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Promoting Youth Civic Engagement through Various Education Methods in a Social Studies
Classroom

A Masters Thesis

By

Zach Peterson

In partial fulfillment of the requirements

For the degree of

Master of Arts in Teaching

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Bethel University

Promoting Youth Civic Engagement through Various Education Methods in a Social Studies
Classroom

Zach Peterson

November 2020

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Abstract

The purpose of this thesis is to apply knowledge gained from reviewing the literature on promoting youth civic engagement through various educational methods in a Social Studies classroom. The history of civic education, current state of civic education and the importance of civic education is introduced to support the purpose of the research. Literature on service-learning, youth organizing, debate, and youth participatory action research is reviewed to give the benefits and challenges of using each educational method in a secondary Social Studies classroom. An application emphasis is included to further discuss the audience, sustainability, and resources needed to introduce civic educational methods into a secondary Social Studies classroom. Limitations of the research and future research needs are also noted.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

In elementary school, my teacher assigned us research on the 1996 Presidential election and the candidates were Bob Dole and the incumbent President Bill Clinton. Once we did our research on how each candidate stands on certain issues, we had a mock election. My vote went to Bob Dole because one of the policies that Bill Clinton was running on was to increase school days. In every election since I turned 18 I have voted, and every time I vote I think back to that 3rd-grade mock election and know it was a simple school activity that made me start thinking about the importance of civics.

As a current 7th and 8th grade teacher I think back to that moment and ponder how I can stress the importance of civic engagement to my students. I think about how I can create an atmosphere for my students so that they not only know the importance of civic engagement but also find opportunities to engage in their communities with the belief that they can bring about change. The murder of George Floyd by a police officer in May 2020 and rioting that followed shows that a large part of our communities are unheard and searching for a way to have their words mean something and can enact change within their communities. Plenty of protests have been led by youth from a variety of different backgrounds as youth are finding ways to allow for their voices to be heard outside of voting.

History of Civic Education

The United States has a long history of attempting to incorporate civic education into schooling for children. Initially, the founders of the United States created a structure within the United States that granted more rights to its citizens as well as require more from its citizens than the country that the United States declared independence from (Crittenden, 2018).

Thomas Jefferson and the founders advocated for a great amount of attention paid to civic education. Thomas Jefferson believed that education was a way to protect individual rights against the power of the state. Thomas Jefferson centered his education approach that education would liberate men to rule themselves (Crittenden, 2018).

Education during the early years of the United States was not publicly funded and varied from community to community. During this time, education was also only available to free white males. Publicly funded and widespread education came during the 19th century with Horace Mann's common school.

The 19th-century common school focused on educating all children no matter their background, religion, or social standing. The common school existed so that all students could flourish within America's democratic system. Using basic and simplistic means children were to become good citizens through the teaching of the basic mechanics of government and inject students with America's democratic ideals inspiring loyalty to America (Crittenden, 2018).

Critics of this form of civic education point that foreigners were required to assimilate into the American way of life. Critics say this program was a program of homogenization, normalization, conformity, and uniformity. Over nine million immigrants came to America between 1880 and 1920 and resisted this type of education due to believing that this was insensitive to foreign language and culture (Crittenden, 2018).

Reformers moved away from the common school and focused on the differentiation of students. The Massachusetts Commission on Industrial and Technical Education in 1906 pushed for industrial and vocational education in public schools. They also argued that educating all youth for participation in democracy by educating them was a waste of time and resources

especially within immigrant communities who they felt lacked the intellectual capacity to study (Crittenden, 2018).

John Dewey argued against this point of view of education and believed that all children not only deserved but were required a democratic education. Dewey thought that if students were put in a place that could share in the interests of others that race, class, and ethnic divisions would be broken down (Crittenden, 2018).

Through the different stages of education in the United States, majority dominant civic education used methods of rote memorization including high schools until the 1960s. High schools through the 1960s offered three courses: civics and governments where students explored the role of citizens at the local and state levels. It wasn't until recently that schools started to offer advanced placement civic courses, economics, and more specialized social studies classes (Gould, 2011).

Despite the inspiration for the education system to prepare students to be civically engaged this goal has been pushed to the side. The focus more recently through educational reforms such as No Child Left Behind and Educate to Innovate has been to focus students' attention on reading, math, and science.

Current State of Civic Education

The United States is facing a crisis of civic education. According to the Annenberg Public Policy Center, a 2016 study found that 1 in 4 can not properly name the three branches of the government. As well as only 17% trust the government to do the right thing according to the Pew Research Center (Winthrop, 2020). The National Assessment of Educational Progress Civics assessment over two-thirds of all American students scored proficient. On the same test, less than one-third of eighth-graders could identify the historical purpose of the Declaration of

Independence and less than a fifth of high school seniors could explain how citizen participation benefits democracy. In a nationwide study of basic civic knowledge defining competency as the ability to correctly answer three-quarters of questions on subject-based tests only 5% of Americans were competent in economics, only 11% competent in domestic issues, 14% in foreign affairs, 10% in geography and 25% in history. (Gould, 2011). As students are struggling to participate civically over 60% of all rural youth live in places that provide little to no opportunities for people to meet, discuss issues, and address problems (Winthrop, 2020).

The current state of youth civic engagement has also developed a civic opportunity gap where students in schools that serve predominantly low-income students and students of color are more scarce than students of relative privilege. Low-income students and students of color will often engage with their educators expressing their thoughts and feelings where students of privilege will benefit from opportunities to study a variety of different issues that are not apparent in their immediate lives (Epstein, 2017). Results of minority young adults show that students who participated in civic activities during their adolescence are more optimistic about the future for themselves and society, they are also more content with where they are in life and obtain higher levels of education than those who choose not to participate in civics during their adolescence (Epstein, 2017).

The current state of civic education has left an opportunity gap where students, particularly students from low income areas, are leaving the education system with a significant gap in knowledge, skills and values. Without this educational experience students are predicted to be less likely to vote, less likely to be engaged in political discourse, less likely to participate within their community than the students who receive a civic education.

Importance of Civic Education

Civic education remains one of the most important criteria in determining how engaged a student will be in society. Research shows that students who do not receive a civic education will be less likely to vote, engage in civically minded discussions, and less likely to participate in community service projects than those who do receive a civic education (Gould, 2011). A quality civic education will create civic knowledge, skills and values that create an active citizen.

Civic knowledge is the understanding of the government, its structure and its processes of making and passing laws (Gould, 2011). Students who receive a civic education score higher on civic knowledge tests than those who do not. Civic education programs also benefit the families of the students in that students report increased discussion with their family and increased media use that is civically centered (Gould, 2011).

Civic skills is the ability that is necessary for students to actively participate as citizens of a democracy (Gould, 2011). Our system of government is centered around debate and the ability to generate compromise. Students will need the skills to build evidence to support their position and articulate that position depending on their audience (Lenzi, 2014). School is that environment where students are able to build those skills in a safe environment through different social contexts and observations.

Business leaders also are claiming that they need employees who are smart and competent in math, reading and writing but they also need employees who have the same skills of an active citizen. Those business leaders are wanting employees who are able to lead, communicate effectively, create new solutions for problems and the ability to navigate the increasingly digital world (Winthrop, 2020).

Students who receive a civic education are not only to attain new civic knowledge and the skills needed to apply that knowledge but also the values that important for the health of a democracy. The civic values that are vital for a democracy is showing concern for others, fairness for all, trust in others and a sense of public duty (Gould, 2011). Research has shown that students who participate in discussion within civic courses have found to increase the concern for others and concern for the unjust treatment for others (Gould, 2011). Students also develop the ability to understand other perspectives, have higher levels of trust in people and institutions, and the ability to think critically about civic issues (Lenzi, 2014). It is through civic education that students are able to develop the civic knowledge to understand the processes of living in a democratic society, the skills to participate in this society and the values to appreciate and engage with those with different perspectives.

Purpose and Guiding Questions

The purpose of this thesis is to apply knowledge gained from reviewing the literature on current civic education and how it develops current and future civically engaged citizens. Throughout the research the guiding questions were addressed: 1) What are the various methods of civic engagement that inspire secondary students to engage in communities? 1a) What are the benefits and challenges of each method? 2) How do methods of civic engagement impact secondary social studies students' knowledge, skills, and values?

Definition of Terms

The following definitions are provided to assist in the understanding of selected terms and research context as they appear throughout the paper.

Civic education: is a combination of developing knowledge, skills, and values within students that will allow them to be productive members of society (Gould, 2011).

Civic knowledge: is the understanding of the government, its structure and its processes of making and passing laws (Gould, 2011).

Civic skills: is the ability that is necessary for students to actively participate as citizens of a democracy (Gould, 2011).

Civic participation: is participating in the form of political activities aimed at governance or in the form of nonpolitical volunteerism (Ballard, 2015 p.65).

Civic values: values that are vital for a democracy is showing concern for others, fairness for all, trust in others and a sense of public duty (Gould, 2011).

Critical civic identity: is when students develop an awareness of structural injustices and motivation to address them (Moya, 2017 p. 458).

Information literacy: is when a student can recognize when information is needed and can locate, evaluate, and use effectively the information needed for problem-solving and decision making (Leek, 2016, p. 401).

Political efficacy: is an individual's belief in one's own capacity to use knowledge and skills to act socially and politically; the personal belief that one can bring about community change through one's actions (Hope, 2014, p. 462).

Service-learning: an educational experience in which students participate in an organized service activity that meets identified community needs and reflects on the service activity in such a way as to gain further understanding of course content, a broader appreciation of the discipline, and an enhanced sense of civic responsibility (Bringle, 1996 p.222).

Youth organizing: is a form of civic engagement in which young people identify common interests, mobilize their peers, and work collectively to address quality of life and human rights issues in their schools and communities (Kirshner, 2012, p.1).

Chapter II: Review of the Literature

A variety of different databases were used to collect and evaluate the research for this thesis. Databases included, ERIC, EBSCO MegaFILE, and Google Scholar. Publications were narrowed down to include research that has been conducted from 1996 to 2020, research available in full text, and peer-reviewed research. Keywords used while accessing research included “civic engagement,” “civic education,” “service-learning,” “youth organizing,” and “constructive controversy”.

This chapter will examine the literature on how the methods of service learning, youth organizing, civil discourse in the form of debate and youth participatory action research will inspire secondary social studies students to engage in their communities. For each method this chapter will also examine the benefits and challenges as well as how each method impacts students' civic knowledge, skills, and values.

Purpose of Civic Education

Schools and communities are trying to find ways to promote a deeper understanding of civics while pushing students to become more engaged, lifelong civic leaders. Civic education develops the core knowledge and appreciation of our democratic system as well as the skills that are necessary for meaningful participation within their community and society as a whole and develops attitudes that encourage engagement in community and political life. Civic education can not only be taught in classrooms and schools but also by the communities as a whole. Research shows that students are more likely to have a sense of social responsibility, work within their communities to address various social problems, and are more likely to demonstrate political efficacy when they engage in structure, reflective experience in their larger community

(Saltmarsh, 2004). Schools and communities need to meet those civic education goals to maintain a healthy and vibrant democracy (Zorwick, 2016).

Meaningful civic education develops a knowledge of democratic institutions and traditions that brings about an awareness of individual and communities' rights. This knowledge also provides context for the students' community experiences such that past events provide a context and foundation for the present community-based problem-solving. Each student develops an understanding that communities have such a unique history that ultimately and fundamentally shapes the present social environment (Saltmarsh, 2004).

This knowledge is more than just knowledge of various facts but rather the awareness of what it means to be a citizen of the United States as well as an appreciation for what it means to live in a modern democratic society. This type of knowledge is the foundation for a deeper and more meaningful understanding of the role students can play in their community (Zorwick, 2016). Studies have found that proper civic education benefits communities with youth who report to having civic courses in high school to be more engaged with civic and political activities that include community service, participating in political campaigns, boycotting, and the majority of students feeling comfortable talking with their families and friends about politics (Hope, 2014). Youth and black youth in particular report a stronger belief in their capacity to participate in politics and be avenues of change. Those strong feelings in their own capacity to bring about change were bolstered by civic education (Hope, 2014). Also, while adolescents aged fifteen to seventeen were more likely to be engaged in protests and boycotts than young adults aged eighteen to twenty-five, young adults were more likely than adolescents to contact their elected public officials (Hope, 2014).

The purpose of civic learning is to develop civic knowledge, critical thinking skills, and civic values. The development of civic knowledge comes from different academic and community sources. Civic education has students develop their civic knowledge as well as develop civic skills that allow for the students to shape a civic identity to determine their individual beliefs, make proper decisions based on those beliefs and communicate effectively. Students will be able to develop the skills that identify, describe, explain, analyze, compare, evaluate, take, and defend positions. Students as they develop knowledge, and skills also can develop civic values as they analyze, evaluate, and question with an open mind (Zorwick, 2016).

Civic Education Methods

Service-Learning

Service-learning is a teaching and learning strategy that integrates meaningful community service with instruction and reflection to enrich the learning experience, teach civic responsibility, and strengthen communities. Service-learning requires the link between general volunteerism with an explicit link on curricular learning objectives. To qualify as service-learning, students are required to draw connections between their service and larger social issues (Mann, 2000).

One of the goals of service-learning is having students complete experiences and think critically about those experiences. Service-learning tasks students with experiencing democracy instead of just learning about it (Leek, 2016). Service-learning helps students to build empathy for other people as well as place their own experiences within the larger community (Saltmarsh, 2005). Service-learning, when done properly, will allow students to develop their sociopolitical identity, civic responsibility, and civic engagement after high school (Mann, 2000). Service-learning promotes healthy and strong communities as students are put into places where they

come away from their experiences with a more critical understanding of their community (Mann, 2000).

Service-learning with its traditions and history has numerous benefits. Research shows that students who are engaged in service-learning projects have higher attendance rates as well as lower incidents of suspension (Ponder, 2011). Middle school students and middle school males, in particular, report fewer behavior problems. Students also are more likely to have increased standardized test scores compared to those students who do not participate in service-learning. Students also had an increase in grades and grade point averages according to studies that are focused on school-based service-learning (Chung, 2015).

Service-learning has been proven to have a direct impact on academic achievement but service learning also allows students to draw connections between what they are learning in class and what is happening in their communities. Service-learning opportunities as a regular part of the classroom found that students were 15% more likely to develop real-world and authentic connections in their reflection journals than those students who only received traditional instruction (Ponder, 2011). A 2016 case study in Detroit where students developed an art project advocating for a social justice issue found that over three-quarters of the students that participated in the project felt an increased awareness of the issues surrounding Detroit. Participants report that this increased awareness brought up desires for them to address the various social, economic, and political issues facing Detroit (Taylor, 2015). Participants also reported that they felt their voices were being heard for the first time even though they continually heard that they were the future of society. Students also identified ways to stay involved in their community with most saying that they planned on meeting with others with a common goal to work together to increase volunteering, mentoring, or cleaning up their

neighborhood. (Taylor, 2015). High school students who participated in community service or school governance service-learning were more likely to be engaged with community organizations and to vote fifteen or more years later than nonparticipants (Wade, 2000).

Students who participate in service-learning were able to show immediate measurable results as well as demonstrate higher-level thinking skills, increased self-esteem, and stronger sociopolitical development (Wade, 2000). Middle school students were able to develop their communication skills, personal and social responsibility skills, and educational competence (Chung, 2015).

Even with the history and the benefits of service-learning, service-learning does have its challenges. The first challenge is that students without a proper connection of history, current events, and critical reflection on their experiences can develop a too simplistic understanding of the social issues that they experience in their service-learning (Saltmarsh, 2005). Service-learning requires careful consideration and proper reflection for students to come away from their experience more civically engaged (Mann, 2000). Improper reflections can task the student with taking their experience and building broad social policies. For example, having the students participate in a food drive and then having students write a reflection on food shortage within the United States, the students will develop only a shallow understanding of the issue that is more detrimental to the students in having a complete understanding of the social issue (Saltmarsh, 2005).

The second challenge of service-learning is that service-learning is a promotion of volunteerism without the critical reflection that is required for students to connect what they are learning in school and their experience outside of school. If students are unable to connect what they are learning in school and their experience then service-learning runs the risk of promoting

volunteerism without the longer term civic engagement beyond school years (Leek, 2016).

Critical reflection and connection to background knowledge will leave students in a place where they are productive volunteers but not in a place where they can turn that volunteerism into civic engagement (Leek, 2016).

While service-learning projects have positive effects on students, the challenges are guiding students in making connections between their service-learning and political engagement. In 1999 over 75% of high school seniors reported doing a community focus service-learning project and at the same time, the National Association of Secretaries of State found that 15-24-year-olds find considerable dissatisfaction from political life. Students are reporting that political engagement ranks low in importance in young people's lives (Mann, 2000).

Opportunities exist for service learning to expand in the future. Students have shown a willingness to care deeply about the issues that surround their communities and are committed to service. As service-learning opportunities are expanded students will have meaningful opportunities to discuss and address social issues (Leek, 2016). Service-learning will be able to provide opportunities for students to address issues but service-learning at times can also miss opportunities for students to develop civic skills that are required to participate in a democratic society (Leek, 2016).

Youth Organizing

Youth organizing is a "form of civic engagement in which young people identify common interests, mobilize their peers and work collectively to address quality of life and human rights issues in their schools and communities" (Kirshner, 2012, p.1). The organized action allows for youth to confront the inequalities that negatively affect young people and their communities (Rogers, 2012). Youth who participate in organizing develop their capacity as

leaders as well as challenge the perception that adolescents are apathetic or naive politically as well as unprepared for civic responsibilities. Personal feelings of efficacy and engagement increase when youth are participating in a broader social movement (Kirshner, 2012). Youth are given ways to direct their civic energy in ways that they have formal power and the capacity to address immediate, relevant problems that challenge the status quo (Rogers, 2012).

Youth who participate in youth organizing also can develop critical social analysis where they can examine the root causes of inequalities and oppression. Youth are also able to acquire and develop important civic knowledge of politics and government structure but also skills on how to bring about social change. Youth involved in youth organizing also tend to become what Westheimer and Kahne label as a justice-oriented citizen. These types of citizens explore reasons for inequalities and develop a solution (Conner, 2016). Within this collective identity, groups engage in a collective action in which the justice-oriented citizen focuses their energy on community betterment while maintaining a critical stance on social, political, and economic issues (Kirshner, 2012).

Youth organizing has a base of young people that are committed to creating ways to alter power relationships to inspire meaningful institutional change. Older youth and adults step in as mentors to guide young people along the process of inspiring and creating change. Youth organizing groups can identify common issues, research a variety of possibilities for reform, plan collective action to win support for their demands, and evaluate the progress of their goals (Rogers, 2012).

Adults play an important role in moving to the background to monitor, mentor, and facilitate while not being in charge. Adults can scaffold youth learning opportunities through training, providing the links to political networks, and giving ongoing support and guidance

during campaigns. Following the campaigns, adults are also able to assist the evaluation of the campaign while giving the youth the resources to critically self-reflect on the challenges that they faced, the different means that they used, and the achievements of their campaigns (Rogers, 2012). Some will criticize the role that adults play in youth organizing in that you are being manipulated by adults instead of youth activism (Conner, 2016).

Youth organizing exists primarily as after school volunteer organizations that young people can choose to join. Young people have joined these organizations for a variety of reasons such as seeking a challenge, something to do after school, interest in the sense of belonging, connecting with their peers and community, or taking action on issues that they care about. Youth organizing is increasing the psychological wellness of youth with youth reporting a renewed sense of hope, empowerment, and purpose in life. That renewed psychological wellness is having an impact on the students (Kirshner, 2012). Examples include African American girls in an after school youth organizing club report high levels of ethnic identity, increased awareness of racism, and intention to engage in activism. Latino students who engaged in youth organizing developed a consciousness of their historical inequities and relevance to academic learning in their lives. Youth organizing organizations self-reported that 90% of students involved indicate that their participation in organizing made them more motivated to complete high school, 80% of students self-report that their grades have improved, and 60% indicate that they took more challenging coursework due to their involvement in organizing (Kirshner, 2012).

Youth organizing campaigns start with surveys and listening campaigns can determine the groups' priorities. Many youth organizing initiatives are working to address multiple issues at one time (Christens, 2011). Interactive campaign activities such as poetry, skits, role-playing,

and cultural activities are important parts of campaigns that give youth engaging ways to articulate their experiences and invite participation from their peers (Rogers, 2012).

Youth organizing provides an opportunity to equalize the opportunity for civic learning and energize civic participation. Youth organizing organizations target most frequently low-income urban neighborhoods due to those youth often having the least access to quality civic learning opportunities (Rogers, 2012). Due to most often working in those neighborhoods these organizations highlight social injustice with a focus on racial oppression. Students are given opportunities to locate their personal experiences within broader patterns of inequality. Youth are engaged in relevant campaigns that are addressing the social problems in their daily lives that transform communities and institutions. In transforming these communities, communities become more responsive to the needs of its young people (Rogers, 2012).

One example took place in Denver with the youth organizing organization *Padres y Jovenes Unidos* examining the disciplinary practices with Denver Public Schools (Rogers, 2012). The organization combined with the Advancement Project a national civic rights organization found that police ticketing in schools had increased 71% between 2000-2004 and expulsions had increased by 30% with half of those expulsions for subjective and nonviolent offenses. Students of color were also 70% more likely to be disciplined than their white peers for similar offenses (Rogers, 2012). *Padres y Jovenes Unidos* organized public meetings and media events to bring attention to the data and pressure local district leaders along with the teacher union to enact reforms. As a result, the district committed to funding programs that increased student access to counseling and conflict resolution. The district formed a working committee of students, parents, teachers, community members, and Advancement Project researchers to revise the discipline code within Denver Public Schools. The working committee with input from students not on the

committee was able to persuade the district to enact new discipline policies in 2008 that limited out of school suspensions, expulsions, and police tickets in school. The district also pledged to work on eliminating the racial disparities in discipline and allowed for students who missed classwork due to suspension to make up that work without penalty. Since those changes took effect in the 2008-2009 school year, Denver Public Schools has seen a 68% reduction in police tickets, and a 40% reduction in the use of out-of-school suspensions (Rogers, 2012).

Youth organizing organizations like *Padres y Jovenes Unidos* creates a place for youth to practice politics, and stretch their skills, perspectives, and social networks. Youth can develop leadership opportunities with experience negotiating with different political and institutional leaders. Youth organizing also supports young peoples' understanding of the various cultural and political forces that shape young people's lives. Young people also learn how to participate in the political process through the development of the skills that build their sense of identity that places them within their larger communities.

As youth participate more in the political spectrum participants can reexamine their own experiences through the lens of power. By looking through the lens of power students can see past an experience of one or two but at the overall structure dynamics. Political education also has youth direct their attention to the root of social problems. As youth examine the roots of the social problems they begin to see themselves as agents of change with an appreciation of collective civic agency with members seeing the value of joint agency (Rogers, 2012).

Communities and schools that develop social studies curriculum that focuses on youth organizing develop a critical civic identity within the students. Critical civic identity involves students developing an awareness of structural injustices and motivation to address them (Moya, 2017). Critical civic identity differs from civic identity because students do not necessarily have

an attachment to that injustice but instead develop a sense of solidarity with those that are oppressed by injustice. Students are empowered with a critical agency that allows them to not only feel effective in one's community but also the feeling of being able to address local and structural injustices (Moya, 2017).

Educational spaces that have engaged students with not only the critical content but also civic action have found a shift in critical civic identities. Students who are taught civics from social justice and youth organizing perspectives seek out the root causes of social injustices and have the motivation to address those injustices (Moya, 2017). Students who develop this perspective report an empowerment and collective belief that they are the ones that can bring about change within their communities (Conner, 2016).

Two different approaches to creating a youth organizing curriculum that focuses on creating critical civic identities have been established. The first approach is to combine social criticism with efforts to reimagine a variety of solutions and enact change. This approach guides youth in expanding their awareness of social injustices and increases their commitment and agency in addressing those injustices. The second approach is combining student agency with guided opportunities to impact change. This approach develops a sense of power and influence within the students while also combining their collective agency with larger youth organizing groups (Moya, 2017).

Contra Costa Interfaith Supporting Community Organization (CCISCO) based out of Contra Costa, California, began as a youth organizing initiative with the idea that those closest to the problem should be involved in the solution to that problem (Christens, 2011). CCISCO started to mount campaigns to bring awareness to the racial achievement gaps in local schools. Results of the organization include more credentialed teachers and lower teacher turnover, an

after-school youth center, and for the schools to have a tracking system for students who are in the English as a Second Language class (Christens, 2011).

The social justice education project in Tucson, Arizona, is an in-school youth organizing project for 11th and 12th graders that started in 2003 in Tucson Unified School District (Christens, 2011). The social justice project emphasizes students to learn critically about their surroundings, identify shared experiences, and work together to advance social justice within their schools and communities. While in 11th-grade students meet state standards for American history and government and in 12th grade develop social activism projects based on their education and personal experiences (Christens, 2011).

In one year of the social justice education project, the students researched the segregation that existed in Tucson, Arizona, between the main campus of Cerro High School and the newly built “law magnet school”, which was a much larger and nicer campus. Social mapping showed that the magnet school was mostly enrolled with white students from the middle-class neighborhoods and the main campus of Cerro High School was made up of mostly poor, low-income Mexican American students. For their project students created a video that contrasted the advanced learning opportunities (AP classes, new computers, and elective law classes) and technology that existed at the magnet school versus the deteriorating facilities that existed at Cerro High School. The project brought mixed results but the most problematic issues were addressed such as the dangerous machinery that was present in the main campus’ special education classrooms removed from the classrooms. Other projects that students have taken on include media representations of youth, the cultural assimilation of Latino youth, and improving the opportunities for active learning (Christens, 2011).

Students who participated in the Tucson Youth Participatory Action Research Project described shifts in the content knowledge as well as their belief in their abilities to bring about change. Students who once felt alienated or disconnected from school now have a deep engagement in their learning due to them being able to recognize the relevance of education to their lives. Students also report being able to interpret data to challenge real discrimination and inequality within systems. Finally, students see that academic content is the true vehicle for them to accomplish their goals (Christens, 2011).

All versions of youth organizing incorporate relationship development, education, social action, and research evaluation. Students in CCISCO, Tucson, and Padres y Jovenes Unidos are developing relationships around a common issue that requires a network of trusting relationships. Youth organizing gives students opportunities to form supportive, working relationships that cross generations including the ability to form formal and informal mentoring relationships. Youth feel that school is relevant and connected to their personal experiences. Youth use that content knowledge and use it for social action that alters the power relationships in the communities that they live (Christens, 2011). That social action requires to be meticulously planned and choreographed to achieve policy and systems change. Youth organizing develops youth research and evaluation skills including interviewing, designing surveys, collecting data, analyzing that data, policy and program research, and public presentations on those findings (Christens,2011).

Debate

Civic education is a combination of developing knowledge, skills, and values within students that will allow them to be productive members of society. One system that educators and communities can implement is guided debates. Debates allow students to participate not only

in academic conversations but also develop the vital communication skills that make civic education successful. If those communication skills and civic education are successful then students can participate and thrive in public discourse within our democratic society. Those communicative skills that are developed in debate settings allow students to apply their critical thinking in a civic context. Students are asked to listen effectively, articulate their thoughts clearly, and communicate within diverse environments that teach students how to communicate their ideas respectfully and with flexibility. Students will be required to practice self-discipline as they apply their critical thinking skills to truly work and listen to others as the students agree and disagree with ideas in a respectful way, not people.

Introducing guided debate in a classroom is having students engage with real political issues in a safe environment where students develop skills for effective political engagement (Hogan, 2016). Instituting a debate program within the classroom can facilitate the political learning of students and build their political efficacy as well as their capacity for political engagement. Political learning must be more than acquiring a list of facts but rather guiding the students in making connections between policy, institutional practice as well as the status quo (Zorwick, 2016). As students make those connections true political engagement happens and students will develop the skills that will help make political change possible. Students will find issues that they can be passionate about and stay open to opposing viewpoints (Hogan, 2016).

Educationally, debate improves content knowledge, students' grade point averages, their reading and speaking skills, student conduct, their critical thinking skills, self-confidence as well as the potential for students to develop vigorous free thought and dialogue (Zorwick, 2016). Students get a sense of energy for participating in a clash of debate ideas that taps into their competitive spirit. Debate also develops the students' appreciation for well-informed arguments

with effective delivery that are supported by facts and research by fostering a critical and cooperative ethos for education which prepares students to be engaged citizens that are guided by an ethical code emphasized by reasoning and respectful debate and value guided citizens. (Hogan, 2016).

Within the safety of the classroom, students are introduced to that habit of participating in discussions, centered around public policy, that ask them to wrap their minds around a variety of perspectives. When providing students the environment to safely explore a variety of perspectives students can respect the opinions of others and, more importantly, the ability to disagree based on real concerns that deserve consideration.

The system of adding debate to the classroom gives students the process of giving reasons to support a particular idea or position. Students are required to make a claim while providing evidence and reasoning that supports their claim. Students become advocates for their position in which they have to identify, organize, and explain their evidence reasonably and persuasively. With this advocacy, students become active in their position. Students need to identify the facts supporting all the positions to actively participate in the debate and teachers should encourage an atmosphere of dynamic exchanges that promotes critical thinking.

Boston Public Schools implemented an Evidence-based Argumentation Program (EBA) (Zorwick, 2016). For teachers to qualify to participate in the program they were sent to teacher summer programs. Of those teachers that participated in the summer programs 99% reported that students' understanding of class content increased, 97% reported seeing an increase in student engagement, and 95% of the teachers reported seeing their students' reading and writing skills improve. An independent consultant's report showed that students who participated in an

evidence-based argumentation program showed a 64% improvement in clear and coherent writing and a 37% increase in their ability to evaluate an argument (Zorwick, 2016).

Constructive Controversy

Constructive controversy is an inquiry-based debate that schools can implement to develop civic skills within students. The teachers will pose a question that is related to the topic that they are studying. Students will be divided into teams of four and then those teams will be split into two. Each team of two will take a position on the question. The teams will be given time to gather information to support their position as well as information that counters the other team's information. Once enough time has been allotted for the students to gather information then they will be given time to present their information. Once each side has been given time to present their information then both times have an open discussion questioning and challenging the information that was presented. Students will be engaged in a debate of ideas using well-researched information. After a time of open discussion, the teams will reserve their perspective on the question. Students will use notes from the first round of debate and have time to add information to present the best case possible. After the second round of debate, the students will now come together to create a joint position. The students will drop their advocacy for any position and now develop a report incorporating supporting evidence and rationale.

As an inquiry-based advocacy project that engages students in political discourse. This style of debate engages students in a way that forces them to use rationale to support their position. As students research and strengthen their position within the project, students become advocates for their position researching the information that strengthens their argument through seeking to learn the necessary information (Johnson, 2014).

When students are presented with the initial problem or decision they have an already formed conclusion in which they have a high degree of confidence based on their limited knowledge and experience. By forcing students to engage in research to strengthen their position and counter-argue the other team the students are engaging in a process that deepens the understanding of the issue. They are also engaging in a higher level of reasoning as they use that information in an argumentative fashion as they attempt to persuade others to agree with them. As students are engaging in that high level of reasoning they become more committed to their position (Johnson, 2014).

As the debate starts and students are confronted with different conclusions, information, experiences, and perspectives they become less confident in the correctness of their view and enter into a state of disequilibrium. This state of disequilibrium motivates a curiosity that students will be actively searching for more information and experiences that will resolve their state of uncertainty (Johnson, 2014).

As students gather new information and different perspectives by listening to other classmates and arguing both sides of an issue the students will develop a new conclusion. Students will also have a positive bond that is formed between the group mates as they work together to come to a consensus position to present to the class (Johnson, 2014).

Introducing this style of debate within the curriculum increases student academic achievement but also socializes students in positive civic-minded discussions that build civic knowledge, skills, and values which leads to students to become productive members in a democracy.

Policy Debate

Another style of debate that can be introduced in the class and develops students' political learning and engagement is policy debate. Policy debate is tasking the students to consider a course of action that a state or federal institution should take such as the Supreme Court, Congress, or an institutional actor such as FEMA, UN, or a criminal court. Educators who combine policy debate with a service-learning experience promote opportunities for students to apply real-world experiences with their in-class experiences. It also allows for students to develop their information literacy skills, how to make critical arguments based on facts, and apply their knowledge across a variety of platforms. This style of debate empowers students to build confidence for political engagement (Leek, 2016). Students will be able to improve their learning by developing the skill of information literacy. Students will be able to recognize what information is needed, how to locate, evaluate, and use that information as needed for problem-solving as well as decision making (Leek, 2016). Students will be required to understand a variety of policy issues by contemplating a wide range of materials including news media publications, court proceedings, research data as well as different institutional propaganda. Students will be required to move beyond basic information and attempt to move into an advanced level of expertise and credibility on the topic. Advanced research will task the students with researching contrary evidence rather than just researching the evidence that supports their argument (Leek, 2016). Communication skills will also be developed as students will need to listen effectively, articulate their well-reasoned arguments, and communicate in diverse environments while working respectfully with others.

The challenge of instituting policy debate and all debate styles in the classroom is that politicians and the press have misrepresented the role debate has in civic engagement. Younger

generations can see that debate is counterintuitive to the goal of tolerance for differing opinions. Those generations feel less obligation to states or traditional modes of policymaking to bring about change. The lack of faith in government and media outlets as institutions who once served as authoritative and trustworthy services of information have lost credibility within the last forty years. Today media, politicians, and media pundits are viewed as political actors that are more interested in the spectacle, power, and profit rather than seeking the truth and the common good (Leek, 2016). The challenge with policy debates as well as all styles of debates will be forcing the students to make the argument solely about evidence. Students will also be required to show respect for others, a moral responsibility towards others, and self-discipline. Students will need to be shown how to disagree with others based on ideas and facts not about the person. Students will need to be shown how to make a logical argument that is supported by evidence (Zorwick, 2016). Within an environment that students can identify the different positions and debate ideas, the students will feel safe to examine arguments and reasoning. To keep students open to new ideas is for the teacher to introduce alternative positions that will promote critical thinking for both speakers and listeners as they participate in dynamic exchanges (Zorwick, 2016).

Overcoming the hurdles of encouraging students to participate in disagreements and advocacy teachers will be able to facilitate a civil classroom that increases student civility, knowledge as the tolerance for a variety of positions and dissent (Zorwick, 2016). Debate gives the students their voice and a way to interact with the bigger world that surrounds them. They will have opportunities to practice civil discourse by sharing their ideas as well as hearing the ideas of others. They will have to consider the evidence that is offered and the reasoning that supports the variety of sides of an issue. In this civil discourse, teachers will be assured of student learning and developing the skills to be active citizens. It will be important for debates to

not be isolated activities but sustained experiences within diverse settings. Students will develop a comfortable understanding of a world where ideas can be shared and explaining and disagreement are natural and not threatening (Leek, 2016).

Youth Participatory Action Research

Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) is a collaboration between youth and adults to assist the sociopolitical development and civic engagement that promotes the power and sociopolitical voice of youth with an emphasis on marginalized groups through the process of inquiry and action (Kornbluh, 2015). This process empowers students to create knowledge, foster critical thinking, and develop an awareness of issues surrounding their communities and society. Students who engage within this process can develop a critical awareness of the social issues in their communities. This awareness brings a sense of community that their personal experience is part of a larger collective experience. This awareness contributes to the sociopolitical development within students with the means of developing action-oriented solutions.

YPAR also develops relationships with a diverse set of people including formal and informal intergenerational relationships between youth and adults. Adults are present within the YPAR as intentional members to scaffold support for young people to receive training and support to do their work effectively (Kornbluh, 2015). Within this support system, young people can develop a voice to express their experiences within the safety of a support system. This sort of relationship-building has led to a significant increase in sociopolitical development within students compared to that of students to participate in traditional leadership development courses. Students by building these new relationships also open up employment opportunities for young people

YPAR is a system that works within schools or through the communities. Within the community the focus is on understanding the issues that are relevant to the community, building rapport within the community, and building leadership skills. Students put together campaigns that address the issues that are facing their communities (Kornbluh, 2015).

Schools on the other hand emphasize teachers partnering with the students to conduct an action research project within elective or required courses. Contrasted with YPAR within community programs school-based YPAR may or may not focus their energy on issues that are in direct relevance to the community (Kornbluh, 2015). Arizona school systems that incorporated YPAR within elective courses. Students' participation in these courses is a strong indicator of passing the Arizona state standardized test as well as graduating high school (Kornbluh, 2015).

YPAR is not without its challenges. Students and young people within the YPAR system are challenging historical power relationships within their schools and communities. Within a school system, this could mean challenging the system of students being the recipients of information dependent on the teacher to become actual contributors to their school environments. Teachers who use this process also may feel that they are taking a professional risk by having a lack of control on the process of which decision making is youth-driven.

Administrators and schools can assist teachers in overcoming this challenge by providing teachers with professional learning communities and resources tied to specific academic standards. Professional learning communities will allow for teachers to have a sense of community and take away the feeling of isolation. Teachers will also have access to information and support to implement YPAR.

Another challenge is teachers being resistant to politically sensitive topics. As society is becoming more politically divisive teachers are wary of topics that are related to social justice.

Teachers may be reluctant to discuss controversial topics such as race for being afraid of saying the wrong thing or being criticized for indoctrinating students with one viewpoint.

Administrators who provide their vocal support for teachers and young people will create an atmosphere of comfort in utilizing YPAR in the classroom. Youth will also have a greater opportunity to explore and challenge the existing structures or policies that maintain inequality.

The final challenge of the YPAR model is the amount of time and resources that are required for planning, designing, and executing the research plan. Students will require ample time to properly follow the steps of identifying, collecting, and analyzing data and then develop an action plan that responds to the data. This approach is in the Minnesota Civics Skills substrand for grade nine, as follows:

9.1.1.1.4 - Examine a public policy issue by defining the problem, developing alternative courses of action evaluating the consequences of each alternative, selecting a course of action and designing a plan to implement the action and resolve the problem (MN Department of Education, 2013).

Steps of Youth Participatory Action Research

YPAR is a four-step process of identifying problems that young people want to see improvement within their schools and communities. The process has young people research to inform their actions to best address the problems within their school or community depending on the context (Kornbluh, 2015).

The first step of the YPAR process is for youth to assess their community and identify a problem of interest. Students during this part of the process gather information from a variety of sources such as school reports, newspaper articles, and census data. Students are tasked with critically reviewing that data to determine the position of the sources, any biases, and their main

arguments. Students will be able to assess the reasoning of the author and whether or not the information supports critical thinking. Students then will determine what gaps currently exist, if there are missing perspectives, and what areas require further inquiry. This first step supports the ability of students to paraphrase information and to develop a critical lens to name and describe issues surrounding inequity (Kornbluh, 2015).

The second step of YPAR is collecting data. Students plan and carry out investigations and strategically design their research to gather the appropriate information from members of the community. This step will task the students with designing surveys, one-on-one interviews, and group interviews. This part of the process has the students developing their data collection tools, assessing, and revising their tools to best answer their research questions. This system of planning, revising, editing, and rewriting their approach supports the mastery of students in revision (Kornbluh, 2015).

The third step of YPAR is to have the students analyze their data. Students will learn the process of critically examining the data to identify themes developing within their data. Students will need to clearly define the process of including and excluding information from their research. Tasking the students with determining the value of their research will develop skills on how to use evidence to support or dispute claims. Students will also be able to draw connections between their personal experiences and existing larger social structures. Placing the students' experiences within a larger social context will inspire students to develop strategic action areas and create critical discussions surrounding that social action (Kornbluh, 2015).

The last piece of YPAR is action. The students take their data-driven conclusions and develop strategic actions to address a particular social issue. Within the action phase of YPAR students will develop skills tied to social justice such as organizing, leadership, communication,

and partnership. Students will also develop skills by turning data into inspiration for others to engage in collective action for the betterment of their school or community (Kornbluh, 2015).

Chapter III: Application of the Research

The purpose of this chapter is to outline how research supports the application of civic education in a 7th and 8th grade classroom, and introduces the audience that the applications were developed for as well as the resources that are required.

Purpose of the Application of the Materials

Schools and communities are trying to find ways to promote a deeper understanding of civics while pushing students to become more engaged, lifelong civic leaders. The use of a variety of different civic education methods develops a deeper knowledge and appreciation of our democratic system as well as the skills and values to participate within the students' community as well as society. Research shows that students are more likely to have a sense of social responsibility, work within their communities to address various social problems, and are more likely to demonstrate political efficacy when they engage in structure, reflective experience in their larger community (Saltmarsh, 2004). The application of these methods allows for students to identify societal problems and the ability to address them appropriately in a structured and reflective experience.

The purpose of the service-learning application is for students to connect knowledge of voting rights to practice within their community. The students can see the practice of certain rights and duties within the community and how governments make it easier or harder for groups to participate. This experience will allow students to understand the factors that lead certain communities to have high or low participation voting rates. Understanding this will lead students to understand the social environment of their communities and ways to address issues through civic participation (Saltmarsh, 2004).

The youth organizing application having students explore effects and responses to climate change students exposed to current research through an inquiry-based learning approach. The students will see climate change as a critical problem that requires an investigation, analysis of the data, and a way to take action to create change within their communities and the United States. This open-ended inquiry will stretch young people's cognitive ability and their social interaction skills (Rogers, 2012). This exercise will provide students with the opportunity to develop complex action plans based on the research of what other countries are doing. Students will be able to use their communication skills to persuade audiences using reliable evidence to change their actions (Rogers, 2012). Youth organizing in this framework will develop their civic knowledge, skills, and values.

There are two applications for debate: a constructive controversy application and a policy debate application. The constructive controversy debate surrounding the current application of the 15th amendment to the Constitution will allow for students to advocate both sides of this issue that will challenge their perspective and their established information. When students finish the debate, they will present their cooperative assignment on how to guarantee the 15th amendment rights to all. A cooperative assignment tasks the students to incorporate all their information in a safe and structured manner to promote creativity and distribution of knowledge (Johnson, 2009).

The second application for debate is a policy debate where students will debate whether or not to tear down Confederate and other historical monuments. Students will be able to connect historical background knowledge to current events. Students in this debate will also explore how the democratic system of government works and how the government can protect the rights of

minorities. In practicing policy debate students will develop their communication skills as well as their information literacy skills that will allow them to practice political action in the future.

The Youth Participatory Action Research application tasks the students with researching the immigrant community within Minneapolis. Students will be able to research the reasons why immigrant groups are specifically leaving their home country and coming to Minnesota. Students are able to identify the needs of those immigrants that are coming to Minnesota based off of that information and develop a plan in order to address those needs. Possibilities include researching and petitioning for more English language inclusive classrooms and accommodations. Other possibilities include working with established immigrant organizations to develop ways to identify needs and develop a plan of action.

Providing an opportunity for students to work within their own communities to identify the needs and develop an action plan gives those students a stronger belief of their own capacity to participate in politics and be those avenues of change. Those strong feelings in their capacity to bring about change were bolstered by civic education (Hope, 2014).

Audience

The applications have been developed for the 7th and 8th-grade students at Global Academy in New Brighton, Minnesota. Global Academy has an 84% Black or African American population. Global Academy's student population is 32.6% English Language Learners and 83.6% qualify for free/reduced-price lunch. Seventh and eighth-grade students at Global Academy are first or second-generation immigrants predominantly from regions in East and North Africa. The students at Global Academy are required to complete three action service projects per year, K-6, which typically are viewed as more community service projects guided by teachers than service-learning projects that are connected to the content. By participating in these

civic education projects in the social studies curriculum the 7th-grade students at Global Academy will have fulfilled their action service project requirement. The 8th-grade students will be required to do at least 1 more action service project as this curriculum only has 2 applications geared specifically towards them. The curriculum can be modified to add one more application to fulfill their action service project requirement.

Resources Needed

To efficiently and effectively engage students in these activities will require students to have the means to conduct research. At Global Academy students are provided with a school iPad. Students will need to have additional training on proper researching skills and proper online resources. With a high rate of English Language Learners students will need further education on creating thinking maps and organization of notes to best use their information within a debate. This training will occur in the 7th and 8th grade Humanities classes.

A get out and vote drive organized by students would require multiple class periods dedicated to student-led research of communities of high participation versus communities of low participation. Following student-led research students would be required to organize a plan and place to conduct the get out and vote drive with particular focus on communities with low participation. With the assistance of teachers, paras, and volunteer parents, students would have the opportunity to focus their drive-in community events, festivals, or in high foot traffic areas. This service-learning opportunity would have the highest success in the fall before general elections.

All civic education methods require open communication with the different administration within the school. These methods will challenge the existing power structures within communities and empower students to develop methods to bring change within their

communities. As the teacher responsible for these new initiatives, it will be important to have regular communication with the administration. Also, communication with fellow grade level teachers is important for interdisciplinary collaboration or in the youth organizing, service learning, and youth participatory action research projects may need possible schedule changes.

Chapter IV: Discussion and Conclusion

Utilizing civic education in a secondary social studies classroom develops the knowledge for students to participate within their community and society as a whole. Civic education develops the skills to develop new knowledge through identifying and analyzing the various positions on an issue. Then students have the confidence to evaluate the evidence to take and defend their position. In being able to take and defend their position the students will also be able to value other sides of the argument with an open mind. The development of these knowledge, skills, and values come from incorporating various civic education methods.

Each civic education method has its benefits and challenges that teachers will be able to examine to bring into the classroom. Using each method will allow students to have various opportunities to apply their knowledge in real-life situations. Service-learning will give students opportunities to use their knowledge that they build within the classroom out in their community. Debate develops the skills to advocate for a position using evidence as well as develop the skills to listen to other positions with an open mind. Youth Organizing and Youth Participatory Action Research give students the opportunities to place their own experience within their community and society as a whole. Students can develop ways to combat injustices through the safety of the classroom with the guidance of trusted adults and other classmates. Each method is a way that develops knowledge, skills, and values through practice, discussion, and reflection that will allow students to become active members of society.

Professional Application

Using various methods of civic education is a challenge that requires time, patience, and strong relationships with students. A strong teacher-student relationship will allow for students to

truly take leadership during these applications. Developing strong teacher-student relationships will also assist in teachers developing a sense of how to scaffold properly the various civic education opportunities. When introducing service-learning the students will need the knowledge to make the proper connections between the service-learning and their education.

Teachers will need the courage to take risks and place their trust in the students as they guide themselves through these different opportunities. Students will be tying in their own experience to guide their youth organizing project and youth participatory action research project. Teachers will need to have open communication with their students, other teachers, the administration, and parents. An open communication plan with all involved will alleviate the risks as everyone will be working towards accomplishing the same goal.

My goal in my classroom is to provide opportunities for students to use the knowledge in a way that connects history and geography to the experiences of students. I have found that building excitement for students for history and geography can be a challenge, especially for middle school students. Using civic education opportunities such as service-learning, debate, youth organizing, and youth participatory action research ties the content knowledge from the classroom into real-world experiences. My desire from my students in connecting their content knowledge and real world experiences is finding safety within the classroom to take risks with the education to become active citizens as they enter high school and eventually pursue college and/or careers.

Limitations of the Research and Future Research Needs

Research on the benefits of youth civic engagement is quite plentiful. However, research about the challenges of youth organizing was virtually non-existent. More research is needed to understand what the challenges are of incorporating youth organizing into curriculum and real

world processes and how to overcome those challenges. Research on how to overcome challenges would be especially helpful to educators who work in schools where there may only be one teacher per content area, as the research would substitute for the collaboration that could take place if there were several teachers in the same content area.

A second limitation is the lack of information on how youth civic engagement impacts test scores. A bit of research exists showing the impact debate and service-learning have on test scores but more research is needed explicitly connecting methods of civic education and test scores. To create buy-in from parents and administrators, more research is needed on the connection between civic education and test scores.

A third limitation is updated research on service-learning. Service-learning has a long history in the United States with a push to use service-learning in schools in the 1990s. However, it was difficult to find current research about civic education as a service-learning approach in secondary classrooms and it was also difficult to find research about service-learning's effectiveness when civic education approaches were used.

A fourth limitation is that this thesis is not an exhaustive list of all methods to promote youth civic engagement. Further research could examine how simulations of democratic process promote civic engagement. Other research could also examine how bringing in outside experts promotes civic engagement.

Conclusion

The purpose of this literature review with application emphasis was to apply knowledge gained on current civic education and how it develops current and future civically engaged citizens. A literature review was undertaken to find answers to these guiding questions: What are the various methods civic engagement inspires secondary students to develop socio-political

attitudes and engage in communities? What are the benefits and challenges of each method? How do methods of civic engagement impact second social studies students' knowledge, skills, and values?

The literature review was used to write five applications to integrate the knowledge into a secondary social studies classroom. The first application is to create a service-learning opportunity that guides students in researching voting rates within Minneapolis communities and organize a get out and vote drive based on historical laws that encourage and suppress voting rates. The second application is to create a youth organizing opportunity for students to address climate change within their communities and the United States. The third application is to engage students in a constructive controversy debate debating the practice of instituting the 15th amendment to the United States Constitution. The fourth application is for students to engage in a policy debate on tearing down Confederate and other historical monuments. The fifth application is for students to participate in a Youth Participatory Action Research project researching the needs facing immigrant groups within Minneapolis and how to address those needs.

Integrating these five applications based on the literature review will develop the civic knowledge, skills, and values necessary for students to become active and engaged citizens within society. As students are the future of the United States and the world they are the ones that will be deciding to move society forward using the knowledge, skills, and values that they develop in school.

Appendix

Application 1: Service Learning

Class: 7th-grade History

Standard 1:

Democratic government depends on informed and engaged citizens who exhibit civic skills and values, practice civic discourse, vote and participate in elections, apply inquiry, and analysis skills and take action to solve problems, and shape public policy.

Benchmark:

7.1.1.1.1 Exhibit civic skills including participating in civic discussion on issues in the contemporary United States, demonstrating respect for the opinions of peoples or groups who have different perspectives and reaching consensus.

Standard 2:

The United States is based on democratic values and principles that include liberty, individual rights, justice, equality, the rule of law, limited government, common good, popular sovereignty, majority rule, and minority rights.

Benchmark 2

7.1.2.3.1 Identify examples of how principles expressed in the Declaration of Independence and Preamble to the Constitution have been applied throughout United States history, including how they have evolved (if applicable) over time.

Standard 3

Citizenship and its rights and duties are established by law.

Benchmark 3

7.1.3.5.1 Describe the components of responsible citizenship including informed voting and decision making, developing and defending positions on public policy issues, and monitoring and influencing public decision making.

Benchmark 4

7.1.3.5.2 Compare and contrast the right and responsibilities of citizens, non-citizens, and dual citizens.

Standard 4:

Historical inquiry is a process in which multiple sources and different kinds of historical evidence are analyzed to draw conclusions about how and why things happened in the past.

Benchmark 5

7.4.1.2.1 Pose questions about a topic in United States history, gather and organize a variety of primary and secondary sources related to the questions, analyze sources for credibility and bias; suggest possible answers and write a thesis statement; use sources to draw conclusions and support the thesis; present supported findings, and cite sources.

Description of Project

Students will examine the rights and responsibilities of citizens within the United States including various Constitutional amendments that have expanded voting rights to different groups of people. Students will also look at Supreme Court rulings and laws that have impacted the various groups of people and their participation in elections. Students will need to come up with a service-learning project that will encourage voting in different communities that have high participation and low participation. Opportunities could include a “get out and vote” drive, writing letters to the Secretary of State, making contact with local organizations that are promoting voter participation, or participating in the Minnesota Secretary of State’s mock voting process.

Steps of Project

1. Students will research Constitutional Amendments such as the 13th, 14th, 15th, and 19th Amendments.
 - a. Constitutional Amendments will fit within the timeline of the Civil War and Reconstruction unit.
 - b. The 19th Amendment will fit in the Gilded Age unit.
2. Students will combine the research of voting participation with possible reasons for nonparticipation.
 - a. Supreme Court rulings
 - i. Voting Rights Act
 - b. Laws passed by Congress
 - i. Voting Rights Act
3. Students will need to research methods to promote voting in different communities.
 - a. Students can put together an effective get out and vote drive.

- b. Can be combined with letters to the Secretary of State of Minnesota.
 - c. Combination with local organizations that are promoting voter participation.
4. Students will need time to reflect after the service-learning project to connect the content knowledge of ways to promote and suppress voting rights through various ways with their experience in promoting voting participation.

Application 2: Youth Organizing

Class: 8th-grade Geography

Standard:

Geographic factors influence the distribution, functions, growth, and patterns of cities and human settlements.

Benchmark 1:

8.3.3.6.1

Describe how the physical and environmental features of the United States and Canada affect human activity and settlement.

Benchmark 2:

8.3.3.6.2

Describe how the physical and environmental features of Latin American affect human activity and settlement.

Benchmark 3:

8.3.3.6.3

Describe how the physical and environmental features of Europe and Russia affect human activity and settlement.

Benchmark 4:

8.3.3.6.4

Describe how the physical and environmental features of Southwest Asia and North Africa affect human activity and settlement.

Description of Project

Climate change has an impact on the world that differs depending on the location. Climate change has forced the population to change the way that they do things to survive. The first part of the youth organizing project will be for students to identify those ways that climate change has impacted different locations and the ways that populations have had to adapt. Based on those impacts and the ways that humans have had to adapt, the students will organize a way to encourage governments and societies to address climate change.

Steps of Project

1. Students using their foundation of TODALS and the five themes of geography to look at ways that climate change has impacted different locations.
 - a. Locations could include a specific country, region, or multiple regions.
 - b. Impacts could include physical characteristics of the location or human characteristics.
2. Students will analyze the ways that different countries have responded to those various impacts of climate change.
 - a. Promotion of public transportation in Latin America.
 - b. Laws that force companies to reduce emissions.
 - c. Investing in renewable energy.
3. Based on the research of climate change and ways that other countries have responded to climate change the students will develop an action plan to encourage their communities or the United States to combat climate change in their area.

Class: 7th Grade U.S. History**Standard 1:**

Democratic government depends on informed and engaged citizens who exhibit civic skills and values, practice civic discourse, vote and participate in elections, apply inquiry and analysis skills and take action to solve problems and shape public policy.

Benchmark 1:

Exhibit civic skills including participating in civic discussion on issues in the contemporary United States, demonstrating respect for the opinions of people or groups who have different perspectives, and reaching consensus.

Standard 2:

Free and fair elections are key elements of the United States political system.

Benchmark 2:

Analyze how changes in election processes over time contributed to freer and fairer elections.

Standard 3:

Historical inquiry is a process in which multiple sources and different kinds of historical evidence are analyzed to draw conclusions about how and why things happened in the past.

Benchmark 3:

Pose questions about a topic in United States history, gather and organize a variety of primary and secondary sources related to the questions, analyze sources for credibility and bias; suggest possible answers and write a thesis statement, use sources to draw conclusions and support the thesis; present supported findings and cite sources.

Standard 4:

Regional tensions around economic development, slavery, territorial expansion, and governance resulted in a Civil War and a period of Reconstruction that led to the abolition of slavery, a more powerful federal-government, a renewed push into indigenous nations' territory, and continuing conflict over racial tensions.

Benchmark 4

Describe the effects of the Civil War on Americans in the north, south, and west, including liberated African-Americans, women, former slaveholders, and indigenous peoples.

Standard 5:

As the United States shifted from its agrarian roots into an industrial and global power, the rise of big business, urbanization, and immigration led to institutionalized racism, ethnic and class conflict, and new efforts at reform.

Benchmark 5

Analyze the effects of racism and legalized segregation on American society.

Description of Project

Students will participate in a constructive controversy debate. This debate will be connected with the 15th Amendment and ways that it is practiced historically and currently. Students will debate the merits of not allowing felons to vote even after they complete their sentences until they pay off fines, or are pardoned by the governor. After completing the debate students in their groups will design an opinion on whether that is a law that should be enforced and whether or not it violates the 15th amendment.

*This debate can be combined with the service-learning project examining voting participation.

Steps of Lesson:

1. Divide students into groups of 4. Within that group of 4 divide students into groups of 2.
2. Pose the question “There are several states that do not allow for felons to vote even after they complete their sentence or until they pay fines, restitution, or are granted a pardon by the governor. Is this a violation of the 15th amendment for convicts?” Each pair within the group must take one side of the issue.
3. Have each pair research evidence that supports their position, supports the other side, and refutes evidence presented by the other side. Encourage students to explore the sources that they are using to gather evidence. Each side has 20 minutes to research their position.
4. After 20 minutes the sides will come back together to debate. The team that is arguing that these restrictions do violate the 15th amendment will present their information first. The side listening is only able to listen and take notes. This side will have 5 minutes to present their side.
5. After 5 minutes the team that is arguing that these restrictions do not violate the 15th amendment will present their information. The other side will listen and take notes.
6. After each side can present their sides. Another 5 minutes of open debate. Reminding students that they are debating an idea based on evidence. Students will be able to ask questions based on the notes that they were able to take or counteract any evidence presented with the students researched.

7. Students will now switch positions and research for 10 minutes of evidence that will support their new position. Students can use the information that has already been presented and now expand on that information.
8. Students will come back to the debate. Repeating steps 4 and 5.
9. After each side can present their side. Groups of 4 will drop their positions and come together as a team to develop a position as a team on whether states should allow felons the right to vote. Groups will write a paper or develop a presentation on their agreed-upon position using a researched position. This activity will also help students understand democratic values, and principles through a structured constructive controversy.

Application 4: Debate-Policy Debate

Class: 7th-grade History

Standard 1:

Democratic government depends on informed and engaged citizens who exhibit civic skills and values, practice civic discourse, vote and participate in elections, apply inquiry, and analysis skills and take action to solve problems and shape public policy.

Benchmark:

7.1.1.1.1 Exhibit civic skills including participating in civic discussion on issues in the contemporary United States, demonstrating respect for the opinions of peoples or groups who have different perspectives, and reaching consensus.

Standard 2

The United States is based on democratic values and principles that include liberty, individual rights, justice, equality, the rule of law, limited government, common good, popular sovereignty, majority rule, and minority rights.

Benchmark 2

7.1.2.3.1 Identify examples of how principles expressed in the Declaration of Independence and Preamble to the Constitution have been applied throughout United States history, including how they have evolved (if applicable) over time.

Standard 3

Citizenship and its rights and duties are established by law.

Benchmark 3

7.1.3.5.1 Describe the components of responsible citizenship including informed voting and decision making, developing and defending positions on public policy issues, and monitoring and influencing public decision making.

Benchmark 4

7.1.3.5.2 Compare and contrast the right and responsibilities of citizens, non-citizens, and dual citizens.

Standard 4:

Historical inquiry is a process in which multiple sources and different kinds of historical evidence are analyzed to draw conclusions about how and why things happened in the past.

Benchmark 5

7.4.1.2.1 Pose questions about a topic in United States history, gather and organize a variety of primary and secondary sources related to the questions, analyze sources for credibility and bias; suggest possible answers and write a thesis statement; use sources to draw conclusions and support the thesis; present supported findings, and cite sources.

Description of Project

Students will engage in debate on whether states should remove historical monuments. Students could explore the historical monuments as a federal issue on federal land, a state issue of historical monuments on state land, or local issues such as a high school mascot name. Students will be divided into three groups. The first group is an elected body that will decide via democratic processes how to proceed after hearing arguments. The second group will present research that the historical monument should be removed. The third group will present research that the historical monument should remain.

Steps of Project

1. Divide students into 3 groups.
 - a. One group of 2-3 will research and prepare arguments that the statues should remain due to their historical significance.
 - b. One group of 2-3 will research and prepare arguments that statues should be taken down to that they represent oppression to certain groups of people.
 - c. The final group of students will be the students that will decide based on the arguments and evidence presented.
2. Gives students that are preparing arguments 1-2 days to work together in research and preparation
 - a. The students that will decide based on arguments presented will spend time researching how other countries have responded to various legacies.
 - i. How did Germany respond to Nazism and World War 2?
 - ii. How did Cambodia respond to the Khmer Rouge?
 - iii. Other countries and their tragic legacies.
3. Each side will have an opportunity to present their argument.
4. After each side has presented their side. Each side will have a chance to rebuttal the other side's

argument.

5. Students will be allowed to ask any follow-up questions to each side before deciding based on evidence that has been presented.

Application 5: Youth Participatory Action Research

Class: 8th-grade Geography

Standard 1:

The characteristics distribution and migration of human populations on the earth's surface influence human systems (cultural, economic, and political systems).

Benchmark 1:

8.3.3.5.1 Describe the locations of human populations and the cultural characteristics of the United States and Canada.

Standard 2:

Historical inquiry is a process in which multiple sources and different kinds of historical evidence are analyzed to draw conclusions about how and why things happened in the past.

Benchmark 2

8.4.1.2.1 Pose questions about a topic in world history; gather and organize a variety of primary and secondary sources related to the questions; analyze sources of credibility and bias; suggest possible answers and write a thesis statement; use sources to draw conclusions and support the thesis, and present supported findings and cite sources.

Standard 3:

Globalization, the spread of capitalism, and the end of the Cold War have shaped a contemporary world still characterized by rapid technological change, dramatic increases in global population and economic growth coupled with persistent economic and social disparities and cultural conflict.

Benchmark 3

8.4.3.14.1 Describe causes of economic imbalances and social inequalities among the world's peoples in the post-colonial world and efforts made to close those gaps.

Description of Project

Students will be spending time researching the various reasons for people to migrate to different countries. In that research to connect to the needs of the community that the Global Academy students live in and are part of the students will be able to make contact with various organizations that work with the immigrant communities and develop an action plan that meets those needs. The project can focus just at the students in Global Academy, in a larger community such as a neighborhood, citywide such as in Minneapolis, or society as a whole.

Steps of Project

1. Students research push and pull factors for immigrants.
 - a. Students research reasons for immigrants leaving their home nation with a particular focus on Somali and African populations.
 - b. Students research reasons for the large immigrant population in Minnesota with a particular focus on Somali and African populations.
2. Students make contact with current immigrant organizations to understand the needs of current first and second-generation immigrants.
 - a. Possible organizations include schools, after school organizations, religious organizations.
3. Students work together to research to determine the greatest need facing the immigrant population within their community.
 - a. Students will need to conduct interviews, polls, and contact other officials.
4. Students develop an action plan based on the greatest need facing their community.

- a. Students will be required to interpret the research and prioritize needs.
5. Students meet with current decision-makers within structures that will allow for their action plan to be implemented.

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