 2013, Rebell, 2018). Offering real-world civic engagement trips, service opportunities, and after-school activities are costly and require additional staff time (Levine, 2003; Rebell, 2018). These challenges negatively impact students' ability to share their opinions and access real-world civic opportunities (Rebell, 2018).

Civic Education Laws and Policies

States and school districts have unique civic education policies and expectations. Civic learning is included in accountability frameworks in only 17 states and only 20 states assert that they provide curriculum support for civic education (Rafa et al., 2016). Yet information and resources to implement these policies and expectations are not widely available. Educators have not researched the effects of district or state policies on civic outcomes. States and school districts that prioritize civic learning could undertake research on the implementation and effects of their policies. This could lead to recommendations for educators, improved impact for students, and updates to civic education policy in additional states.

Challenging Political Climate

There are differing opinions on whether students should discuss controversial political subjects in school. The majority of educators argue that it is critical that students practice engaging with issues that are important to them and collaborating with others who have diverse viewpoints (Gurin, Nagda, & Lopez, 2004; Kahne & Middaugh, 2008; Mirra & Morrell, 2011; Sincer,

Severiens, & Volman, 2019). Some educators disagree with this viewpoint and discuss various challenges to engaging in political discussions at school.

In the early 2000's educators questioned whether civic knowledge or civic values should be prioritized at schools because civic values may be politically motivated (Murphy, 2003; Westheimer & Kahne, 2004). Macedo and Finn (2004) argue that civics should be taught in schools but this is complicated because civics can be controversial. Persons hold different values posing a challenge for diverse schools to develop a curriculum that is meaningful and incorporates inclusive perspectives. School leaders are faced with the challenging decision of whether to support political discussions and debates in an era when promoting civic education curriculum can be seen as partisan or polarized (Jamieson, 2013). Westheimer and Kahne (2004) discuss the dilemma educators face when deciding to teach civics. The choice of what and how to teach civics are political decisions that have political consequences. Well-chosen topics have the potential to prepare students to challenge or reinforce existing norms. This decision framework is referred to as liberation psychology (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004).

Negative Perceptions of Youth Civic Engagement

There are varying perceptions about young people's civic engagement. This may be due to the absence of a collective definition of what activities are civic or because young people are civically engaged in ways that are hard to quantify and track (Levinson, 2012). Some scholars believe youth civic development is as much about building knowledge, skills, and attitudes in students as it is about combating public perception of what youth care about (Jain et al., 2019). Checkoway (2009) suggests that media portraits of disengaged young persons do not account for what constitutes engagement and what lessons encourage it. Ginwright and Cammarota (2007) similarly suggest that negative descriptions of urban youth be challenged to promote civic engagement in students from diverse backgrounds. These scholars note that forms of civic

engagement in which young people participate including art and spoken word, social justice, and membership in community groups are often overlooked (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2007). Youth activism provides civic engagement opportunities for young adults marginalized by organizations that are not culturally-responsive to community concerns (Flanagan & Levine, 2010; Jain, Cohen, Kawashima-Ginsberg, Duarte, & Pope, 2019). Some educators advocate for young adults to lead civic engagement education through: identifying the topics; facilitating connections with community-based organizations; and teaching their peers (Godfrey & Cherng, 2016). This might enable more meaningful educational outcomes and effective civic engagement.

Summary

There are many challenges to implementing civic education but a collective understanding of how to solve those challenges is limited. A lack of accountability measures, educational structures, curricular resources, and teacher training exists. Disparities between civic engagement opportunities and outcomes exist between students of different cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds and a significant portion of civic education literature is devoted to this issue and how to address it. The current climate and context of civic engagement education involves challenges that affect students and teachers and result in non-uniformly delivered civic education or it being not delivered at all. Overcoming these challenges requires political will, increased resources, teacher training and public attitude changes to ensure that civic engagement education is widely available and effectively taught.

This chapter analyzed current challenges facing civic engagement education in urban public schools. The next chapter will explore the efficacy of civic education interventions and other environmental factors on increasing civic engagement and other outcomes of civic engagement.

Chapter IV

A Report Card: Efficacy of Civic Engagement Education

“Learning is not attained by chance. It must be sought for with ardor and diligence.”

— Abigail Adams

Introduction

Civic engagement education is complex and interdisciplinary. It does not have existing universally-accepted standards, curriculum, strategies, or sequence. Ideally, civic engagement education develops in students the combination of knowledge, skills, values, and motivation necessary to properly engage in civic life. Civic engagement entails working to make a difference in the quality of life in a community through both political and non-political processes. Civic engagement is broader than civic literacy, which means knowing how to participate effectively in civic life. Civic engagement is also loftier than civic participation, which means being civically active. Civic engagement involves a focus on action and outcome. Thus, active civic engagement education requires dynamic pedagogy and opportunities that build the following in students: 1. *Civic commitment* consisting of three dimensions: (a) Active participation in government and community, (b) Responsibility to take action, and (c) Interest in political and community action outcomes; 2. *Civic identity*, a self-concept that includes participating in political and community affairs; and 3. Knowledge and competencies that are necessary to make effective social change.

This chapter evaluates the research on effectiveness of civic engagement education to achieve youth civic engagement outcomes. Predictors of civic engagement are organized into three categories: 1. Civic engagement opportunities; 2. Civic identity development; and 3. Community connectedness. Limited literature is devoted to exploring other outcomes of civic engagement education. A discussion of the results and limitations of research on civic engagement follows. Ideas for future research are presented.

Predictors of Civic Engagement

There are many activities, interventions and educational practices that are identified as predictors that should result in achieving the goal of civically engaged youth. Research exploring the efficacy of these predictors is described here.

Civic Engagement Experiences

Community Service

Many educators view service as a predictor of civic engagement because it is widespread, easily measured, and accessible. Bennett (2009) explores mandatory community service and its impact on a student's *civic engagement orientation* in a study of nearly 2,000 seniors in midwestern urban schools. Bennett (2009) defines civic engagement orientation as a combination of developing civic competencies and establishing civic commitment. Bennett (2009) hypothesizes that mandatory community service would have a positive effect only if accompanied by social support like mentorship. Mandatory community service moderately increases a student's commitment to future volunteering and civic participation if social support is present but does not affect civic identity. Perceptions of neighborhood wellness and access to civic discussions positively predicted civic engagement orientation more than did service (Bennett, 2009).

McIntosh and Munoz (2009) survey 20,000 students in a large urban school district in Kentucky to explore predictors of civic engagement. Community service and political discussion, in this study, had the strongest positive relationship with civic engagement outcomes out of sixteen that were all positively associated with it. Students who participated in community service reported being significantly more likely to vote and contact public officials than students who didn't participate in service. However, the study is correlational and thus, one cannot draw cause and effect conclusions.

Experiential Learning in the Classroom

Kahne and Sporte (2008) hypothesize that young people of color² are attracted to community-based civic participation more than to traditional political participation. Classrooms with integrated service-learning, civic skill development, and community civic learning opportunities had the greatest impact on civic engagement outcomes in a study of 4,000 predominantly low-income Black and Latinx Chicago youth (Kahne & Sporte, 2008). The effects of civic learning opportunities such as classroom current events discussions and community service on civic engagement was statistically significant despite learning approaches varying among schools. Kahne and Sporte (2008) found civic engagement education to be predictive of civic engagement outcomes even after controlling for many neighborhood, school, and family characteristics. These controls included neighborhood social capital, neighborhoods with adults who care about making their community better, and parents who discussed current events at home. Kahne and Sporte's (2008) study suggests that civic engagement education can lead to positive civic engagement outcomes.

Martens and Gainous (2013) surveyed students, teachers, and principals to assess the impact of civic learning on civic engagement outcomes in 124 ninth grade social studies classrooms across the United States. These researchers hypothesized that developing self-efficacy skills would successfully prepare students for civic engagement. Results indicate that maintaining an open classroom climate was the most effective strategy for developing civic identity and other competencies. An open classroom climate encourages students to respectfully share opinions and ideas. The authors conclude that it is possible that open classrooms also improve other teaching methods such as active learning and traditional teaching. However, the research suggests that other

² The term "of color" is used to refer to persons considered minorities in the United States compared to persons designated as "White" native English speakers and assumed to have no "color." Persons designated "of color" are usually darker in skin tone and speak a language other than English. The designation also includes English speakers.

teaching methods also develop civic engagement outcomes such as positive attitudes, external efficacy, intention to vote, and civic knowledge (Martens & Gainous, 2013). More research is needed to compare students from different ethnic, cultural, socioeconomic and gender identity groups to determine the impact of teaching style on civic engagement outcomes. There is also a need to explore other factors' influence on civic engagement outcomes such as teacher-student relationships and parental guidance.

Political Activity Experience

Political activity experience and strong beliefs about responsible citizenship were the top two predictors of intended future civic engagement in a study where educators interviewed Black young adults aged 18-25 in Trenton, New Jersey (Chung & Probert, 2011). The study's authors were surprised that their hypothesis that an individual's belief that her community could experience positive change did not demonstrate an impact on civic commitment. This study is included in the chapter despite the participant ages because 45% of participants were not high school graduates, and two-thirds were currently enrolled in other educational programs such as vocational training that often incorporates civic engagement education. A longitudinal analysis would offer more insights to potentially indicate some causality between student belief and civic engagement outcomes.

Two studies consider the effects of student government participation on civic engagement outcomes. Voight and Turney-Purta (2013) define civic engagement as multi-dimensional, consisting of patterns of behaviors and attitudes, in 3,800 public middle schoolers in Tennessee. The study results support the hypothesis that students participating in high school government have a stronger civic commitment to improve community conditions. Voight and Turney-Purta (2013) conclude that increases in the civic engagement outcome of civic commitment could occur because student participated in other activities. Notably, the results demonstrate that students did not

increase civic activity without a positive change in civic attitude (Voight & Turney-Purta, 2013).

An article published before the time period of this review is notable. Youniss, McLellan, and Yates (1997) reviewed studies of actual civic behaviors in adults fifteen years after high school. These researchers reported on relationships between civic education in high school and civic engagement in adulthood. Youniss and his colleagues (1997) reported a strong positive relationship between participation in student government and adult voting and between student government participation and joining community organizations in adulthood. This supported the hypothesis that youth civic engagement strongly positively affects adult civic engagement. These researchers also reported that participation in high school student government was strongly positively related to three civic engagement indicators fifteen years later: (a) Civic commitment to improve community conditions, (b) Joining community organizations and (c) Voting (Youniss et al., 1997). It is impossible to assume a direct causal link between high school civic engagement education and adult civic engagement outcomes. It is possible that other factors may mediate or moderate the relationship between these predictors and outcomes.

Civic Identity Development

Critical civic engagement experiences are thought to develop personal and social identity, increasing understanding of one's relationship to community conditions and becoming an ethnic group advocate (Lannegrand-Willems et al., 2018). Some examples of research on how these aspects of civic development predict civic engagement follow.

Ethnic Awareness

Flanagan, Syversten, Gil, Gallay and Cumsille (2009) explored the relationship between ethnic identity and civic engagement outcomes. These researchers hypothesized that students with strong ethnic identity would have greater civic engagement outcomes than youth with low ethnic identity. Flanagan and her colleagues (2009) found that students with high ethnic awareness are

significantly more likely than those with lower ethnic awareness to advocate for understanding the cultural and socioeconomic group to which they belong and its needs (Flanagan et al., 2009).

Ethnic awareness was measured using open-ended questions that required participants to describe feelings of belonging to an ethnic group (Flanagan et al., 2009). The results supported Flanagan and her colleagues' hypothesis in a study of 1,000 adolescents in three Midwest and Northeast cities. The authors conclude that civic engagement education that teaches advocating for one's ethnic group and for racial understanding can increase civic commitments (Flanagan et al., 2009). The self-reporting study method is not a strong indicator of future behavior on its own to verify if ethnic awareness is a strong predictor of civic engagement.

Attitudes and Civic Engagement

Metzger et al. (2018) examined whether empathy, emotion regulation, *future-orientation*, and *prosocial moral reasoning* predicted various forms of civic engagement in young people. *Future-orientation* is defined as the capacity to make thoughtful plans for the future. *Prosocial moral reasoning* is defined as the ability to think about others' well-being. A sample of 2,500 geographically and culturally diverse young people from 8-20 years-of-age participated in the survey. The results indicate that the capacity for empathy and future-orientation significantly predicts all forms of civic engagement in students. Additional results indicate that socio-cognitive behaviors predict civic engagement differently depending on the age group. Empathy and emotional regulation predicted civic engagement in younger youth, whereas future-orientation and prosocial moral reasoning predicted civic engagement more strongly in older youth (Metzger et al., 2018). These results support a need for a developmental approach to civic engagement competencies.

Belief in one's own ability to affect civic change is a recurring topic in predictors of civic engagement studies. Bandura (1986) defines this self-belief as an individual outcome expectation,

and defines a community outcome expectation as the belief that one's community can positively change. Chung and Probert (2011) conduct a survey of 129 Black men and women in Trenton, New Jersey to identify potential relationships between individual and community expectations as outcomes of civic education and civic engagement. Study participants respond to eight questions regarding what individual and community outcomes anticipated from civic engagement activities. Chung and Probert's (2011) results supported the hypothesis that a high individual outcome expectation predicted a higher intention to engage civically in the future. Community outcome expectations were not associated with civic engagement though the researchers hypothesized that there would be strong positive associations between the two variables (Chung & Probert, 2011).

A study of Black youth between the ages of 15 to 25 in Chicago conducted by Hope and Jagers (2014) examined political efficacy. The researchers defined political efficacy as the belief in one's ability to create community change. This study found formal civic literacy education, defined as one course at minimum during the school day, to be a moderator between political efficacy and civic engagement using a simple slopes analysis. Civic engagement in this study is significantly associated with political efficacy for Black youth receiving formal civic education. There is a marginal association between civic engagement and political efficacy for Black youth without civic education. One reason Hope and Jagers (2014) give for the importance of civic education is that the study results seem to support the notion that Black youth are more civically engaged when they are taught the root causes of and structures that perpetuate social and political inequality. The researchers also hypothesize that the development of critical analysis skills would result in increased civic engagement. This hypothesis was moderately supported by the results (Hope & Jagers, 2014).

Community Connectedness

Civic engagement is significantly positively related to feelings of connection and sense of

belonging to school and one's broader community in a number of studies. McIntosh and Munoz' (2009) survey of a diverse sample of youth, described previously, explored a variety of predictors of civic engagement. These predictors included civic activities, civic beliefs, and school-related factors. McIntosh and Munoz (2009) hypothesize that positive character, conflict resolution skills, school discussion climate, and non-sport extracurricular activities strongly predict civic engagement. These four factors had some relevance as predictors but their impact on civic engagement was less significant than that of political discussion and community service, as described previously. The results also suggest that school context can promote civic engagement in students. The results from McIntosh and Munoz (2009) finds that 29% of the variance in civic engagement is related to school factors, such as school discussion climate and sense of belonging, whereas student background factors accounted for only 3% of the variance in civic engagement.

Community connections and social network resources had differential effects on community engagement and civic commitment in a study of 345 first- and second-generation immigrant urban high schoolers (Wray-Lake et al., 2015). Specifically, availability of social network resources predicted higher community engagement but only for second-generation immigrants. Wray-Lake and her colleagues (2015) underscore the need to use different educational approaches to community engagement to meet immigrant student needs.

Zaff, Malanchuk, and Eccles (2008) are the only educators to suggest that a systematic approach to civic development is needed. The systematic approach Zaff and colleagues (2009) recommends is to provide consistent civic education in the school context throughout development. The approach allows that multiple community persons including family, peers, educators, and community members intervene collectively and purposefully to influence civic engagement as a developmental goal of emerging adulthood. Zaff et al. (2008) examined this approach in a longitudinal dataset of 1,000 youth from 7th grade to age 21 and their primary caregivers in

Maryland. The Zaff et al. (2008) team posited that being around peers and adults who exhibit civic competencies broadly and consistently results in higher civic engagement for young people concurrently during high school and beyond high school into adulthood. The study did not differentiate results between young people of cultural and gender identities (Zaff et al., 2008).

The findings of a significant relationship between school connectedness and civic engagement is supported by a 2015 study. Guillaume, Jagers, and Rivas-Drake (2015) examine associations between school connectedness and civic engagement both concurrently and longitudinally in middle school youth of color. The researchers expected positive school climate to strongly predict civic engagement. The researchers reported that positive school climate is indirectly related to civic engagement and is mediated by school connectedness. School climate did not directly predict civic engagement independently of school connectedness. School connectedness however accounts for 64 % of the total variance in school factors as predictors of civic engagement (Guillaume et al., 2015).

Students in another study conducted by Pritzker, Lachapelle, and Tatum (2012) continually discussed messages they received regarding civic engagement from other adults, including parents, teachers, and community members. Students request that teachers support students' civic development by serving as civic role models and developing students' civic engagement skills. This study into predictors of civic engagement following a school project on participatory action had a small sample size of fifteen students but was the only study to include qualitative interviews (Pritzker et al., 2012).

Summary of Civic Engagement Predictors

The limited research on predictors of civic engagement does not significantly contribute to a collective understanding of the comparative effectiveness of civic education elements on civic engagement. The main themes researchers focus on are students expressing civic commitment,

demonstrating civic participation, and the outcomes of service learning. The research on the efficacy of civic engagement in middle and high school students on each aspect of civic engagement education is scant. The main themes in this research area are developing civic commitment; fostering civic identity; and developing civic competencies. Not all civic engagement opportunities and competencies are equally explored to date. Chung and Probert (2011) are the only researchers to contribute to a limited understanding about how students develop a civic identity, but their study does not explore differences among a variety of civic identities.

Most studies are limited in scope to exploring the efficacy of only one intervention approach. Only one study explores civic context in school, family, and community and this study was published over a decade ago (Zaff et al., 2008). Civic engagement educational activities explored are narrow compared to the integrated and comprehensive civic education that educators theorize would be effective. Many researchers question the quality, efficacy, and breadth of curriculum and civic engagement opportunities available to students. This is particularly true of studies involving students in schools serving low-income populations. Educational interventions that are brief and not engaging could result in limited effectiveness

These limited results suggest that civic education can change civic commitment in youth. Student access to experiential civic curricula leads to developing civic competencies such as self-efficacy and developing a civic identity. Civic participation is positively related to future civic engagement. More research is needed to draw conclusions about specific interventions and their benefits for students of various backgrounds, abilities, and stages of development.

Outcomes of Civic Engagement Education

This section focuses on studies that highlight the importance and diversity among outcomes studied in civic education efficacy research. A limited number of studies explore the different outcomes of civic engagement education beyond civic engagement itself. Richards and colleagues

(2016) examined the effect of a middle school civic engagement curriculum that included participatory action research and service learning, on the following outcomes: 1. Student leadership development, assessed through a survey of seven self-reported items; 2. Two coping styles (communalistic and harmony-based); and 3. Life satisfaction. The researchers hypothesize that civic engagement would be positively associated with all three outcomes. Leadership development was the only outcome to increase independent of demographic factors. This study was limited to fifty students and students completed a second survey measures of the outcomes only one week after the curriculum was completed (Richards et al., 2016).

Civic engagement in adolescence was somewhat positively related to higher life satisfaction, educational attainment, and to lower rates of arrest in emerging adulthood in a much larger longitudinal study from Chan, Ou, and Reynolds (2014). Data from the Chicago Longitudinal Study was analyzed for a sample of 854 black and Latinx low-income students identified as at-risk based on an assessment of family risk indicators. The study's authors acknowledge that the overall effects of civic engagement to long-term positive development are worthwhile but modest. The size of the sample allows for significant effects for most variables. Results show that civic engagement education predicts increased civic engagement and educational attainment in adulthood more frequently than any other outcomes (Chan, Ou, & Reynolds, 2014).

Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

A variety of limitations exist in current civic engagement research. Many are universal across studies, with a few exceptions. These limitations are summarized below and their implications discussed.

Lack of Consistent Variables

Many studies explore associations between formal civic education in schools and civic participation and/or civic commitment. However, the researchers often do not specify the scope and

sequence of that civic education. Civic education curriculum and the efficacy of that curriculum is different for all classrooms and students. Therefore, the variables are likely different for all study participants and replication of the results in future studies is unlikely. Educators can develop common standards for formal civic education and informal civic engagement opportunities, and consistent outcome expectations and variables. Common measures and outcome expectations would increase both the confidence in results and the usability of research results on practice. This limitation was not discussed in any study but is true of all published research on civic engagement.

Unknown Cause and Effect

It is impossible to draw conclusions about the cause and effect of specific interventions. All studies look at one or a few components of civic engagement education, rather than all that a student has experienced. The studies do not account for other factors that could have impacted students, in particular expected maturity and growth over time. Not accounting for a young person's natural development over time is the main threat to the internal validity of the studies but is not explicitly addressed in the researchers' description of study limitations. Many studies use a cross-sectional design that can draw associations between interventions and outcomes, but do not allow for conclusions about cause and effect. Any number of external factors can contribute to changes in student outcomes. Future studies can explore the impact of multiple potential civic engagement predictors and outcomes in order to compare and contrast effects.

For some studies that use pre-existing longitudinal data sets not focused on civic engagement, the results are only as strong as the small number of questions asked. Future research can expand on those early results and focus on civic engagement predictors.

Lacking Control Groups

The use of a control group allows the researcher to conclude that only the intervention accounts for the changes in the dependent variable. Importantly, only one study discussed in this

chapter incorporates a control group for comparison (Richards et al., 2016). This is a limitation in the research design of the studies on civic engagement predictors. Future researchers could attempt to test the results of existing studies through the use of control groups.

Sample Sizes

Sample sizes were modest and did not allow for analysis within- and between-group differences. Further studies can utilize larger samples of each demographic, including age, ethnicity, country of origin, gender, and socioeconomic status. Teachers, school leaders, other school staff, and parents are rarely included as study participants. Incorporating the civic behaviors and values of these groups in future studies can add to an understanding of a student's civic context.

Methods Dependent on Self-Reporting

The majority of studies depended on student surveys for data, as opposed to observed changes in behavior. Self-reporting about future likelihood of civic engagement could have been impacted by any number of causes, including wanting to impress or appease the researchers. Self-reporting is not the soundest test of whether the civic engagement educational intervention had an effect. Lastly, though the research does explore a young person's current self-reported civic participation, it does not explore the effectiveness of that engagement on one's peers or community. This is a critical area for future research.

Summary

The factors of civic engagement — civic commitment, civic identity, and civic competencies — are studied to some extent, but are not universally accepted, clearly and consistently operationally defined, nor comprehensively studied. Studies on the predictors of civic engagement use different measures of civic education and civic engagement, making comparisons challenging. A small number of studies on the outcomes of civic engagement for young adults have

been published. Critical limitations in the research design and measures prevent meaningful conclusions for educators.

This chapter synthesized research on efficacy of civic engagement education, predictors of civic engagement, and other developmental outcomes of civic engagement. The next chapter will offer recommendations for educators to equitably and adequately provide civic engagement preparation. Additionally, the next chapter will summarize the lessons learned from this review.

Chapter V

Moving the Needle:

Summary and Recommendations for Civic Engagement in 6th-12th Grade Public Schools

“We must harness the resiliency and optimism of youth” — Godfrey & Cherng, 2016

This chapter proposes new recommendations based on the information presented in Chapters 1 to 4. Recommendations are proposed to advance the goals of offering effective civic education. The two goals most commonly noted in this review focused on: 1. Fostering the development youth to become civically engaged and 2. Creating a thriving democracy of participatory, knowledgeable, and skilled citizens committed to effecting community change. This second goal is somewhat nebulous and is intricately linked to the first. However, the recommendations here are focused on both goals with the first being the primary focus. This chapter also presents a summary of the major themes from this review. The summary is organized into four sections. The first section describes the purpose of the review. A synthesis of theoretical approaches to civic engagement education is also presented. This synthesis is followed by a summary of current challenges to civic engagement education in public schools. Lastly, insights are offered about the efficacy of current civic engagement education curricula and pedagogy based on limited research findings.

Recommendations for Educators

This section considers all theoretical approaches and findings shared in this review and offers new approaches and recommendations for advancing effective civic engagement in young adults. This section is written as though civic engagement education is presently in its ideal form.

Individualized Civic Plans

As soon as a student matriculates at a school, she should be provided a civic interest survey and assessment and placed on an individualized civic plan. College and career advisors support

students with a postsecondary plan that can begin in 9th grade. Similarly, civic advisors support students' civic development. Advisors ensure civic opportunities are geared towards the interests and needs of each student. Civic education is not one-size-fits-all and requires a tailored approach for each young person. Various student-facing online tools exist to support college and career readiness, including providing curriculum, informing students of future opportunities, and tracking their progress. Teachers can similarly access these online tools to facilitate student learning. Civics is taught across content area and grade level. Advisors oversee the documentation of civic experiences and mastery of competencies. Students graduate with a civic portfolio demonstrating their impact on their school and community.

School Partnerships

Schools partner with elected officials, social service agencies, and community activists to design a comprehensive civic readiness educational continuum. This partnership operates similarly to other partnership models, such as high school educators partnering with college officials to design college readiness programs and employers to design career readiness programs.

Understanding the individual and community goals for civic engagement and how success could be measured would be the first step. For school leaders, understanding what their students are learning civically from peers, family members, community leaders, and others outside of school is critical as well.

Culturally-Responsive Education

Civic engagement education is culturally-responsive and trauma-informed. Civic role models from similar racial and ethnic backgrounds as the students have a large impact. Students may not believe that social and political institutions, including school, are responsive to their needs or capable of positive change. Educators take time to understand a student's experience with civic life. Students who feel a sense of belonging in school and are given opportunities to share their

viewpoints will be more likely to be civically engaged. Educators are sensitive to the ways civic engagement can be different for immigrants, undocumented students, and other marginalized populations.

Educational strategies are designed with empowered youth at the center so that students feel a sense of belonging in civic life. Young people drive civic engagement education in school through youth-led civic advisories and peer-taught workshops. Adults become the coaches and allow young people to select the community issues they care to discuss and work to solve. This approach is aligned to Positive Youth Development and develops agency in students and an opportunity for students to leave an imprint on their school and community.

Civic participation opportunities in the school building are equalized for all students across all schools. A great effort is made by schools to provide outreach and engage those students who are not having civic discussions at home or who have not yet had access to engage in civic life.

Civics Across the School Day

Civic engagement education is integrated across the curriculum. All teachers design curricula and opportunities that assume civic engagement as a natural and important responsibility. Civic engagement curricula across all content areas would be an important contribution to the education field.

This review focuses on middle and high schools but there are implications for elementary and college students. Elementary school educators incorporate awareness activities, such as civic fairs, field trips, classroom visits, and voting drives during parent-teacher conferences. College staff and faculty consider advanced civic development, including externships, student-driven clubs, and interactive visits with political candidates and officials.

Effective school design systems exist to coordinate civic engagement programs. A large part of advancing civic engagement education is building a school staff's capacity to: 1. Examine

their school and personal mission; 2. Understand their power; 3. Build trust and relationships with students and families; 4. Develop community partnerships; and 5. Redesign structures to give students more voice. A system is in place to bring decision-makers together, coordinate action, and share accountability.

For under-resourced schools to take on new priorities, a top-down approach is needed for naming civic education a necessary and critical element of schooling. To provide accountability for the implementation of high-quality civic education, educators must think more broadly than additional high-stakes tests and assessments for students. One option is identifying civic education outcomes more explicitly in the common core standards. These standards detail what students should know in math and English language arts. Civics aligns with many of the English standards, such as crafting and evaluating arguments, understanding different points of view, and analyzing substantive texts. Civic engagement can be easily added to those and other standards.

Civic Education as Liberation

Civic engagement is not about maintaining the status quo, but ensuring individuals have the knowledge and capacity to effect positive change necessary for their health and well-being. Young people can and should hold their school and political officials to high standards and accountability. At the same time, young people should be aware of systemic oppression and feel empowered to organize to effect change. Educators can develop students with liberation psychology principles as described in chapter two to understand the root causes of oppression and strategize and implement new ways of combating inequality. Young people need to believe that political issues are relevant to their lives and that their experiences and civic influence are an important part of a larger context that can bring about positive social change.

Leveling the Playing Field

Inequality is inherent in politics, with resources being a prerequisite for rights in America (Verba, 2003). Though money and health and well-being can provide political opportunity, these are not equal for all citizens. In order to attempt to level the playing field, citizens would need to have civic knowledge, civic competencies, and access to opportunities and training in civic life. This could involve recruiting and increasing motivations of those who are underrepresented in civic life. To go a step further, our government would need to intervene to change the underlying social and economic conditions that create differences among individuals and groups in their capacity to be active. The process of ensuring that all students are equipped to fully participate in civic life is one that can begin in school and be addressed in all civic institutions.

Summary of Theory and Research Literature

Civic engagement education goes beyond civic literacy. It not only provides individuals with the knowledge of civic processes but also develops the competencies, values and commitment to civic participation and community change. Civic education and assessment in American schools has traditionally focused on civic literacy. Many educators argue that civic engagement education is more interesting and challenging for students and has greater potential to prepare citizens who are able to adequately engage in civic life and contribute to their communities.

Civic engagement curriculum and standards are not universally accepted and little is documented about the breadth and depth of civic engagement education. There is no published review on civic engagement education in urban public middle and high schools. Therefore, this thesis contributes to a collective understanding among educators of what theories, challenges, and research currently exist on developing civic engagement among adolescents.

In Chapter 1, connections between school and democratic life were explored, and the importance of civic engagement education defined. Schools are an important factor in creating an

engaged citizenry because adolescent civic engagement predicts adult civic engagement. Education and civic participation are intimately linked. Research has shown that there is a strong correlation between increased years of schooling and higher civic participation

Much of the literature on civic engagement education consists of educator theories and approaches, which were organized and summarized in Chapter 2. Most educators believe civic engagement should be an important outcome of education. Many educator viewpoints are shared across three categories: 1. The educational context for civic engagement; 2. Curricular approaches to civic engagement education curriculum in schools; and 3. Expected outcomes of civic education. These approaches contain suggestions that would impact curricula and school offerings. Educators recommend increased teacher professional development, positive school culture that engages youth voice and models civic principles, and strong relationships between all in a school building to encourage respectful discussion and debate. There is no universal model for civic engagement education. Five theoretical models are compared and a new model is offered that demonstrates the impact of the educational and political climate on civic engagement curricula, and the impact of civic engagement on community health.

In Chapter 3, the vast challenges of effectively implementing civic engagement education are described. There are a lack of accountability measures, educational structures, curricular resources, and teacher training. The quality and accessibility of civic education is not equal for all students. The civic empowerment gap between Black, Latinx and low-income students as compared to White, Asian, and middle-income students was first discussed in published literature in 2007 and remains true today. Disparities in learning opportunities, teacher training, school resources, and educational policies abound. Current climate and context of civic engagement education involves challenges that affect students and teachers. Overcoming these challenges

requires political will, increased resources, and teacher training to ensure that civic engagement education is widely available and effectively taught.

Research on the efficacy of current civic engagement education, synthesized in Chapter 4, covers all aspects of civic engagement but not comprehensively or cohesively. The research identifies associations between civic engagement, civic commitment and other social and psychological factors. These factors can be viewed as potential predictors of civic engagement. The predictors include civic curriculum in school, community service experience, and school and community connectedness. Two educators studied the outcomes of civic engagement on a student's leadership development and life satisfaction and found modest connections. They concluded that civic engagement led to positive outcomes of leadership development and life satisfaction in adults (Chan, Ou, and Reynolds; 2014; Richards et al., 2016).

There are many areas that need further research on civic engagement in public schools. Researchers can study the impact of other theoretical approaches shared in Chapter 2 on civic engagement, for example different teacher training and other developmental values including agency. Larger sample sizes would allow for inter- and intra-group comparisons across racial, socioeconomic, and gender differences. Longitudinal studies could provide more insight into the cause and effect of various civic educational interventions. Continued research on the outcomes of civic engagement would be valuable for promoting civic engagement education. There is also no current research study on the impact civic engagement education has on a neighborhood, which could provide insight into the systemic impact of civic education.

Civic engagement education can benefit from a unifying theoretical model and long-term strategy for civic engagement. Implementing a comprehensive model may have an impact on United States educational policy, use of school resources, teacher training, and future research on

civic engagement. This alignment can move the needle towards equal and effective civic engagement education for all students.

Appendix A Key Term Definitions

Citizenship: an individual's relationship with his/her community and country

Civic commitment: consists of three dimensions: demonstrating active participation in government and community, having a sense of responsibility to take action, being interested in the outcomes of one's political and community actions

Civic competence: Another term for civic literacy

Civic development: the growth of an individual towards learning the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary for civic engagement. Similar to civic education, but with opportunities to test out civic skills.

Civic education: teaching civic literacy and/or civic engagement.

Civic effects of schools: the outcomes of a school's student population's civic engagement on civic life.

Civic efficacy: The perceived belief someone has about their ability to participate in civic life, assume citizenship responsibilities, and make a difference (Miller, 2009).

Civic empowerment: the mastery of civic skills and opportunities for civic engagement (Levinson, 2012)

Civic empowerment gap: a gap in civic education between Black, Latinx and low-income students as compared to White, Asian, and middle-income students (Levinson, 2012)

Civic engagement: Civic engagement means 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. It means promoting the quality of life in a community, through both political and non-political processes (Ehrlich, 2000, p. 6).

Civic engagement education: Developing the combination of knowledge, skills, values, and motivation necessary for civic engagement (Ehrlich, 2000, p. 6).

Civic identity: the way in which one perceives themselves as participating in political and community affairs

Civic literacy: The knowledge to participate effectively in civic life through knowing how to stay informed, understanding governmental processes, and knowing how to exercise the rights and obligations of citizenship at local, state, national, and global levels. Individuals also understand the local and global implications of civic decisions and the skills necessary to contribute to civic life (Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2019).

Civic mission of schools: the belief that educators in schools have a responsibility to prepare and motivate students for civic engagement

Civic outcomes: the effects/results of civic engagement at any level of influence (e.g. the community, state, or federal level)

Civic participation: taking part in a civic action. having any type of role in civic life, such as voting, going to political meetings, belonging to a group, community service, etc.

Civic responsibility: Feeling a sense of duty to participate in civic life

Civically active: Another term for civic engagement

Civics: Local, state and federal social and political systems as well as their inherent individual rights and duties

Community outcome expectation: the belief that one's community can experience positive political and social change (Bandura, 1986)

Curriculum: content and subject matter that is taught

Individual outcome expectation: the belief that one can play a part in bringing about the political and social change she desires (Bandura, 1986)

Pedagogy: teaching techniques and style

Political efficacy: belief in one's ability to create community change (Hope & Jagers, 2014)

Prosocial moral reasoning: the ability to think about others' well-being (Metzger, Alvis, Oosterhoff, Babskie, Syvertsen, & Wray-Lake, 2018)

School context: all curriculum, pedagogy, school programs and practices

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