Evidence Brief

Literature Review on Citizenship Education

Key Words

We searched YouthREX's Library for Youth Work, and searched in online databases using the following key terms: "civic," "curriculum," "education," "Ontario," "Canada," "political," "engagement," "democratic," "citizens," "citizenship," "political," "disengagement," "involvement," "participation," "citizenship," "youth," "digital," and "technology."

Summary of Evidence: Key Themes

The following articles were discovered and have been organized by theme (indicated by each heading). The summary under each title is a description of the article by the author(s).

1. Citizenship / Civics Curriculum

Beach, M. (2015, September/October). Why don't teens care about politics? *TEACH*. Retrieved from http://www.teachmag.com/archives/8559

> This article includes methods on engagement of youth in civics education, including quotes from the founder of the Ontario Civics Education Network, and conversations about the context of civic education in Canada.

Cavanagh, F., Schultz, L., & Viczko, M. (n.d). *Political & Civic Involvement of Youth*. Edmonton, AB: Centre for Public Involvement. Retrieved from https://d10k7k7mywg42z.cloudfront. net/assets/55a16de9c0d671556b035c01/NEW_Youth_Civic.pdf

> This report is a summary of the academic and grey literature related to youth involvement in political and civic life. Discussions with professionals working in other municipal jurisdictions and civic organizations across Canada were also held to gather data about best practices in youth involvement, and the case studies provided throughout this report reflect some of these discussions. On page 29, the report recommends investigating the roles of civics education and service learning.

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Claes, E., Hooghe, M., & Stolle, D. (2009, September). The Political Socialization of Adolescents in Canada: Differential Effects of Civic Education on Visible Minorities. *Canadian Journal of Political Science, 42*(3), 613-636. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/27754504

> It is assumed that civic education has persistent effects on political attitudes and behaviours of young citizens. There is no consensus, however, on what kind of efforts have the strongest effects on specific outcomes, like political knowledge and intended political participation. In some of the older literature, it has been shown that effects of civic education are stronger for children from a visible minority background. This article takes up these questions using a dataset with a sample of 15–17-year-olds from Canada. The results show that active efforts for civic education can make a difference – especially community service, a rather new form of civic education, which fosters political knowledge and conventional future participation. However, in Canada, adolescents from a visible minority background do not benefit disproportionately from civic education efforts.

Llewellyn K. R, Cook, S. A., & Molina, A. (2010). Civic learning: moving from the apolitical to the socially just. *Journal of Curriculum Studies, 42*(6), 791-812.

> This study examines the knowledge and skills that characterize civic learning for young people. Building on a literature review, it reports an exploratory case study with students and teachers in four secondary schools in the Ottawa, Canada, region. For instance, the authors found that teachers themselves often reflected that they avoided politicizing lessons, even in civics education courses, suggesting that political engagement is not a priority for schools. The article concludes that current civic learning is primarily characterized by procedural knowledge and compliant codes of behaviour that do not envelope students in collective action for systemic understandings of political issues. This study argues for renewed efforts to put social justice at the heart of student learning. To present a convincing civic educational program, schools should prepare students to analyze power relationships, investigate the ambiguities of political issues, and embrace opportunities for social change.

2. Citizenship / Civics Education

Manley, A. (2012). *Youth Civic Engagement, Knowledge and Literacy as Challenges to the Modern Democracy: A Participatory Approach to Civics Education as a Policy Response in Canada* (Research paper). University of Ottawa, Ottawa, ON.

This paper seeks to convey how deficits in youth civic engagement, knowledge, and literacy are important issues that need addressing across Canada, as – in a few short years – this generation will be taking over from their parents. In looking to understand how best to address these issues through the educational system, civics education is presented as a potential solution. It provides three parts: firstly, understanding youth civic disengagement and getting to the interactive model of civics education; secondly, looking at Ontario's grade 10 civics education classes, its shortcomings and barriers to successful implementation; and lastly, a way forward for civics education in Ontario.

Samara. (2017). *Samara's Democracy 360*. Retrieved from http://www.samaracanada.com/research/2017-democracy-360

Samara Canada's second edition of the Democracy 360 is a made-in-Canada report card on the state of Canada's democracy. Built on the understanding that democracy is about more than just casting a ballot every four years, the report card examines the complex relationship between citizens and political leadership and how they interact, especially between elections. It measures three areas essential to a healthy democracy: communication, participation, and political leadership. One of its five ideas for strengthening democratic infrastructure is through civic education, in and beyond the classroom (page 33 highlights the main points for this idea).

3. Digital Education / Political Engagement

Hamel, A. V. (2011). *From Consumer to Citizen: Digital Media and Youth Civic Engagement*. Ottawa, ON: Media Awareness Network. Retrieved from http://mediasmarts.ca/sites/mediasmarts/files/pdfs/publication-report/full/civic-engagement.pdf

This brief focuses on the impact of media – especially interactive technology – on civic and political engagement for children and youth. It looks at the present and future state of civics education. Since civic and political bodies are racing to establish a presence online and a great many civic and political actions now occur in virtual spaces, the authors consider the importance of digital literacy skills development as a means for children and youth to be competent and engaged civic and political actors at all ages.

Kane, R. G., Ng-A-Fook, N., Radford, L., & Butler, J. K. (2017). Conceptualizing and contextualizing digital citizenship in urban schools: Civic engagement, teacher education, and the placelessness of digital technologies. *Citizenship Education Research Journal, 6*(1), 1-15.

This article first reviews existing research within the scholarly and policy contexts of civic engagement in urban schools and 21st-century learning skills. The conceptualization of digital citizenship is also presented, with particular emphasis on the different *spaces* in which urban youth can be (and are) civically engaged. The authors discuss an attempt to develop a faculty/school partnership model as a way of making the curriculum more locally relevant and meaningful to learners.

4. Civics Curriculum / Measurement / Learning Outcomes

Bell, S., & Lewis, J. (2015). A Survey of Civic Engagement Education in Introductory Canadian Politics Courses. *The Canadian Journal for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, 6*(1). Retrieved from http://dx.doi.org/10.5206/cjsotl-rcacea.2015.1.2

This article reports on the findings of a national survey of politics instructors and their course syllabi, regarding civic engagement as an intended learning outcome at a post-secondary level. By analyzing the real and imagined audience(s) and purpose(s) of course assignments, the authors find that students are required to complete assignments that situate them within academic contexts, involving academic purposes and audiences. It stands to reason that instructors can continue delivering disciplinary enculturation rather than vocational or citizenship training by identifying civic engagement as a secondary or intended "incidental" learning outcome of any form of civic literacy education. Therefore, civic engagement is being seen as a secondary learning outcome.

Chen, P., Li, E., Milner, S., & Pareja, A. (2014). *Youth City? You decide. An assessment toolkit for youth to measure youth civic engagement*. Retrieved from https://exchange.youthrex.com/toolkit/youth-city-you-decide-assessment-toolkit-youth-measure-youth-engagement

Through the use of previous studies on youth civic engagement in Canada, a self-assessment tool that measures the youth-friendliness of Canadian municipalities was built. The self-assessment questionnaire has expanded into a toolkit, *Youth City? You Decide*, to be utilized by NGO partners for distribution to civic committees and councils, as well as youth-oriented groups. The purpose of this toolkit is to help users understand how open their city is to youth ages 15-24. The toolkit looks at five indicators: Youth Voice, Youth Space, Cultural Identity, Social Responsibility, and Education and 7Learning. Turn to pages 18, 28, and 30 for more findings on this indicator.

5. Civics Engagement / Education / Ontario

Chan, M., & Lee, J. (2017). *Youth Impact Summit: Redefining Youth Civic Engagement in Ontario*. Retrieved from https://studioy.marsdd.com/resource/youth-impact-summit-redefining-youth-civic-engagement-ontario/

> A summary of literature and findings from MaRS Discovery District, Studio Y, a youth impact summit on redefining youth civic engagement in Ontario.